

To: Cecilia Mata, Chair, Arizona Board of Regents
CC: Arizona Board of Regents
From: José Luis Cruz Rivera, President, Northern Arizona University
Date: August 1, 2024
Re: Submission of Annual and Multiple-Year At-Risk Goal Reports



I am pleased to submit the enclosed reports to the Arizona Board of Regents, pursuant to action taken during the September 28, 2023, meeting related to the item titled “Presidents’ Contracts and Notice of Appointment for the Executive Director” (*Item #3, B2: President Cruz Rivera Proposed Annual At-Risk Compensation goals for 2023-2024*) and the September 30, 2021, meeting related to the item titled “Proposed Amendments to the Presidents’ Contracts and Notice of Appointment for the Executive Director” (*Item #2, B1: President Cruz Rivera Proposed Multiple-Year Goals 2021-2024*).

Attached herein are final reports documenting the achievement of the two (2) Annual At-Risk Compensation Goals (2023-24) and the four (4) Multiple-Year At-Risk Compensation Goals (2021-2024) assigned.

Each report on the annual goals is structured as follows:

- An executive summary, presenting a high-level statement of achievement describing how the incentive goal was met and how it will be maintained to ensure NAU can continue to advance the mission of the enterprise strategic plan, as it pertains to ABOR’s Strategic Goals.
- Additional sections that describe in detail the context, processes, plans, results, and future considerations associated with each goal, demonstrating how the incentive goal was met.
- Supplemental appendices are included to provide further background on how NAU has achieved the goals and the supporting information that informed the strategic plans and actions documented in the reports.

Ultimately, when taken together, the achievements documented around the annual and multiple-year goals demonstrate a clear vision and intentional approach that has elevated NAU to stand among the nation’s preeminent access and attainment-focused universities, recognized as an engine of opportunity for individuals and driver of economic prosperity for statewide communities. This work has contributed significantly to ABOR’s Strategic Goals and NAU has an ambitious, achievable, and sustainable path forward to continue this work. A summary of some of the most impactful achievements registered during this period, resulting from the cross-cutting efforts supporting each of the four multi-year goals and emblematic of NAU’s enhanced position in the tri-university enterprise, is presented below.

- **Record Incoming Student Enrollment (Fall 2022 and Fall 2023):** NAU achieved record enrollment numbers, particularly among Arizona residents and students from working class, first generation, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino backgrounds. Notably, there was a 3% increase

in Arizona residents and a 47% increase in Native American students in fall 2023, marking the largest numbers in the university's history.

- **Record Research Expenditures:** NAU faculty achieved \$144.3 million in research expenditures in FY22 and FY23, with projections to surpass \$90 million in FY24. This growth has propelled NAU toward attaining R1 designation in 2025, which will place NAU in the company of a select handful of institutions nationwide that are HSIs and R1s. This achievement has been realized through a mission-driven commitment to impactful research and the teacher-scholar model.
- **Record Private Support:** NAU raised an unprecedented \$121.5 million in private support from 2022-2024, significantly exceeding the previous three-year record of \$48.5 million from 2019-2021. This success underscores the strong public support for NAU's vision and initiatives and builds momentum as the university launches a transformational comprehensive fundraising campaign.
- **Financial and Operational Strength:** NAU has implemented and enhanced strong financial governance and centralized controls, ensuring the university's operational sustainability. Highlights include maintaining healthy cash reserves, a stable credit rating, record employee retention, and strategic workforce investments that enhance productivity and impact.
- **National Leadership and Recognition:** NAU has gained national recognition for its contributions to higher education, including: President Cruz Rivera's election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and appointment by the U.S. Senate to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI), featured stories in numerous state and national publications (Washington Monthly, Phoenix Business Journal, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, AGB's Trustee Magazine, and many others), congressional testimony on Hispanic Serving Institutions, the launch of the Semester Zero initiative with College Track, and significant mission-driven investments from organizations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Helios Education Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Mellon Foundation, and NAU Foundation, among others, that total nearly \$35 million.

As NAU stands poised to continue its work to meet talent with opportunity and propel upward economic mobility and social impact for the people of Arizona and beyond, the words and recognition of Bill Gates, NAU Honorary Doctorate Recipient in 2023, highlight NAU's remarkable transformation and its innovative approach:

I don't give commencement speeches often, but I'm excited to be giving one at NAU because something remarkable and all too rare is happening in Flagstaff: The school is redefining the value of a college degree.

The goals pursued during this period and status of their achievement are listed below:

2023-2024 Annual Goals	
Goal	Status
Launch NAU Health	Achieved
Advance Development of a Statewide Network of Colleges	Achieved
2021-2024 Multiple Year Goals	
Goal	Status
Broadening Participation	Achieved
Statewide and Allied Health Expansion	Achieved
Increase Profile in Latino Communities and Enhance HSI Status	Achieved
Enhance Profile in Serving Native American Students and Communities	Achieved

I look forward to discussing these reports and charting the path for the next phase of NAU's work during my annual review with the Regents this summer.

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To: Cecilia Mata, Chair, Arizona Board of Regents
CC: Arizona Board of Regents
From: José Luis Cruz Rivera, President, Northern Arizona University
Date: August 1, 2024
Re: 2023-24 At-Risk Goal #1: Launch of NAU Health



This memorandum presents a high-level statement of achievement describing how the incentive goal in reference was met and how the corresponding efforts will be maintained to ensure that NAU can continue to advance the mission of the enterprise strategic plan, as it pertains to ABOR's Strategic Goals. Sections of this memorandum that describe **confidential** personnel or proprietary information are marked appropriately and should be limited to executive session review by the Board.

Goal Statement

As part of the ABOR Arizona Healthy Tomorrow Initiative, NAU will launch the advanced planning and multi-year implementation of NAU Health to double the number of credentials awarded in health-related fields by 2030, with a special focus on providing training for physicians and practitioners who are well-positioned to meet the most urgent primary health care needs present in Arizona's urban, rural, and Indigenous communities.

In FY24, NAU will meet the following milestones:

- NAU will establish a College of Nursing, launch the Office of NAU Health, and hire senior leadership to better structure and coordinate the university's existing portfolio of academic programs and research excellence in nursing, physical and behavioral health.
- Guided by a Medical Education Advisory Council of institutional, regional, state, and national experts, as well as external consultants, NAU will present for Board review and approval a comprehensive plan for the establishment of the College of Applied Community Medicine (CoACM). Through a comprehensive accelerated model, the CoACM will educate promising students to be physicians who are focused on protecting and promoting the health and well-being of communities and populations through a Primary Health Care approach. The plan will include curricular, personnel, programmatic, infrastructure, partnership, and funding considerations.

Executive Summary

In the past year, NAU created a new branch of its educational enterprise—NAU Health—led by Julie Baldwin, Ph.D., a nationally recognized expert in health equity research. Baldwin serves as executive director of the Center for Health Equity Research at NAU, is a Regents' professor of health sciences, and

is a member of the National Academy of Medicine. Thanks to a generous multi-year philanthropic gift from the northern Arizona-based NARBHA Institute, which was inspired by the vision for primary health education that NAU is pursuing, she began her tenure as the founding NARBHA Institute Vice President for NAU Health on January 1, 2024, with the primary goal of developing a plan for the NAU College of Medicine.

The work of NAU Health has focused on an intensive and extensive visioning, discovery, and design process around the key features necessary for a successful NAU College of Medicine. This report shares the depth and breadth of these considerations and charts a path forward for implementation of this revolutionary new college at NAU.

To reflect the distinct areas of emphasis NAU is pursuing, the university has realigned, elevated, and clarified the roles, portfolios, and leadership for key health-related programs. The adjustments, which are all in effect for academic year 2024-2025, are listed below and together will contribute to the workforce education goal of doubling the number of NAU degrees awarded by 2030 to students in nursing and health professions disciplines:

- **College of Nursing**—NAU’s School of Nursing has been elevated to a free-standing college in recognition of this critical set of academic programs and the need to enhance visibility and impact at the state and national levels. In addition to continued growth in program offerings throughout the state, the College of Nursing will heighten NAU’s ability to address Arizona’s nursing shortage through strengthened partnerships, improved alumni relations, expanded development opportunities, and more robust recruitment and retention of talented, mission-driven nursing faculty. The new college, complete with a dean and administrative leadership team, launched on July 1, 2024.
- **Elevating Health Professions Education in the College of Health and Human Services**—NAU expanded its impact across the health professions disciplines that include physical and occupational therapy, physician assistant studies, dental hygiene, and more through continued investments in program growth, diversified pathways, expanded sites and modalities, and more robust partnership programs. With the segmentation of the College of Nursing, the College of Health and Human Services will have a renewed and tightened focus on creating pathways and partnerships with community colleges to accelerate educational attainment in allied health fields; the development of a core interprofessional program that supports provider education across disciplines with skills aligned with the College of Medicine, including community practice and health equity; and the creation of residency and credential programs for practicing healthcare providers to advance practice in rural and underserved communities.
- **Strengthening Behavioral Health**—NAU has a unique portfolio of programs in behavioral health disciplines that are distinctive and much-needed in Arizona. Through continued intentional growth efforts, these programs are expanding. Furthermore, their vital disciplinary lenses are being infused into the curriculum of existing health programs, as well as into the planning for the College of Medicine to ensure practice-ready graduates who can navigate the diverse healthcare needs of populations in both physical and behavioral health dimensions.

The results of this work are expansive, including numerous program expansions and launches in Flagstaff, hybrid/online, and statewide to bolster attainment and workforce readiness in health-related fields. These efforts have been supported by the state’s NEI/Workforce investment, as well as the ABOR Arizona Healthy Tomorrow investment, with funds supporting personnel, facilities, and operational support that has propelled growth in strategic program areas.

In total, these new and expanded programs will propel nearly 950 new health care professionals into the workforce, with a focus on meeting critical needs throughout Arizona’s statewide communities.

Importantly, NAU’s growth plans will be amended based on the availability and continuation of public funds directed toward health programs. Given the FY25 state budget reduction and the uncertainty of future one-time Workforce funding, NAU will adjust growth targets accordingly to focus on the most impactful and financially sustainable program development and growth trajectory and ensure above all else that the quality of an NAU degree remains exceptional for all students. Calibrating these targets against the evolving backdrop of state funding will be a key point of NAU’s continued work on health programs in the years ahead.

The substance of the report that follows outlines the work that has been conducted over the last three years to lay the groundwork for the NAU COM—from its earliest conceptualization to meet the state’s primary care provider shortage to in-depth stakeholder engagement, consultation, and planning that crystalized key design features and a clear path forward to realize this ambitious and much-needed vision. The COM will enhance NAU’s successful approach to educating the people of Arizona and provide a pathway for students who have a strong desire to serve the state to earn a medical degree, work in primary care, and practice in areas of high need throughout the state.

To facilitate the next steps in the development of the NAU COM, in FY25 the university proposed moving forward in the following areas: 1) conducting cost feasibility assessments; 2) identifying secure and diverse funding sources; 3) cultivating clinical and community partnerships; 4) planning for accreditation; and 5) starting to develop curriculum and learning outcomes.

Following the completion of the activities outlined, a roadmap for the COM will be presented in summer 2025 that will set NAU on the trajectory to enroll its first class of MD students in fall 2030.

CONFIDENTIAL Progress Report: College of Medicine

This report articulates the key characteristics, considerations, and necessary steps toward implementation for ABOR’s consideration for a College of Medicine (COM) at NAU. The innovative model proposed is directly responsive to the state’s healthcare workforce needs, individual and population health outcomes, and ABOR’s charge for distinctive interventions by each of Arizona’s public universities to support the healthy future of Arizona. At the core of NAU’s model is a singular focus on educating Primary Care Physicians to serve in Arizona.

The sections that follow take a deep dive into the following areas: 1) the need for primary care providers in Arizona; 2) NAU COM vision; 3) stakeholder engagement; 4) design features; 5) timeline; 6) budget; and 7) next steps.

Letters of support from national and state experts and stakeholders are included in [Appendix A](#), which serve to underscore the timeliness, innovative nature, and robust community of support for NAU’s COM, and further appendices provide additional detail and background on how NAU has pursued its design work for the COM.

Grounded in the NAU mission to power upward economic mobility and social impact for the people of Arizona, the COM will enhance NAU’s successful approach of supporting all students, particularly Arizona residents, first-generation students, and others who are committed to serving their communities and staying in Arizona. Challenged with the evident need for primary care providers and access to health care, this plan

illustrates the opportunities to optimize technology, minimize costs, differentiate NAU from other Arizona university programs, and produce an innovative COM with minimal student debt and enduring societal impact.

1. The Need for Primary Care Providers in Arizona

Arizona is facing a healthcare provider shortage across the state (**Appendix B**), with acute needs in the primary care field: nearly 3 million Arizonans have limited access to primary care¹, more than 1 in 3 of the state’s hospitals face a critical staffing shortage, all of Arizona’s counties have designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA), and people in the state’s rural and tribal communities have additional barriers to care².

2. NAU College of Medicine Vision

NAU is a national leader in providing educational access, achieving high levels of attainment, and serving in-state residents, first-generation students, and individuals from diverse backgrounds. This experience has inspired a sharp vision for medical education. NAU aims to integrate existing excellence in behavioral health, public health and health equity, and the health sciences to create a COM that is founded on strong partnerships with providers and communities and designed to prepare physicians to meet primary healthcare needs in rural, underserved, and indigenous communities in advancing health outcomes, care, and equity in Arizona.

The College of Medicine will bring to life the vision of a new NAU as:

- An **engine of opportunity** to address primary care workforce needs and the needs of economic mobility that will launch our graduates into careers of consequence and lives of purpose and propel healthier communities to a more prosperous future.
- A **driver of social impact** that will fuel the eradication of disparities in health outcomes and bring the idea of equitable society closer to within reach.
- A **vehicle of economic mobility** that fuels an effective education ecosystem for healthcare delivery in Arizona and beyond by being a one-of-a-kind model for medical education.

“The new NAU College of Medicine is an exceptionally exciting and much-needed endeavor. In a nation that is confronting serious health disparities, especially among underserved populations, a community-based approach is key to closing those gaps. Moreover, the College can play an important role in addressing current physician workforce shortages in Arizona and beyond, as well as in enhancing the diversity of that workforce. I look forward to the NAU College of Medicine becoming a reality!”

– Darrell G. Kirch, MD, President Emeritus, Association of American Medical Colleges

CONFIDENTIAL 3. Stakeholder Engagement

Conceptualization of the NAU COM started in the fall 2021 through preliminary conversations between tri-university leadership teams. The state’s clear need and NAU’s distinctive strengths, offerings, and re-affirmed vision as the state’s access and attainment institution presented an opportunity to explore a new COM that had strong support from members of the EEC. This led to planning discussions with the Regents

around the Arizona Healthy Tomorrow Initiative focused on healthcare workforce needs and resulted in the development of a concept paper in the spring of 2022. The following year, with the help of expert advisors, a panel of national experts was convened to provide feedback on the NAU concept. This led to the creation of a Medical Education Advisory Committee with both statewide and national members. In the fall 2023, with the support of a generous gift from the NARBHA Institute, as well as Arizona Healthy Tomorrow investments from ABOR, Julie A. Baldwin, PhD, was appointed as the inaugural NARBHA Institute Vice President for NAU Health and charged with developing a comprehensive plan for consideration by ABOR, informed by state and national healthcare experts who would serve as a guiding coalition for the development of the COM.

Following the discovery period, the NAU Health team began stakeholder engagement to conduct exploratory research, attend medical conferences, coordinate site visits with existing medical schools, collaborate with external consultants (New Origin Studio and ABOR Arizona Healthy Tomorrow experts), and meet with key experts to lay the groundwork for the NAU COM. This stage of planning informed medical school type (Allopathic or Osteopathic), design principles, accreditation requirements, the formation of a local provider advisory group, and potential clinical partners. A detailed listing of external meetings, site visits and key consultations is in [Appendix C](#).

Design Summit and National Medical Education Advisory Committee Meeting

NAU partnered with New Origin Studio consultants (experts in Health Systems Design) to design and facilitate two pivotal convenings:

- **Design Summit** (April 3, 2024): the Medical Education Advisory Committee (Statewide members) leveraged their expertise of the unique circumstances of northern Arizona to shape the vision, strategic features, and mechanisms for the future COM (See [Appendix D](#) for a list of attendees).
- **Medical Education Advisory Committee meeting** (May 14, 2024): the National members convened to render targeted guidance, grounded in the regional circumstances and priorities, with a coalescing of priorities that would be fundamental to the COM (See [Appendix D](#) for a list of attendees).

A high-level summary of key takeaways of these convenings are outlined in **Table 1** organized in accordance with this report. (A full summary of key takeaways is in [Appendix E](#).)

Table 1. Key Takeaways from Design Summit and National Medical Education Advisory Committee convenings

Domains*	Key Takeaways
OVERARCHING	Community partnerships are exceptionally critical as the college must develop nearly everything in partnership. The mission and values of the NAU COM are innovative compared to the current funding models for medicine and medical training.
CURRICULUM	The curriculum must be designed based on the people to be served—in this case, the communities represented in northern Arizona and other high-need populations throughout the state. Key themes will include Integrated/team-based care, Rural and Tribal focus, and Trauma-informed care.

Domains*	Key Takeaways
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	Partnerships are the most critical feature of COM, where different partners will be relevant and necessary for different goals. Notably, partnerships with Indigenous and other underrepresented stakeholders must be reciprocal, mutual, and trust-building.
INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS	Innovative teaching methods, especially those that leverage technology, can potentially lower cost and creatively serve rural communities. But there is a need to be cautious about teaching to a new care model that may not yet be operational in the region—graduates must be equipped for workforce success and impact because of their training.
AFFORDABILITY (NO/LOW DEBT)	While No/Low student debt is an incredibly unique potential feature—and affordability in general is vital to recruiting and retaining Arizona-serving physician cohorts—it depends on a sustainable funding model and may not serve underrepresented students well depending on how it is achieved.
ACCELERATED OPTION	Features to allow accelerated pathways to graduation and participation in the workforce are attractive. However, there is some caution and concern about initially creating an accelerated program. This may be best positioned as a feature to be developed over time to best realize the core goals of the COM.

Mission Elements

The key takeaways from the Design Summit and the recommendations from the National members of the Medical Education Advisory Committee inform a set of strategic opportunities, each of which can potentially contribute to a unique and groundbreaking mission for the College of Medicine. However, the new COM may not be able to realize all these opportunities equally or simultaneously, especially at launch. Thus, the guiding vision articulated above—shaped by the Arizona Healthy Tomorrow imperative and affirmed by the expert advisory groups—will help to prioritize when and how mission elements are implemented to best facilitate the launch and impact of the NAU COM. While these elements of the NAU COM mission reinforce each other, they also represent different levers for change, and can be a distinct starting point in a roadmap to success. See [Appendix F](#) for additional details.

CONFIDENTIAL 4. Design Features

From this foundation, the NAU Health team has created a set of design specifications for the COM, which are realistic translations of the guiding vision, key mission elements, and stakeholder inputs to create a model that can meet the needs of Arizona.

NAU COM Overview

The NAU COM will be an allopathic medical school and will follow the Association of American Medical Colleges' (AAMC) **Core Model 4, the Stand-Alone Model**, where the hospital/medical center CEO is fully independent from the College of Medicine (COM) and parent university in terms of financial control and direct reporting.³ Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH) hosts the only hospital in Flagstaff—Flagstaff Medical Center—which is the only Level 1 Trauma Center north of Phoenix. NAH has indicated interest and excitement in forming a partnership central to NAU's COM under the Stand-Alone Model. The COM will broadly follow the Community-Based/Primary Care Model for medical education, which aims to address the patient as a whole and find practical ways to meet the health care needs of underserved groups and communities.⁴

NAU is collaborating closely with our sister Arizona universities and has explored the possibility of becoming a regional medical campus of one of the existing state medical schools. However, through consultation with Statewide and National Medical Education Advisory Committee members, this approach has been strongly advised against, as it would compromise NAU's ability to provide differentiated impact in the state and reduce the local responsiveness that is fundamental to the COM vision. As such, the regional medical campus model will not be pursued.

Admissions Model. The NAU COM aims to recruit students who have a strong desire to work in primary care, practice in Arizona, and have a propensity to serve in rural areas with high healthcare needs. Admission preference will be given to students who are residents of the state of Arizona and from rural communities or those with strong ties to the state.

To acknowledge different educational backgrounds and preparation, the COM will employ a Holistic Review admissions model, which gives balanced consideration to applicant's experiences, attributes, and academic metrics to contextualize potential contribution to the program and practice of medicine.⁵ Specific review criteria that will go into this balanced context score will be developed later in the planning process.

"Can we break the cost-quality curve?"

- Medical Education Advisory Committee National Member

Reducing Institutional Costs. NAU Health has and will continue to examine innovative ways to reduce costs during the development of the COM to ensure sustainability over time. Below are a list of potential cost savings and methods for financial efficiency that have been identified and will be the subject of in-depth feasibility studies in subsequent planning phases.

Potential cost-saving measures

- Incorporate unembedded faculty to supplement core faculty that can teach virtually or in person as adjunct or volunteers (National Medical Education Advisory Committee meeting).
- Identify faculty with focus on teaching (vs. clinical and research; lowering salary impacts).
- Develop partnership with UA or ASU to share library resources.
- Leverage any faculty/staff, space, student services, simulation labs, library resources, and testing/study resources from already active programs at NAU, such as Nursing, PT, PA, OT, and Hospitality (for patient experience).
- Utilize simulation, virtual, and telehealth for instruction.
- Overlap existing NAU faculty for the COM and/or leverage new COM faculty to deliver additional revenue-generating programs beyond the MD curriculum.⁶
- Collaborate with NAU's W. A. Franke College of Business to conduct a strategic business analysis for planning, accreditation, and sustainability over time.⁶
- [Appendix G](#) outlines Vieweg and colleague's⁶ Ten Key Management Principles that NAU COM can leverage to further reduce costs in a sustainable way.

NAU COM Curriculum

Primary Care. The NAU COM will be designed to prepare physicians to meet the health equity and primary healthcare needs in rural, underserved, and Indigenous communities in Arizona by centering its curriculum on the primary care specialties (e.g., family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN), with a particular focus on rural and tribal populations. These foci will include elements such as exposure to rural

and tribal related healthcare topics; the importance of integrated, team-based, and trauma-informed care; use of technological advancements in healthcare delivery; and longitudinal integrated clerkships. *All design principles, curricula, and community partnerships, including clerkship and residency opportunities* will be informed by the NAU COM Local Provider Advisory Group – a collection of providers from northern Arizona with varying backgrounds and expertise (see [Appendix H](#) for a list of current Local Provider Advisory Group members). Such an approach ensures that graduates are prepared for practice in the specific settings where there is greatest need, informed by those who are already practitioners in the space.

Rural and Tribal Focus. With rural and tribal populations facing significant health disparities, there is great need to train culturally proficient physicians committed to practicing medicine in these areas. The NAU COM will be designed to provide students with the appropriate knowledge and skills to practice medicine in Arizona’s rural and tribal communities by employing curriculum elements across all years of training (see **Figure 1**). Potential elements include exposure to rural/tribal-related healthcare topics and traditional healers via classroom seminars, early and extended rural/tribal clinical experience (see section on longitudinal integrated clerkships below), and opportunities to participate in rural/tribal interest groups and social events.

“Culturally informed curriculum that includes Indigenous and other traditional healing approaches”

- Design Summit Attendee



Figure 1. Curriculum elements across four years of medical school.

Team-Based Care. In line with guidance from the American Medical Association, the NAU COM will help medical students understand the importance of team-based care to patient safety and patient-centered care. The most effective way to maximize the complementary skill sets of all health care professionals is to work as part of a physician-led team.⁷ Depending on the specific practice needs, a team-based approach can include various combinations of physicians, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, social workers, behaviorists, case managers and other health care professionals. Members of the team share information and assist in decision making based on their unique skills—all with the common goal of providing the safest, best possible care to patients. NAU’s use of a team-based care model in medical education will be reinforced by the portfolio of other health programs the university offers, with potential shared faculty, facilities, and resources embedding a team-based approach across all health disciplines that NAU offers.

- Team-based health care core competencies include⁷:**
- *Providing patient-centered care*
 - *Creating a culture of continuous quality improvement*
 - *Learning from informatics*
 - *Employing evidence-based practice*
 - *Working inter-professionally*

“Curriculum teaches student to be a team leader rather than a lone practitioner.”

- Design Summit Attendee

Integrated Care. To ensure NAU COM students are trained to deliver culturally centered, whole-person care, the curriculum will include a focus on integrated care. Integrating behavioral health into primary care is seen as a critical step in providing comprehensive care and has been shown to improve outcomes (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality⁸).

Core competencies for integrated care include⁹:

- *Knowledge of mental illness, substance use disorders, and adverse health behaviors commonly seen in primary care*
- *Knowledge of cognitive, affective, biological, behavioral, and social aspects of health and medical conditions*
- *Familiarity with evidence-based, brief screening tools for behavioral health problems*
- *Strong clinical assessment skills*

Trauma-Informed Care. To provide effective health care service, physicians and care teams need to have a complete picture of a patient’s life situation—past and present. The more an individual is exposed to adverse experiences (e.g., physical, emotional abuse), the greater their risk for chronic health conditions later in life. Trauma-informed care (TIC) recognizes trauma as an important factor impacting health throughout the lifespan, and by offering trauma-informed approaches and treatments in health care settings, providers can more effectively treat patients, thereby potentially improving health outcomes, reducing avoidable care utilization, and curbing excess costs (CHCS, 2017). See [Appendix I](#) for a full list of TIC competencies.

Technological Advancements in Healthcare. *Technological advancements are changing the way health care is delivered and with it comes the need to reform medical education.* To prepare students to operate in this new landscape, the NAU COM will train students to use innovative technologies, particularly those most beneficial to serving those who live in rural communities, including telehealth and (e.g., telemonitoring) and use of electronic health records (EHRs) and artificial intelligence (AI). Telehealth is broadly defined as “the use of communications technologies to provide health care at a distance.”¹⁰ It can allow healthcare professionals to host a range of patient encounters while facilitating management of acute and chronic conditions and preventive services. For example, tele-mentoring, like Project ECHO, can bring scarce clinical expertise to rural or remote locations. NAU COM students will be trained to use this cutting-edge video-conferencing technology.

Another important technological advancement that is often overlooked in medical training is working with electronic health records (EHRs).¹¹ EHRs have many benefits, such as improved patient safety and interfacing with laboratories and pharmacies, but also assist the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in health care (e.g., the use of medical forecasting). Yet, training on use of EHRs for medical students is not commonly incorporated in the curriculum.¹² The NAU COM will incorporate training on EHRs and use of AI tools to ensure graduates develop competencies related to data management and use of AI applications to make informed decisions.

“Technology-enabled but relationship-grounded”

- Design Summit Attendee

Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships. Another design feature supported by the NAU COM Medical Education Advisory Committee, is the adoption of the Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) model. LICs are an alternative to traditional block rotations (TBRs) and involve learners spending an extended time in a clinical setting where learning opportunities are interwoven through continuities of patient contact, assessment and supervision, and clinical and cultural learning.¹³ LICs have been shown to prepare students as well as TBRs while increasing students’ sense of patient-centeredness and confidence and provide students a meaningful continuity of care experience and the opportunity to develop long-term relationships with preceptors, while simultaneously meeting the clinical competencies of multiple clerkships. Research has also shown that the LIC model significantly improves the student learning environment and faculty teaching experience while being cost-neutral, resulting in an increase in value.¹⁴

Community Partnerships

As identified by members of the Medical Education Advisory Committee, the foundation of a successful medical school will be building relationships with community partners including, but not limited to, local schools, community and tribal colleges, healthcare delivery organizations, hospitals, and Tribal leadership. Specifically, for the NAU COM to realize its goal of training medical students to identify, understand, and serve the unique health needs of Arizona’s rural and tribal communities, they must have opportunities early and often to practice in these environments.

Pathways. Medical students who grow up in small communities far from urban centers are much more likely to return to their communities to practice. Thus, the NAU COM will work with community partners, including local high school and community, tribal, and 4-year colleges, to identify potential candidates from rural communities and encourage them to pursue a medicine degree.

The NAU COM will aim to recruit “students from rural, under resourced communities that want to train, serve, and stay in their communities to improve health outcomes”

- Design Summit Attendee

Clerkships. A major element in nearly all rural-focused curricula is a lengthy rural clinical experience.¹⁵ “These rotations provide hands-on experience, including the scope of practice required of a primary care physician in a community where there may be no OB/GYN or general surgeon. (Jaret, 2020)” Additionally, identifying appropriate sites and talented preceptors for longitudinal integrated clerkships while critically important, is difficult and will require leveraging existing partnerships and developing new collaborations.

Residencies. A necessary ingredient to address the state’s physician shortage and develop the local workforce is the availability of graduate medical education (GME) spots in Arizona—specifically in rural and tribal areas. Studies show that graduate medical students are far more likely to remain in practice in the states where they completed their residencies.¹⁶ Currently, there exists a shortage of GME spots in the state with a particular deficiency in tribal affiliated sites. To overcome this, it is paramount that NAU’s COM develops partnerships with existing health care groups to create more residencies in rural or tribal areas.

“Partnerships with existing health care groups to create more residencies in rural or tribal areas (so they stay!)”

- Design Summit Attendee

Innovative Teaching Methods

Effective medical education requires implementing innovative teaching techniques beyond didactic lectures (DL). While DL has been the gold standard for providing medical education, exposing students to large amount of information with minimal engagement can make it difficult for students to retain and interpret course content.^{17,18} For effective learning, it is imperative to implement flexible medical curricula that accommodate distinct modern teaching methodologies¹⁹ and make knowledge sharing enjoyable, easier for comprehension, and best meet the specific needs of students.²⁰ For this reason, the NAU COM will incorporate multiple alternative teaching and learning strategies which are well validated, culturally and trauma informed, and delivered by instructors representative of the region, including traditional healers. Some examples of modern teaching methods²¹ are listed here.

Modern techniques of teaching and learning:

- Case based learning
- Evidence based medicine
- Problem based learning
- Simulation based learning
- Social media and video lectures (e-learning)
- Peer assisted learning
- Observational learning

Affordability (No/Low Debt)

Medical education is costly. According to a 2020 report by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the four-year cost to attend medical school for the class of 2020 surpassed \$275,000 at over half of all medical schools.²² Additionally, as of 2019, the median education debt for indebted medical school graduates was \$200,000, and 73% of graduates reported having education debt.²² The overall effect of the high cost of medical education is a reduced likelihood that well-qualified students from the lower and middle socioeconomic strata will apply to medical schools.²³

To ensure that the NAU COM is affordable and accessible, specifically to populations in rural and tribal areas of the state, NAU will include plans for a tuition coverage program similar to the Arizona Teachers' Academy, where graduates who stay to practice in Arizona after graduation will have educational costs fully covered. Additionally, NAU will leverage existing institutional, state, and national scholarship programs (e.g., Arizona Legislative funding, Arizona Primary Care Provider Loan Repayment Program, and National Health Service Corps Rural Community Loan Repayment Program) and explore possibilities for developing new scholarships with philanthropic funding.

By combining these approaches, the cost of medical school education would be reduced and, in turn, would attract a higher quality and greater diversity of students,^{23,24} including those from rural and tribal regions of the state.

Three approaches for making medical school more affordable include:

1. Reduction in tuition
2. Increase in scholarship aid and/or grants, and
3. Initiation of an innovative loan programs

Accelerated Option

Rising student debt and projections for physician shortages have reinvigorated interest in three-year accelerated medical school programs.²⁵ This feature has been the subject of significant consideration for the NAU COM. While there are certainly benefits in rapidly propelling students into practice, the challenges of such an approach are significant, with the Statewide and National Medical Education Advisory Committee members and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) recommending caution in making this a core characteristic of NAU's COM. As such, NAU plans to start with a 4-year program and consider creating an accelerated program in the future when infrastructure is already fully in place.

CONFIDENTIAL 5. Timeline

Phase 1: COM Discovery	Phase 2: COM Planning	Phase 3: COM Design	Phase 4: Implementation of COM			
FY22-23 (3/31/21-12/31/23)	FY24 (1/1/24-6/30/24)	FY25 (7/1/24-6/30/25)	FY26 (7/1/25-6/30/26)	FY27 (7/1/26-6/30/27)	FY28 (7/1/27-6/30/28)	FY29 (7/1/28-6/30/29)
		\$1.5M	\$1.9M	\$2.9M	\$3.9M	\$10.3M
		Budget request FY 25 Funding: NARBHA, TRIF or NEI	Cost estimate: \$18-20M (Operations) \$27-50M (Facility) Funding: State, Philanthropy & Grants			
Conceptualization	Planning & Consultation	Partnership & Curriculum Development	Operationalize and Launch the NAU COM			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAU President & Provost discussion with Arizona university leadership (Fall 21) 2. Planning for Arizona Healthy Tomorrow Initiative with ABOR 3. Developed concept paper for COM (Spring 22) 4. Convened a National Advisory Committee Meeting (Spring 23) 5. Hired Inaugural NARBHA Institute Vice President for NAU Health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mobilized NAU Health team 2. Conducted medical school virtual site visits 3. Compared Allopathic and Osteopathic medical programs 4. Consulted with Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Secretariats 5. Held Statewide Design Summit 6. Organized local provider group 7. Reconvened national members of Medical Education Advisory Committee 8. Prepared ABOR At-Risk Report (preliminary COM design features, cost estimate, and next steps) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hire key medical school consultants and Interim Dean 2. Facilitate the identification of medical school innovations 3. Initiate behavioral health programs assessment 4. Develop clinical partnerships 5. Explore cost quality models 6. Start curriculum development 7. Begin accreditation planning 8. Conduct space & cost assessments 9. Seek support from Tribal and other community partners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hire key positions for the COM (Deans, leadership, key faculty & staff) 2. Secure COM facilities 3. Contract with clinical rotation sites 4. Secure additional funding sources <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partnerships b. Philanthropy c. Grants 5. Obtain institutional approvals and accreditation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. NAU (approval of new college/ program) b. ABOR (strategic plan, budget/ resources) c. HLC (Degree granting) d. LCME (Allopathic medical school accreditation) 			
Deliverable 1: Creation of NAU Health	Deliverable 2: ABOR COM At Risk Report	Deliverable 3: COM roadmap, timeline & ABOR budget request	Deliverable 4: First NAU COM class starts			

Figure 3. Strategic Timeline to Design and Launch the NAU College of Medicine

CONFIDENTIAL 6. Budget

Planning Years

A preliminary pro forma budget was developed for the COM to estimate programming costs, including salaries and benefits and non-labor expenses, to arrive at total estimated expenses for planning and implementation phases (Phases 3 and 4 in Figure 3). Competitive salaries for faculty and staff are crucial to attract and retain qualified professionals. To estimate salaries, benchmarking available from AAMC for faculty at the PhD and MD level was used. NAU Human

Resources assisted with staff salaries and CIP Codes 51.12 were also considered. Given the scope of expertise needed to realize the COM vision in the proposed timeline, it will be crucial to hire consultants to begin developing curriculum, advancing accreditation processes, and securing leadership for implementation to begin in full force.

Timeline Phase 3 (FY25): COM Planning and Design: \$1,500,000.

Timeline Phase 4 (FY26-29): Implementation of COM: \$18,000,000 - \$20,000,000 total.

Timeline Phase 4 Fiscal Years:

FY26: \$1,900,000

FY27: \$2,900,000

FY28: \$3,900,000

FY29: \$10,300,000

Operating Years

FY 2030 is projected to be the first operating year. The first cohort of students are projected to begin fall 2029. Cohort class size will start at 20, increase to 30, and cap at a class size of 40 students per year. Operating Year 6 (FY35) onward is projected at 160 students total per year.

Programming costs without student tuition: \$15,000,000 – \$20,000,000 per year.

Programming costs including tuition revenue at \$40,000 per student:

\$10,000,000 - \$15,000,000 per year.

For the LCME accreditation process, NAU will need to submit a 6-year pro forma showing costs for developing and maintaining the COM, including a description of all financial resources available, and the status and sustainability of the sources, to be submitted with the data collection instrument (DCI) for preliminary accreditation.

Facility Costs

Construction costs are estimated separately from programming costs. It is estimated that the construction budget will range between \$27,000,000 - \$50,000,000, depending on square footage, furnishings, technology, equipment, etc. Lab spaces at NAU run \$800.00 per sq. ft. and classroom spaces average \$650.00 per sq. ft. While capacity of the final COM is not established, the base assumptions used include instructional space at approximately 15,000 sq.ft., administrative space at approximately 8,800 sq. ft., and additional student study spaces and miscellaneous spaces (restrooms etc.) at 6,000 sq. ft.

Space needs include simulation space, library and study areas, classrooms, labs, and office spaces to house

approximately 80 faculty/staff/administrators and a full cohort of 160 students by operating year 6 (FY35).

Construction Cost (Building 30,228 sq.ft @\$800/sq. ft): \$24,182,400
 Furnishings, tech., soft costs: \$3,500,000
 Total: \$27,682,400

Construction Cost (Building 55,398 sq.ft @\$800/sq.ft): \$44,318,400
 Furnishings, tech., soft costs: \$3,500,000
 Total: \$47,818,400

Facilities costs represent perhaps the most complex dimensions associated with launching the COM. However, there are multiple pathways toward this infrastructure goal that could significantly lower costs. A standalone on-campus building may be the costliest pathway, while a partnership with Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH) in a proposed new NAH campus or a lease of current NAH facilities if they are vacated in the future would substantially reduce construction and startup costs. NAU is actively engaged in strategic partnership conversations to optimize collaboration, space utilization, and potential cost savings with NAH and other local partners.

CONFIDENTIAL 7. Next Steps

Drawing on key findings from the first stages of planning, the next steps will mobilize additional medical school experts to transform the emergent design features for the College of Medicine into a strategic roadmap that will enable NAU to launch a one-of-a-kind medical school in FY 2030.

Table 2 provides a summary of next steps to advance the planning and design of the NAU COM.

Table 2. Next Steps: COM Planning and Design

Next Steps	Key Activities
Bring on additional medical school experts to execute the planning and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire Interim or Planning Dean • Hire key medical school consultants • Develop organizational structure
Conduct cost feasibility assessment & begin to secure funding from diverse sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop financial model, economic impact projections, and space needs/cost projections • Conduct strategic planning for cost quality based on feasibility • Secure funding (state, ABOR, philanthropic, and grants)
Consult with a medical school accreditation expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire medical school accreditation expert to lead the accreditation planning process in accordance with LCME standards • Finalize approval and accreditation timelines
Cultivate medical school curriculum that aligns with COM vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage consultants with expertise in medical & Indigenous curriculum to lead development, leveraging the local provider group to inform NAU COM curriculum development
Develop clinical partnerships for clerkships/rotations and residencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Undergraduate Medical Education (UME)</u>: Hire an expert to facilitate planning to identify and secure clinical training sites including Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Indian Health Services (IHS), Tribally operated 638 facilities, private practices, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), and local (private) hospital systems. • <u>Graduate Medical Education (GME)</u>: Work with Jacque Chadwick, MD, AZ Healthy Tomorrow Consultant to determine GME

Next Steps	Key Activities
	needs/gaps and build partnerships.
Facilitate the identification of medical school innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine unique medical school faculty models, curriculum, cost savings and clinical training modalities
Seek support from community partners and identify community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tribal nations and Tribal-serving organizations Regional partners (community leaders, healthcare, economic development, education, and business organizations)
Identify COM partnership opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for NAU, ASU and UA COMs to collaborate and leverage expertise.

NAU COM Deliverable (Planning and Design Phase)

Following the completion of the activities outlined in **Table 2** above, the NAU Health team will submit a formal COM roadmap (finalized design plans, timeline for approvals/accreditation, curriculum, and clinical education model) and ABOR budget request for approval (August 2025).

Implementation of NAU COM

Table 3 provides a summary of next steps to advance the implementation of the NAU COM plan.

Table 3. Next Steps: Implementation of COM

Next Steps	Key Activities
Hire key positions for the COM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deans, leadership, key faculty & staff
Build medical school facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct medical school space and facilities
Secure long term financial commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Advancement experts at NAU to secure additional funding through philanthropy and grants
Obtain state/institutional approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAU (approval of new college/program) ABOR (approval of new college/program strategic plan, budget/resources)
Obtain degree granting status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Learning Commission (MD degree granting)
Medical school accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize COM standards in compliance with LCME LCME accreditation (Allopathic medical school accreditation)
Launch one-of-a-kind NAU College of Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student recruitment First class starts fall 2030

NAU COM Deliverable (Implementation of NAU COM)

Following the completion of the activities outlined in **Table 3** above, the COM expects to start its first class in fall 2030.

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CONFIDENTIAL Appendices

- A. Letters of Support
- B. Map of Health Professional Shortage Areas in Arizona
- C. List of External Meetings, Site Visits, and Key Consultations
- D. Medical Education Advisory Committee Members
- E. Key Takeaways from the Design Summit and the National Advisory Board Meeting
- F. NAU College of Medicine Mission Elements
- G. Vieweg et al (2020) Ten Key Management Principles
- H. List of Potential Local Provider Advisory Group Members
- I. Trauma-Informed Care Competencies

Appendix A. Letters of Support



N O R T H E R N A R I Z O N A H E A L T H C A R E

Northern Arizona Healthcare
(928) 779-3366
1200 N Beaver St.
Flagstaff AZ, 86001
NAHealth.com

July 2, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Subject: Letter of Support - College of Medicine at Northern Arizona University

Dear Dr. Cruz Rivera,

As the Chief Executive Officer of Northern Arizona Healthcare and a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, I am privileged to express our strong support for the establishment of a College of Medicine at Northern Arizona University. This initiative promises to significantly enhance the medical education landscape and healthcare delivery in our region.

At Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH), our mission is to provide exceptional care and service to our community. A partnership with the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine would align with our goals and has the potential to enrich both our healthcare delivery in Northern Arizona and the educational opportunities available to students in our state who intend to remain in Arizona. The creation of this new college of medicine will enable us to address critical healthcare shortages and improve access to quality medical care for underserved populations in our region.

The university's commitment to innovation in medical education, with an emphasis on problem-based learning and technology integration, is particularly exciting. We anticipate that these approaches will prepare students to thrive in a healthcare environment that is increasingly dependent on technology and interprofessional collaboration. This preparation is essential for developing healthcare professionals who are not only clinically adept but also skilled in navigating the complexities of modern healthcare systems.

Furthermore, the focus on rural and community health resonates deeply with our mission at NAH. The unique challenges of rural healthcare delivery require adapted educational experiences that NAU College of Medicine is well positioned to provide. Through collaboration, we can make certain that the next generation of healthcare professionals is ready to serve our communities with the highest standards of care and dedication.

Mission
Improving health, healing people.

Vision
Always better care.
Every person, every time...together.



N O R T H E R N A R I Z O N A H E A L T H C A R E

Northern Arizona Healthcare is eager to contribute to the success of this new college by considering clinical rotations, joint research opportunities, and mentorship from our team. We are hopeful for a partnership that not only fosters educational excellence but also enhances the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Thank you for inviting me to share our enthusiastic endorsement. We are excited about the possibilities that this new college of medicine brings to our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Cheney".

David Cheney, MBA, FACHE
President & Chief Executive Officer
Northern Arizona Healthcare

Improving health, healing people.

Always better care.

Every person, every time...together.





July 15, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera,

Thank you for the trust and opportunity to engage in the process of developing the vision and the design plans for the College of Medicine (COM) at Northern Arizona University (NAU). I have been honored to participate in numerous discussions and meetings regarding the need for primary care in our region. With these discussions, my enthusiasm for the prospect of the College of Medicine has only grown. We were very pleased to be able to offer NAU a gift to establish the named position of The NARBHA Institute Vice President for NAU Health in January of 2024. We pledge to provide continued support and resources through The NARBHA Institute as the COM continue to evolve.

The profound opportunity for NAU to impact the future of medicine and health care in our state is both moving and exhilarating. Health care in the US is at risk, and inequity is real and present. Prevention has the power to eliminate or reduce diseases and health disparities, yet many people are never offered the opportunity to learn how to avoid illness. Our health systems are currently inadequate and antiquated. Poverty and lack of shelter are precursors to disease. The recent pandemic caused a moral wound in our healthcare providers that illuminates the need for an innovative approach to medical training.

Your vision, Dr. Cruz Rivera, of focusing on health equity and building resilience by supporting first-generation college students to become competent primary care physicians, offers great promise and a contemporary solution to our health care needs. NAU has the potential to produce a college of medicine that embraces the culture of northern Arizona and offers a new generation of physicians who hold equity, compassion, and science in equilibrium.

It has been a privilege thus far to serve as a major partner in assisting the NAU Health team in designing the plans for a new College of Medicine, and we are committed to staying fully engaged in this process and supporting your team.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Gregory, RN, MS
The NARBHA Institute

July 2, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera,

I was honored to recently receive an Honorary Doctorate from Northern Arizona University and to learn more about your plans to create a new College of Medicine at NAU. I am currently the President and Chief Executive Officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona (BCBSAZ) and lead our 3,000-employee company to inspire health through inventive programs, services and health insurance products.

I am spearheading an initiative at BCBSAZ to enhance our commitment to the public good by focusing on critical health issues impacting our state, including mental health, substance use disorder, chronic health conditions and health equity. Our mission at BCBSAZ closely aligns with NAU's College of Medicine's mission to educate a new generation of medical professionals who are not only skilled in clinical practice but also deeply aware of the major health disparities that exist for underserved communities in Arizona.

I believe that Northern Arizona University's initiative to launch a College of Medicine is a critical step forward in addressing the urgent need for accessible, high-quality medical education that is attuned to the realities of rural and underserved communities. The proposed college's emphasis on primary care, rural medicine, and Indigenous health are especially commendable, as these areas are often overlooked in many medical education programs.

NAU's dedication to fostering innovation, driving transformation, and cultivating compassion in healthcare is both commendable and essential. These principles are critical to developing the holistic and inclusive health system that Arizona's citizens deserve. By establishing a College of Medicine grounded in these values, NAU will significantly enhance the health and well-being of all Arizonans.

I am genuinely enthusiastic about supporting NAU in this pivotal initiative and eagerly anticipate the opportunity to collaborate with the university to bring this vision to life. Please feel free to contact me to discuss how I can further contribute to the development of this promising new college.

Sincerely,



Pam Kehaly, President & CEO



July 11, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera,

I was honored to be invited to participate as a member of the Medical Education Advisory Committee for the NAU College of Medicine. As a physician, attorney, and advocate for health equity, I am in full support of the establishment of a new medical school given the shortages of medical providers in our region. My career, guided by a commitment to improve health care access and outcomes for underserved populations, aligns with NAU's mission to educate a new generation of medical professionals who are not only skilled in clinical practice but also deeply aware of the social determinants of health.

Northern Arizona University's initiative to launch a College of Medicine is a very critical step forward in addressing the urgent need for accessible, high-quality medical education that is attuned to the realities of rural and underserved communities. The proposed college's emphasis on primary care, rural medicine, and Indigenous health are especially commendable, as these areas are often overlooked in more traditional medical training settings.

In my current roles of Executive Director for the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health, faculty with the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health and on the Board of Directors for the San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation, I have seen the profound impact that informed, culturally competent medical professionals can have on their communities. By focusing on a curriculum that integrates robust scientific training with a strong emphasis on health equity, health justice and community service, NAU will prepare its graduates not just to be physicians, but to be community health leaders.

NAU's commitment to creating a sustainable program that nurtures innovation, fosters transformation, and cultivates compassion in healthcare is impressive. These principles are essential for the kind of holistic, inclusive health system that our society needs. By establishing a College of Medicine that is committed to these values, NAU will make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of all Arizonans.

I am extremely eager to support NAU in this commendable endeavor and look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with the university as it works to realize this vision. Please feel free to contact me for further discussion on how I can contribute to the development of this promising new college.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Molina". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Molina, M.D., J.D., L.H.D.
Executive Director, Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care
Adjunct lecturer, Public Health Practice, Policy & Translational Research, The University of Arizona
John.molina@aacihc.az.gov

July 5, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera:

As the Chief Executive Officer of North Country HealthCare, a federally qualified health care organization deeply committed to improving health outcomes across northern Arizona, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine. This initiative aligns well with our mission to provide accessible, high-quality healthcare to our communities, particularly those in rural and underserved areas.

At North Country HealthCare, we understand the challenges faced by communities with limited access to medical services. The creation of a college of medicine at NAU is a critical step towards addressing these challenges by educating a new generation of healthcare professionals who are committed to serving local populations. The focus of the potential College of Medicine on primary care, rural medicine, and community health mirrors our own values and the needs of the populations we serve.

The potential for collaboration between North Country HealthCare and Northern Arizona University offers exciting possibilities. Through joint initiatives, such as community health projects, clinical rotations, and residency placements, we can provide students and trainees with real-world experiences that enhance their learning and prepare them for successful careers in medicine. These collaborations will also benefit our organization and our community by bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas to our healthcare delivery models.

We are excited to support the possibility of Northern Arizona University establishing a College of Medicine in Flagstaff and the potential benefits this will bring healthcare across northern Arizona. We believe that this new college will make significant contributions to the health and well-being of our communities and aid in alleviating the shortage of primary healthcare professionals in our state.

In summary, we are very enthusiastic about this new initiative and look forward to a fruitful partnership with NAU to transform the future of healthcare in our region.

Sincerely,



Anne Newland, MD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

July 15, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera:

I am Dr. Sanjeev Arora, founder, and director of Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes), an initiative aimed at democratizing medical knowledge and expanding patient care capabilities globally. It is with great enthusiasm and a shared vision for transformative medical education and community health improvement that I write this letter in support of the establishment of the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine.

The vision for the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine—to create a hub of medical excellence and innovation accessible to underserved populations in northern Arizona—resonates deeply with the core principles of Project ECHO. Our model, which leverages telemedicine to connect specialists with primary care providers through a collaborative approach, has proven effective in enhancing local capacities to manage complex health conditions in remote and resource-limited areas.

Integrating the Project ECHO model into the curriculum of the new college would not only augment the educational resources available to medical students but also extend their impact beyond the classroom into communities that urgently need skilled healthcare providers. By embedding our tele-mentoring and guided practice model into their training, students can gain real-world experience in managing diverse health issues, preparing them to be more effective practitioners upon graduation.

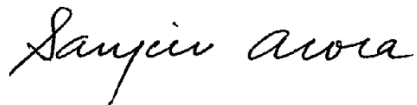
The presence of a College of Medicine in northern Arizona which may incorporate the ECHO model, would serve as a beacon for innovation in rural health care delivery. It would enable a continuous cycle of learning, application, and improvement, pivotal for addressing the unique challenges faced by rural healthcare systems.

We at Project ECHO are excited about the potential collaboration with Northern Arizona University College of Medicine. We are committed to providing support through our global network of experts and resources to ensure the success of this noble endeavor. Together, we can

forge a new path in medical education and community health services, creating a lasting impact on the health landscape of northern Arizona and beyond.

I am looking forward to the possibility of our future collaboration and am eager to discuss further how Project ECHO can contribute to the success of the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sanjeev Arora".

Dr. Sanjeev Arora
Director, Project ECHO

DONALD M. BERWICK, MD, MPP
24 Holbrook Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

July 15, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera:

As the President Emeritus and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, the former Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and an advocate for comprehensive healthcare reform, I am delighted to support the establishment of a new College of Medicine at Northern Arizona University. With no medical school in this region and a severe shortage of healthcare providers, bringing this resource to northern Arizona is timely and innovative.

The new College of Medicine at NAU has the great potential to provide exceptional clinical training and integrate a teaching focused model that embraces systems thinking necessary to improve healthcare outcomes across the board. By emphasizing integrative care at an affordable cost, NAU will be on the forefront of creating an innovative program that prepares students to value health equity and population health to improve healthcare in Arizona.

In my work, I have always emphasized the need for healthcare systems to embrace continuous improvement and innovation. The teaching focused model at NAU encapsulates these ideals, ensuring that students are not only becoming proficient clinicians but also change agents who can navigate and enhance healthcare systems. This approach aligns perfectly with modern healthcare needs where integrated, patient-centered care is paramount.

NAU's dedication to a systems approach in healthcare education — through collaborations with healthcare institutions and community partnerships — enhances its capacity to instill in its students the importance of broad-scale health interventions and public health considerations. Such training is essential for addressing current and emerging health challenges effectively, especially in underserved and rural areas.

I am enthusiastic about the potential of Northern Arizona University to establish a College of Medicine in Flagstaff, Arizona, and I am very committed to supporting NAU in its mission to educate the next generation of healthcare leaders and innovators. I will help any way I can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald M. Berwick, MD, MSP". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Donald M. Berwick, MD, MPP
President Emeritus and Senior Fellow, Institute for Healthcare Improvement
Former Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Lecturer, Department of Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School

Accreditation International Group

July 8, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera:

I am writing to you as a psychiatrist and a former co-secretary of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) in the context of my experience in guiding new medical schools through the accreditation process. In addition, as the Founding Academic Dean for two new medical schools, I have experience in the design and implementation of innovative admissions, curriculum, and student support systems for new medical schools whose missions are to increase the diversity of our health care workforce and prepare students to practice in rural communities. It is with this background that I express my strong support for the establishment of the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine.

During my nine-year tenure in the LCME, I have witnessed firsthand the significant impact that innovative educational strategies and combined resource utilization can have on the success of an emerging medical school. Northern Arizona University (NAU) is positioned to leverage its existing strengths in health sciences, along with partnerships with local healthcare systems, to create a medical education program that not only meets accreditation standards but also sets new benchmarks for excellence in medical training.

The proposed model of the NAU College of Medicine, focusing on teaching and preparing primary care physicians in Arizona, is commendable. Utilizing innovative teaching tools such as simulation labs, telemedicine, and interprofessional education, the college can offer its students a complete learning experience. As a psychiatrist, I appreciate that NAU intends to focus on health equity in underserved areas as well as integrating behavioral health into the medical curriculum. This integration is not only crucial for addressing the needs of patients but is also essential in combating the growing mental health challenges our communities face today. By creating an educational environment that emphasizes the importance of mental health alongside physical health, NAU will be able to prepare a new generation of doctors who are trained to serve their diverse communities.

With the intention of incorporating affiliations with local hospitals and mental health services, NAU will provide a practical platform for students to use their knowledge in real-world settings. This not only reinforces what they are learning in the classroom but also reinforces essential skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are critical in medical practice and behavioral health integration.

The vision for the NAU College of Medicine to integrate such resources effectively ensures that it is well-equipped to fulfill the LCME's standards related to institutional resources, academic environment, and student support, with the goal to seek a smooth path to accreditation.

I am confident that with its strong foundation and forward-thinking approach, Northern Arizona University will achieve its goals of excellence in medical education. I look forward to seeing its progress and the positive impact it will undoubtedly have on the community and the broader field of medical education.

Sincerely,

Dan Hunt, MD, MBA

President, Accreditation International Group

Former Co-Secretary, Liaison Committee on Medical Education

Former Founding Vice Dean, Northern Ontario School of Medicine

Former Founding Vice Dean, NYU Grossman Long Island School of Medicine

July 15, 2024

José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD
President, Northern Arizona University
1900 S. Knoles Dr.
P.O. Box 4092
Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Dear President Cruz Rivera:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the establishment of the Northern Arizona University College of Medicine. As a physician and researcher examining the effects of developmental adversity (e.g., *'Adverse Childhood Experiences'* or *ACES*, *maltreatment*, *intrauterine exposure to alcohol or drugs*), I have seen the profound challenges these complex problems create for our current early childhood, mental health, child welfare, health, educational and juvenile justice systems. These problems are growing. Our current medical communities and medical systems are ill equipped to meet the growing needs related to these social, emotional and physiological health problems.

The holistic perspectives envisioned for the NAU College of Medicine offer hope and leadership for many individuals, systems and communities addressing these complex issues related to developmental adversity, trauma, cultural marginalization and economic inequity. There is a critical need for a medical school that serves rural and underserved communities in Arizona, where social determinants of health often limit access to care. NAU's plan to create a unique medical school focused on these areas offers hope for significant improvements in our community's health. The learnings of this new medical school can model innovations for other health care settings across the world. The emphasis on team-based care highlights the importance of training physicians to consider the broader context of individual health. The new College of Medicine at NAU represents a promising advancement in medical education that aligns perfectly with our emerging understandings about the importance of cultural, social and developmental experiences as major determinants of physical health.

The vision for the NAU to integrate a holistic, developmentally-aware and adversity-sensitive care approach into its curriculum is particularly compelling. This approach is crucial for the training of medical professionals who can address health issues through a lens that considers psychological, social, and biological factors. The emphasis on understanding the human condition and ensuring that patients who have experienced a range of adversities and trauma receive care that is respectful and conducive to healing is especially valuable in the underserved areas where these students will be working.

NAU's commitment to serving the diverse populations of northern Arizona, including rural and underserved communities, is commendable. The focus on healthcare delivery models that respect and integrate local cultural contexts can significantly improve health outcomes in these communities. Training medical students in these environments not only enhances their learning but also serves a critical public health need.

I am particularly impressed by the proposed use of innovative teaching methods and the emphasis on community-based experiential learning at NAU. These methods ensure that students are not only

recipients of cutting-edge medical knowledge but also active participants in solving real-world health problems. This hands-on approach is essential for developing the skills and empathy required to become a compassionate and competent physician.

The establishment of a College of Medicine at Northern Arizona University is a step forward in creating a healthcare education platform that is inclusive, innovative, and impactful. I fully support this initiative and look forward to the contributions its graduates will undoubtedly make to the field of medicine.

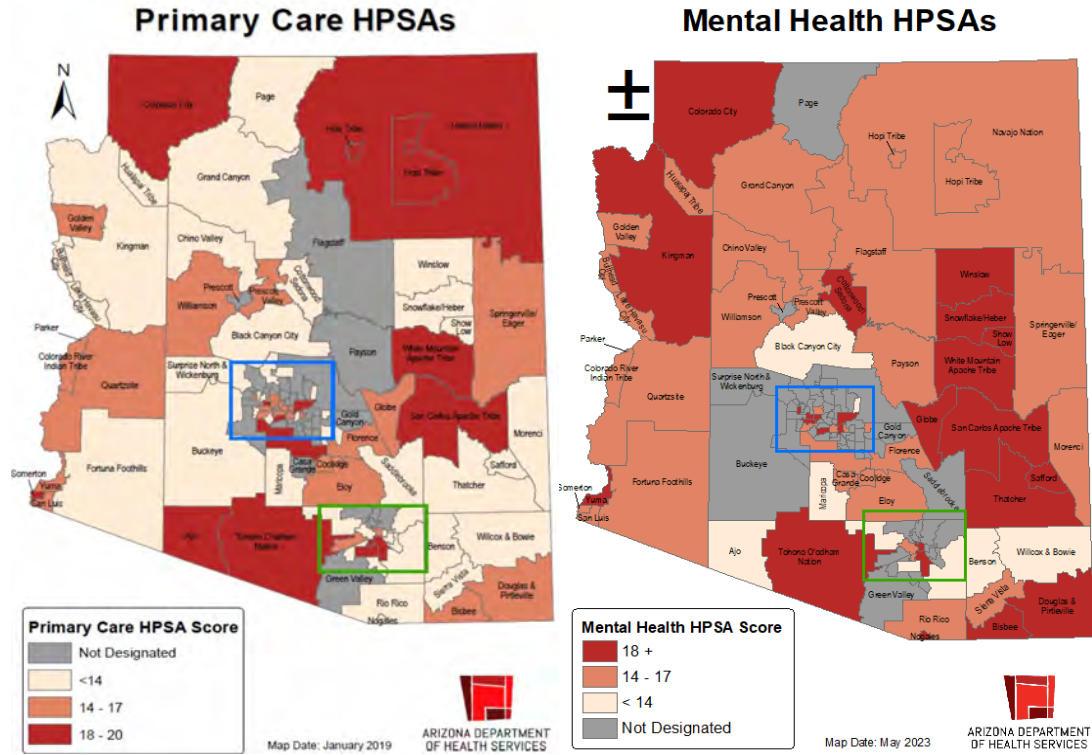
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B D Perry" followed by a horizontal line.

Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.
Principal, The Neurosequential Network

Professor (Adjunct)
School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport
La Trobe University
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia

Appendix B. Map of Health Professional Shortage Areas in Arizona



Appendix C. List of External Meetings, Site Visits, and Key Consultations

Stakeholder Organization	Date	Type of Meeting	Experts Consulted (Titles)	Focus
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley COM	1/17/24	Medical School Site Visit (virtual)	Francisco Fernandez (Founding Dean, now Psychiatry Clerkship Director)	Starting a rural primary care COM
ABOR AZ Healthy Tomorrow consultants	2/13/24	Strategy (virtual)	Judy Bernas & Jacque Chadwick (ABOR COM consultants)	Funding, clinical rotation capacity, admissions, and collaborations
Oklahoma State University COM at Cherokee Nation	2/14/24	Medical School Site Visit (in-person)	Natasha Bray (COM Dean), & Deena Wheeler (Exec Director as Center for Rural Health at OSU)	Rural/AIAN focus, staffing, budget, collaborations & curriculum
New Origin Consultants	Ongoing	Strategy (virtual & in person)	Stacey Chang and Natalie Privett, Health Systems Design Experts	Strategy and design for COM
ABOR AZ Healthy Tomorrow consultant	4/26/24	Strategy (virtual)	Jacque Chadwick (ABOR COM consultant)	Faculty & clerkships
ASU Health Leadership	3/25/24	AZ COM Strategy (virtual)	Sherine Gabriel, Executive VP of ASU Health & Randy Burd, Vice Dean of ASU Health	Accreditation, curriculum approvals & partnership
ASU Health Leadership	5/9/24	AZ COM Strategy (virtual)	Randy Burd, Vice Dean of ASU Health	Accreditation & Curriculum timelines
UA COM PHX	3/20/24	AZ COM Strategy (virtual)	Fredric Edward Wondisford, Dean, U Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix	Partnership
UA COM PHX	5/7/24	AZ COM Strategy (virtual)	Fredric Edward Wondisford, Dean, U Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix	Partnership
LCME Secretariats	4/25/24	Accreditation strategy	LCME Secretariats Barzansky & Catanese	LCME Accreditation
LCME Secretariats	6/6/24	Accreditation strategy	LCME Secretariats Barzansky & Catanese	Accreditation timelines/planning
UC Davis COM	4/24/24	Medical School Site Visit (virtual)	Melody Tran-Reina, Executive Director for Community Health Scholars	Serving the state's health needs in rural MUA
UC Davis COM	4/24/24	Medical School Site Visit (virtual)	Alicia Gonzalez-Flores, Executive Director of Accelerated Competency-based Education in Primary Care (ACE-PC)	Accelerated and Primary Care
Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN (COM)	3/4/24	Medical School Site Visit (virtual)	Jonathan Baines, Medical Director, Native American Pathway Programs, Mayo Clinic	Funding, accreditation & Indigenous/rural tracks

Stakeholder Organization	Date	Type of Meeting	Experts Consulted (Titles)	Focus
Augusta University / University of Georgia Medical Partnership	5/10/24	Medical School Site Visit (virtual)	Shelly Nuss, Dean, COM	Partnerships
Local Provider Advisory Group	Ongoing	Provider consultation for curriculum development	Mark Pico, FMC provider	Creation of a Local Provider Advisory Group
National Medical school expert	3/28/24	Medical school accreditation	Dan Hunt, former LCME Co-Secretary & Senior Director, Accreditation Services, Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)	LCME accreditation process
ABOR Healthy Tomorrow Initiative	5/17/24	COM, CHHS, CON & Provost Pugliesi	Lorenzo Martinez, ABOR Senior Director, Health Sciences	NAU Health collaborations
AAMC Conference for Institutional Advancement	4/10/24-4/13/24	Fundraising strategy for COM	Julie Baldwin, NAU Health VP, attended this conference	Fundraising strategy for the proposed NAU COM
Standing Committee on Primary Care	5/20/24-5/21/24	Status of primary care	National Academy of Medicine (NAU Health team attended virtually)	Identifying challenges and solutions
Northern Arizona Healthcare	5/24/24	Clinical partnerships	Pasqual Bernardi, President of Northern Arizona Healthcare Medical Group & Mark Pico, FMC provider	Clinical partnership potential

Appendix D. Medical Education Advisory Committee Members

National Members

- Sanjeev Arora, MD, Director and Founder, Project ECHO
- Jonathan Baines, MD, PhD, Medical Director, Native American Pathway Programs, Member, Mayo Clinic Cancer Center, Department of Family Medicine, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN
- Don Berwick, MD, MPP, Chief Executive Officer Emeritus, Institute for Healthcare Improvement
- Dan Hunt, MD, MBA, Former Professor, Associate Dean, Dean, and Liaison Committee on Medical Education, Association of American Medical Colleges
- Bruce Perry, MD, PhD, Principal, The Neurosequential Network, Professor (Adjunct), Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL, Professor (Adjunct), School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Statewide Members

- Amanda Aguirre, MA, RD, President and CEO, Regional Center for Border Health, Inc
- DuWayne Begay, PhD, Area Director, Navajo Area Indian Health Service
- Vincent Berkley, DO, MBA, Treasurer-Member, NARBHA Board of Directors, Provost, NARBHA Transformational Fellowship
- Teresa Bertsch, MD, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Wellbeing Officer, The NARBHA Institute
- Mark Carroll, MD, Chief Medical Officer, BCBSAZ Medicaid Plans, Board of Directors, AZ Blue Foundation for Community & Health Advancement
- David Cheney, MBA, FACHE, President and CEO, Northern Arizona Healthcare
- Tammy McLeod, PhD, President and CEO, Flinn Foundation
- Trudie Milner, PhD, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Yuma Regional Medical Center
- John Molina, MD, JD, Director, Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care
- Kurt Mueller, MD, Psychiatry Specialist, Program Director, North Country HealthCare Psychiatry Residency (in development)
- Anne Newland, MD, MPH, Chief Executive Officer, North Country HealthCare
- Mark Pico, MD, MPH, President/Medical Director Pathfinder Accountable Care Organization (ACO), Board Member Equality Health ACO
- Kim Russell, MHA, Executive Director, Navajo Department of Health
- Charlton Wilson, MD, Executive-in-Residence, The NARBHA Institute

In attendance at Design Summit, but not part of Medical Education Advisory Committee:

- Ann Marie Chischilly, Esq., Vice President, Office of Native American Initiatives, NAU
- José Luis Cruz Rivera, PhD, President, NAU
- Kevin Gaines, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Navajo Area Indian Health Service
- Chelsea McKeirnan, Senior Development Director, NAU
- Karen Pugliesi, PhD, Executive Vice President and University Provost, NAU
- Petra Schaumburg-Fitch, Director, University Development, NAU
- Jacqueline Chadwick, MD, MA, Professor Emerita, Family, Community, and Preventive Medicine, University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix

Appendix E. Key Takeaways from the Design Summit and the National Advisory Board Meeting

State and Regional Design Summit Attendees: State and Regional Stakeholders	National Committee Meeting Attendees: National Advisory Committee
OVERARCHING	
Community partnerships are exceptionally critical for the NAU COM as the college must develop nearly everything in partnership.	The mission and values of the NAU COM are at odds with the current funding models for medicine and medical training.
CURRICULUM	
The curriculum must be designed on the basis of the people to be served - in this case, the communities represented in N. Arizona.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The care model and curriculum must be considered in tandem. ● The community plays a very substantive role in curriculum development. <p>Integrated/team-based care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interprofessional team leadership was ranked highly by attendees as both a critical and unique potential feature of the new College of Medicine. ● A Longitudinal Integrated Care (LINC) model should be considered as a mechanism to achieve this. ● Interprofessional education can and should leverage existing assets in place at NAU, particularly other disciplines and health profession education (e.g., PT, OT, NP). <p>Rural and Tribal tracks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tribal training and care (content and experience) was ranked as the second most unique potential feature by attendees. ● These tracks must be developed with community engagement. ● Immersive cultural experiences are a necessary component. <p>Trauma-informed Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trauma-informed care was raised as a necessary consideration in the curriculum and training model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curriculum should be designed on the basis of the people you want to serve. ● The program must ensure that students have an appropriate place to practice once they've been uniquely trained. <p>Integrated/team-based care - no additional commentary</p> <p>Rural and Tribal tracks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rural and Tribal curriculum are NOT necessarily the same. ● To train students for rural practice, it is critical to mitigate rural medicine frustrations. For example, you must train the PCPs to make them specialty-savvy and/or address their frustration around specialty access by enabling them to connect patients with specialists more easily. ● More than just curricular content updates are required to train for indigenous care. There is a need for tailored experiences and carefully considered professional culture in addition to specific content. <p>Trauma-informed Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training must not contribute to indigenous students becoming isolated and ostracized from their communities of origin.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	
Partnerships are the most critical feature of the College of Medicine, where different partners will be relevant and necessary for different goals. Notably, partnerships with indigenous stakeholders must be reciprocal, mutual, and trust-building, particularly as this community has been disappointed by decades of unfulfilled commitments from institutions.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By a wide margin, strong relationships and partnerships were ranked as the most critical potential feature by attendees. ● Nearly all of the elements that the College of Medicine is concerned about are also influenced by the broader ecosystem, reinforcing the criticality of partnerships. ● Different partners are appropriate for different goals of the College of Medicine (e.g., curriculum, fundraising, etc.). ● Partnerships are required to secure clinical experience for students. ● The design process for the College of Medicine should be reciprocal and mutual with indigenous communities. ● The College of Medicine can further the community vision by increasing community trust and engagement. ● If the College of Medicine chooses to honor the interest of external stakeholders, nearly everything should be developed in concert with a partner. This is particularly critical when engaging with a community that has been disappointed by unfulfilled commitments from institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intentional at-depth engagement with the community is necessary. (Consider the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University as an exemplar.)

INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS

Innovative teaching methods, especially those that leverage technology, can potentially lower cost and creatively serve rural communities. However, there is a need to be cautious about teaching to a new model that graduates will not be able to practice in.

- Innovative teaching modalities was ranked as the second most unique potential feature by attendees.
- It may be necessary to include creative considerations for supplemental or remedial instruction, such as fragmenting assessments to identify need for remediation.
- Technology should be leveraged, including AR/VR, AI, simulation, hybrid, etc.
- Utilizing technology-enabled distance healthcare learning models (like ECHO from The University of New Mexico) should be considered.
- A competency-based model (not test-focused) should be considered.

- Innovative teaching methods and modalities are effective mechanisms for dramatically reducing costs (breaking the cost-quality curve).
- Students must be ensured a place to practice once they've been uniquely trained.
- The challenge with an innovative curriculum is that students still have to pass Step exams.

ACCELERATED OPTION

There is abounding caution and concern about an accelerated program, citing misalignment with mission and underserved students.

- An accelerated degree program was ranked low as either a unique or critical potential feature by attendees.
- Attendees cautioned that an accelerated program may not be appropriate for all students and might work best as an option.

- Committee members shared significant concerns about an accelerated program, especially as a challenge to the mission of serving underserved students.
- One possible advantage of an accelerated program is greater control of the student pathway when starting at a bachelor's degree program
- The disadvantages of an accelerated program include faculty and students tiring, graduates lacking maturity, and the inability to accommodate basic science remediation.

AFFORDABILITY (NO/LOW DEBT)

While No/Low student debt is a very unique potential feature, it depends on a sustainable funding model and may not serve underrepresented students well depending on how it is achieved.

- Strong relationships and partnerships were ranked as the most unique potential feature by attendees, and by a wide margin.
- Low / no student debt is contingent on a sustainable financial model, which will likely require external funding.

- Breaking the traditional quality-cost curve in academic medicine is a critical element of achieving affordability.
- The College of Medicine will need to broaden the idea of what it means to support students financially.
- How no/low debt is structured determines whether the affordability aim is achieved (service obligations may unfairly burden underserved students).

Appendix F. NAU COM Mission Elements

A framework and design for success:

- A one-of-a-kind model worthy of replication
- An engine of opportunity and a vehicle of economic mobility
- A means to meet the workforce needs of our region
- A driver of social impact to address disparities in health outcomes and achieve health equity in our communities

The purposeful architecture of this design is to position the Mission Elements to build upon and reinforce each other and provide different levers for change. What follows is a description of four distinct Mission Elements including the strategic logic to illuminate unique curriculum, community partnerships, innovative teaching methods, acceleration options and affordability.

1. “A one-of-a-kind model worthy of replication”

The modern version of academic medicine relies on a tightly bound relationship between teaching, research, and clinical service to achieve the collective aim of advancing the practice of medicine alongside experiential training. Historically, teaching, and now increasingly research, are loss leaders that are supported by the revenue generated through the clinical enterprise. In that arrangement, significant emphasis is placed on the hiring of academic faculty who can run an effective clinical enterprise to generate the revenue necessary to support all three areas of focus, usually to the detriment of teaching quality. In essence, the cost of clinical prowess is high, and the quality of teaching suffers therefore. With the College of Medicine’s stated commitment to teaching as its primary focus, the prevailing economic model runs counter to the school’s mission and serves as a fundamental barrier to innovation.

NAU has determined that it will not own its clinical enterprise and will instead partner with regional healthcare organizations to provide venues of care in which students and trainees will practice and learn. Disentangling clinical care provision from teaching allows the College of Medicine to focus intensely on its teaching mission - a much lower cost model.

What makes this strategy unique? Nearly every other academic medicine enterprise serves multiple masters – chief amongst which is clinical care delivery. As a result, teaching innovation and mission are deprioritized. Diminishing the interference of the clinical care delivery and research allows NAU to focus on leading change in medical education.

What leverage does this create? The COM can center teaching in its mission and strategy, which enables it to hire faculty based on commitment to teaching innovation and achieve goals in groundbreaking curriculum and new teaching modalities.

What design elements will feature most heavily in this strategy?

1. Curriculum, especially interprofessional/interdisciplinary approaches
2. Innovative teaching and learning models, including technology-enabled simulation, at-a-distance approaches, and state-of-the-art adult learning pedagogy.

How does this strategy align with what makes NAU distinct? NAU is already a leader in teaching innovation, with notable simulation capability in other academic fields. NAU’s commitment across a breadth of health disciplines (nursing, occupational and physical therapy, nutrition, public health, and others) lends distinct momentum in this strategy.

Considerations and tradeoffs

- Time to accomplish – Breaking the traditional cost-quality curve with a teaching-focused model requires establishing a new business model, which will take time to research and initiate. Once established, it may be simpler and faster to execute.
- Expense – Compared to academic models that include research and clinical practice, a teaching model should be lower cost.
- Complexity – Conceptually, the complexity is initially higher than replicating known models. Tech-enabled models will require development if new.
- Risk – The conceptual risk is high, and brings along with it some accreditation risk. Once established, risk should be lower than typical, but is contingent on faculty recruitment.

2. “An engine of opportunity and a vehicle of economic mobility”

Whether as a result of economic, educational, or social opportunity, students from the underserved communities that surround NAU are underrepresented in higher education, and particularly in medical education. Solving for that underrepresentation not only creates a launchpad where there might otherwise be none, but can also position students in affordable trajectories towards careers of consequence.

What makes this strategy unique? Building a runway for underserved students amplifies NAU’s “of the community” and “for the community” identity. Communities in Northern Arizona are not only underserved through lack of economic opportunity, but also underserved by healthcare that is culturally-insensitive or culturally-ignorant. This strategy aims to address the community’s unmet needs by developing curriculum that is shaped by their lived experience and honors their circumstances.

What leverage does this create? Developing a pathway for underserved students, especially one that is community-derived, invokes a positive cycle of impact. In addition to raising the economic means of the individual students (and thus their families), these students are more likely to return to their communities and serve in roles that would otherwise go unfilled, perpetuating a virtuous feedback loop that improves their communities’ circumstances, opportunities, and talent retention.

What design elements will feature most heavily in this strategy?

1. Curriculum, especially rural, tribal, and trauma-informed curriculum that are developed *with* the community (i.e., community-derived), and educational remediation strategies for underprepared students
2. Affordability, either no- or low-debt
3. Student recruitment pathways from primary through secondary education, and for later-in-life students.

How does this strategy align with what makes NAU distinct? NAU has long been a champion of the community in which it resides, with a legacy of supporting first-generation students.

Considerations and tradeoffs

- Time to accomplish – Developing community-derived curriculum will require skill, partnership, and time via a process of skillful community engagement. Full realization of culturally-responsive curriculum may take some to realize both in content and professional culture.
- Expense – Affordability (no/low-debt) will require external funding
- Complexity – The new curriculum may invoke complexity with regard to necessary community partnerships. Affordability increases funding complexity.

- Risk – The risk is high, mainly due to new curriculum approvals and accreditation with appropriate bodies. Funding risk is tied to fluctuation in funding by source, especially governmental.

3. “A means to meet the workforce needs of our region”

The State of Arizona, and in particular Northern Arizona, faces severe projected shortages of healthcare workers presently and into the future. Developing an accelerated and market-relevant training program to graduate locally-trained physicians is an important element in stemming the tide of that shortage.

What makes this strategy unique? Speed is of critical importance in addressing a challenge that is already present but also requires time to curtail. An accelerated program not only graduates working professionals more quickly, but also inherently creates more capacity in institutions that have to accommodate fewer yearly classes at any given time. Additionally, the nature of work in health care is evolving quickly to a more team-oriented and tech-enabled approach. Preparing students for those market shifts gives them a leg up in a fast-changing reality.

What leverage does this create? Accelerated programs, by nature of their shortened timeline, are less expensive for students. The reduced debt load enables graduates to consider residencies that tend to pay more modestly, such as primary care and family medicine, where the gaps in workforce are most severe.

What design elements will feature most heavily in this strategy?

1. Accelerated program options – including combined undergraduate and medical education
2. Curriculum, especially interprofessional/interdisciplinary approaches

How does this strategy align with what makes NAU distinct? NAU continues to demonstrate a sharp focus on training students for viable, tangible careers, with a commitment serving the underserved. Interprofessional and interdisciplinary approaches leverage NAU’s existing programs training a broad array of healthcare professionals.

Considerations and tradeoffs

- Time to accomplish – Developing accelerated program options requires additional vetting, especially about accreditation. Most accelerated programs have partnerships to facilitate graduate medical education matching since accelerated medical undergraduates do not go through the typical residency match process. These onramps and partnerships take significant time to establish.
- Expense – Should be relatively neutral once established.
- Complexity – Accreditation will invoke additional complexity. Management of multiple program options (standard and accelerated) will introduce operational complexity.
- Risk – Accreditation remains the highest risk. Accelerated programs may also run counter to the needs of underserved students and students needing educational remediation.

4. “A driver of social impact to address disparities in health outcomes and achieve health equity in our communities”

Underserved communities don’t just struggle with lack of economic and educational opportunity. They also suffer disproportionate negative health outcomes. Access, affordability, and quality are all elements of legacy health care models that work best for those with wealth and other privileges. In particular, chronic disease, which is disproportionately high in communities of need, is poorly managed in the existing care model. Improving health disparities and achieving health equity in communities of need requires more

effective collaboration between existing health care providers, new care models to capitalize on that collaboration, and new education programs that train practitioners for those new, more equitable models.

What makes this strategy unique? Its interconnected position within the regional healthcare ecosystem gives NAU unique authority and influence. The COM in collaboration with clinical and community partners will necessarily innovate and evolve the model of care. This establishes NAU as a differentiated and instrumental stakeholder driving the redesign of regional care delivery.

What leverage does this create? Graduates expressly prepared for the circumstances in Northern Arizona are not only better equipped to care for the unique health needs of the community, but their training and practice will shape the regional healthcare ecosystem to also better serve the community. Many communities represented in Northern Arizona have been disappointed by unfulfilled commitments from institutions over decades. Prioritizing the community, with special emphasis on the underserved, can improve community trust and engagement, further improving health in communities.

What design elements will feature most heavily in this strategy?

1. Community Partnerships provide teaching and experience opportunities that equip students to address health disparities. Such partnerships must facilitate diverse and broadly representative community experience, cultural exposure, mentorship, project work, and clinical practice.
2. Curriculum, especially rural, tribal, and trauma-informed curriculum, developed with consideration for the specific context, circumstances and health-related challenges of the community (e.g., rural geographic spread, culture, historical context)

How does this strategy align with what makes NAU distinct? A focus on disparities and underserved communities extends NAU's broader commitment and prioritization of community further into the health sphere. NAU is a fundamental driver of the Northern Arizona economy and is therefore tightly tethered to the community's wellbeing.

Considerations and tradeoffs

- Time to accomplish – Developing equity-focused curriculum designed for impact in Northern Arizona will require skillful community engagement and an extensive community partnership strategy. Deployment of such a curriculum will take time and the subsequent shift in regional clinical care and culture will take even longer.
- Expense – Low once established
- Complexity – The new curriculum, particularly experiential opportunities, may invoke complexity with regard to necessary community partnerships.
- Risk – The risk is high, mainly due to the types of community partnerships that will be necessary.

These four strategic options are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the activation of some creates additional momentum to achieve additional options. Most notably, activating Mission Element 1 “A one-of-a-kind model worthy of replication” to dramatically lower cost, drives both affordability and sustainability, ensuring access that can drive economic opportunity (Mission Element 2) and increase local health care workforce (Mission Element 3). Improving regional economic opportunity and health care access also lend to improving community health overall and potentially the reduction of health disparities (Mission Element 4). Given the Mission Element architecture, The NAU COM presents an integrated pathway with mobility and interdependencies for success.

Appendix G. Vieweg et al's (2020) Ten Key Management Principles**Table 3.** Ten Key Management Principles

Principles	Impact Areas	Financial Implications
1. Developed and utilized a comprehensive financial optimization and prediction model for planning, accreditation and sustainability over time that includes optimization of time required and reinvestment of savings for purposes of improving quality.	Strategic Analytics	Optimized resource allocation over the entire 6-10-year process.
2. Adopted Just-In-Time approaches to faculty and staff hiring.	Personnel	Minimized personnel lead time costs.
3. Implemented a licensing model with other university colleges, centers and institutes to secure program faculty.	Personnel	Minimized costs associated with program faculty lines.
4. Leveraged faculty effort through the delivery of pipeline or post-baccalaureate programs.	Personnel	Created new streams of revenue with existing faculty lines and by optimizing utilization of personnel.
5. Implemented lean and six sigma methodologies to optimize resource management and consolidate through acquisition and mergers of other programs with the medical school.	Resources Management and Program Consolidation	Streamlined operations, eliminated waste and minimized institutional overhead.
6. Maximized shared resources (student services/simulation/library/testing).	Program Services	Eliminated unnecessary duplication and minimized ancillary costs.
7. Developed and established strategic internal and external contractual partnerships.	Partnerships	Optimized synergistic activities and minimized risk and exposure.
8. Obtained in-kind revenue from hospital partners.	Partnerships	Reduced costs for services provided through hospital partners, and provided a stable platform for clinical care.
9. Initially utilized and re-purposed existing campus facility and space resources until funds are secured for major capital investment.	Facilities	Minimized initial investment in facilities.
10. Developed and implemented a fiscal sustainability model that includes aligning research product with a campaign that links donor interests with specific disease entities.	Sustainability	Complemented the initial tuition-based business model with other significant sources of revenue, ensuring the fiscal health of both the education and research enterprises.

Appendix H. List of Potential Local Provider Advisory Group Members

Practice	Contact name	Title	City
NAH	Mark Pico, MD, MPH (co-chair)	President/Medical Director Pathfinder Health	Flagstaff
NAH	Cindy Martin MD, MBA (co-chair)	Palliative Care Physician	Flagstaff, Verde Valley
NAU Campus Health Services	Matt Wise, MD	Assistant Medical Director	Flagstaff
NAU Campus Health Services	Sandy Smith, MD	Medical Director, Staff Physician	Flagstaff
Flagstaff ER Physicians	Jen Conn, MD, FACEP	CEO	Flagstaff
NAR	Kimberly Winsor, MD	Radiology	Flagstaff
Tuba City Regional	Mitchell Ross, MD	Hospitalist	Tuba City
NAH	Dr Jeremy Payne, MD, PhD	Neurology	Flagstaff
Private	Jennifer Graff, MD	Gynecology	Flagstaff
Private	Adam Graff, MD	Psychiatry	Flagstaff
NAH	Micheal Papez, MD	Pathology	Flagstaff
NAH	Edward Hiltner Jr., MD	Emergency Medicine	Flagstaff
Private	Robert Berger, MD	Surgery	Flagstaff
Private	Alice Berger, MD	Pediatrics	Flagstaff
NAH	Brandon Abbott, DO, MPH	Inpatient Medicine	Flagstaff
NAH	Omar Wani, MD	Cardiology	Flagstaff
Dilkon Medical Center	Michelle Tom, DO	Deputy Chief Medical Officer	Dilkon
East Flagstaff Family Medicine	Bradford Croft, DO	Family Medicine	Flagstaff
Tuba City Regional	Tom Grosheider, MD	Emergency Medicine/Chief of Staff	Tuba City
Tuba City Regional	Katherine Glaser, MD	OB/Gyn	Tuba City
Hopi Public Health Authority	Darren Vicenti, MD	Director	Hopi Reservation

Appendix I. Trauma-Informed Care Competencies

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Competencies for Undergraduate Medical Education

Berman S MD^a, Brown T MD^b, Gerber M MD^c, Goldstein E MFT PhD^d, Jelley M MD MSPH^e, Mizelle C^f, Potter J MD^g, Raja S PhD^h, Rush P MD MBAⁱ, Sager Z MD^j, Sciolla A MD^k, Stillerman A MD^l, Weil A MD^m.



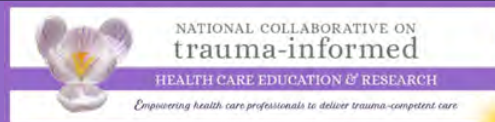
Knowledge for Practice

1. Define trauma and resilience.
2. Describe the epidemiology of different types of trauma and their associated adverse health effects.
3. Describe how building resilience through social support and other strategies may serve to prevent and mitigate adverse health effects and promote healing.
4. Describe how structural and social contexts, including oppression, stigma and discrimination, can be traumatic.
5. Describe how structural and social contexts increase vulnerability to poor health outcomes, decrease access to resilience-enhancing resources, and change presentation to medical care.
6. Describe the theoretical and empirical bio-psycho-social-spiritual mechanisms and drivers by which trauma impacts health and development across the lifespan and generations.
7. Explain the concept of regulation as it relates to the window of tolerance.
8. Describe the principles of a trauma-informed approach.
9. Explain the concept of universal trauma precautions.
10. Describe how trauma impacts interpersonal relationships and healthcare engagement.
11. Describe common physical, mental, and social manifestations of trauma exposure.
12. Analyze the risks and benefits of trauma inquiry, including routine screening.
13. Describe evidence-based strategies for primary and secondary prevention of trauma.
14. Describe evidence-based therapeutic strategies to promote healing and recovery for people who have experienced trauma.
15. Identify community resources that provide supportive services for people who have experienced trauma.
16. Define and describe the effects of compassion fatigue, moral injury, vicarious trauma, secondary trauma, and burnout.
17. Describe historical and ongoing examples of structural trauma inflicted by the medical system on patients, staff, and clinicians.



Patient Care

1. Demonstrate the ability to apply trauma-informed principles to all aspects of patient care, including:
 - a. History gathering
 - b. Physical examination
 - c. Tests and procedures



- a. Decision-making
- b. Counseling, treatment, and referral
2. Recognize the emergence of a traumatic stress response in a patient during a clinical encounter.
3. Educate patients on the benefits and practice of regulation techniques.
4. Develop preliminary care plans with patients that enable patient autonomy, mutual respect, safety, and ongoing engagement.



Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

1. Describe trauma and resilience literature and explain how it may impact patient care.



Interpersonal and Communication Skills

1. Apply principles of trauma-informed care in communication with patients.
2. Discuss documentation of sensitive information with patients and the possibility of mandatory reporting when abuse or neglect is disclosed or suspected.
3. Demonstrate the principle of containment by explaining to the patient they are in control of how much, what, and when they disclose.
4. Respond to patient disclosure of trauma with empathic statements that convey acceptance, validation of patient's experience, and compassion.
5. Demonstrate use of a validated tool to screen for trauma, when appropriate.
6. Demonstrate the use of trauma-informed language in documentation and professional communications.
7. Educate patients on the benefit of protective factors on health and explain how positive experiences and coping strategies can promote health and wellbeing.
8. Educate patients about the impact of trauma on health and explain health risk behaviors as potential adaptations to chronic stress.
9. Elicit patient strengths and use trauma-informed approaches to promote healing.



Professionalism

1. Describe examples of interpersonal and systemic bias and how they might traumatize or re-traumatize patients, colleagues, and staff.
2. Describe strategies to mitigate bias in order to resist traumatization and re-traumatization of patients, colleagues, and staff.
3. Explain how a personal trauma history may influence interactions with patients, peers, supervisors, and healthcare team members.



Systems-Based Practice

1. Identify aspects of the healthcare system and other interacting systems that may not be trauma-informed and identify potential areas of improvement.



Interprofessional Collaboration

1. Demonstrate words and actions that incorporate trauma-informed principles during team-based care.
2. Use strengths-based language when discussing patients with healthcare and non-clinical teams.



Personal and Professional Development

1. Describe strategies to prevent and mitigate compassion fatigue, moral injury, vicarious trauma, secondary trauma, and burnout.
2. Describe signs or symptoms of moving outside the window of tolerance.
3. Describe regulation skills that are effective in returning to or remaining within the window of tolerance.
4. Identify effective regulation skills and other self-care techniques for healthcare providers to maintain personal health and wellbeing, especially in the face of trauma.
5. Describe the prevalence of mental health distress among medical students and explain the benefits of mental health support.
6. Describe how to access trauma-informed supervision, mentoring, and/or coaching relationships to promote personal and professional vitality.

^aDepartment of Psychiatry, Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge, MA.

^bDepartment of Emergency Medicine, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, MA.

^cDivision of General Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Albany Medical College, Albany, NY.

^dDepartment of Population Health Nursing Science, College of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

^eDepartment of Internal Medicine University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine, Tulsa, OK.

^fUniversity of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, NC.

^gDivision of General Medicine, Department of Medicine, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School and The Fenway Institute, Boston, MA.

^hDivision of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Services, Clinical Behavioral Sciences, Resilience Center, UIC College of Dentistry, Chicago, IL.

ⁱThe Center for Collaborative Study of Trauma, Health Equity and Neurobiology (THEN), Chicago, IL.

^jDepartment of Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA.

^kDepartment of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, Davis, Sacramento, CA.

^lDepartment of Family Medicine and Community Medicine, Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System, The Center for Collaborative Study of Trauma, Health Equity and Neurobiology (THEN), Chicago, IL.

^mDivision of General Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology, Beacon Child and Family Program, Larry J Keith Advising Colleges, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.



CONFIDENTIAL

To: Cecilia Mata, Chair, Arizona Board of Regents
CC: Arizona Board of Regents
From: José Luis Cruz Rivera, President, Northern Arizona University
Date: August 1, 2024
Re: 2023-24 At-Risk Goal #2: Statewide Network of Colleges



This memorandum presents a high-level statement of achievement describing how the incentive goal in reference was met and how the corresponding efforts will be maintained to ensure that NAU can continue to advance the mission of the enterprise strategic plan, as it pertains to ABOR's Strategic Goals. Sections of this memorandum that describe **confidential** personnel or proprietary information are marked appropriately and should be limited to executive session review by the Board.

Goal Statement

NAU will collaborate with ABOR to produce a multi-year strategic and operational plan that, upon successful implementation and contingent on securing necessary public and private resources, will result in an innovative and highly differentiated network of colleges that expands access to academic excellence. In concert with ABOR's efforts to expand the universe of college-going students in Arizona, NAU's plan will leverage the university's already expansive statewide footprint, far-ranging K-12 partnerships, and strong collaboration with community colleges and the state's other public universities.

In FY24, NAU will meet the following milestones:

- **Statewide Network of Colleges:** NAU will collaborate in the development and presentation of a series of proposed actions for endorsement by the Board, focused on a.) assessment of the market; b.) differentiated concept and structural mission; c.) funding and advocacy strategies, and d.) design specifications for a statewide network of colleges powered and coordinated by NAU.
- **Community College Partnerships:** Through the continuation and expansion of A++ efforts, NAU will a.) launch at least one A++ certified academic pathway for Fall 2024 with A++ partners and b.) seek Intergovernmental Agreements for ongoing collaboration and implementation, including data sharing provisions to facilitate the Alliance's work.
- **K-12 Partnerships:** Led by NAU's new Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy (AIEE), NAU will present preliminary plans for robust expansion of partnership efforts into the K-12 realm that will accelerate progress on gains to be made in the immediate college going rate.

Executive Summary

A brief statement of achievement for each of the elements is presented below. Supporting information is included in the report's appendices. Because of the volume of work related to the statewide network of colleges, the remainder of this report will be solely dedicated to this element of the at-risk goal. Detailed information regarding the community college partnerships has been provided in previous ROAs, as well as the multiple-year reports, and more information regarding K-12 partnerships will be presented at the September 2024 NAU State of the University and throughout the year as the partnership officially launches and matures.

Statewide Network of Colleges: NAU successfully collaborated with an ABOR team in the creation and presentation of a series of proposed actions for the development of an innovative model for higher education in the state of Arizona. These actions focused on assessing the market, creating a differentiated concept and structural mission, and developing design specifications for a statewide network of colleges powered and coordinated by NAU. The recommendations set forth represent a synthesis of iterative, collaborative efforts by a joint NAU-ABOR working group that devoted nearly a year to this in-depth research, feasibility, and design effort, supported by expert external consultation. Because of the current state funding landscape, funding and advocacy strategies—informed by the value proposition offered in this report—will be developed in concert with ABOR as part of enterprise-wide lobbying and funding plans.

Community College Partnerships: Through the continuation and expansion of NAU's Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++) efforts, the Universal Admissions program will launch in fall 2024 as the A++ certified academic pathway. The program was first piloted with Coconino Community College in fall 2023 and is currently expanding to five additional community college districts in fall 2024, with three colleges within the Maricopa Community College District to follow in fall 2025. Additionally, NAU sought and established five year Intergovernmental Agreements for ongoing collaboration and implementation of A++ endeavors—which include data-sharing provisions to facilitate the Alliance's work around creating a student-centered degree-granting ecosystem and closer relationship with workforce outcomes across academic programs—with nine community college districts, as well as the Arizona Commerce Authority.

K-12 Partnerships: Led by NAU's Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy (AIEE), founded in July 2023, the university has developed plans for a robust expansion of partnership efforts into the K-12 realm. These plans aim to boost the immediate college-going rate and launch bold initiatives to bolster the state's postsecondary attainment rates. The High school to Higher education to High demand, High wage, High skill employment network (H5 Network), will publicly launch in September 2024 and will advance efforts around college admission redesign, high school to higher education academic pathways, workforce embeddedness, and more. The H5 Network is a key supporting element of NAU's mission and will serve as a vital link to existing efforts, such as A++ and NAU's Flagstaff, statewide, and online offerings, as well as being a foundational component that will ensure the success of the proposed network of colleges. The H5 Network will support the aspirations of immediate high school graduates who want to obtain a high value, high return on investment degree quickly and at low cost as they seek to engage in Arizona's booming workforce. Currently the H5 Network is composed of 20 high school districts representing a broad cross section of the state—both urban and rural centers—and several key workforce organizations, such as Greater Phoenix Leadership, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, and the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, among others. Several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have already been signed by district governing boards, with the remainder to be completed in advance of the public launch in September. The potential held in redesigning high school and higher education has resonated strongly across philanthropic partners, with nearly \$2M in private support helping to propel the H5 Network and

more funding opportunities in the proposal phase.

CONFIDENTIAL Progress Report: Statewide Network of Colleges

Given the significant and well-documented attainment needs facing Arizona, NAU has undertaken a year-long project, funded by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) and supported by expert consultants, to create a design blueprint for an innovative, low cost postsecondary provider. This project focuses on understanding market demand and identifying features that could help current non-participants or non-completers in postsecondary education earn credentials and contribute to the state's workforce.

After rigorous investigation and collaboration, the following key findings suggest significant opportunities for a new postsecondary offering in Arizona and form the basis for the blueprints and design specifications for the college network:

- **Market Potential:** Phoenix and Tucson have a substantial market of prospective students, primarily composed of non-degreed adults (25-39) and young adults (18-24).
- **New Public Option Requirements:** The new option should be low-cost, high-value, innovative, career-focused, and designed for modern students and working learners.
- **Distinctive Features:** To meet the abovementioned requirements, the new option would include distinctive design features to differentiate from other options in the state's postsecondary landscape:
 - **Cost and Transparency:** Ensuring low-cost and transparent pricing for prospective students.
 - **Accelerated Opportunities:** Offering accelerated degree programs that further amplify the affordability of the low-cost, high value offerings.
 - **Clear Career Outcomes:** Providing academic pathways linked to local workforce and employer needs, ensuring economic mobility, in part by offering stackable credentials such as certificates and associates degrees on the way to earning a bachelor's degree.
 - **Student Support Services:** Integrating wraparound, concierge student supports to make the college experience student-focused and streamlined.
 - **Effectively Flexible Delivery:** Adapting to diverse learner needs in terms of time, place, and modality without compromising student success.

The proposed operational model, powered by NAU, would leverage centralized resources, services, and economies of scale while maintaining autonomy to differentiate from NAU's traditional residential experience in Flagstaff. This hybrid design aims to serve a student population of 5,000 Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) students within eight years of launch (four biennial election cycles), primarily consisting of Arizona residents in undergraduate programs (graduate programs would be considered separate from the design presented).

A robust modeling tool has been developed to triangulate operating costs, with a single instance of the new public option having an estimated annual budget of \$42M-\$62M/year. Under this model, approximately 60% of total expected costs would be covered by student tuition and fees, compared to NAU-Flagstaff's current 33%. Given the startup costs associated with the new college, the focus of this proposal is on launching a highly impactful single instance of the new provider in an area with the greatest potential. Contingent on future availability of funding and ongoing market analysis, additional instances—scaled to meet local needs—could be considered using the innovative blueprint provided herein.

In considering the current challenges in public higher education funding in the state, NAU further proposes a phased implementation approach to complement the more ambitious plan for launching the new option. This strategy aims for incremental progress by leveraging NAU’s existing locations, programs, partnerships, and resources—particularly the ecosystem approach of A++ coupled with NAU’s current statewide footprint—to target rapid progress with modest resources. For this approach, NAU proposes a three-year roadmap to implement phased reforms, while staying prepared to launch the novel provider as resources and public support become available.

Design Approach: Consultative and Comprehensive

To engage in this complex and multifaceted work, an NAU-ABOR joint working group was convened in fall 2023, comprised of the following members to provide strategic vision and relevant content knowledge in approaching this goal:

Table 1: NAU and ABOR Teams	
<i>NAU</i>	
	José Luis Cruz Rivera (President and Principal)
	Jonathan Gagliardi (Vice President, Economic Mobility and Social Impact)
	Bjorn Flugstad (Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer)
	Laurie Dickson (Vice President for Strategy; Senior Associate to the President)
<i>ABOR</i>	
	Larry Penley (Regent and Principal)
	Andrew Comrie (Chief Academic Officer)
	Jane Kuhn (Chief Enrollment and Student Success Officer)
	Chad Sampson (Interim Executive Director)

The working group considered the broad goal of strengthening the postsecondary ecosystem in Arizona through an NAU-powered intervention and identified key workstreams through which to pursue discovery and design related to the project. As the workstreams came into sharp focus, the working group developed a proposal to secure expert consultants would be needed to thoroughly vet assumptions, conduct in-depth research, and develop the tools necessary to allow the working group to propose an impactful educational intervention for Arizona. As a result, in November 2023 a request for a \$1.5M Regents’ Opportunity Initiative Grant to NAU to facilitate the development of this plan was proposed to the Strategic Initiatives and Planning Committee and approved by the Regents. This was invested in securing the services of the following outside consultants who would address four key workstreams:

Table 2: NAU-ABOR Contracted Partners	
Name	Workstream
Public Opinion Strategies (POS)	Market Research
Cicero Group	Market Research
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)	Design Research
Red Cactus	Brand Consulting
Geodetics Analysis/Arth Analytics	Location Analysis

From the goal's conception through the submission of this report, a regular cadence of collaborative meetings was scheduled with team stakeholders and design consultants. In addition, regular updates were provided throughout the year to the full membership of the Board to share progress and solicit input or considerations from the Regents. These occurred during standing Presidential Review of Assignments (ROAs) in September and November 2023; February, April, and June 2024; and a special ad hoc ROA in January 2024 focused solely on the crucial findings from the market research phase. Moreover, to take full advantage of their expertise, individual Regents were consulted on an ad hoc basis.

The ability for sustained, iterative input and consultation across stakeholder groups has provided a set of considerations that is holistic in its view and designed to be a timely solution for amplifying the public university enterprise's impact on Arizona's educational landscape by directly addressing its gaps. Ultimately, the approach undertaken was guided by a set of interlocking questions, which were addressed in a phased manner, providing carefully vetted checkpoints throughout the work to ensure the viability of the intervention at every step of the way.

Guiding Questions: Given the lack of a dedicated, comprehensive public state college in Arizona, the state's clear attainment shortfalls, and untapped economic potential, is there:

- A **market** that, if given a new and differentiated option, would pursue postsecondary education?
- A distinctive set of **design features** and institutional characteristics that would attract students and deliver value and workforce outcomes?
- A corresponding **brand** that would resonate with the market and promote the distinctive new provider?
- A **location** (or locations) that would best satisfy the needs of this market?
- An **operational and financial** model that would be feasible.

The features, models, and considerations presented in this report are all predicated on market demand, operational viability, and innovative yet realistic reforms that can be implemented in Arizona, provided sufficient resources are available to pursue the endeavor.

Research and Design Workstreams

To understand the potential market and core features necessary for a new, NAU-powered postsecondary provider—intended to focus on unmet undergraduate degree need—four key workstreams were pursued. A summary of each workstream and its key findings and deliverables are shared below, with full background reports from each contracted consultant available in the corresponding appendices.

Market Research

Two firms, Cicero and POS, were engaged to investigate the market demand in Arizona for an innovative postsecondary provider and identify key attributes that would drive demand.

Key Outcomes:

- Surveys highlighted that an optimally designed institution would include significantly lower tuition and fees than other four-year institutions, generous scholarships or financial aid offerings, career-focused programs, accelerated and stackable degrees, hybrid course offerings, and shorter commute times.
- Of comparator institutions, the optimally designed institution was preferred by 27% of the simulated market, which was far higher than all other institutions included in the analysis.

- Based on these findings, there is an estimated obtainable market of up to 107,000 people in Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties, primarily composed of young adult (18-24) and adult learners (25-45).
- The preference is especially strong among 20-39 year-olds, women, young respondents with a Hispanic/Latino background, residents of Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties, individuals with high school diplomas and some college experience but no degree, those with an annual family income less than \$65,000, and employed respondents.

For additional details on the findings of Cicero and POS, see **Appendix A** (Cicero) and **Appendix B** (POS).

Design Research

The firm NCHEMS was secured to leverage the key market findings and identify feasible ways to create innovative features and substantiate those with an underlying business plan and financial modeling tool.

Key Outcomes:

- Academic programs that can be sustainably offered and are well-aligned with areas of high occupational demand, economic mobility, social impact.
- Credentials that are stackable, have reduced credit burdens, are conducive to prior learning assessment, and involve experiential learning opportunities.
- A novel learning model with full-time faculty exclusively focused on teaching and student success, an emphasis on high-quality instructional design, and the hybrid delivery of a standardized curriculum developed in partnership with the private sector.
- The creation of an innovative support model that pairs a “concierge” who as a central point of contact and orchestrates enrollment, financial aid, academic, and career advising on behalf of the student.
- NCHEMS also created a cost modeling and business tool that will enable ongoing adjustments and refinements based on pursuit of this novel design.

For additional details on the findings of NCHEMS, see **Appendix C** and **Appendix D**.

Brand Research

The firm Red Cactus was enlisted to help articulate the values of the institution and develop a series of promise statements that will serve as a foundation for the future development of a core brand, name, and creative content.

Key Outcomes:

- Those who participated in interviews and focus groups expressed a desire to find greater freedom and security, deepen their identity, and expressed interest in an institution that would provide them with the environment and experiences that would help facilitate that.
- A synthesis of qualitative research points to core institutional values, such as a high return on investment, affordability, flexible offerings, and an orientation toward career success through experiential learning and entrepreneurship.
- The idea of an innovative vehicle that promotes economic mobility through the provision of a high quality, flexible, and personalized learning experience focused on transforming lives resonates both as a core identity and a promise statement.

For additional details on the findings of Red Cactus, see **Appendix E**; for additional details on brand-related

findings from POS, see **Appendix F**.

Location Analysis

The team of Geodetics Analysis/Arth Analytics was chosen to conduct demographic and location analysis to help identify ideal locations for the placement of a new institution based on myriad data sources to conduct long range projections, and a suitability analysis.

Key Outcomes:

- Given the importance of developing an operationally feasible and financially sustainable new institution, it is critical to place it in areas where a scale economy is present.
- Considering that, a suitability analysis was conducted which identified Maricopa and Pima counties as areas with sufficient population density and favorable workforce projections to place a new institution.
- The suitability analysis was based on the creation of an index score including population and the proportionality of key demographic areas related to higher levels of preference for the new institution, such as the ratio of income to poverty level and the intersection of educational attainment, gender, Hispanic background, and age.
- Areas in northwest Phoenix were identified as the most suitable, with other promising areas present in east-central Phoenix and central and southern Tucson.

For additional details on the findings of Geodetics/Arth, see **Appendix G**.

Distinctive Features of New Postsecondary Provider

Based on the convergent findings from the workstreams noted above, the following distinctive features are essential to meet the demands of the currently unserved market of learners in Arizona.

Table 3: Foundational Features for Students in the New Postsecondary Provider

Feature	Description
Affordable	Quantitative and qualitative research revealed that a low-cost option with sufficient grants and scholarships was one of two most important factors that drove interest in this option.
Valuable	Market research and a larger body of evidence validate the growing importance of employment and earnings post-graduation. Together with affordability, these two options converge to generate an appealing return on investment driven by economic mobility and social impact.
Accelerated	A shorter time commitment was top-of-mind among respondents and interviewees, making features like stackable credentials with lower credit loads (e.g., 90 credit bachelor's degree) and robust credit for prior learning, among others, vitally important.
Streamlined	Having fewer choices among thoughtfully curated high-demand, high-earning, and high-skill pathways to completion was compelling to prospective students who acknowledged the difficulties of navigating traditional institutions and expressed a desire to know their education would pay off.

Table 3: Foundational Features for Students in the New Postsecondary Provider

Feature	Description
Personalized	Respondents noted that the complex network of traditional support represented a challenging barrier to their success. A concierge model of integrated, holistic supports that enable student success at every step of the educational journey was a highly appealing feature.
Flexible	Respondents who preferred this new option noted the importance of being able to choose between hybrid modalities, digitally accessible supports, and in-person programming within 20-30 minutes of home in helping facilitate their desire to fully engage in the pursuit of a high-quality credential.
Distinctive	The creation of a consistent and standardized approach to learning—delivered by faculty exclusively devoted to teaching and the science of teaching and learning—and a curriculum focused on quality multi-modal instructional design appealed to learners who want to know what to expect. Additionally, programs and courses that are codeveloped with industry and that promote economic mobility and social impact appealed to prospective learners using experiential learning and practicing professionals as faculty.
Employable	Respondents strongly favored programs that would help them get a job, advance their career, and accelerate their earnings. The idea of a college that provides career advising from day one, and experiential learning opportunities like paid and credit-bearing internships were appealing characteristics of the new institution.
Integrated	A new institution that eliminates administrative and operational barriers by being truly student-centric was perceived as an advancement that would facilitate and accelerate success among those who were surveyed and interviewed.

Of these features, the most influential are 1) Affordability, 2) Value, 3) Streamlined and Integrated Academic Programs, and 4) Student Supports, as they are central to the design proposed by NAU.

Affordability: Tuition and Grants/Scholarships

Based on four market research studies, two quantitative and two qualitative, the intersectionality of affordability and postgraduate outcomes emerged as the two most important characteristics of the new public institution. On the affordability side, the conditions most influential in shaping preference for this new institution included a tuition of between \$7,500 and \$8,500, and grants and scholarships ranging between \$3,000 and \$5,000, which will be attained through a combination of a 20% discount, grants such as Pell, and external funding such as philanthropic contributions. Importantly, while the price point is a vital feature, at least some level of discounting is expected by the market and is expected to be necessary for final enrollment management and pricing strategies. Finally, the ability of students to continue working while pursuing a degree also contributes to affordability.

Value: Time and Credits to Degree

Market research also revealed that prospective students were apprehensive about committing four years to pursue an education, noting that credentials that took less time would be an appealing feature of the new institution. Considering that, a variety of interventions were identified as promising practices, including the launch of 90 credit bachelor's degrees, the implementation of stackable credentials like associates degrees, the use of credit for prior learning, and the inclusion of credit-bearing experiential learning. The institution

should be built to facilitate continuous enrollment given the myriad life priorities held by working learners that can serve as barriers to successful full-time enrollment in a traditionally structured term model. Initial designs call for a term model focused on helping students take and earn 24-30 credits per year, though not all will. Taken together, these tools will help to amplify value by shortening the time spent in college, thus reducing the overall cost of an education and opportunity cost of pursuing one, and represent attractive features to immediate collegegoers, transfer students who are high-probability completers, adults with some college but no degree, and the adult/non-traditional learner populations.

Streamlined: Quality Academic Programs

Specific attention was paid to considering the potential set of academic programs that could be offered. A key finding is that more limited choice—as opposed to the depth and breadth of disciplines available at a traditional residential university—was an attractor. Such a program set would serve to streamline and simplify the student experience, clearly articulate workforce outcomes, be well-matched to current and future employer demand in the state, facilitate seamless transfer for learners (community college transfers, some college/no credential, prior learning assessment), and offer significant economic mobility when compared to non-degree holders.

Furthermore, such a portfolio offers significant benefits for the institution, especially when tailored to programs that contain many of the benefits noted above that can be offered at relatively low cost. The following table provides a sample of some of the leading academic program areas that would be considered for the new provider. For the purposes of this report, all design assumptions include a streamlined portfolio of academic programs.

Discipline	Example Concentration(s)	Economic Mobility (L/M/H)	Social Impact (L/M/H)
Applied Business	Logistics and Supply Chain Management Hospitality Management Construction Management Management Analytics	HIGH	MEDIUM
Computer Science	Software Development Analytics/Data Science Information Systems	HIGH	MEDIUM
Education	Teacher Education Early Childhood Education	MEDIUM	HIGH
Health	Healthcare Administration	MEDIUM	HIGH

Design Model: Arizona’s New Postsecondary Provider

Given the unserved learner market in Arizona and the unique features necessary to attract, retain, and propel these students to more prosperous futures in the state’s workforce, the NAU-ABOR working group began to shape a multiple model approach—each of which would emphasize different distinguishing characteristics but all drawing upon the foundation of market demand. All models shared a few common features, such as being a non-residential, commuter-focused school that would provide for lower operating and student costs, as well as provide greater differentiation from the state’s existing residential public

universities.

A portfolio of four leading models emerged, as shown in Table 5.

Option	Distinguishing Feature	Description
New Public University	90 Credit Degree	In addition to the core of innovative features, this New Public University will endeavor first and foremost to shorten the time to degree by creating new 90 credit bachelor's degrees in high-demand, high-earning, high skill programs by leveraging new developments in accreditation, credit for prior learning, and other tools to shorten time to degree. This will enhance affordability and value, two things most privileged by prospective students with the greatest interest in this new institution.
Flipped University Model	Reversed Curriculum	A common refrain from would-be students is that it takes too long to learn the skills and competencies that provide an immediate career payoff. Given that, this novel model flips the curriculum by providing students with major-focused courses that are more clearly aligned with workforce skills and competencies first, resulting in an immediate payoff that will incentivize them to continue their enrollment, ultimately leading to the completion of a bachelor's degree.
Learn and Earn University	Blended Working and Learning	Traditional colleges and universities are structured and incentivized to create a false binary of learning or working. This new, integrated working and learning university would instead shirk sector touchstones, such as a six-year graduation rate and continuous full-time enrollment, and instead focus on integrating the pursuit of a bachelor's degree into the working experience of a prospective student. This would allow them to forgo the opportunity cost of not working while also pursuing a program certified and co-developed by industry.
NAU+	Leveraging Ongoing Efforts	NAU continues to develop a national reputation as a leading provider of an education that promotes access, success, attainment, and prosperity. In keeping with ongoing and groundbreaking work, NAU will continue to explore the foundational innovations identified throughout this process through its A++ and H5 partnership ecosystems, statewide presence and complementary online programming, and strengthened industry connections.

Each of these models are built on the same core set of innovations and have unique additional advantages in terms of their area of focus. However, some complexities or nuances to individual model designs suggest they may be add-on features rather than standalone and distinct institutional identities. For instance, the Learn and Earn University could be highly impactful as part of a subset of tailored programs designed in partnership with a major local employer. These would represent a value-add, but alone are not sufficient to sustain a standalone institution. They could be an embedded program feature within a larger superstructure. As such, **NAU recommends a single model for continued consideration**—the New Public University.

The scope and scale of this intervention represents the most comprehensive option, but also can be built in a way that includes the Flipped University and Learn and Earn models (in whole or in part), while offering the greatest chance to introduce a groundbreaking intervention into Arizona’s postsecondary ecosystem. As an aspirational and all-encompassing design, this model can also be pursued at an incremental level—that is, contingent on context, opportunity, and resourcing, NAU’s A++ framework offers an avenue to deliver some of the most impactful features, even without immediately launching a new standalone institution.

Institutional Operational and Financial Model

Importantly, many of the features that are most impactful for the student market hold promise and value to institutional design, operations, and efficiency. Given student preference for career-aligned academic programs, for instance, the institution can gain vital operational efficiencies when compared to traditional higher education models through limited (and lower cost) program arrays and more efficient faculty workload models focused on teaching output and student impact. One important component of this new university is that only 20% of program requirements will have two course options for students, which both generates cost savings (through designing, maintaining, and offering fewer courses) and streamlines the student experience by providing simple and clear pathways to each degree. Elective courses will also be a focus of streamlining, either by limiting choices or eliminating entirely from academic plans.

Academic offerings can be facilitated by a branch campus accreditation model, which provides significant autonomy to the new entity—including the ability to have a distinct name and brand—yet is tethered to the existing institutional accreditation held by NAU. This can lower startup costs and accelerate time-to-market given that separate accreditation is not needed. Additionally, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)—NAU’s accreditor—recently announced a substantive change application and guidance for offering reduced-credit bachelor’s programs, which makes the development of a 90-credit bachelor’s degree through this new institution well within reach.

Additionally, the new model disaggregates the faculty role into several functions, including course design, course delivery, assessment, and the like, and assigns different instructional functions to different categories of employees based on their specific skill sets. This assignment of employees to functions yields a slightly lower cost model than traditional delivery models in which full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty are responsible for the full spectrum of instructional functions. In addition, the lack of a research enterprise would further streamline faculty workload allocations to be focused directly on student learning, with a multi-year contract system rather than traditional tenure. This allows the new institution to aim for 70% of instruction to be delivered by full-timers rather than part-time faculty, with part-time faculty being strategically engaged to help customize instruction based on student and employer needs. This allows for the use of practice faculty—employed professionals who can bring real-world experiences and links to employment to market the program.

An additional factor integrated into the design process is a centralized governance model powered by NAU in which the new institution has independent programs and service functions—tailored to specific market needs—but benefits from scale economies and centralized services offered through NAU, such as contracts, purchasing, HR, IT, finance, and the like.

Furthermore, the new institution will offer only a streamlined set of services, which eliminates the costs for some functions that are not expected to be needed, such as residence halls (along with associated staffing, cleaning, and maintenance), a bookstore, dining commons, and an athletics department. Additionally, some necessary functions will require fewer staff than a traditional university, such as facilities and capital planning. In the end, staff FTE are expected to be approximately 10% lower in the new model compared to a traditional comprehensive university.

The new institution will have personnel costs that comprise approximately 70% of overall expenses, a generally similar proportion to that of NAU and other comparable institutions. Given the reduced infrastructure needs and cost savings achieved through leveraging NAU's existing infrastructure and economies of scale, this percentage may be higher in the end.

Some additional underlying components of the new institution's operating model include the following:

- Leased facilities that require little staffing beyond regular maintenance.
- A target sticker-price for tuition and fees of \$7,980 for 30 credits.
- An average institutional financial aid package of 20%, which means net tuition revenue of \$6,384 per student FTE. The rate is based on typical figures for similar institutions as well as market research indicating that prospective students expect to receive scholarships to lower the sticker price and communicate that students are sought after.
- A cost of materials, supplies, and assessments per credit hour of approximately \$40.
- An ongoing marketing budget of \$3M per year, which will be necessary and may need to expand given that this is a new entrant into the marketplace.

Considering all these features, the estimated core financial considerations for the new college are summarized below:

- Students served: Within eight years of launch the FTE student enrollment is projected to reach 5,000.
- Operating budget: \$42M-\$62M/year.
- Net tuition and fee revenue: \$31.9M/year (~60% of total expected costs).
- State funding model (proposed): Per FTE contribution to have the state invest in students at the new college at the same level as they invest in students at NAU.
- The operational and financial models assume \$2M-\$4M in philanthropic support year-over-year.
- With a sticker price that is roughly 62% of NAU's, the new institution is designed to place a premium on affordable access to a high-quality credential of value.

With the modeling tool available, NAU can continue to calibrate and refine cost estimates over time, making relevant adjustments for inflation and other factors.

There is a clear need for state investment to support the operational model, yet it is modest in comparison to standing up a new, traditional university and offers more immediate ROI for both learners (low cost with high economic mobility potential) and the state (rapid time to workforce and state economic impact). However, given current challenges related to statewide higher education funding, a full advocacy strategy would need to be developed in close collaboration with ABOR to not unduly affect the current core funding priorities of the tri-university enterprise.

This level of state funding on a per FTE basis is lower than UA, higher than ASU, and modest from a national perspective. In most states, lower-tuition regional teaching institutions (with similar missions to this new venture) receive a greater percentage of their revenue from state appropriations than do research universities, given their different missions and abilities to raise revenues from non-state sources. State policy often explicitly establishes different shares of state support for different types of institutions. This is not the case in Arizona.

According to IPEDS data, there are 200 public, 4-year institutions in the country with published in-state tuition and fees under \$8,500, excluding tribal colleges. In 2022, the median state appropriation per student

FTE at these institutions was \$8,551. The new Arizona venture is specifically designed to be streamlined in a way that reduces costs, and therefore will require below-average levels of public investment. This being said, state appropriations per FTE student at levels higher than the NAU rate could be argued for (and would be justified).

In addition to the base FTE funding model, the new institution is projected to need a special legislative investment for approximately two years, focused on one-time startup expenses. These include program and course development, facilities acquisition and renovation, and technological infrastructure. Further, such an investment would establish required financial liquidity levels as enrollment scales up and the institution reaches maturity in its operational model. While a state investment in the new institution is essential, the operating model also accounts for philanthropic support and centralized services to ensure that any state funding allocated to this endeavor is purposeful and every dollar is maximally utilized to propel students to degrees and workforce impact.

Incremental Approach: A Pathway to Implementation through A++

The design model presented is a bold contribution in the educational landscape of Arizona and the nation. While its features are aspirational and innovative, they are also realistic and achievable.

The most significant hurdle to this endeavor is the availability of startup funds to launch a new entity. Given the strategic context in Arizona today, the prospect of an immediate new investment in higher education is unlikely.

NAU has taken this reality under consideration and to maintain momentum towards the realization of the New Public University model proposes an incremental path forward that can drive at the broad goals of serving the state’s unmet attainment need, is inspired by the vision, market research, and features that underpin the innovative model, but is pursued using existing programs, partnerships, sites, and other assets the university has available.

The essential components that allow NAU to take this approach are the partnership system architecture of A++, the emerging H5 Network of NAU-coordinated high school districts, NAU’s existing statewide sites and program offerings, a refined NAU Online operation, and NAU’s expertise and core of services and programs in Flagstaff. NAU proposes pursuing incremental progress toward this new provider in the following manner over the next three years:

Table 6: Opportunities for Incremental Innovation

Category	Effort	Description
Access	Extending the Universal Admissions Program	The Universal Admissions program is a groundbreaking effort designed to ensure that no one who applies to NAU is denied access to a bachelor's degree pathway by partnering with nine of the state's ten community college districts. By extending this NAU pathway to applicants who are denied admission to Arizona State University and the University of Arizona, A++ would become the access platform for all Arizonans.

Table 6: Opportunities for Incremental Innovation

Category	Effort	Description
Success	Piloting the Student Concierge Model	Through the AZ Ahead and Yuma Educational Success Program, facilitated by NAU in concert with A++ partners, NAU has built a wraparound model of enrollment management and financial aid support, academic and career advising, and student supports including family engagement. This multidimensional support model is an ideal space to pilot the idea of a student concierge, who would be charged with orchestrating these supports in service to the student while serving as their point of contact for all things related to their learning journey.
Attainment	Developing a 3-year bachelor's degree	Together, NAU and its community college partners have established innovative academic pathways, including 2+2 and 90X30 degree programs. Considering the HLC's recent announcement that it will consider proposals for reduced-credit programs, A++ and NAU's statewide sites and online portfolio can serve as the vehicle through which a 3-year bachelor's degree can be designed and launched in partnership with community colleges and H5 partners in fields that promote economic mobility and social impact. The accelerated time to degree afforded by this option would make an NAU education more affordable and position the university as the preferred access, transfer, and degree completion partner for Arizona.
Prosperity	Developing an Internship Brokerage	The notion of being 100% Career Ready has been embraced by NAU, which has launched a signature initiative to support the postgraduate success of every student. By working with employers to create an internship bank, NAU can ensure that internships and other work-based learning opportunities are available to the students who stand to benefit the most and generate disproportionate economic impacts, providing a compelling value proposition for students who question the immediate workforce ROI of higher education.

NAU would fund these efforts in FY25 with TRIF AWD with the intent of developing a value proposition for ABOR's consideration of TRIF allocations in subsequent years. Though the creation of a new, innovative public university has massive potential to benefit the people, communities, and economy of the state, NAU can and will engage in the work necessary to realize many of its most vital components immediately, without waiting for a transformational and dedicated state investment.

Conclusion

NAU has always possessed the will and urgency to affect meaningful structural changes to the state's postsecondary ecosystem in service to access and success. Now, following a year-long discovery process, it possesses a deep knowledge of the present and future opportunities and challenges to doing so and is equipped with a playbook of student-centered innovations. The successful implementation of these innovations stands to boost college-going among all Arizonans and accelerate and amplify the success of those who entrust their future to the state's public education enterprise.

CONFIDENTIAL Appendices

- A. Cicero Findings
- B. POS Findings

- C. NCHEMS Findings – Part I
- D. NCHEMS Findings – Part II
- E. Red Cactus Brand Study
- F. POS Brand Study
- G. Geodetics Location Study

APPENDIX A: MARKET RESEARCH AND CONJOINT ANALYSIS, CICERO

The logo for Cicero, featuring the word "Cicero" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letter "o" is stylized with a white bird-like shape inside it. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the "o".

Implementing Data-Driven Strategy

NAU/ABOR

Postsecondary Options Research and Strategy

February 2024

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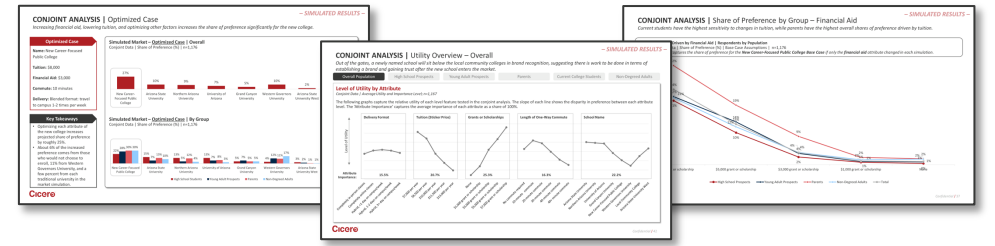
1	Executive Summary	Slides 4 – 13
2	Market Size Assessment	Slides 14 – 30
3	Methodology Overview	Slides 31 - 34
4	Quantitative Analysis	Slides 35 – 86
5	Qualitative Analysis	Slides 87 – 97
6	Competitive Landscape	Slides 98 – 109

OVERVIEW | Project Objectives & Deliverables

Project Deliverables

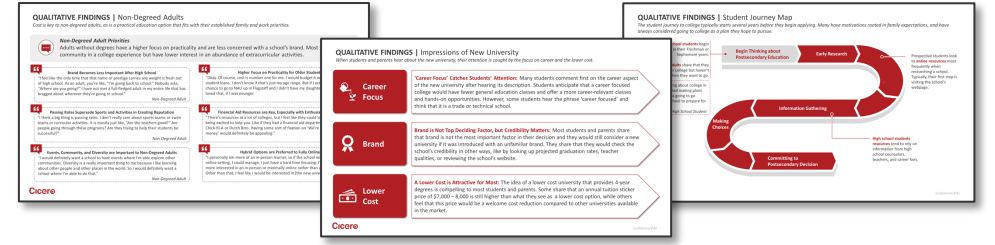
1 Quantitative Analysis
 Research findings derived from a survey of 1,176 respondents, split across populations of prospective students, parents, and current university students.
 Analysis includes:

- Preference projections based on a conjoint market simulation
- Utility analysis and factor sensitivity analysis
- Aggregated responses on topics such as enrollment drivers & course delivery

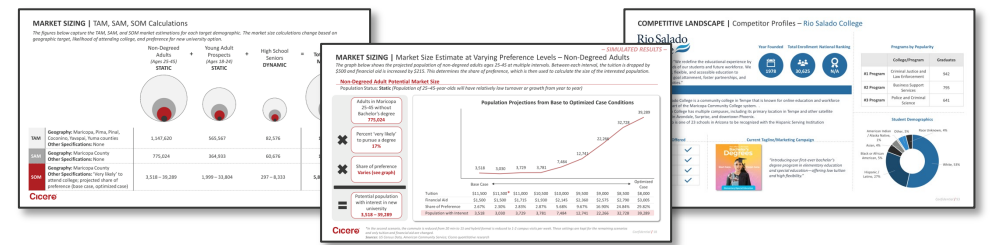


2 Qualitative Analysis
 Key takeaways from in-depth interviews conducted with 31 Arizonans including prospective students, parents, and current university students.

- (10) High school students
- (5) Young adult prospects
- (5) Non-degreed adults
- (6) Parents of high school students
- (5) Current university students



3 Market Size Assessment and Competitive Landscape
 An estimation of market size based across three core non-degreed populations (high school seniors, young adults 18-24, and adults 25-45) for the potential new postsecondary offering.
 Additionally, an analysis of key competitors in the Arizona higher education landscape.





'Go' Conditions



Significantly Lower Cost than Existing 4-Year Institutions



Generous Scholarships or Financial Aid Offerings



Career-Focused Programs and Faster Path to Degree



Online and Hybrid Course Offerings



'No Go' Conditions



Similar Tuition or Financial Aid Offerings to Existing Universities



Uncertainty on Target Student Populations to be Served

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | Key Areas for Feasibility

Highly Affordable

Finances are top of mind for students in every aspect of the college decision. Offering tuition and scholarships or financial aid at the right levels when establishing the new postsecondary offering is critical for success.

- Annual tuition of \$7,000 - \$8,500 and annual funding from scholarships or grants of at least \$3,000 - \$5,000 at the new postsecondary institution are the most impactful cost and aid ranges for attracting new students.

Core Institutional Characteristics

The new offering is most immediately attractive to non-degreed adults and will need thoughtful design to meet the needs of traditional-age students.

- High schoolers prefer in-person classes and are focused on memorable experiences, while non-degreed adults prefer online classes and value flexibility more highly than other prospective students do.

Differentiated Value Proposition

A new college offering benefits by having characteristics that stand out from existing institutions.

- The concept of a 'career-focused' school is appealing to traditional and non-traditional students.

High School Student Priorities

Features they need:

- In-person classes
- On-campus experience and social activities

Things they value more than other groups do:

- Gaining independence
- Making positive memories
- Undergraduate research opportunities



Shared Priorities Across All Groups



- **Eased Financial Stress**
 - Low tuition
 - High scholarships
- **Resources to Help Access Financial Aid**
- **Increased Earning Potential**

Non-Degreed Adult Priorities

Features they need:

- Online and hybrid classes
- Faster path to degree
- After hours resources

Things they value more than other groups do:

- Emergency financial grants
- Childcare support
- Student foodbank access
- Access to healthcare and mental health counseling

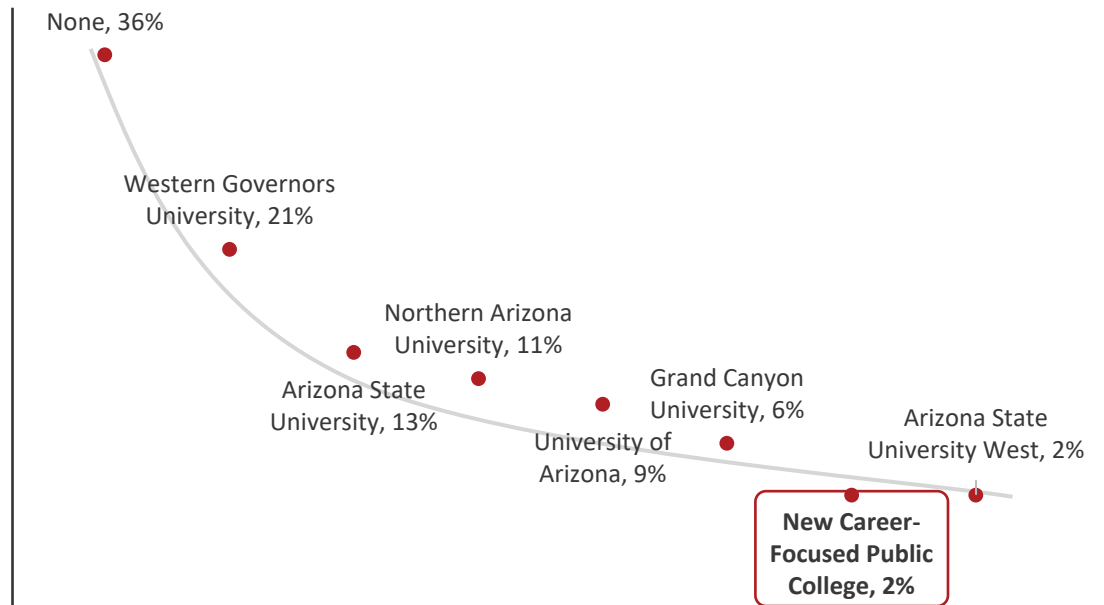
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | New University Offerings Comparison in a Simulated Market

Preference for Affordable, Flexible University Option

Simulated Market – Base Case

– SIMULATED RESULTS –

A new postsecondary option with similar costs and formats to existing Arizona universities is projected to capture only a very small share of the market.

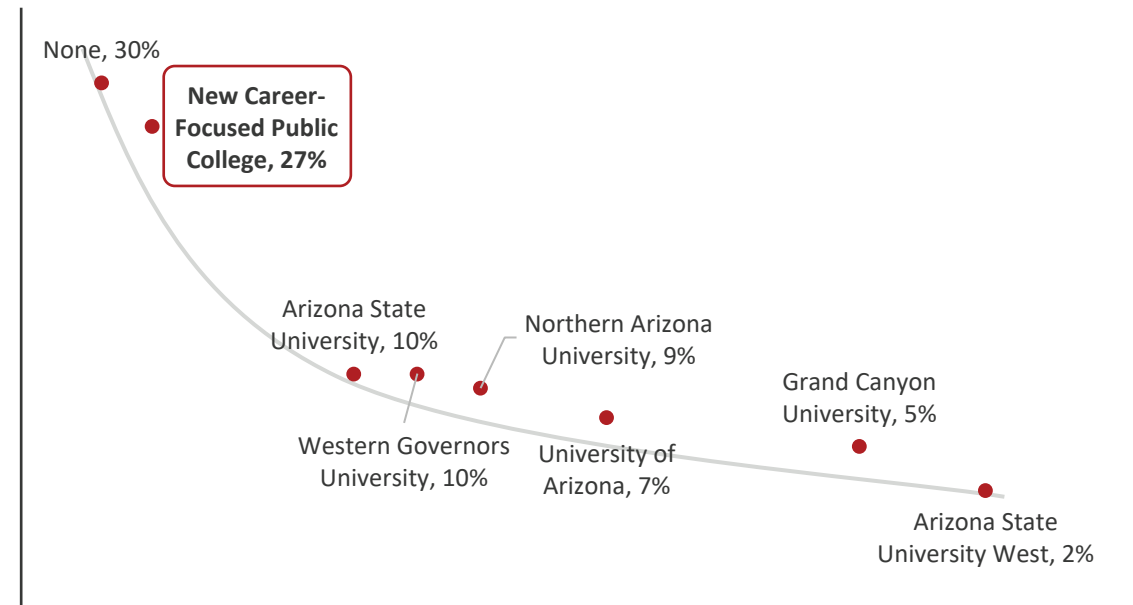


Projected Share of Preference in Conjoint Market Simulation

Simulated Market – Optimized Case

– SIMULATED RESULTS –

By offering lower tuition, higher scholarships, hybrid course delivery, and shorter commutes – creating a “perfect world” scenario – preference for the new option is projected to be much higher, showing the possibility if all characteristics can optimally be aligned with market needs.



Projected Share of Preference in Conjoint Market Simulation



Highly Affordable

Factors related to cost are consistently the highest priority for prospective students and their parents. Within the financial decision, securing financial aid and scholarships carry more weight than the actual cost of tuition.

77% of students and parents share that **affordability** is one of the most important factors that influences their college enrollment decision.

84% of **non-degreed adults** name affordability as a key factor in their enrollment decision.

“

“When it comes to making decisions on colleges, money is the biggest factor for me, and also the programs, of course, of what they offer there. But money is the most prominent factor.”

High School Student

“

“Of course, cost is number one for me. Cost, quality of program, quality of teachers, location -- I'd say those four are most important, but cost is number one”

Non-Degreed Adult

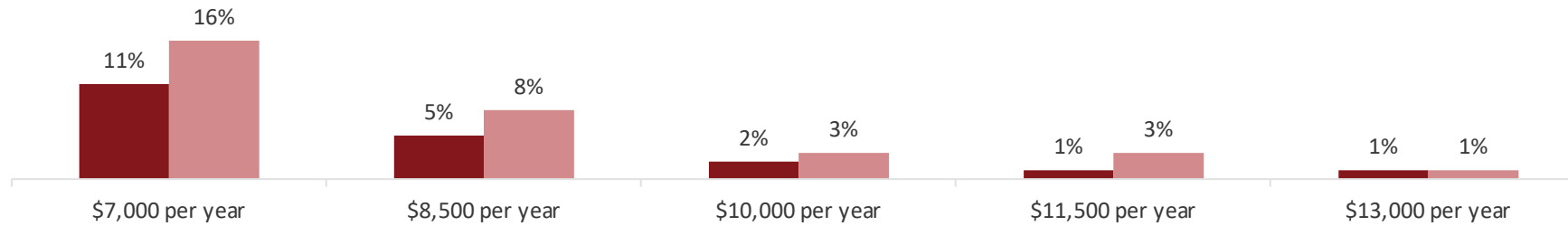
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | Impact of Tuition and Scholarships/Grants on Preference



Influence of Changes in Tuition and Scholarships/Grants

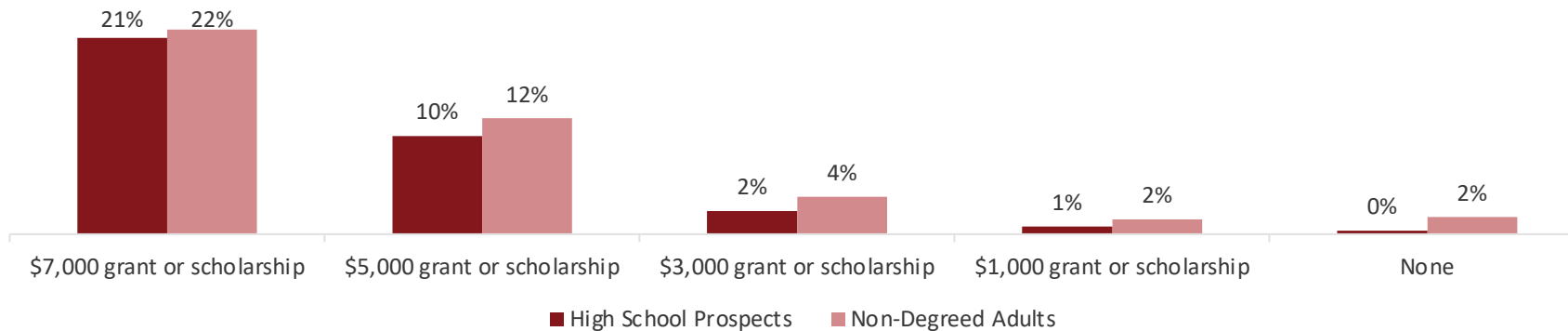
Preference Driven by Tuition | High School Students and Non-Degreed Adults

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176



Preference Driven by Scholarships/Grants | High School Students and Non-Degreed Adults

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176



The share of preference for the new offering in a simulated market increases when tuition is reduced or when scholarships and grants are increased.

When tuition drops, the preference level raises more significantly for non-degreed adults.

Non-degreed adults have higher preference for the new school at every financial aid level than high school students.



Core Institutional Characteristics

High school students have a stronger preference for in-person classes and are more inclined to attend a traditional university than any other option. Non-degreed adults are more interested in online classes and flexibility.

43% of non-degreed adults are very interested in taking online classes only, compared to only 6% of high school students.

52% of high school students are 'very likely' to consider a traditional university, compared to only 14% of non-degreed adults.



"I prefer that to be in-person. I just feel like it would be easier to really understand the material if you have that human connection being face-to-face with the person."

High School Student



"Of people my age, a lot of parents, I think, would be really interested in that school. I think that the hybrid element would definitely be attractive to someone with family responsibilities or a job."

Non-Degreed Adult

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | Differentiated Value Proposition Overview



Differentiated Value Proposition

When considering a potential new university, students prefer an option that stands apart from existing institutions.

The key factors that make a new institution stand out include a strong focus on career, faster path to a degree, and resources for finding financial aid.

55% of students and parents share that support with securing scholarships and financial aid would be an important resource, making this the most important resource for both groups.

37% of students and parents identify no cost textbooks and educational resources as an appealing feature of a college, making it the second most preferred resource that could be provided by a university.



“[The new institution] would probably have to do something for the first couple of years of students to make it attractive. I don't know what, but they'd have to do something to entice them. Scholarships, maybe.”

Parent of a High School Student



“There would have to be a clear selling point, something to differentiate it between a community college and a full four-year university. There'd have to be a justification for it costing more than community college but less than the university.”

Young Adult Prospect

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | Evaluation of Resources and Features



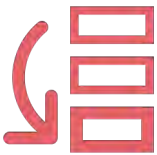
Must Have

- Affordability (Lower tuition, abundant scholarship and aid options)
- Hybrid Course Delivery Options
- Focus on Career



Nice to Have

- No Cost Textbooks and Career Resources
- Short Commute
- Mental Health Resources

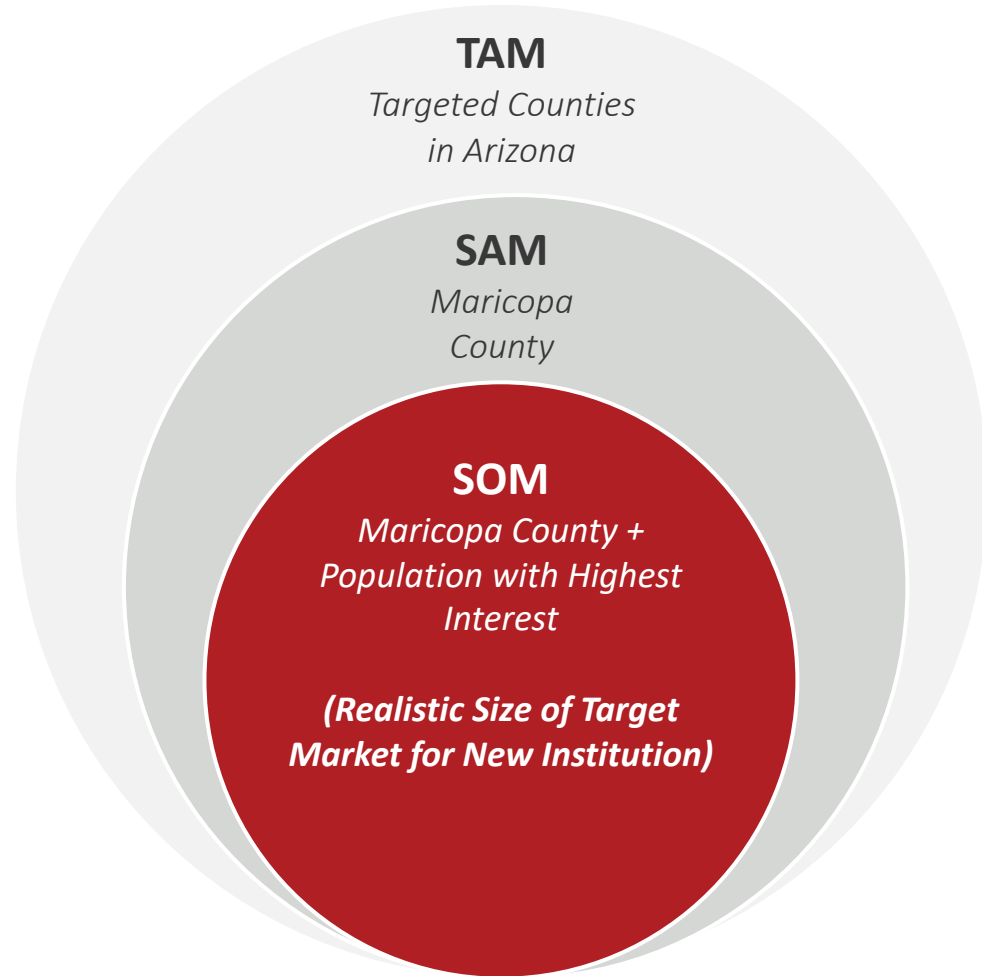


Less Critical

- Non-Political Atmosphere
- Healthcare On-Campus
- Food Bank Access

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | TAM, SAM, and SOM Structure

Cicero will leverage population counts and results from bespoke quantitative research to estimate the potential market size for a new institution.



Market Size Estimates

TAM: Total Addressable Market

- Overall market size available if a wide geographic area is targeted and all potential students in a target demographic are reached.

SAM: Serviceable Available Market

- The portion of TAM that reflects prospective students in a specific geographic range.

SOM: Serviceable Obtainable Market

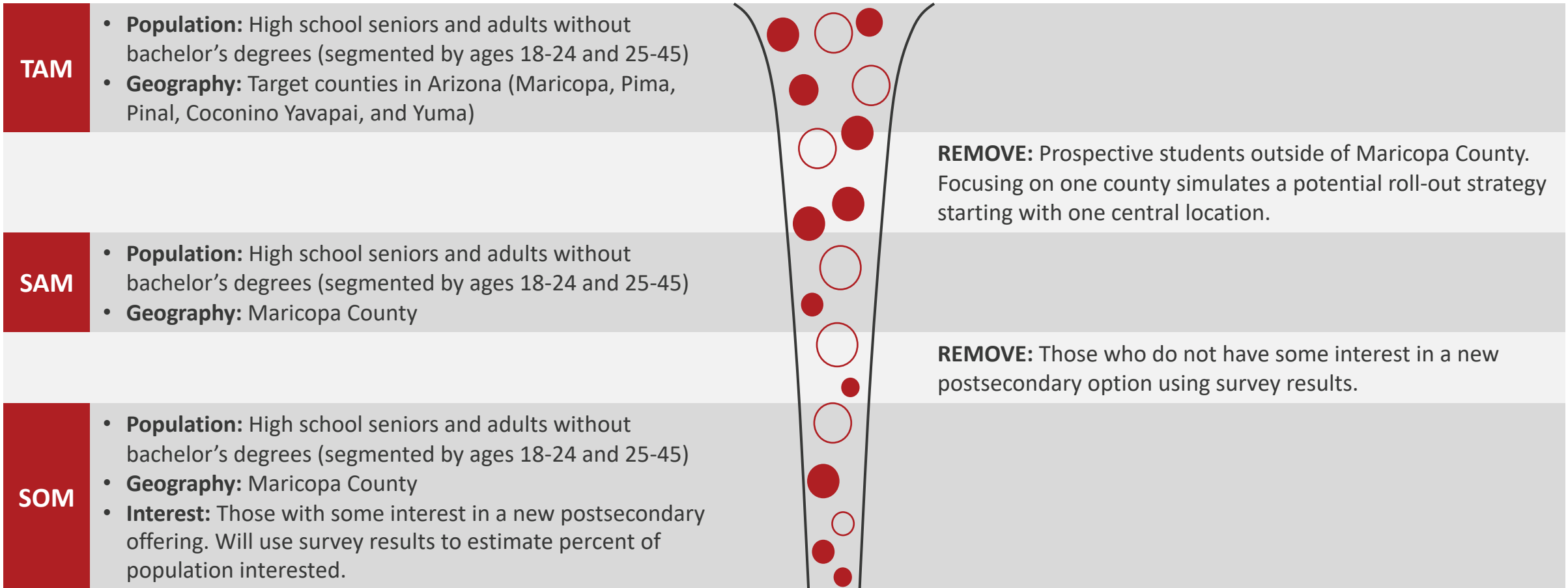
- The market size that could realistically be pursued by the new institution given constraints based on levels of interest of prospective students.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | TAM, SAM, SOM Filtering Assumptions

Cicero plans to apply to cuts to arrive at a SOM for the new postsecondary option. The first cut narrows by geography, and the second cut narrows by interest in new option.

Segmentation

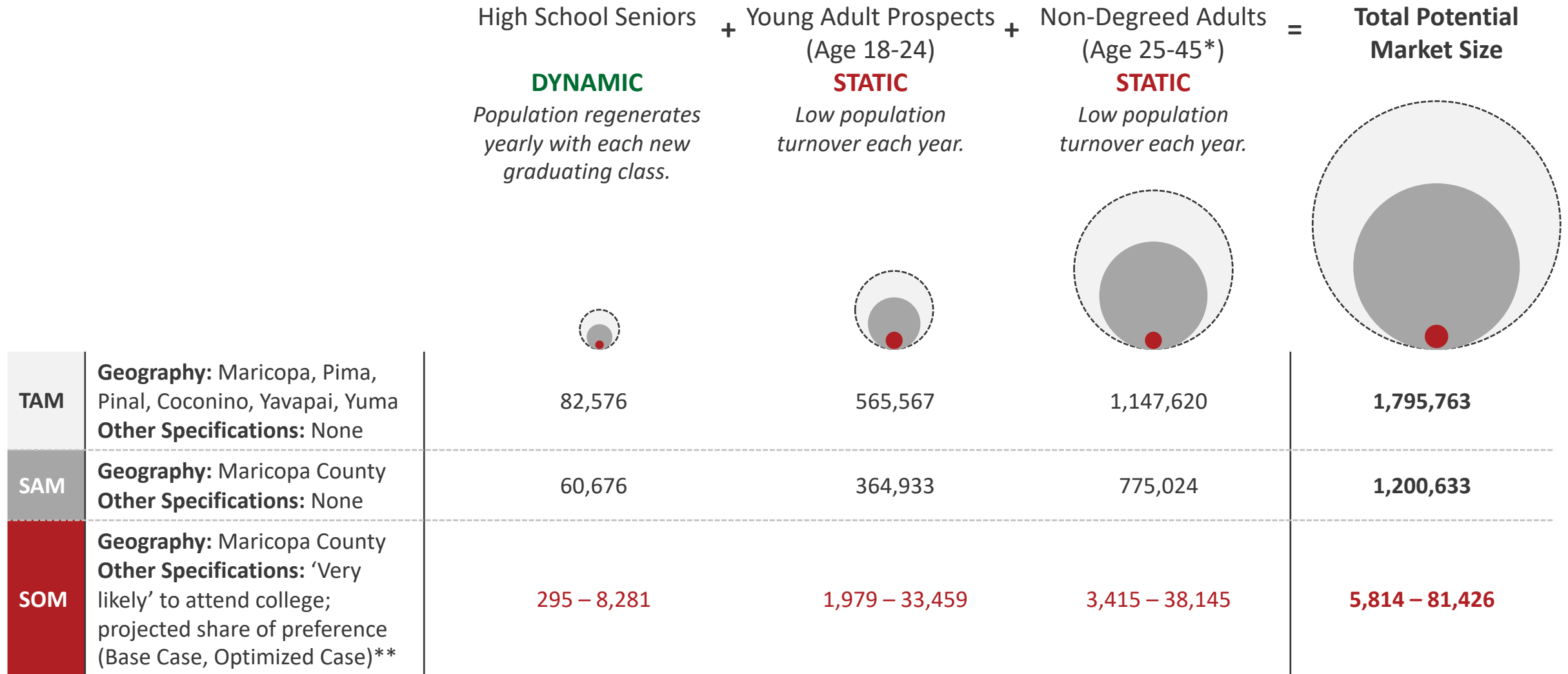
Filtering Details



+ Additional Counties: In addition to the SOM estimate for Maricopa county, see subsequent slides for additional estimates for Maricopa and Pinal counties (combined estimate) and for Pima county.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | TAM, SAM, SOM Calculations

The figures below capture the TAM, SAM, and SOM market estimations for each target demographic. The SOM captures a population range based on whether the new institution offers basic or optimized features.

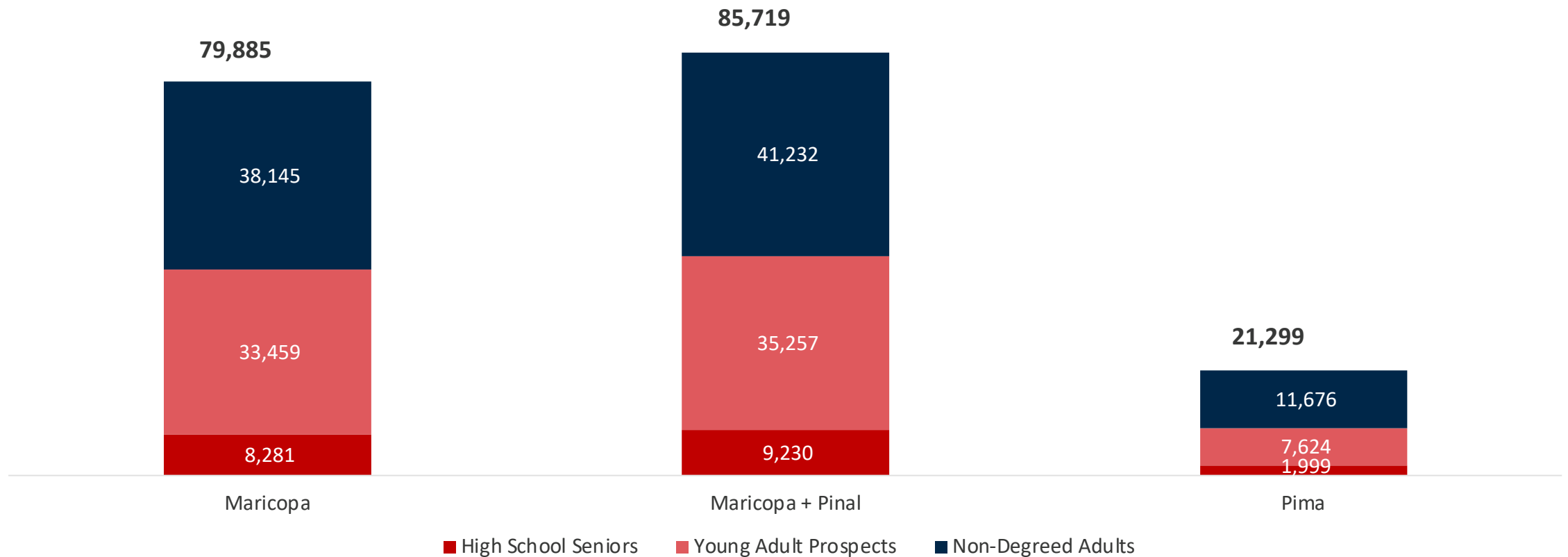


MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Market Size Across Three Counties

The following figures capture market size estimates across three counties and three primary target audiences. These market size calculations use estimated share of preference for a new postsecondary offering with optimized features.

Population Estimates by Group Using Optimized Case Scenario

\$8,000 tuition | \$3,000 in scholarships or grants | 15-minute commute | Hybrid classes on campus 1-2 times per week



MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | High School Seniors in Maricopa

The graph below shows the projected population of high school seniors at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Maricopa

High School Seniors Potential Market Size

Population Status: **DYNAMIC** (New population of seniors every year)

Maricopa population age 17 enrolled in school¹
60,676

×

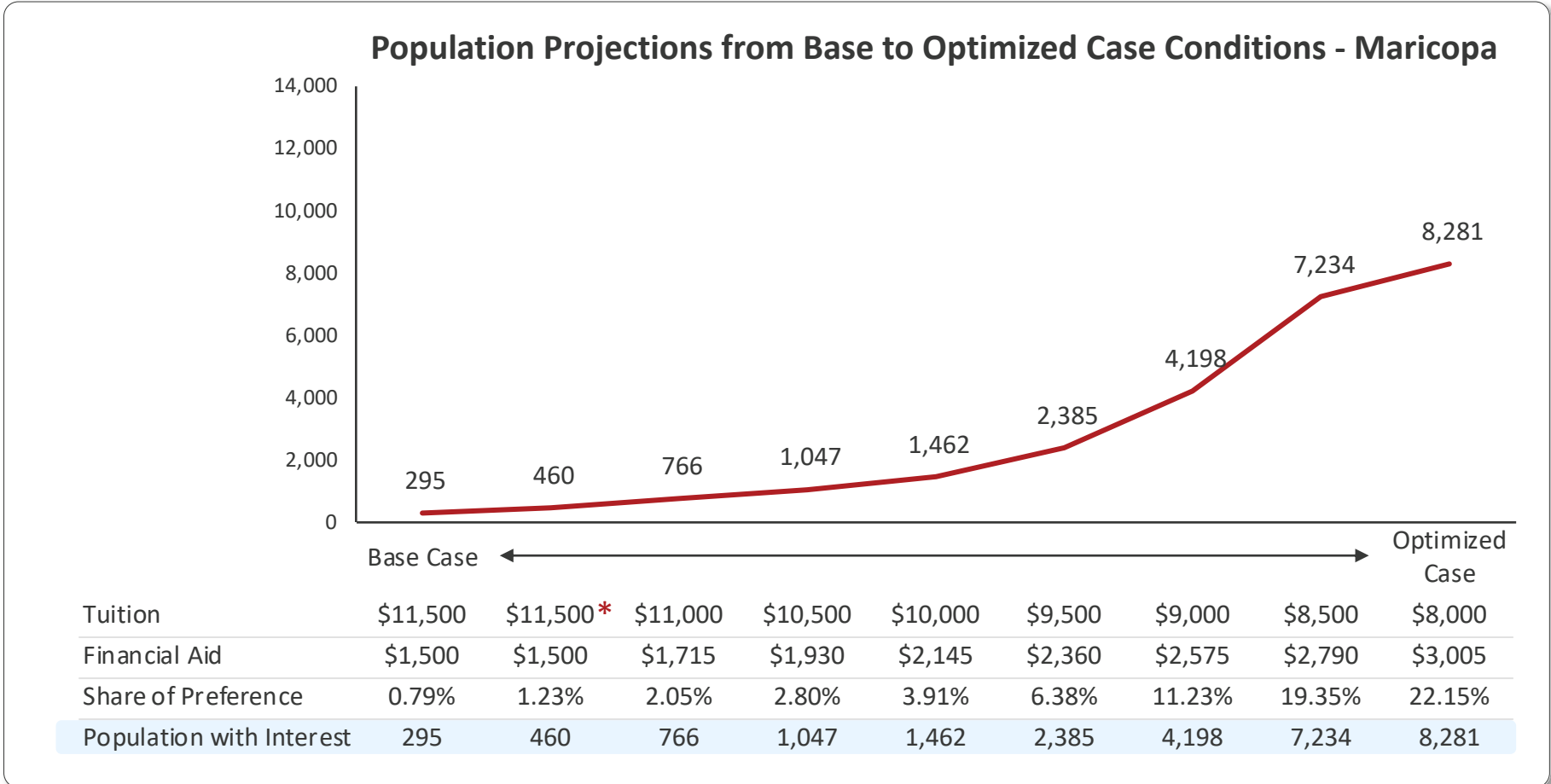
Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree²
61.62%

×

Share of preference³
Varies (see graph)

=

Potential population with interest in new university
295 – 8,281



*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.

1– The Maricopa population ages 15-17 enrolled in school is 182,027. This was divided by 3 to give a rough estimate of 17-year-olds enrolled in school in Maricopa.

2 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Maricopa high school students is n=198.

3 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all high school students (n=252) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | High School Seniors in Maricopa and Pinal

The graph below shows the projected population of high school seniors at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Maricopa + Pinal

High School Seniors Potential Market Size

Population Status: **DYNAMIC** (New population of seniors every year)

Maricopa + Pinal population age 17 enrolled in school¹
66,355



Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree²
62.80%

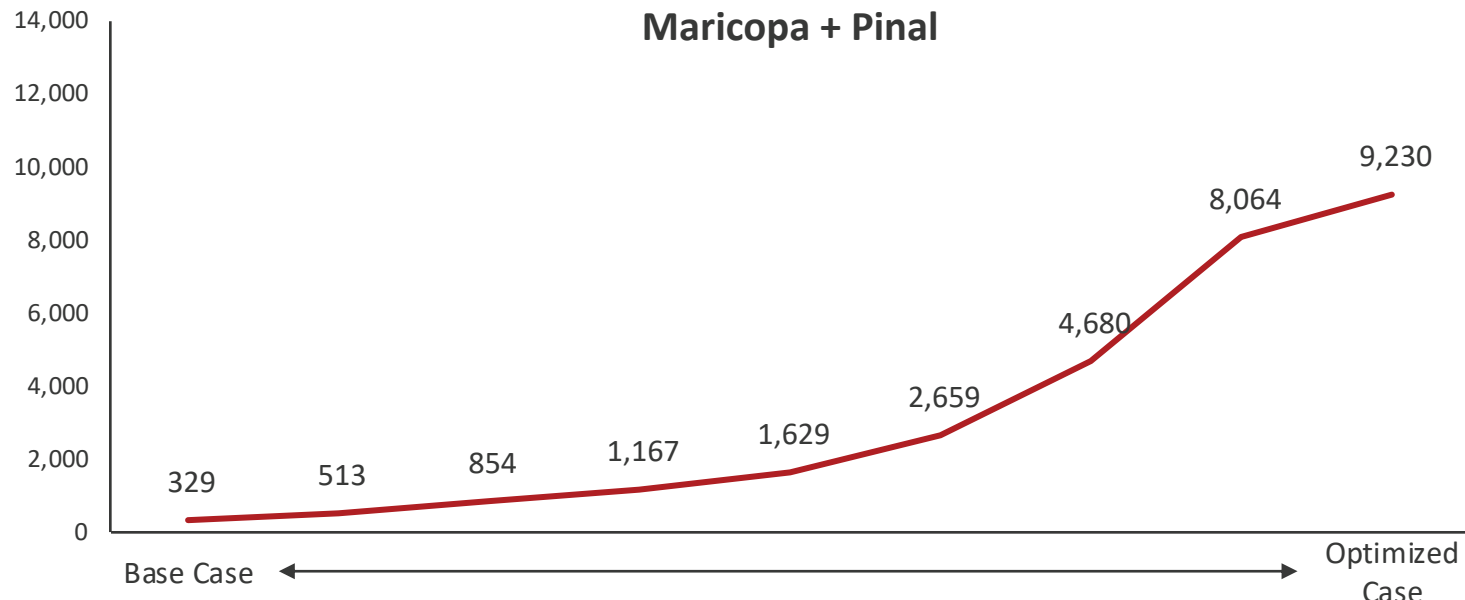


Share of preference³
Varies (see graph)



Potential population with interest in new university
329 – 9,230

**Population Projections from Base to Optimized Case Conditions
Maricopa + Pinal**



	Base Case	Interval 2	Interval 3	Interval 4	Interval 5	Interval 6	Interval 7	Interval 8	Optimized Case
Tuition	\$11,500	\$11,500*	\$11,000	\$10,500	\$10,000	\$9,500	\$9,000	\$8,500	\$8,000
Financial Aid	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,715	\$1,930	\$2,145	\$2,360	\$2,575	\$2,790	\$3,005
Share of Preference	0.79%	1.23%	2.05%	2.80%	3.91%	6.38%	11.23%	19.35%	22.15%
Population with Interest	329	513	854	1,167	1,629	2,659	4,680	8,064	9,230

*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.

1 – The Maricopa + Pinal pop. ages 15-17 enrolled in school is 199,066. This was divided by 3 to give a rough estimate of 17-year-olds enrolled in school in Maricopa + Pinal.

2 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Maricopa + Pinal high school students is n=207.

3 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all high school students (n=252) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | High School Seniors in Pima

The graph below shows the projected population of high school seniors at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Pima

High School Seniors Potential Market Size

Population Status: **DYNAMIC** (New population of seniors every year)

Pima population age 17 enrolled in school¹
12,368



Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree²
72.97%

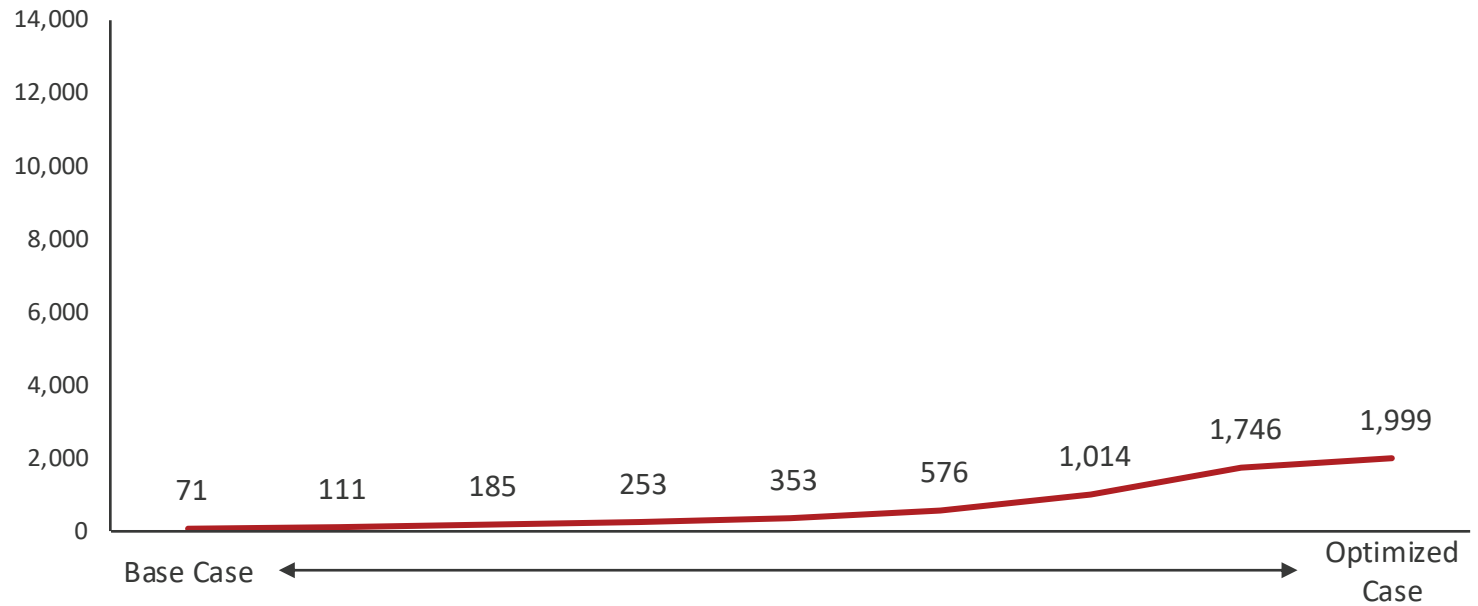


Share of preference³
Varies (see graph)



Potential population with interest in new university
71 – 1,999

Population Projections from Base to Optimized Case Conditions – Pima



Tuition	\$11,500	\$11,500*	\$11,000	\$10,500	\$10,000	\$9,500	\$9,000	\$8,500	\$8,000
Financial Aid	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,715	\$1,930	\$2,145	\$2,360	\$2,575	\$2,790	\$3,005
Share of Preference	0.79%	1.23%	2.05%	2.80%	3.91%	6.38%	11.23%	19.35%	22.15%
Population with Interest	71	111	185	253	353	576	1,014	1,746	1,999

*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.

1– The Pima population ages 15-17 enrolled in school is 37,105. This was divided by 3 to give a rough estimate of 17-year-olds enrolled in school in Pima.

2 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Pima high school students is n=37.

3 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all high school students (n=252) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | High School Seniors Across Counties

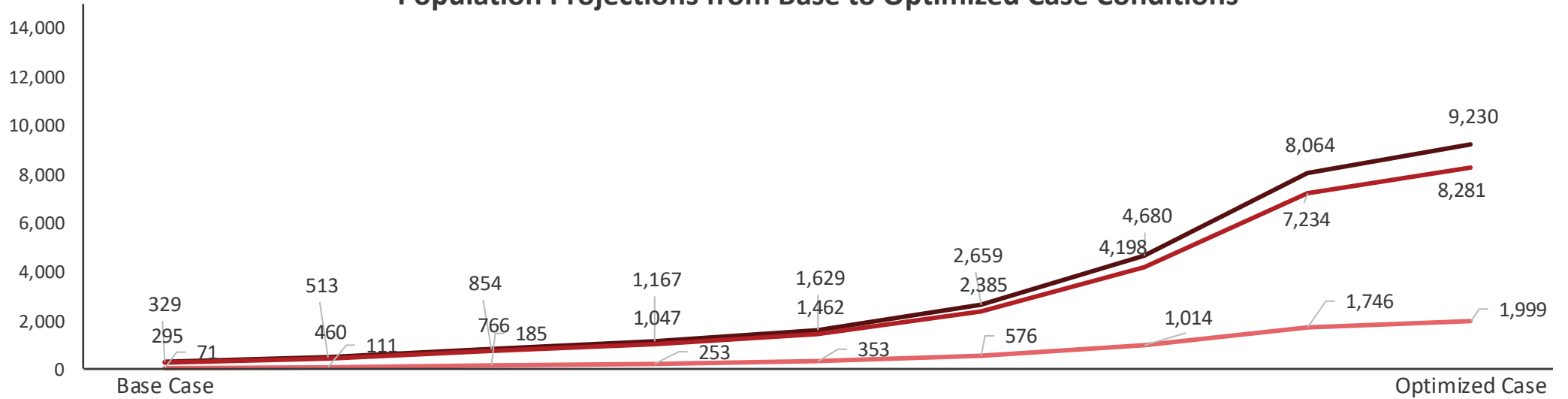
The following data shows an aggregated look at the potential market size for high school seniors at multiple levels in Maricopa and Pinal, just Maricopa, and Pima counties.

Multiple

High School Seniors Potential Market Size

Population Status: **DYNAMIC** (New population of seniors every year)

Population Projections from Base to Optimized Case Conditions



Tuition	\$11,500	\$11,500*	\$11,000	\$10,500	\$10,000	\$9,500	\$9,000	\$8,500	\$8,000
Financial Aid	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,715	\$1,930	\$2,145	\$2,360	\$2,575	\$2,790	\$3,005
Maricopa + Pinal	329	513	854	1,167	1,629	2,659	4,680	8,064	9,230
Maricopa	295	460	766	1,047	1,462	2,385	4,198	7,234	8,281
Pima	71	111	185	253	353	576	1,014	1,746	1,999
Share of Preference	2.67%	2.30%	2.83%	2.87%	5.68%	9.67%	16.90%	24.84%	29.82%

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Young Adult Prospects in Maricopa

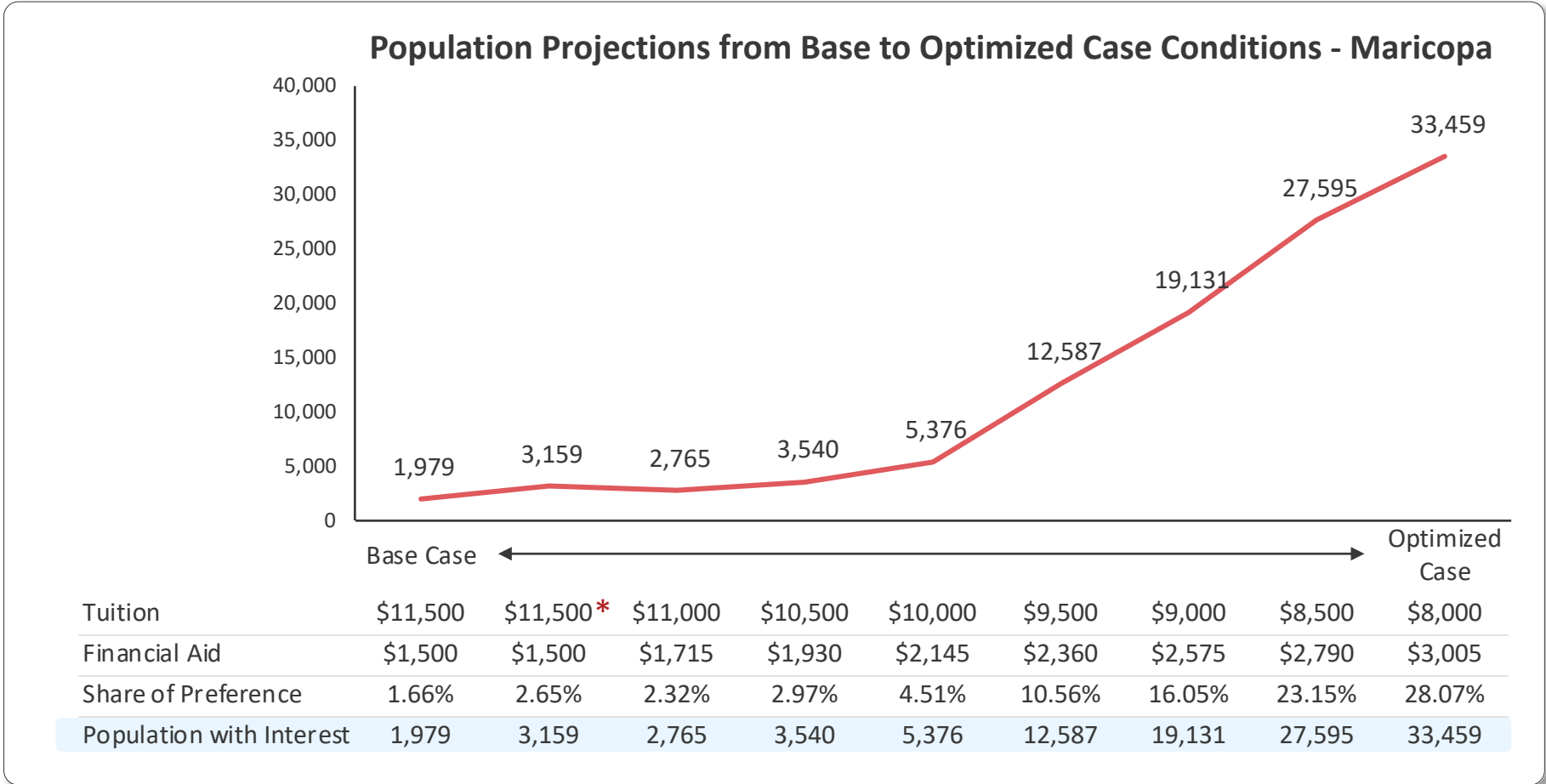
The graph below shows the projected population of young adult prospects at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Maricopa

Young Adult Prospects Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 18–24-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

- Adults in Maricopa 18-24 without Bachelor's degree **364,933**
- ✖ Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree¹ **32.66%**
- ✖ Share of preference² **Varies (see graph)**
- ▬ Potential population with interest in new university **1,979 – 33,459**



*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.

1 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Maricopa young adults is n=199.

2 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all young adults (n=302) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Young Adult Prospects in Maricopa and Pinal

The graph below shows the projected population of young adult prospects at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Maricopa + Pinal

Young Adult Prospects Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

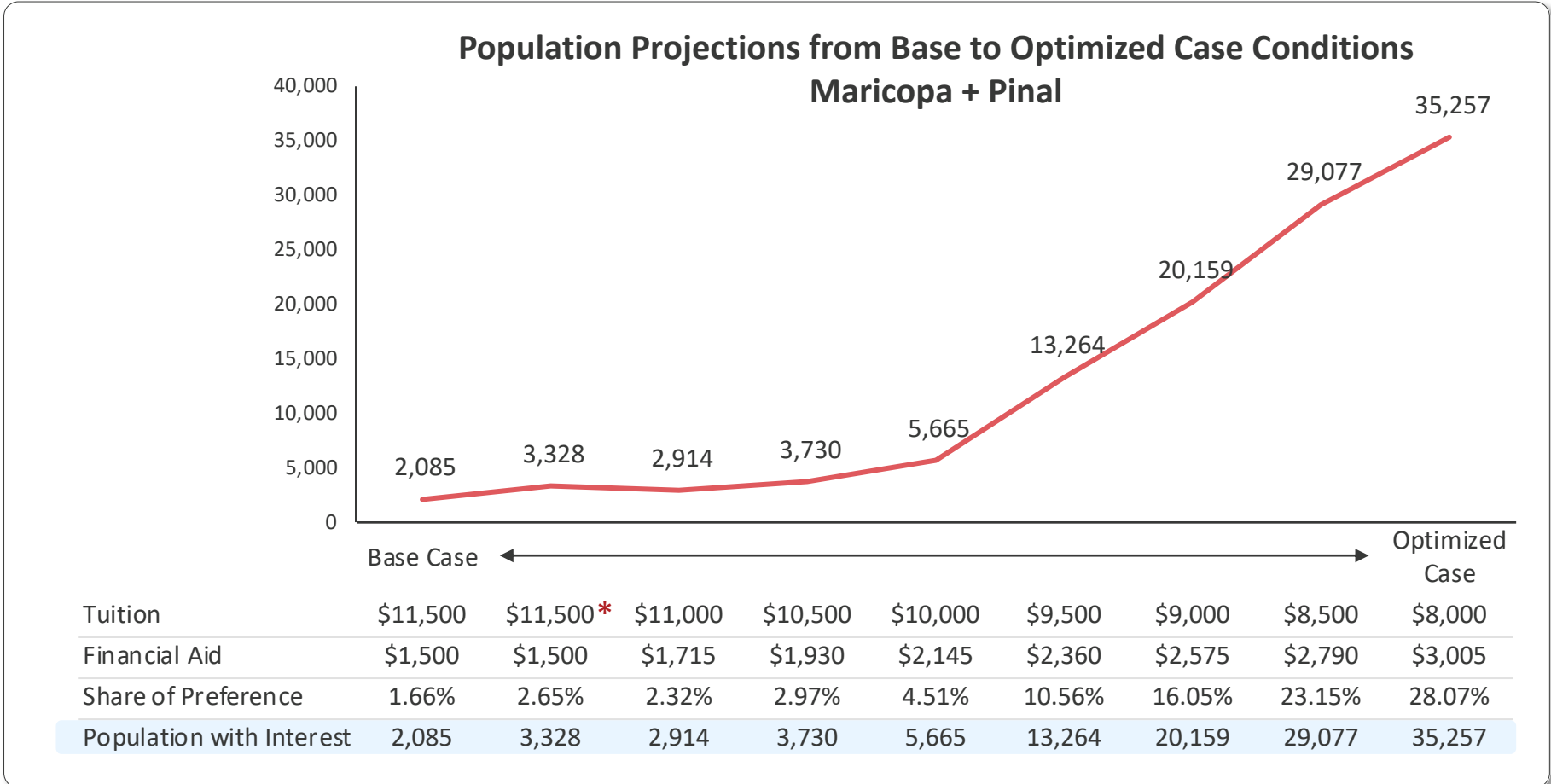
Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 18–24-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

Adults in Maricopa + Pinal 18-24 without Bachelor's degree
396,544

✖ Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree¹
31.67%

✖ Share of preference²
Varies (see graph)

▬ Potential population with interest in new university
2,085—32,357



MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Young Adult Prospects in Pima

The graph below shows the projected population of young adult prospects at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Pima

Young Adult Prospects Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

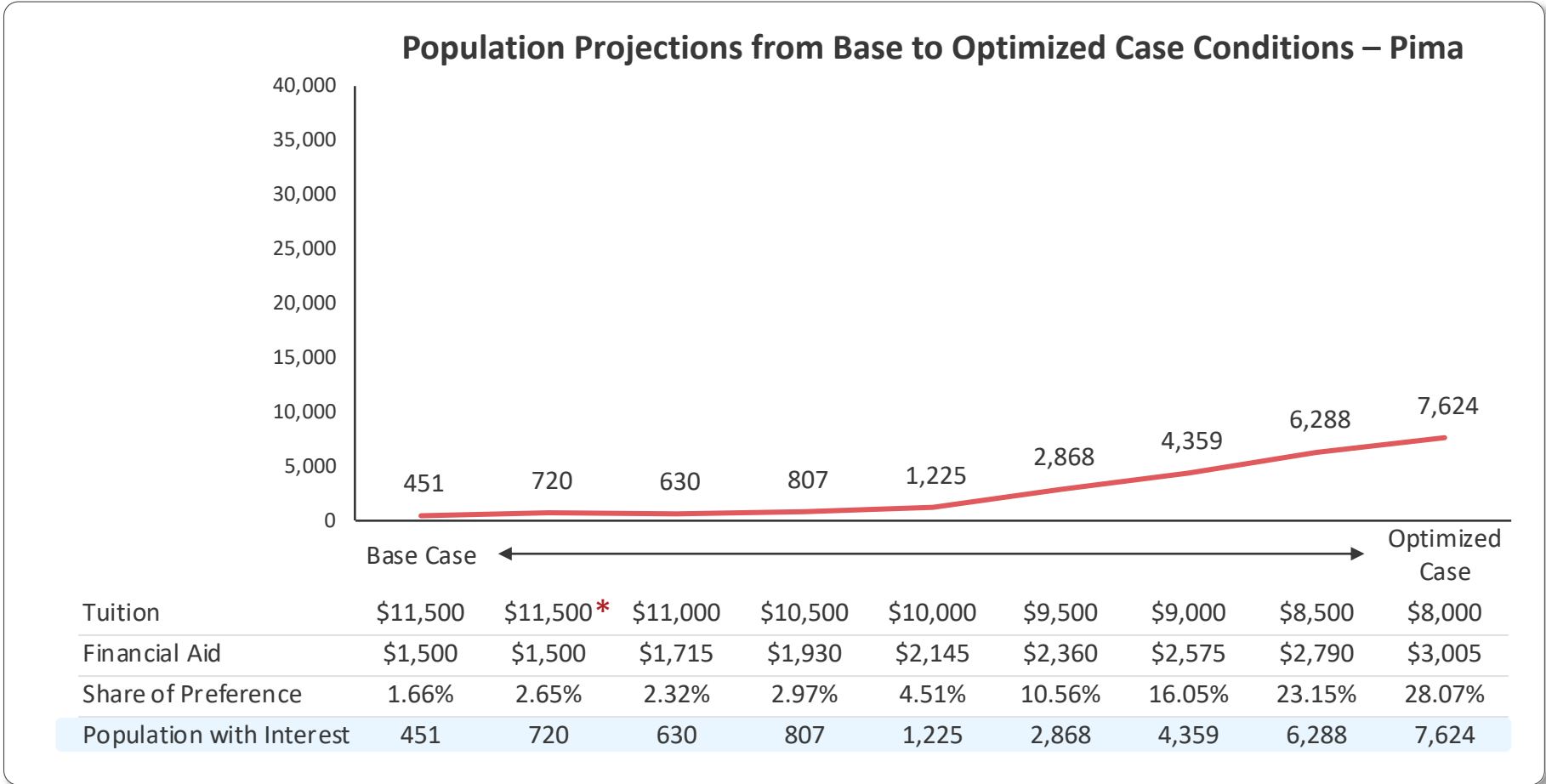
Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 18–24-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

Adults in Maricopa + Pinal 18-24 without Bachelor's degree
106,948

✖ Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree¹
25.40%

✖ Share of preference²
Varies (see graph)

▬ Potential population with interest in new university
451–7,624



*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.

1 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Pima young adults is n=63.

2 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all young adults (n=302) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Young Adult Prospects Across Counties

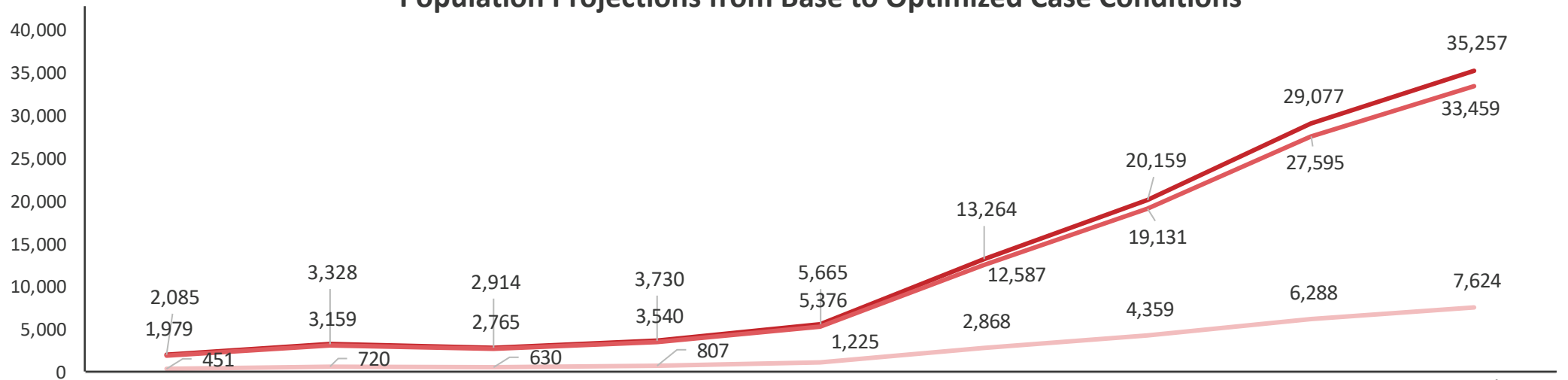
The following data shows an aggregated look at the potential market size for young adult prospects at multiple levels in Maricopa and Pinal, just Maricopa, and Pima counties.

Multiple

Young Adult Prospects Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 18–24-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

Population Projections from Base to Optimized Case Conditions



	Base Case	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7	Scenario 8	Optimized Case
Tuition	\$11,500	\$11,500*	\$11,000	\$10,500	\$10,000	\$9,500	\$9,000	\$8,500	\$8,000
Financial Aid	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,715	\$1,930	\$2,145	\$2,360	\$2,575	\$2,790	\$3,005
Maricopa + Pinal	2,085	3,328	2,914	3,730	5,665	13,264	20,159	29,077	35,257
Maricopa	1,979	3,159	2,765	3,540	5,376	12,587	19,131	27,595	33,459
Pima	451	720	630	807	1,225	2,868	4,359	6,288	7,624
Share of Preference	2.67%	2.30%	2.83%	2.87%	5.68%	9.67%	16.90%	24.84%	29.82%

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Non-Degreed Adults in Maricopa

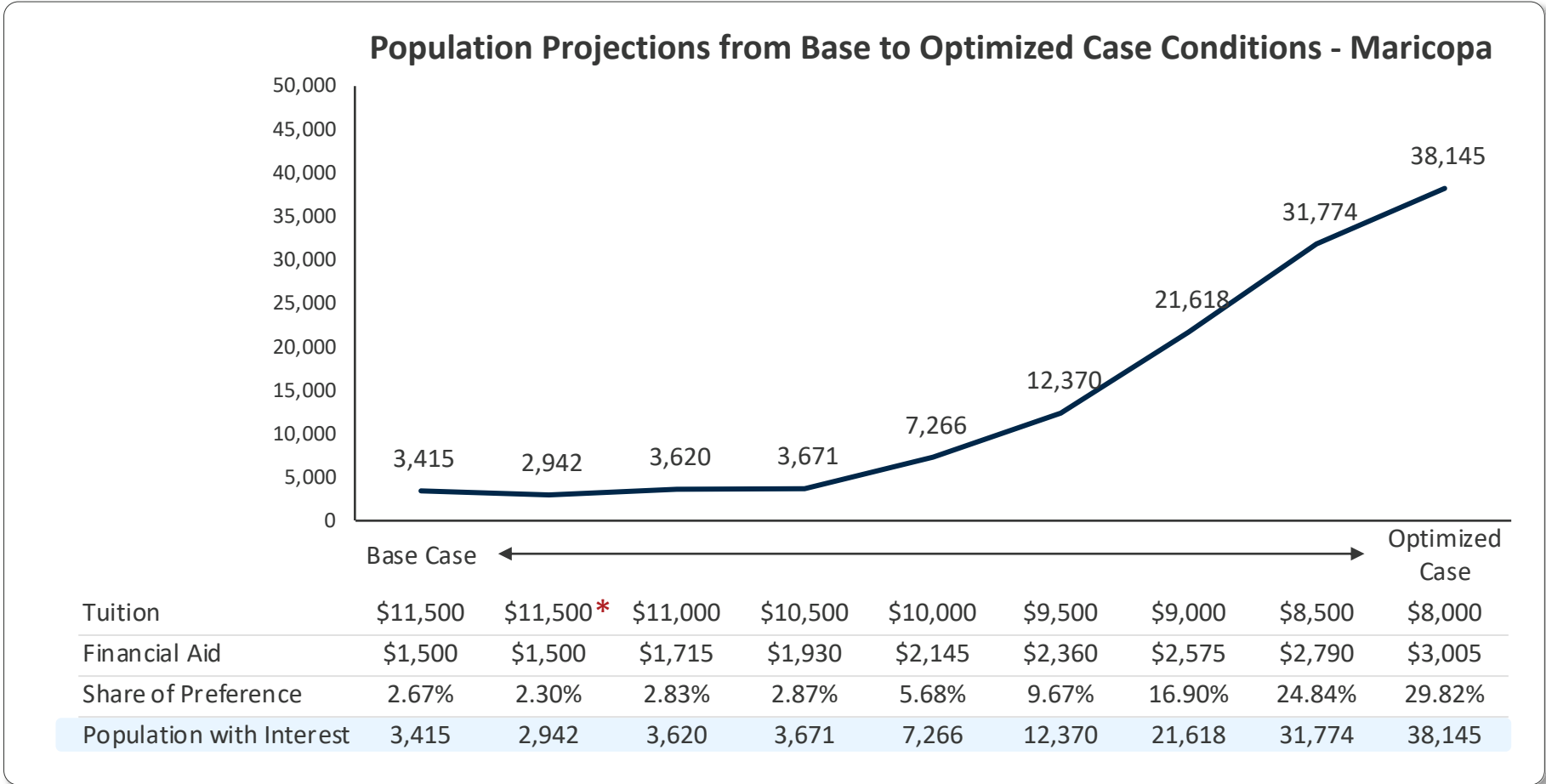
The graph below shows the projected population of non-degreed adults ages 25-45 at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Maricopa

Non-Degreed Adult Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 25–45-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

- Adults in Maricopa 25-45 without Bachelor's degree **775,024**
- ✖ Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree¹ **16.50%**
- ✖ Share of preference² **Varies (see graph)**
- ⊞ Potential population with interest in new university **3,415 – 38,145**



*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.

1 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Maricopa non-degreed adults is n=206.

2 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all non-degreed adults (n=304) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Non-Degreed Adults in Maricopa and Pinal

The graph below shows the projected population of non-degreed adults ages 25-45 at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Maricopa + Pinal

Non-Degreed Adult Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 25–45-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

Adults in Maricopa + Pinal 25-45 without Bachelor's degree
873,067

×

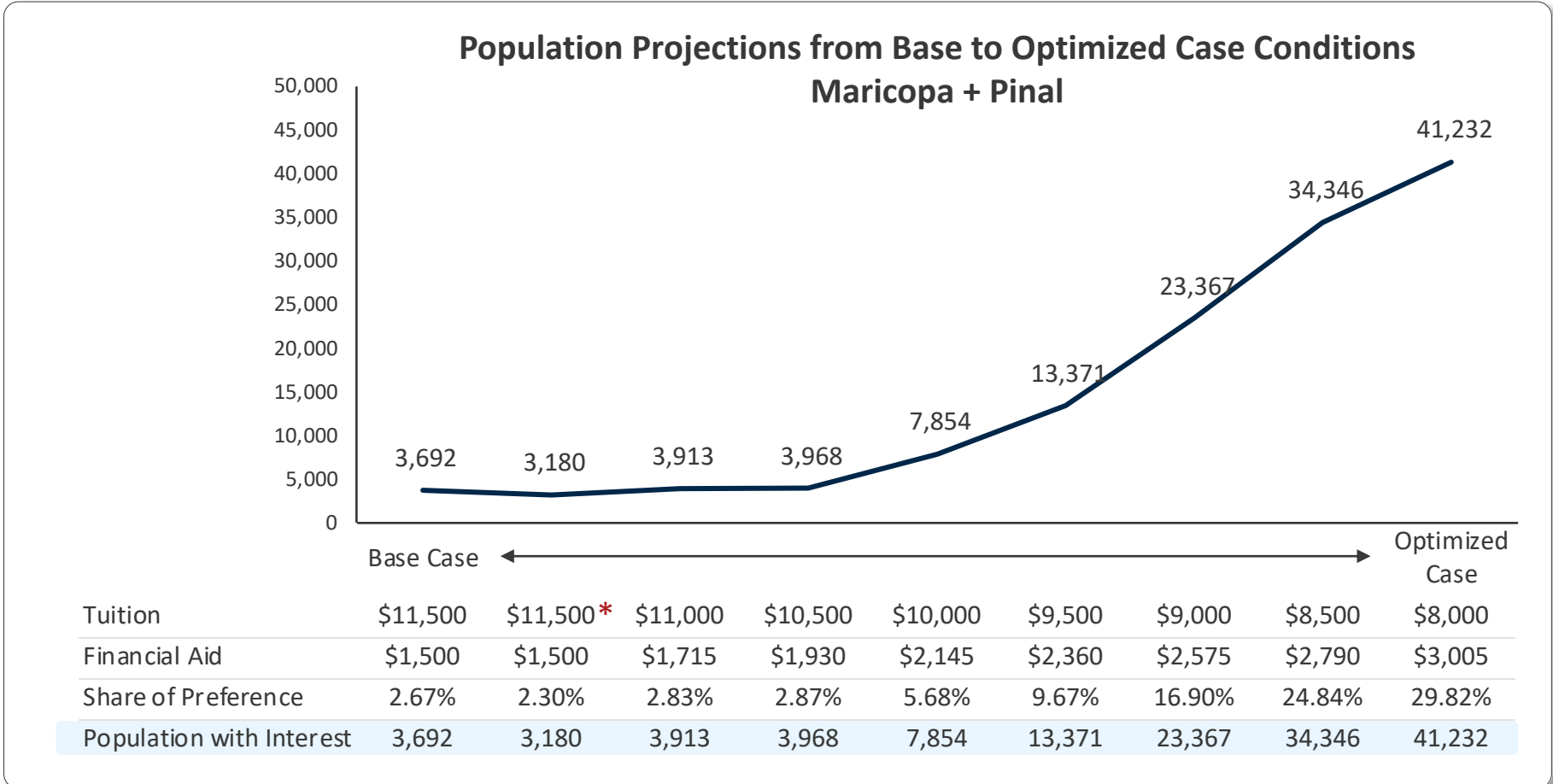
Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree¹
15.84%

×

Share of preference²
Varies (see graph)

=

Potential population with interest in new university
3,692 – 41,232



MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Non-Degreed Adults in Pima

The graph below shows the projected population of non-degreed adults ages 25-45 at multiple intervals. Between each interval, the tuition is dropped by \$500 and financial aid is increased by \$215. This determines the share of preference, which is then used to calculate the size of the interested population.

Pima

Non-Degreed Adult Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 25–45-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

×

Adults in Pima 25-45 without Bachelor's degree
176,202

×

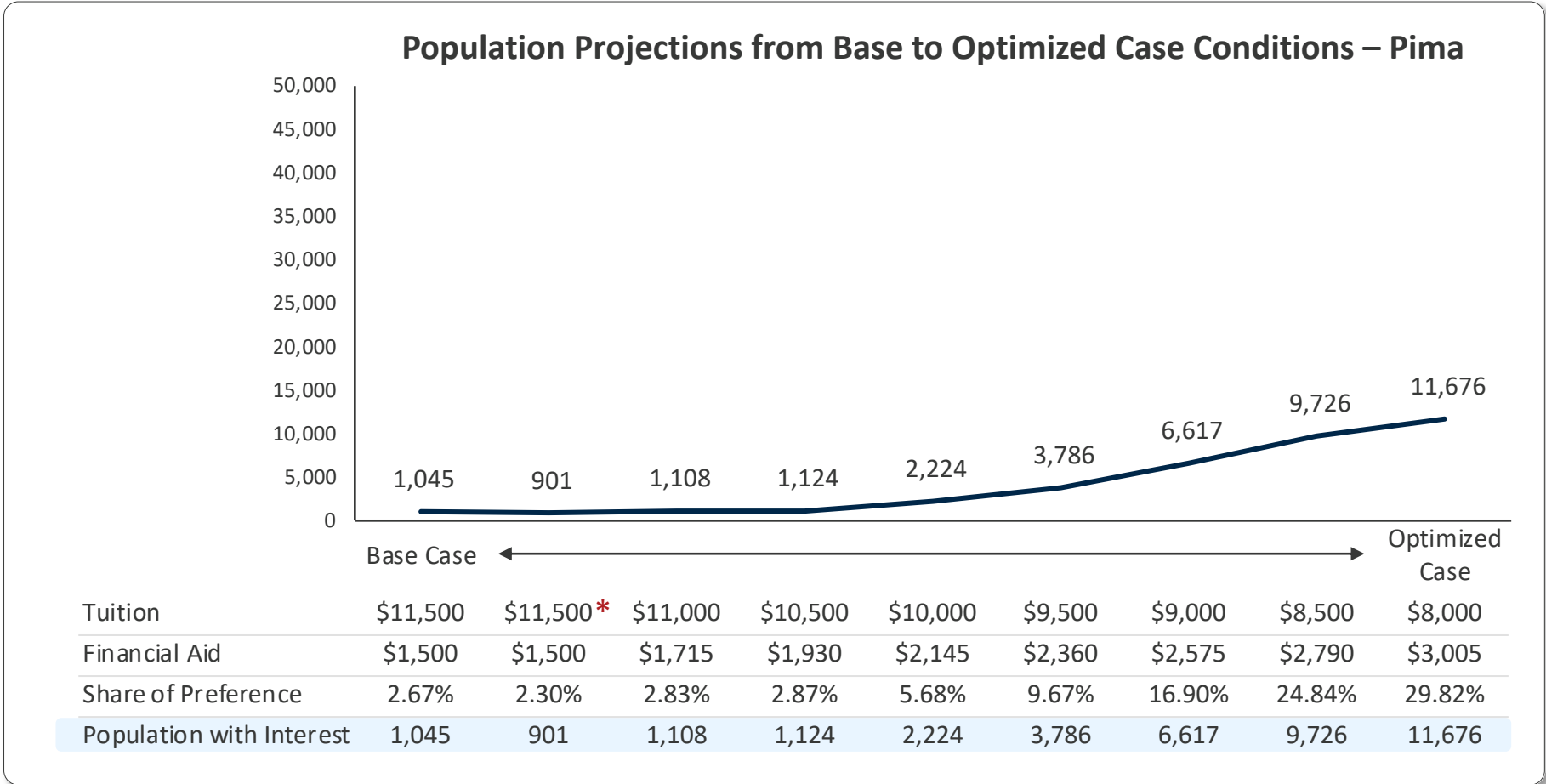
Percent 'very likely' to pursue a degree¹
22.22%

×

Share of preference²
Varies (see graph)

=

Potential population with interest in new university
1,045 – 11,676



*In the second scenario, the commute is reduced from 20 min to 15 and hybrid format is reduced to 1-2 campus visits per week. These settings are kept in remaining scenarios.
 1 – From quantitative survey results. Sample size for Pima non-degreed adults is n=63.
 2 – From conjoint survey results. Share of preference is based on all non-degreed adults (n=304) surveyed due to sample size limitations at the county level.

MARKET SIZE ASSESSMENT | Non-Degreed Adults Across Counties

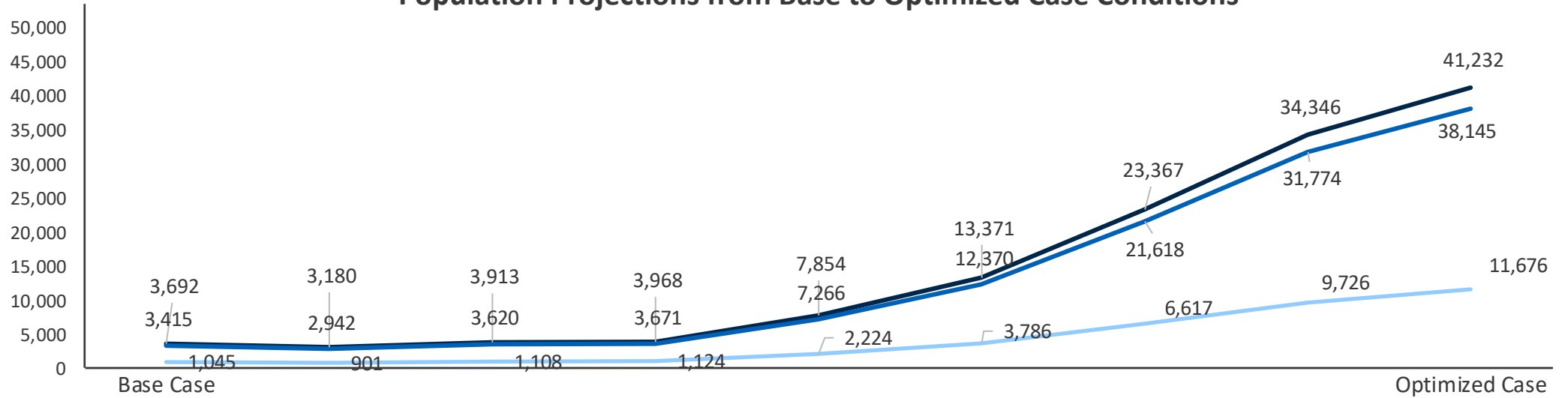
The following data shows an aggregated look at the potential market size for non-degreed adults at multiple levels in Maricopa and Pinal, just Maricopa, and Pima counties.

Multiple

Non-Degreed Adult Potential Market Size with Varying Tuition and Financial Aid Conditions

Population Status: **STATIC** (Population of 25–45-year-olds will have relatively low turnover or growth from year to year)

Population Projections from Base to Optimized Case Conditions



	Base Case	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7	Scenario 8	Optimized Case
Tuition	\$11,500	\$11,500*	\$11,000	\$10,500	\$10,000	\$9,500	\$9,000	\$8,500	\$8,000
Financial Aid	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,715	\$1,930	\$2,145	\$2,360	\$2,575	\$2,790	\$3,005
— Maricopa + Pinal	3,692	3,180	3,913	3,968	7,854	13,371	23,367	34,346	41,232
— Maricopa	3,415	2,942	3,620	3,671	7,266	12,370	21,618	31,774	38,145
— Pima	1,045	901	1,108	1,124	2,224	3,786	6,617	9,726	11,676
Share of Preference	2.67%	2.30%	2.83%	2.87%	5.68%	9.67%	16.90%	24.84%	29.82%

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW | Quantitative and Qualitative Approach

Quantitative Research

Objective:

- Understand public opinions about higher education in Arizona.
- Gauge the feasibility of introducing a new university into Arizona's postsecondary ecosystem to align with needs of prospective students.

Methodology:

- Cicero, in collaboration with representatives from Northern Arizona University and the Arizona Board of Regents, designed and fielded an online survey of prospective students, current university students, and parents of prospective students.

Qualitative Research

Objective:

- Build on quantitative research findings and dig into nuances introduced by survey results.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the student journey map.

Methodology:







- After the fielding and analysis of survey data, a series of virtual in-depth interviews were conducted to explore key survey findings and answer emergent questions from the quantitative phase of research.

Target Group	Survey Sample Size	Interview Count
High School Prospects – High school students in grades 11-12.	N=252	N=10
Young Adult Prospects – Young adult prospects ages 18-24 who are not currently enrolled in a postsecondary program.	N=302	N=5
Current Students – Current students in a postsecondary university program, inclusive of students ages 18-49.	N=161	N=5
Non-Degreed Adults – Adults ages 25-49 who have not gained a university degree.	N=157	N=5
Parents of Prospective Students – Parents of high school students grades 9-12.	N=304	N=6

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW | Survey Structure

Structure of Survey Instrument

The following outline shows the structure of the survey tool developed for quantitative analysis. The research covers several topic areas and methodologies, including a conjoint market exercise to determine consumer preferences about postsecondary education programs.

-  **Screener and Classification** Verify the respondent qualifies to take the survey, then narrow the target populations in core demographics and geographies.
-  **Enrollment Drivers** Explore the factors that inform an individual's enrollment decisions and understand their perceptions of the value propositions of higher education.
-  **Conjoint Exercise** Understand which features of a program would be most attractive for prospective students using choice-based conjoint methodology.
-  **Market Perceptions** Measure demand and desire for a postsecondary option different than those currently available in Arizona.
-  **Delivery** Understand preferences around course delivery, including online or in-person classes, schedule options, and class pacing.
-  **Demographics** Gather additional demographic information for categorization purposes.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW | Conjoint Methodology

Methodology Overview:

Choice-based conjoint analysis is an industry standard methodology for helping organizations identify optimal product and pricing models.

Task:

Each respondent chooses between 3 randomly produced postsecondary program options 10 times and indicate if they would consider enrolling in the selected program.

Feature Set:

The feature sets determined by NAU, ABOR, and Cicero team members based on insights from Regents and general market best practices include the following attributes: Class format, tuition sticker price, grants and scholarships, length of one-way commute, and brand name. This reflects a “base package” with table stakes features a customer would expect to see in any package they might consider. In the survey distribution, feature combinations are randomly selected for each task to provide statistically significant results. *(See right for feature set).*

Notes:

Conjoint reflects the **potential market acceptance** of a product/offering, given the proper promotion, distribution, and time. Conjoint does not calculate real-world market shares. Instead, it calculates share of preference given the scenarios offered in the simulated market. As a result, findings from these simulated markets should rely on the differences in preference generated by the various features, rather than the actual percentages garnered by any individual competitor.

Class Format

- Completely in-person classes
- Completely online classes
- Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus less than 1x per week
- Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus 1-2x per week
- Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus 3+ times per week

Tuition per Year (Sticker Price)

- \$7,000 per year
- \$8,500 per year
- \$10,000 per year
- \$11,500 per year
- \$13,000 per year

Grants and Scholarships per Year

- \$1,000 grant or scholarship
- \$3,000 grant or scholarship
- \$5,000 grant or scholarship
- \$7,000 grant or scholarship
- None

Grants and Scholarships per Year

- No commute required
- 10-minute commute
- 20-minute commute
- 30-minute commute
- 40-minute commute
- Longer than 40-minute commute

Name

- Arizona State University
- Northern Arizona University
- University of Arizona
- Grand Canyon University
- New Career-Focused Public College
- Western Governors University
- Local Community College
- Arizona State University West

CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Simulator Tool

Conjoint Simulator Tool

- The data analysis captured in the following slides was created using a conjoint simulation tool that offers market projections based on different conditions and changing data points.
- Cicero has provided the NAU and ABOR teams with the conjoint simulator tool to test many more different scenarios and conditions for use in future decision making.

The screenshot displays the 'Arizona Colleges Simulator Tool' interface. The top navigation bar includes 'File', 'Home', and 'Base Case Settings'. Below this is a toolbar with various actions like 'Duplicate', 'Add', 'Rename', 'Simulate', and 'Utility Sets'. The main workspace is divided into several sections: 'Products', 'Results', and 'Shares of Preference (Total)'. The 'Products' section contains a table with columns for Label, Delivery, Tuition, Financial Aid, Commute, and Name. The 'Results' section shows a warning message and a 'Simulation Results' table. The 'Shares of Preference (Total)' section features a pie chart representing the distribution of preferences among different college options.

Label	Delivery	Tuition	Financial Aid	Commute	Name
1 New Career-Focused Public College	Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus 3 or more times per week	11500	1500	20	New Career-Focused Public College
2 Arizona State University	Completely in-person classes	11618	3095.25	20	Arizona State University
3 Northern Arizona University	Completely in-person classes	12274	2966.25	15	Northern Arizona University
4 University of Arizona	Completely in-person classes	13275	3819.75	15	University of Arizona
5 Grand Canyon University	Completely in-person classes	17800	2415.5	15	Grand Canyon University
6 Western Governors University	Completely in-person classes	8010	1199.5	0	Western Governors University
7 Arizona State University West	Completely in-person classes	11618	3095.25	25	Arizona State University West

Label	Total	High School Si
Respondent Count	1176	
New Career-Focused Public College		1.7%

CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Simulation Attributes

The following captures the data used to simulate the current Arizona higher education market, as well as multiple simulations of a potential new career-focused public offering.

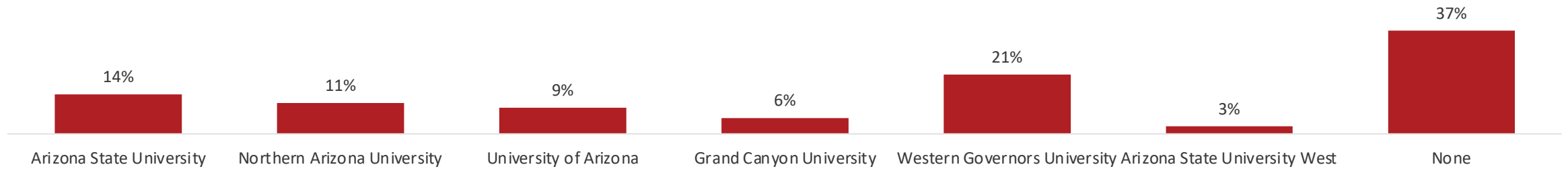
Institution Name	Class Delivery Format	Tuition (Sticker Price)	Financial Aid	Length of Commute	
New Career-Focused Public College	Base Case	Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus 3 or more times per week	\$11,500	\$1,500	20 minutes
	Optimized Case	Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus 1-2 times per week	\$8,000	\$3,000	15 minutes
	Ideal Case	Blend of in-person and online classes: travel to campus less than once per week	\$6,000	\$5,000	10 minutes
Arizona State University	Completely in-person classes	\$11,618	\$3,095	20 minutes	
Northern Arizona University	Completely in-person classes	\$12,274	\$2,966	15 minutes	
University of Arizona	Completely in-person classes	\$13,275	\$3,820	15 minutes	
Grand Canyon University	Completely in-person classes	\$17,800	\$2,416	15 minutes	
Western Governors University	Completely online classes	\$8,010	\$1,200	No commute required	
Arizona State University West	Completely in-person classes	\$11,618	\$3,095	25 minutes	

CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Current Market

In the current market, WGU stands out as a low-price leader, but falls significantly lower in share of preference for high school students, who prefer traditional universities. Non-degreed adults in both age categories have a higher preference for no college option than parents and high schoolers.

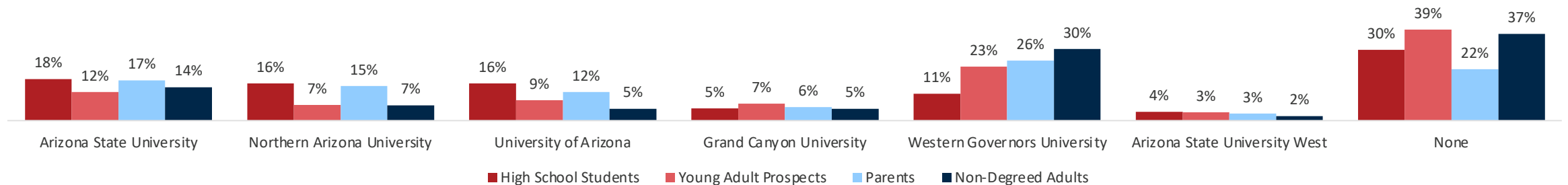
Simulated Market – Current Market | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | n=1,176



Simulated Market – Current Market | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | n=1,176



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Base Case

If introduced at a higher price with low financial aid, the new career-focused offering is unlikely to maintain a strong presence in the market.

Base Case

Name: New Career-Focused Public College

Tuition: \$11,500

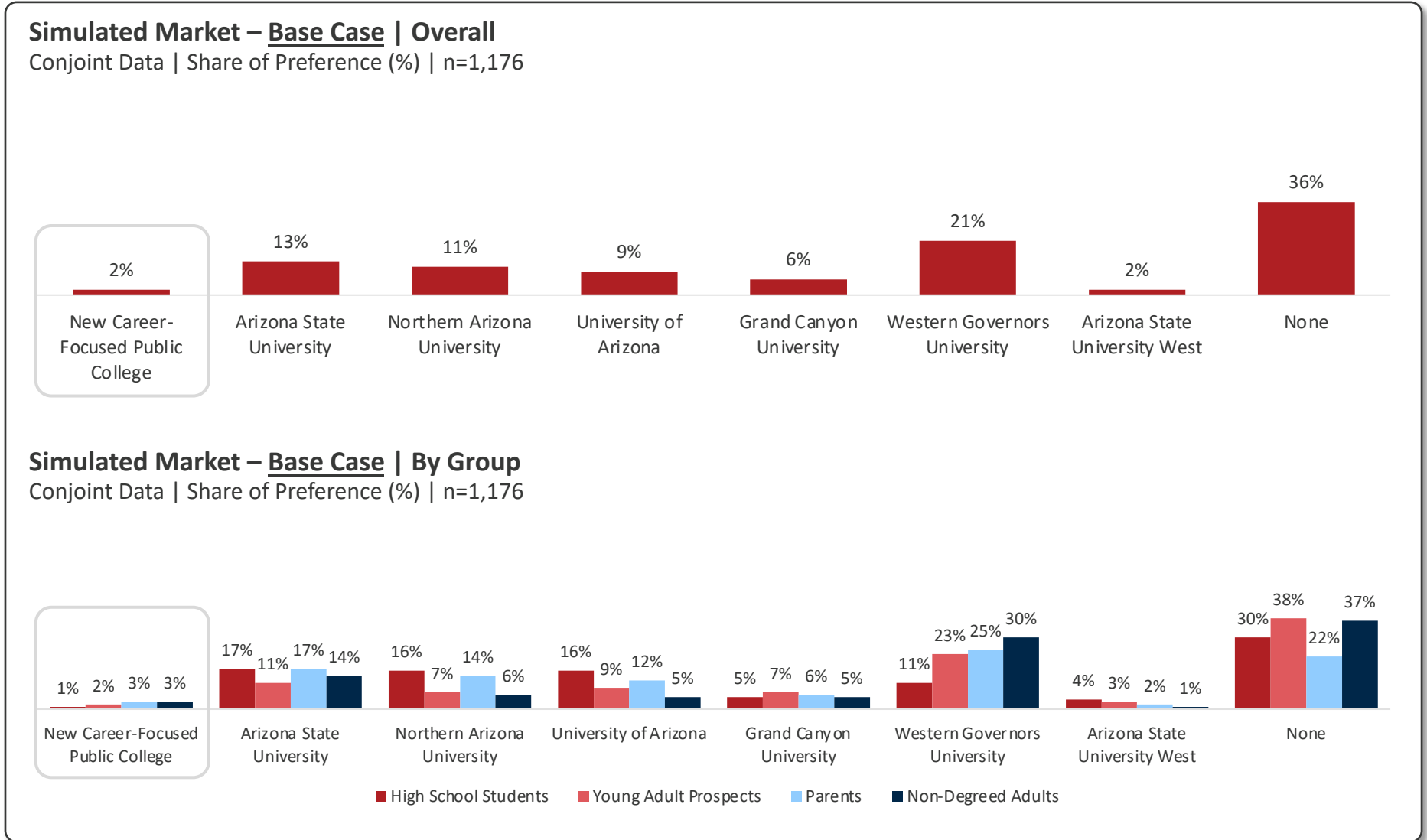
Financial Aid: \$1,500

Commute: 15 minutes

Delivery: Blended format: travel to campus 3+ times per week

Key Takeaways

- A new college brand with high tuition and low scholarships or grants is projected to maintain a very minimal share of market preference.
- The new career-focused public college has the highest share of preference among Parents and Non-Degreed adults.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Optimized Case

Increasing financial aid, lowering tuition, and optimizing other factors increases the share of preference significantly for the new college.

Optimized Case

Name: New Career-Focused Public College

Tuition: \$8,000

Financial Aid: \$3,000

Commute: 10 minutes

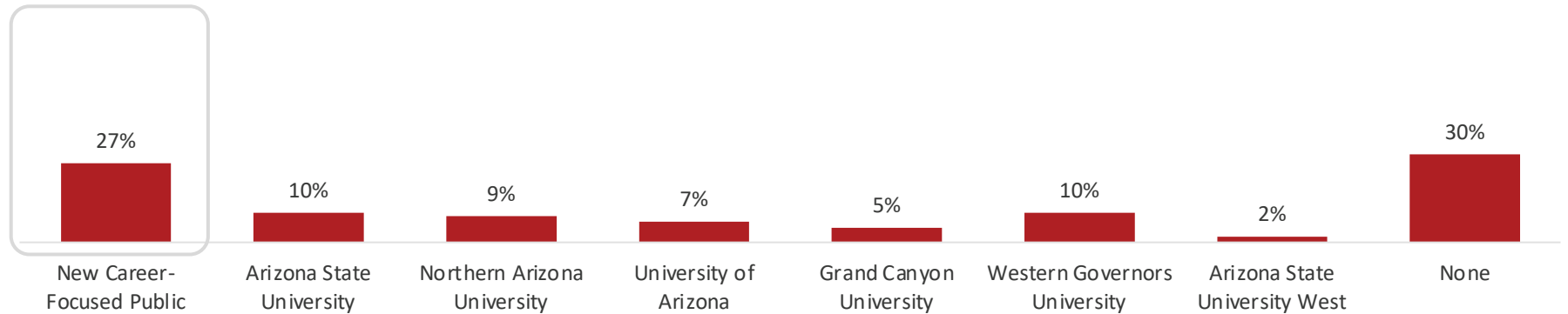
Delivery: Blended format: travel to campus 1-2 times per week

Key Takeaways

- Optimizing each attribute of the new college increases projected share of preference by roughly 25%.
- About 6% of the increased preference comes from those who would not choose to enroll, 11% from Western Governors University, and a few percentage points from each traditional university in the market simulation.

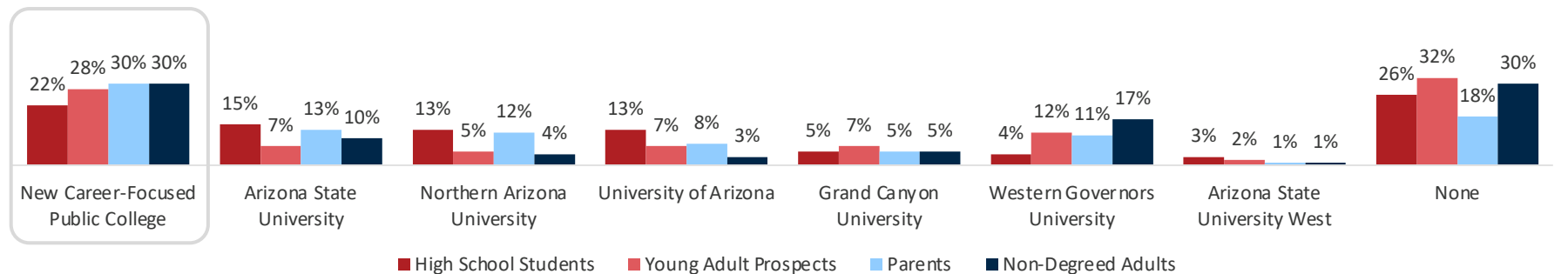
Simulated Market – Optimized Case | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | n=1,176



Simulated Market – Optimized Case | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | n=1,176



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Ideal Case

Introducing an 'Ideal State' scenario with very low tuition that is almost matched by financial aid, with optimized commute and delivery, creates a scenario that draws away preference from most other institutions and heavily concentrates preference on the new postsecondary offering.

Ideal Case

Name: New Career-Focused Public College

Tuition: \$6,000

Financial Aid: \$5,000

Commute: 10 minutes

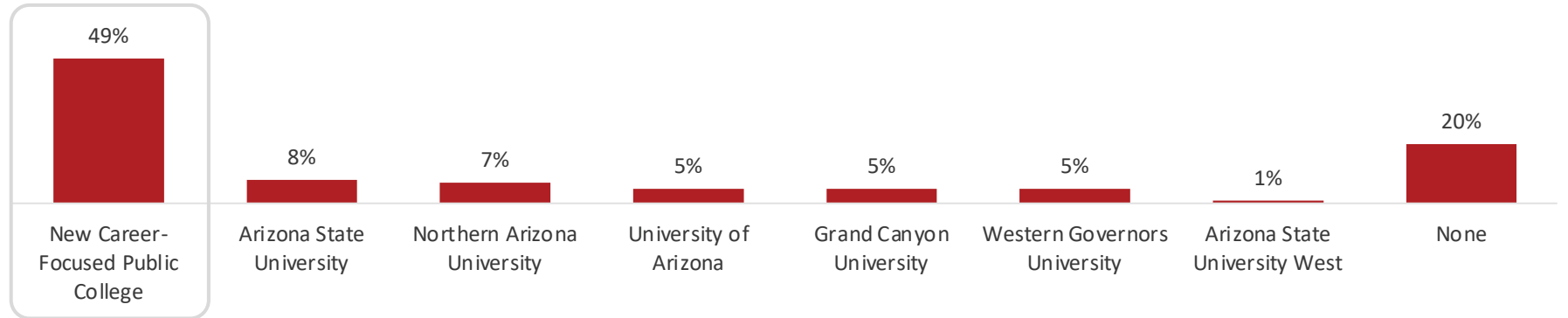
Delivery: Blended format: travel to campus less than once weekly

Key Takeaways

- Lowering tuition to only \$6,000 and increasing financial aid to nearly cover tuition draws a huge share of preference to the new postsecondary option.
- Notably, 20% of students and parents still opt for a 'none' option, even given the ideal state conditions of the new university.

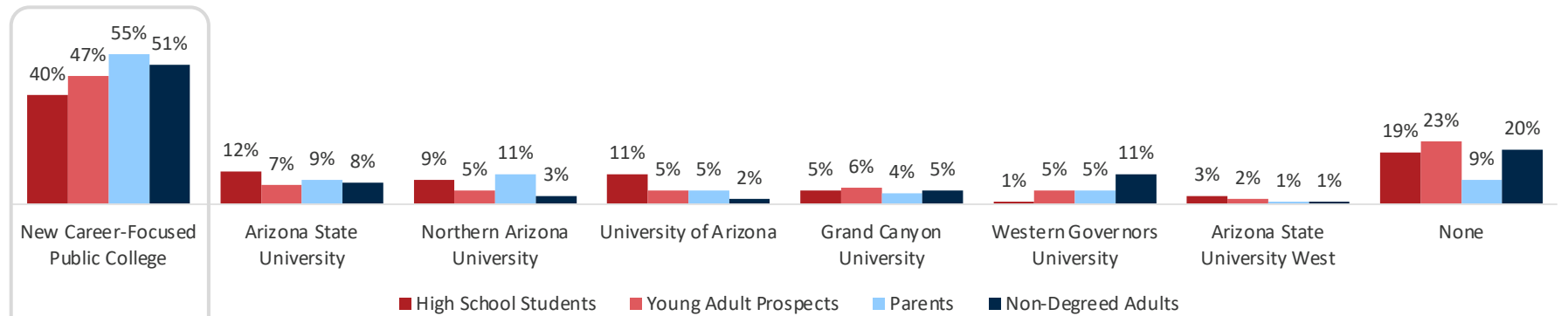
Simulated Market – Ideal Case | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | n=1,176



Simulated Market – Ideal Case | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | n=1,176



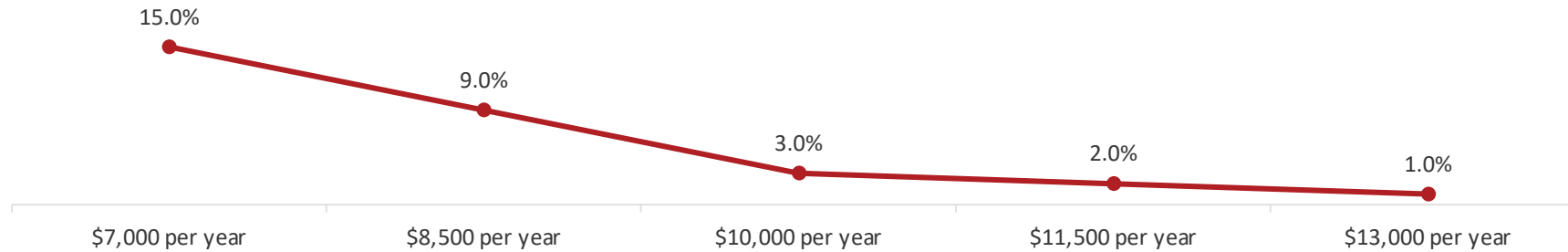
CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Share of Preference – Tuition and Financial Aid

Students are highly cost sensitive and react strongly to changes in tuition and financial aid.



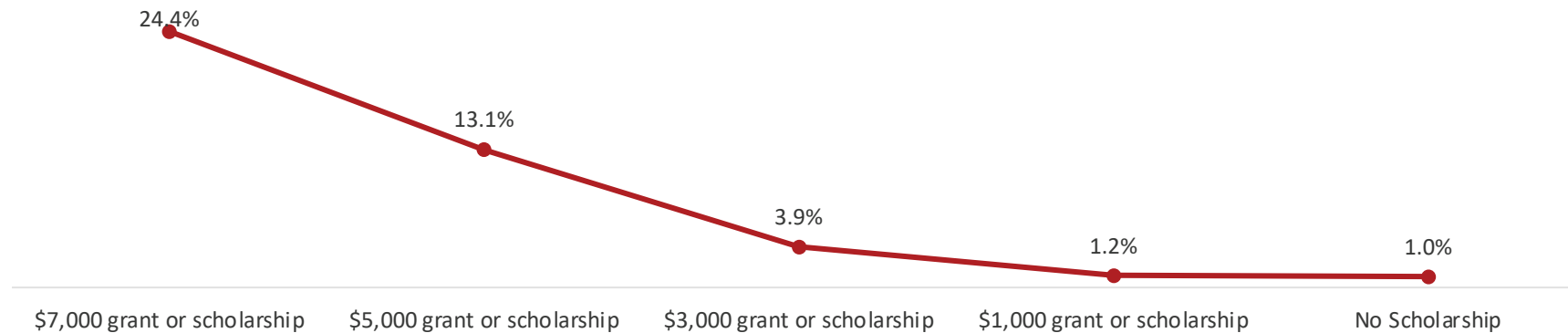
Preference Driven by Tuition | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176



Preference Driven by Financial Aid | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176



Key Takeaways

- **High Price Sensitivity:** Prospective students and their parents are highly cost sensitive, especially at lower tuition points. An increase from \$7,000 to \$8,500 per year has more impact on student preference than an increase of the same size from \$11,500 to \$13,000.
- **Consistent Sensitivity to Financial Aid:** Students and parents are sensitive to increases in financial aid package size, with higher sensitivity to change at higher aid levels.

Interpreting the Data

- These graphs capture the simulated share of preference for the Base Case of the new school option.
- In the top graph, the Base Case is simulated multiple times with the tuition changing each time and all other factors held constant.
- In the lower graph, the same is done with only the financial aid changing each time.

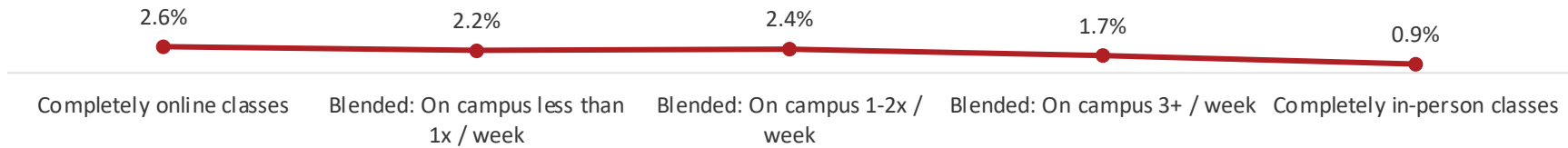
CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Share of Preference – Delivery and Commute

Students are less sensitive to changes in delivery format and length of commute than they are to changes in tuition and financial aid. .



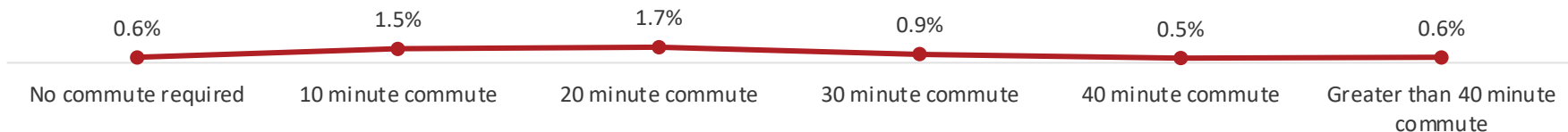
Preference Driven by Class Delivery Format | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176



Preference Driven by Length of Commute | Overall

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176



Key Takeaways

- **Preference for Online Options:** Completely online classes drive the highest share of preference, while completely in-person classes have a lower share of preference.
- **Relatively Low Sensitivity to Delivery:** Reactions to changes in class delivery options are fairly low. This suggests that there is more flexibility in changing delivery format and maintaining preference than changing cost or tuition.

Interpreting the Data

- These graphs capture the simulated share of preference for the Base Case of the new school option.
- In the top graph, the Base Case is simulated multiple times with the class format changing each time and all other factors held constant.
- In the lower graph, the same is done with only the length of commute changing each time.

CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Share of Preference by Group – Tuition

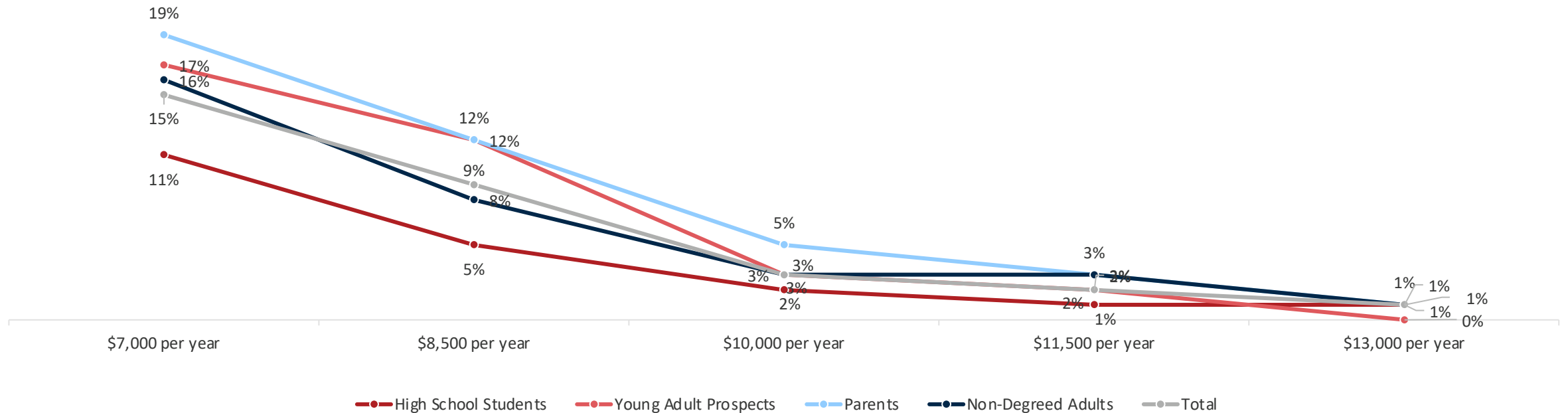
Parents and non-degreed adults have the highest shares of preference driven by changes in tuition.



Preference Driven by Tuition | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176

This graph captures the share of preference for the **New Career-Focused Public College Base Case** if only the **tuition** attribute changed in each simulation.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Share of Preference by Group – Financial Aid

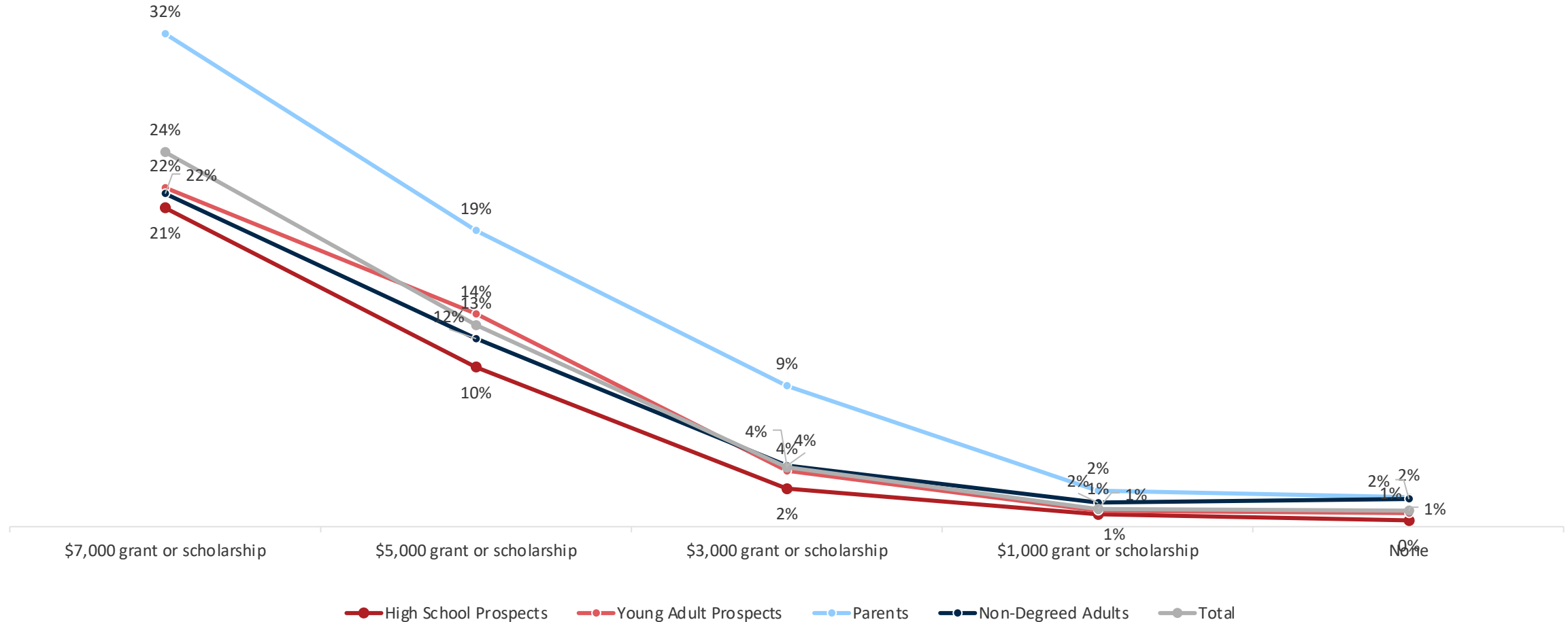
Current students and parents are especially sensitive to changes in financial aid.



Preference Driven by Financial Aid | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176

This graph captures the share of preference for the **New Career-Focused Public College Base Case** if only the **financial aid** attribute changed in each simulation.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Share of Preference by Group – Delivery

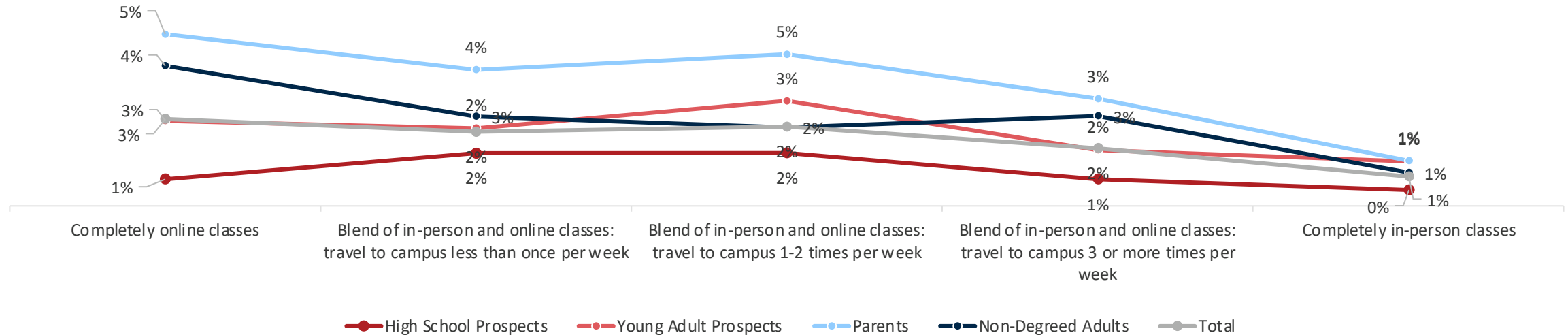
Non-degreed adults have the highest sensitivity to delivery format and have a strong preference for online classes.



Preference Driven by Class Delivery Format | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176

This graph captures the share of preference for the **New Career-Focused Public College Base Case** if only the **class delivery format** attribute changed in each simulation.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Share of Preference by Group – Commute

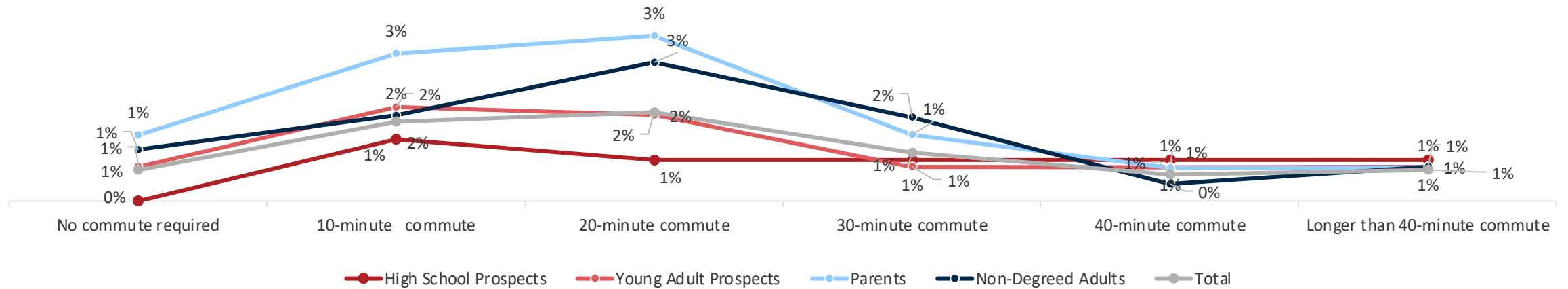
Parents and non-degreed adults have the highest shares of preference driven by the length of commute.



Preference Driven by Commute | By Group

Conjoint Data | Share of Preference (%) | Base Case Assumptions | n=1,176

This graph captures the share of preference for the **New Career-Focused Public College Base Case** if only the **commute** attribute changed in each simulation.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Score Methodology



Utility Score

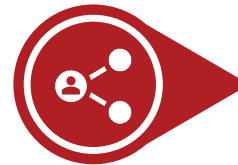
Utility scores are derived from the estimated impact on the decision in comparison to other features in the feature set.

Utility scores are the foundation for the mathematical analytics that drive share of preference (SOP) and willingness to pay (WTP).

Making decisions based on utility scores in isolation is not advised. Rather, the results of the market simulator should be used to estimate impact of different attributes and levels.

Market Simulator

Utility scores are used to build a market simulator. The outputs of this simulator are used to generate other insights in the overall quantitative analysis.



Attribute Importance

The overall importance of an attribute in the consumers' decision-making process. E.g., if a feature has an importance of 25%, then consumers base 25% of their educational decisions on that feature.

Share of Preference (SOP)

% of respondents that would prefer this option and claim they would actually consider enrolling if offered. This measure is similar to market share, although it is only relevant to the simulated market.

CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Overview – Overall

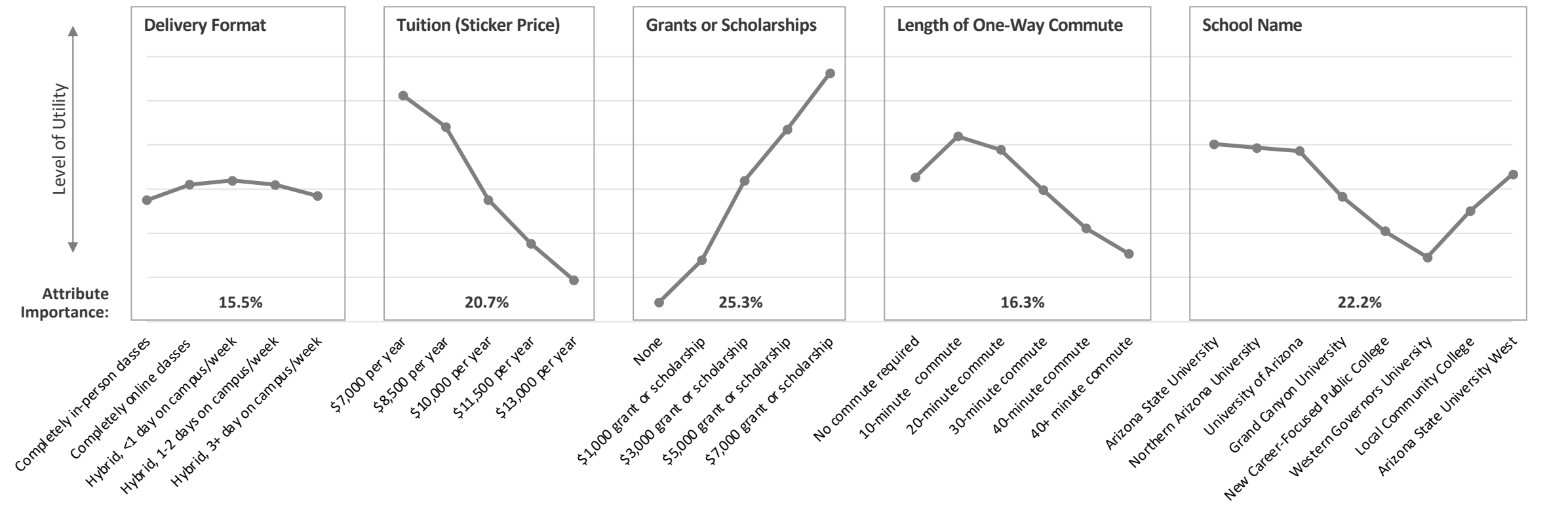
Out of the gates, a newly named school will sit below the local community colleges in brand recognition, suggesting there is work to be done in terms of establishing a brand and gaining trust after the new school enters the market.

- Overall Population
- High School Students
- Young Adult Prospects
- Parents
- Current College Students
- Non-Degreed Adults

Level of Utility by Attribute

Conjoint Data | Average Utility and Importance Level; n=1,176

The following graphs capture the relative utility of each level feature tested in the conjoint analysis. The slope of each line shows the disparity in preference between each attribute level. The 'Attribute Importance' captures the average importance of each attribute as a share of 100%.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Overview – High School Students

High school prospects gain higher utility from having completely in-person classes than the overall group. They also place more value on the brand name for established public universities than other groups do.

Overall Population

High School Students

Young Adult Prospects

Parents

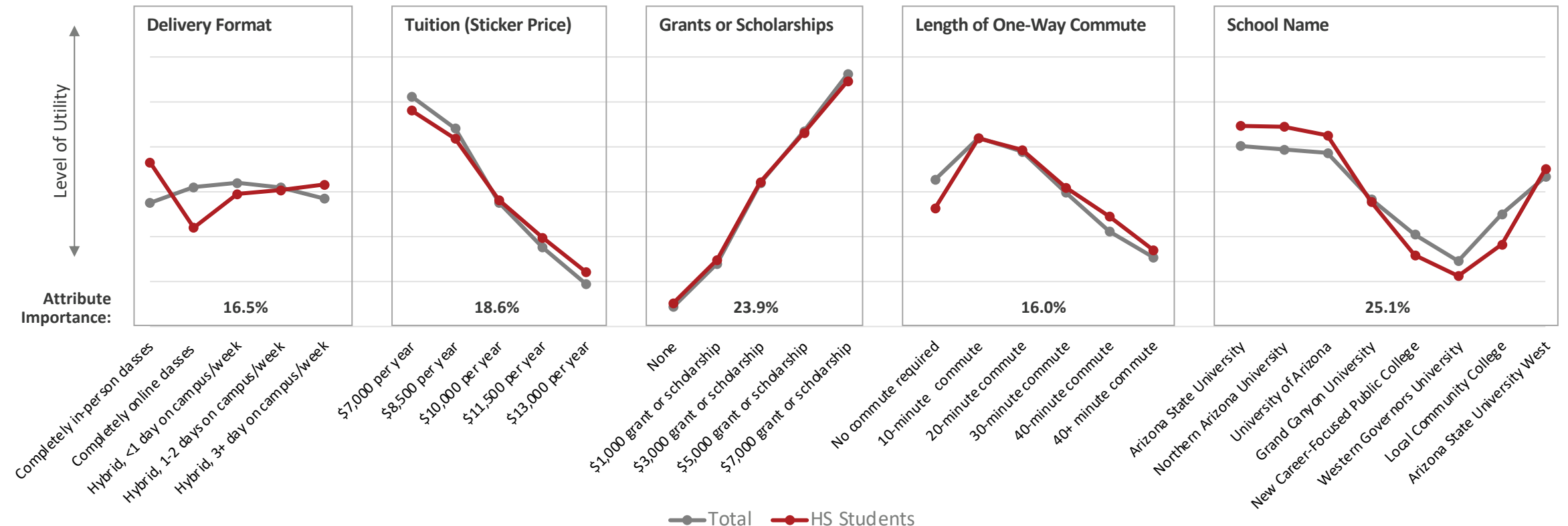
Current College Students

Non-Degreed Adults

Level of Utility by Attribute

Conjoint Data | Average Utility and Importance Level; n=252

The following graphs capture the relative utility of each level feature tested in the conjoint analysis. The slope of each line shows the disparity in preference between each attribute level. The 'Attribute Importance' captures the average importance of each attribute as a share of 100%.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Overview – Young Adult Prospects

Young adult prospective students have a higher relative interest in taking classes online than other groups do.

Overall Population

High School Students

Young Adult Prospects

Parents

Current College Students

Non-Degreed Adults

Level of Utility by Attribute

Conjoint Data | Average Utility and Importance Level; n= 302

The following graphs capture the relative utility of each level feature tested in the conjoint analysis. The slope of each line shows the disparity in preference between each attribute level. The 'Attribute Importance' captures the average importance of each attribute as a share of 100%.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Overview – Parents

Parents follow a similar trend line to the overall group in terms of relative utility gained from each attribute.

Overall Population

High School Students

Young Adult Prospects

Parents

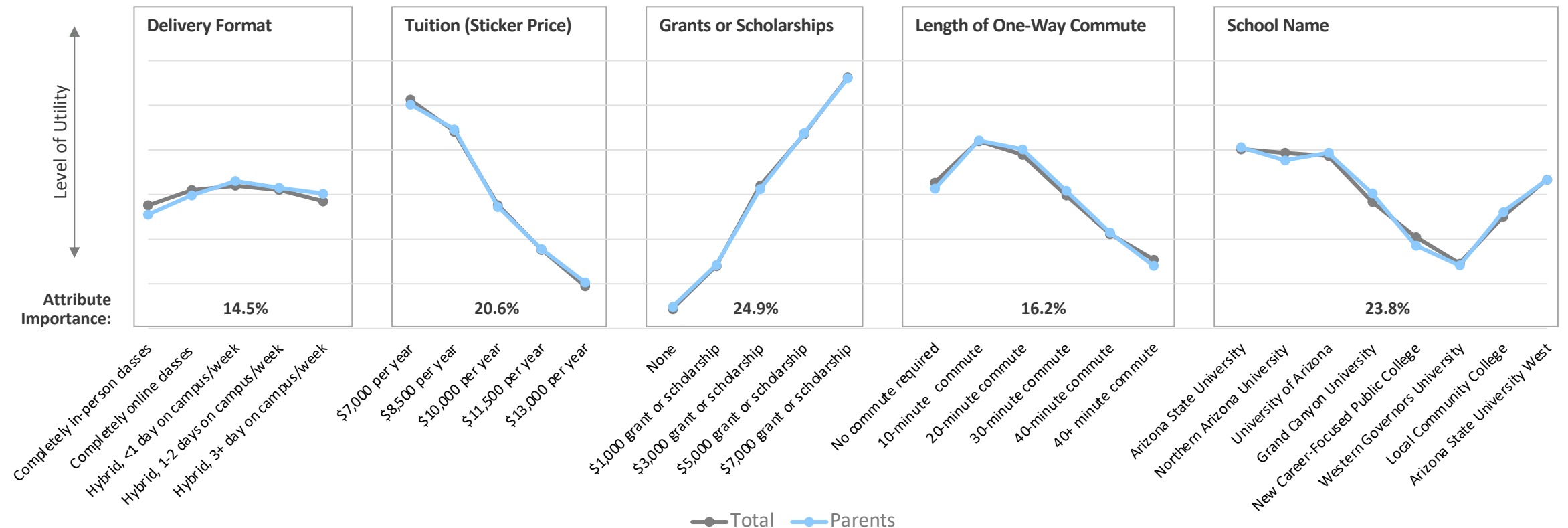
Current College Students

Non-Degreed Adults

Level of Utility by Attribute

Conjoint Data | Average Utility and Importance Level; n= 157

The following graphs capture the relative utility of each level feature tested in the conjoint analysis. The slope of each line shows the disparity in preference between each attribute level. The 'Attribute Importance' captures the average importance of each attribute as a share of 100%.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Overview – Current College Students

Current college students have a higher interest in in-person classes than online classes when compared with the overall groups. The current student group is also more sensitive to changes in scholarship or grant offerings.

Overall Population

High School Students

Young Adult Prospects

Parents

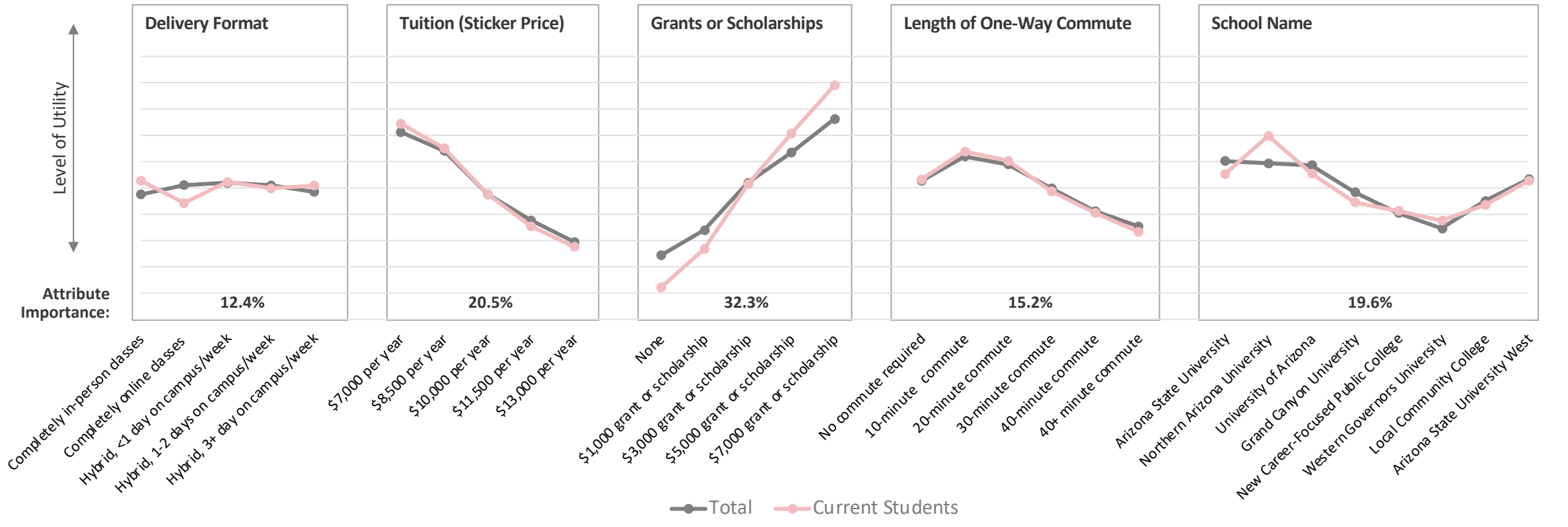
Current College Students

Non-Degreed Adults

Level of Utility by Attribute

Conjoint Data | Average Utility and Importance Level; n= 161

The following graphs capture the relative utility of each level feature tested in the conjoint analysis. The slope of each line shows the disparity in preference between each attribute level. The 'Attribute Importance' captures the average importance of each attribute as a share of 100%.



CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Utility Overview – Non-Degreed Adults

Non-degreed adults show the highest interest in completely online classes when compared with the overall surveyed population.

Overall Population

High School Students

Young Adult Prospects

Parents

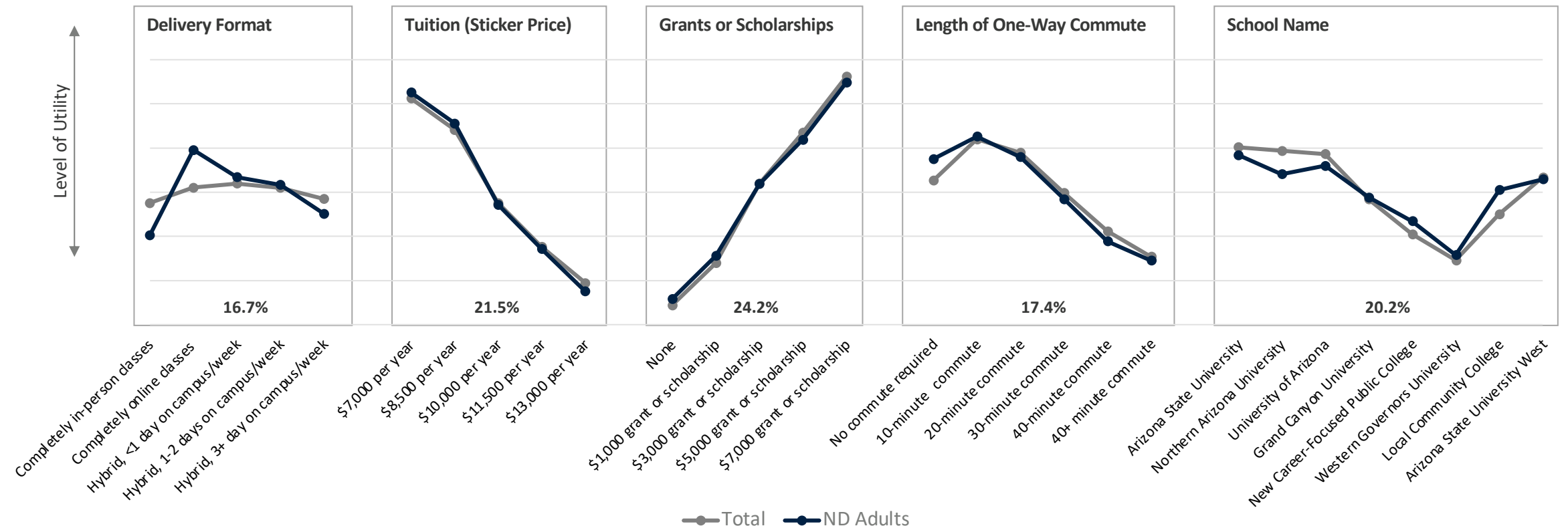
Current College Students

Non-Degreed Adults

Level of Utility by Attribute

Conjoint Data | Average Utility and Importance Level; n=304

The following graphs capture the relative utility of each level feature tested in the conjoint analysis. The slope of each line shows the disparity in preference between each attribute level. The 'Attribute Importance' captures the average importance of each attribute as a share of 100%.

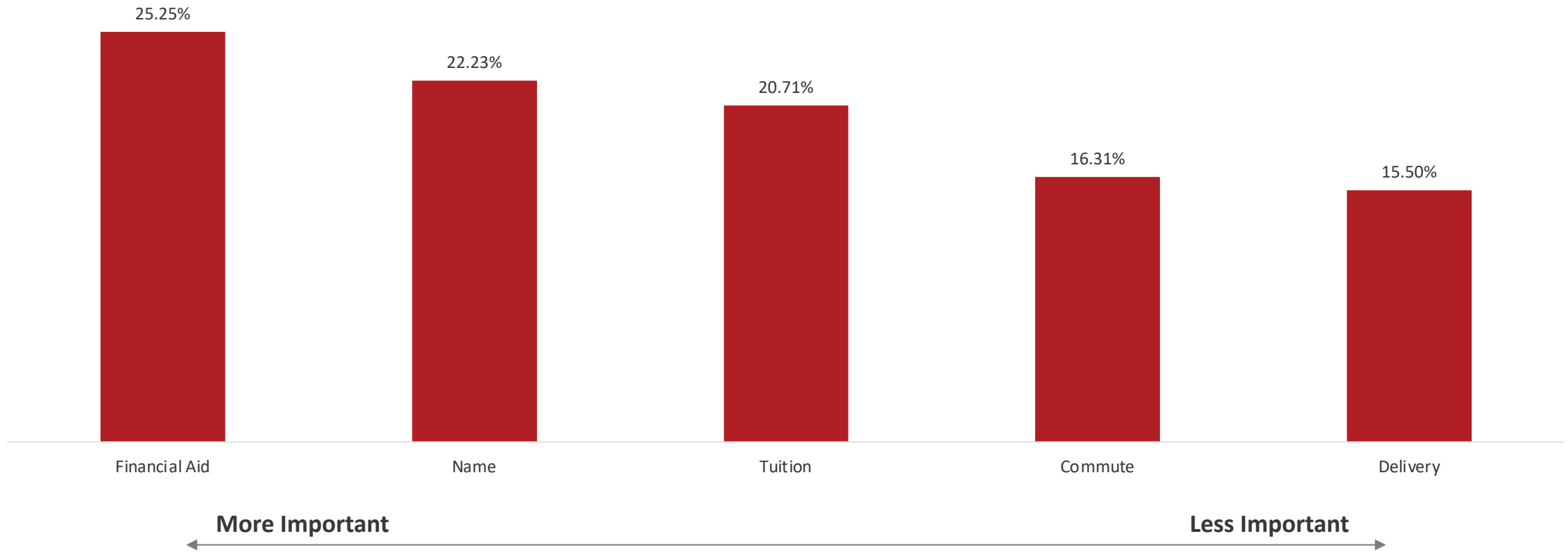


CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Attribute Importance – Overall

Funding from scholarships and grants lead out as the most important attribute in making an enrollment decision. The brand name and tuition sticker price follow closely behind.

Attribute Importance | Overall

Conjoint Data | Importance Level | n= 1,176

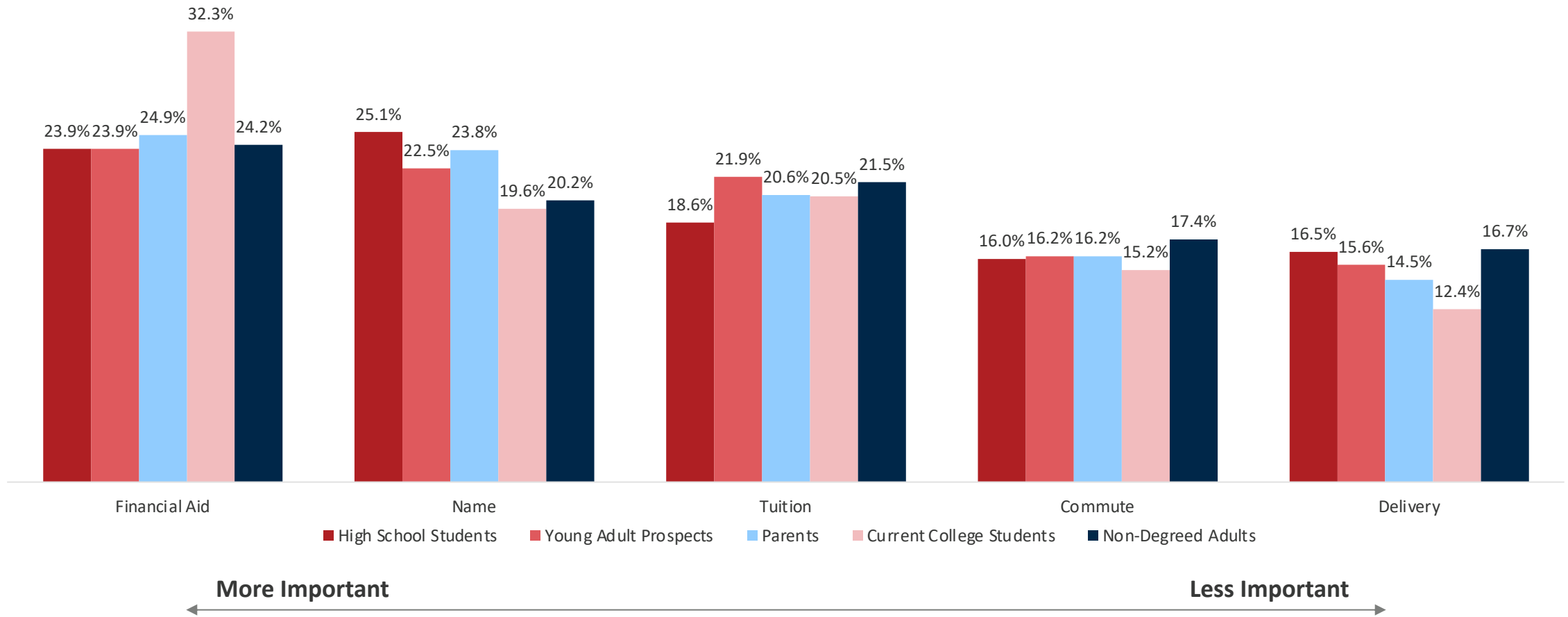


CONJOINT ANALYSIS | Attribute Importance – By Population

For most groups, scholarships and grants are still the most important attribute. However, for high school students, the brand name is the most important and tuition is a less important attribute.

Attribute Importance | Overall

Conjoint Data | Importance Level | n = 1,176

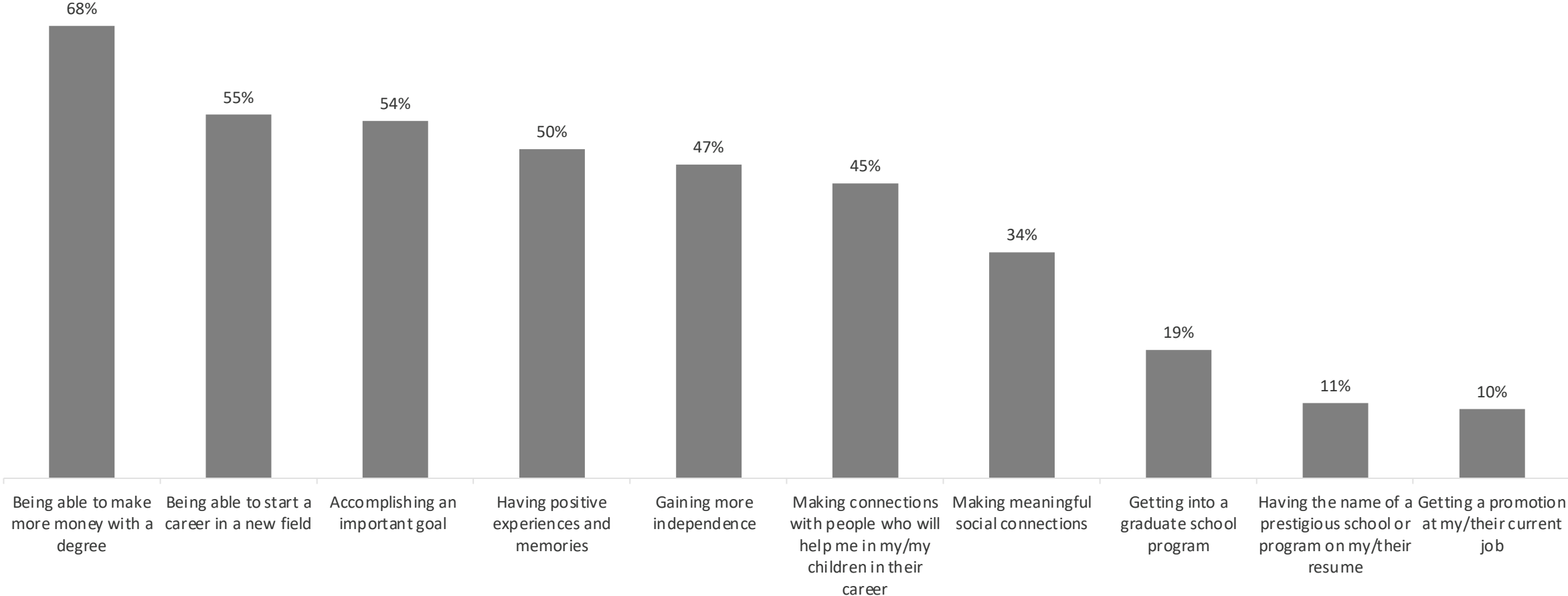


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Critical Outcomes of a Degree – Overall

Being able to make more money with a degree is a key outcome of pursuing a degree, as well as being able to start a ca

Most Important Outcomes of a College Degree | Overall

Multiple Select; n=1,176

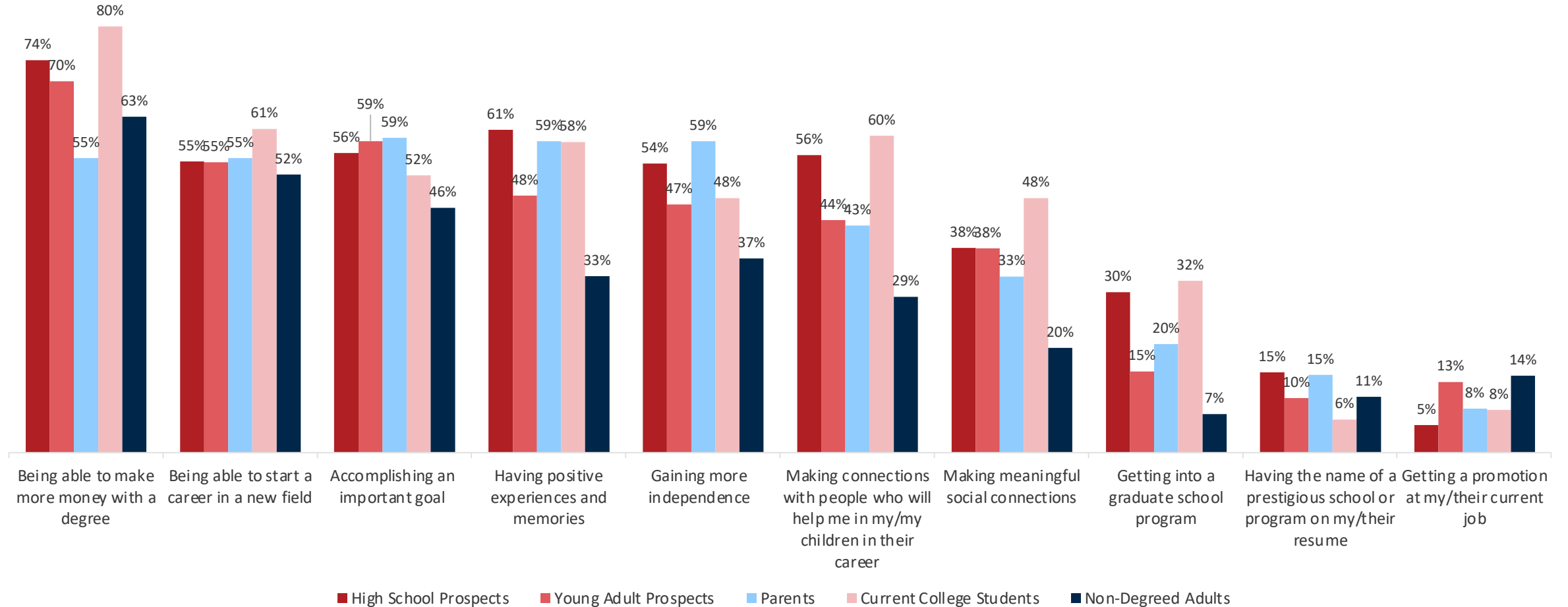


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Critical Outcomes of a Degree by Group

Outcomes seen as most important vary by population. For example, making memories and building connections ranked low in importance for non-degreed adults, while parents and high school students ranked independence higher than other groups.

Most Important Outcomes of a College Degree

Multiple Select; n=1,176

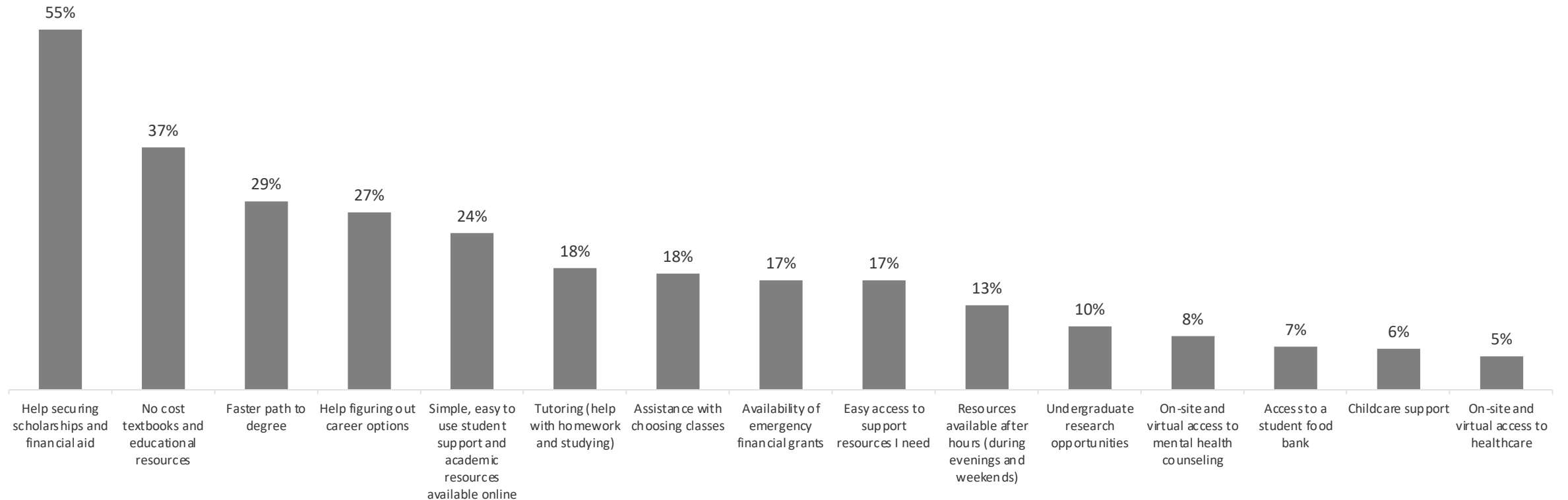


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Most Critical Resources – Overall

Help with financial aid, educational resources, and career assistance ranked highly as valuable resources for all surveyed populations.

Most Critical Resources | Overall

Multiple Select; n=1,176

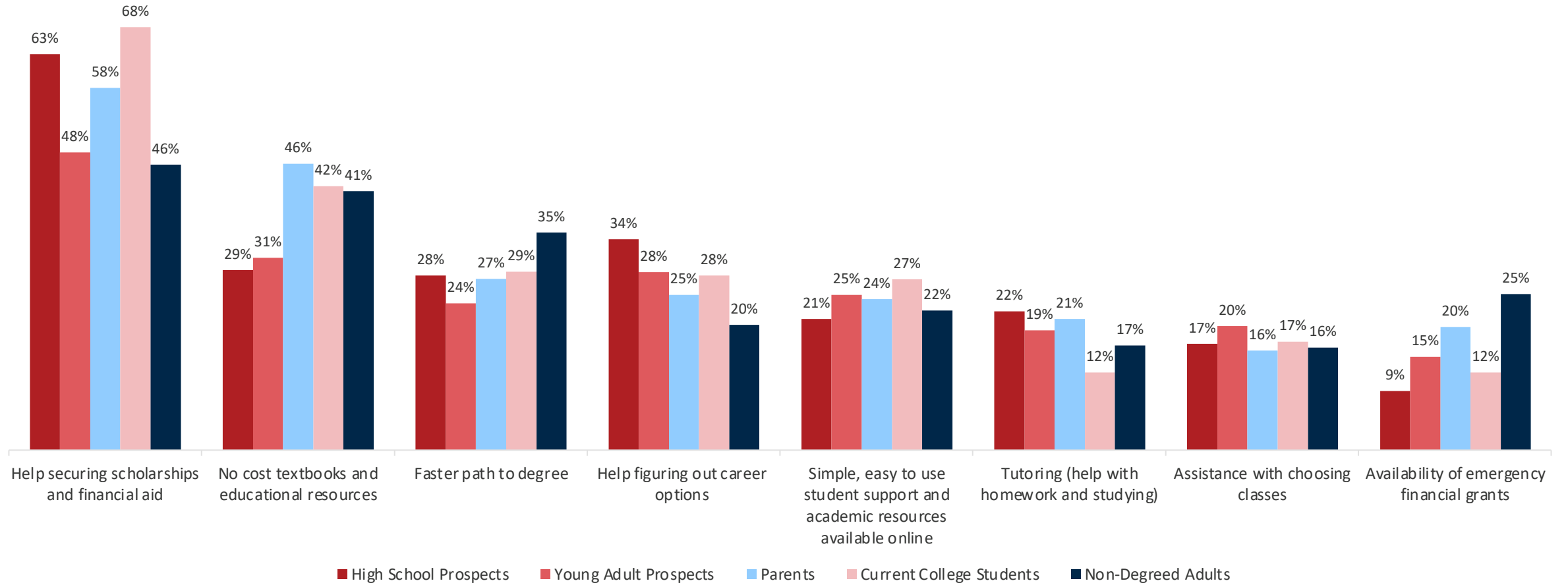


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Most Critical Resources by Group

High school students value help with securing scholarships and financial aid even more highly than young adult and non-degreed adult prospects.

Most Critical Resources (Top 8)

Multiple Select; n=1,176

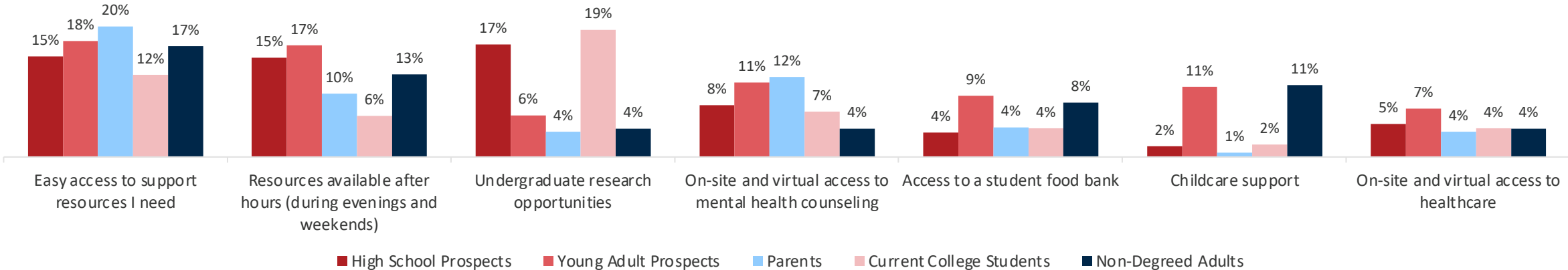


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Most Critical Resources – By Group (Continued)

Among the less popular resources, there was strong variation in how services were valued among various populations. For example, availability of emergency financial grants were important to non-degreed adults, while high school prospects highly valued undergraduate research opportunities.

Most Critical Resources (Next 7)

Multiple Select; n=1,176

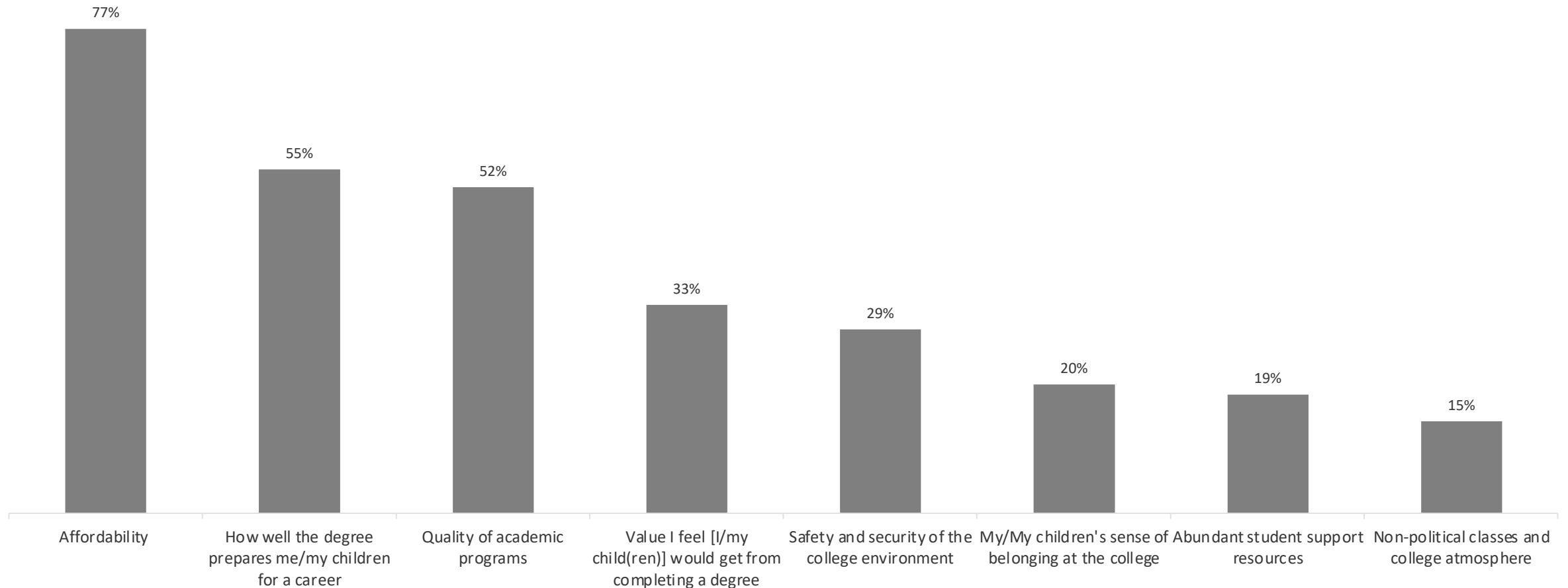


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Influencing Factors – Overall

Affordability and the level at which a degree prepares students for a career are the most influential factors for degree consideration. Non-political classes and atmosphere rank low among influencing factors.

Most Influential Factors in Enrollment Decision

Multiple Select; n=1,176

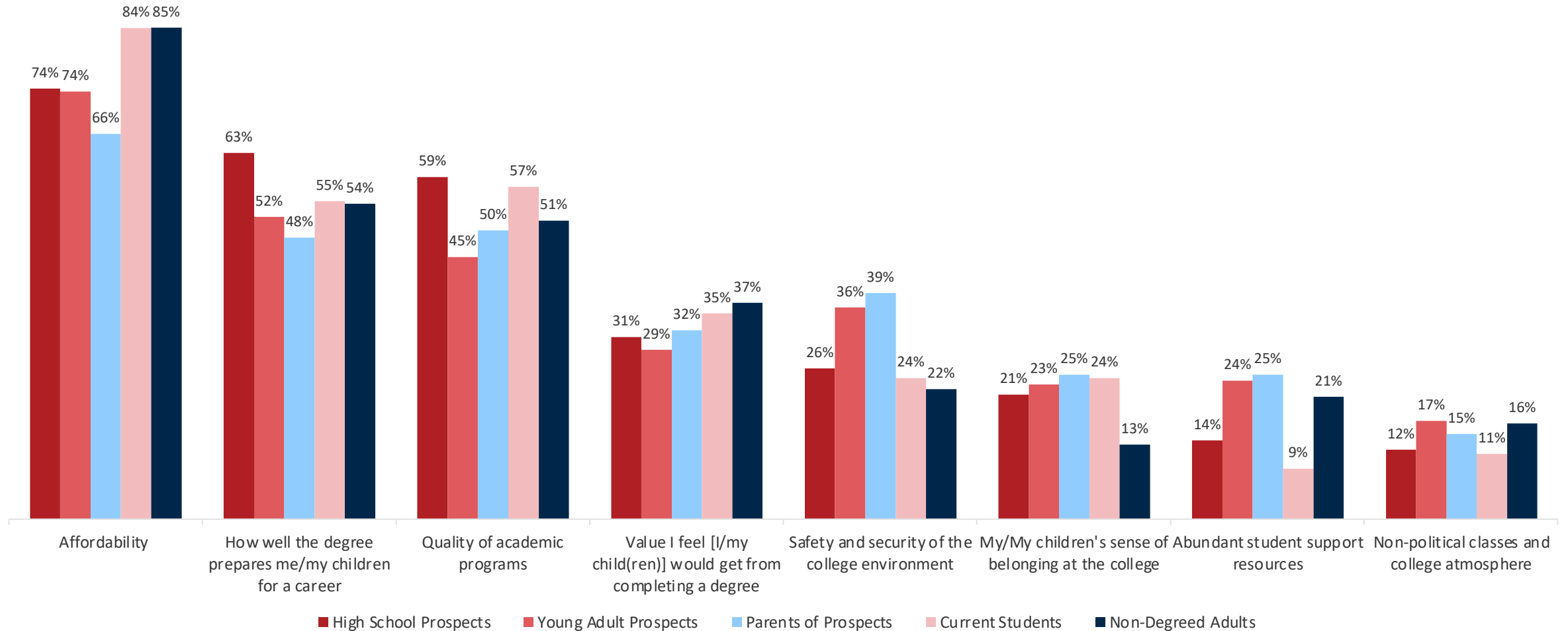


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Influencing Factors – By Group

Affordability is an especially influential factor for non-degreed adults. High school students show a high level of interest in how well the degree prepares them for a career.

Most Influential Factors in Enrollment Decision

Multiple Select; n=1,176

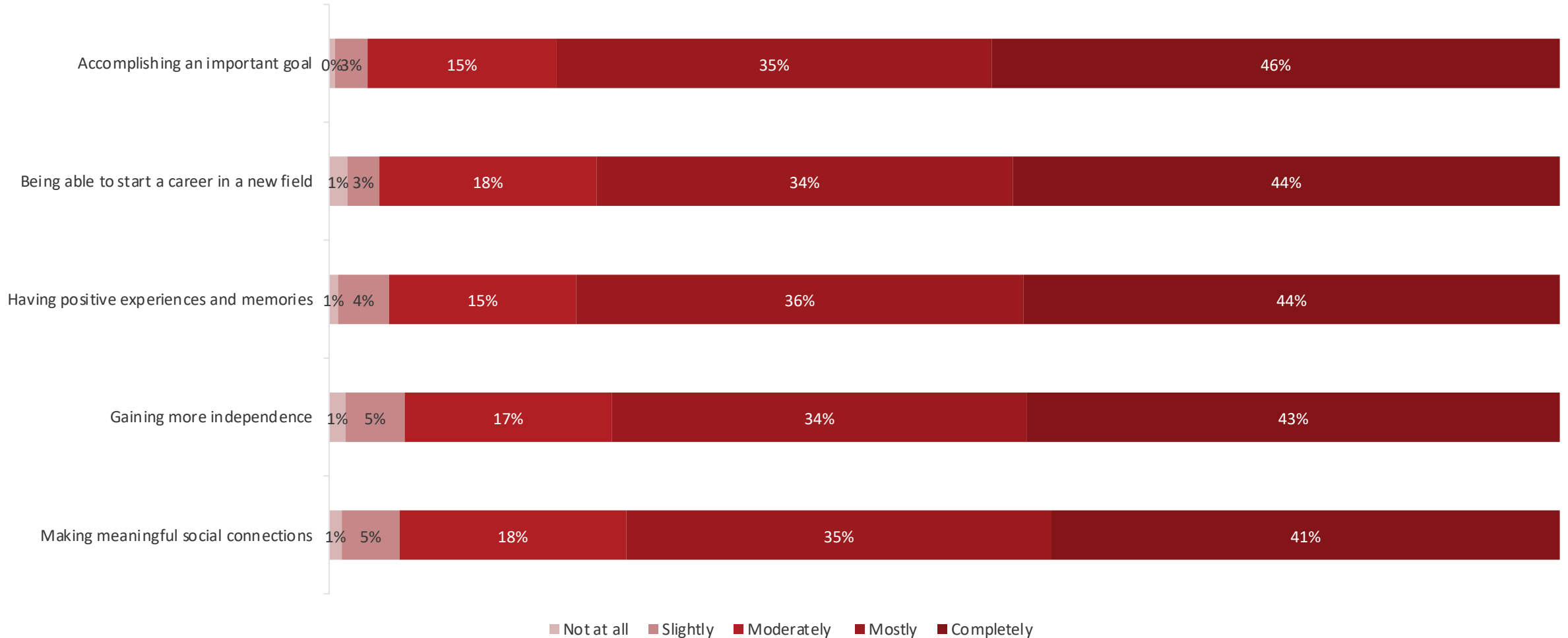


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Satisfaction with Current Arizona Landscape – Overall

Most students and parents in Arizona feel that existing postsecondary education options are satisfactory in delivering the value they look for in their education.

Outcome Accomplishment in Arizona | Overall Population (Top 5)

Single Select; n=1,176

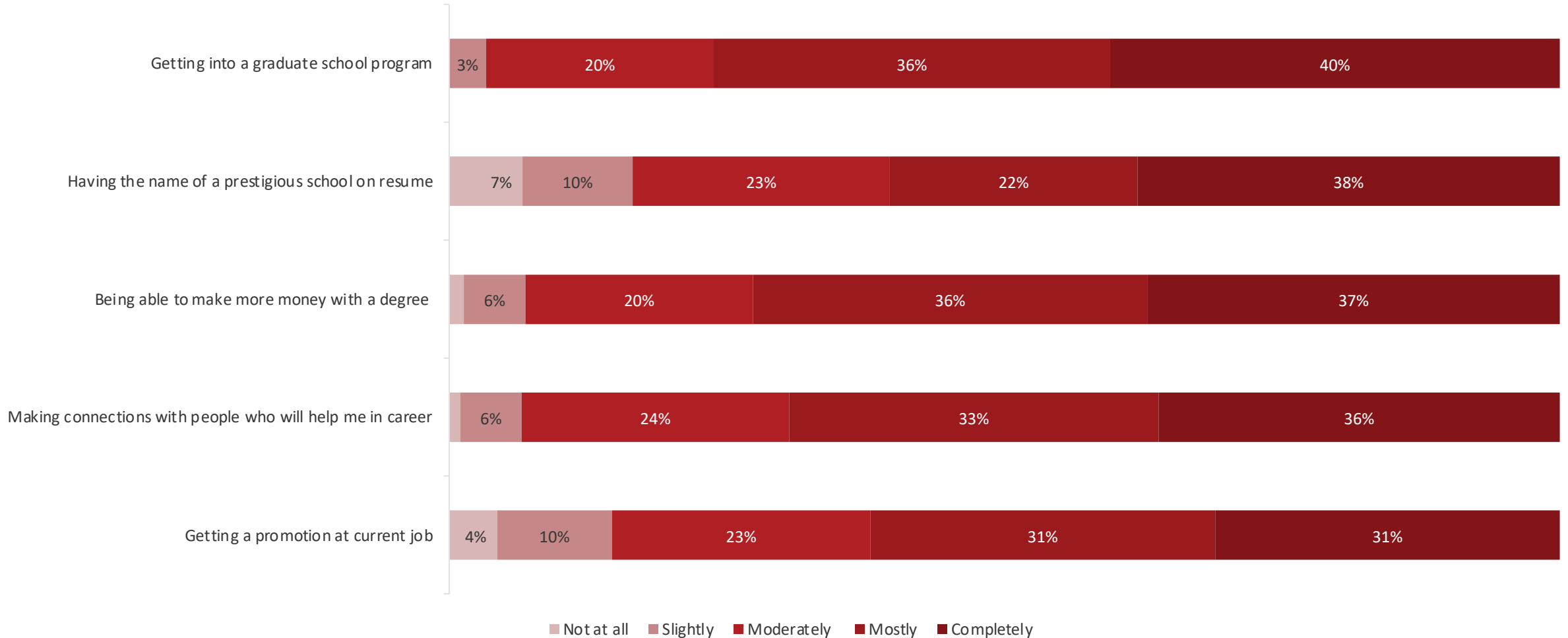


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Satisfaction with Current Arizona Landscape – Overall

Students and parents in Arizona are pleased with how existing postsecondary options deliver value, though there is relatively less satisfaction with how well existing schools prepare students for a promotion at their current job.

Outcome Accomplishment in Arizona | Overall Population (Next 5)

Single Select; n=1,176

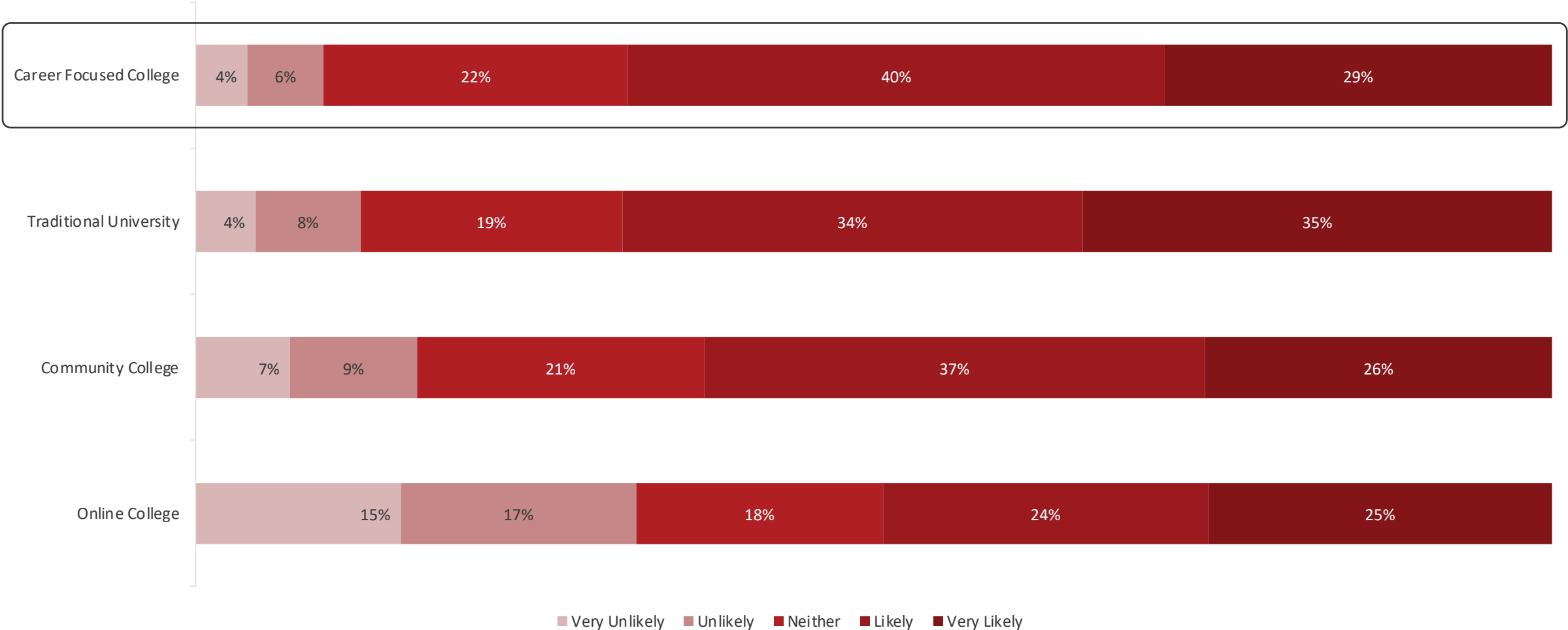


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Preference for School Type – Overall

In the overall population surveyed, traditional university is the most favored option. A career focused offering, like the new option proposed by NAU, draws a higher likelihood of consideration than online or community colleges.

Preference for School Type | Overall Population

Single Select; n=1,176

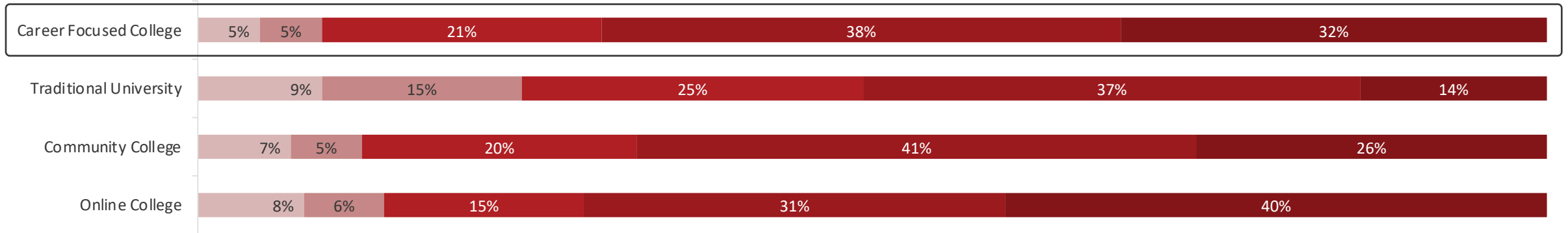


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Preference for School Type – Non-Degreed and Young Adults

Preference for traditional universities is lower among non-degreed adults, while online or career focused offerings hold more appeal.

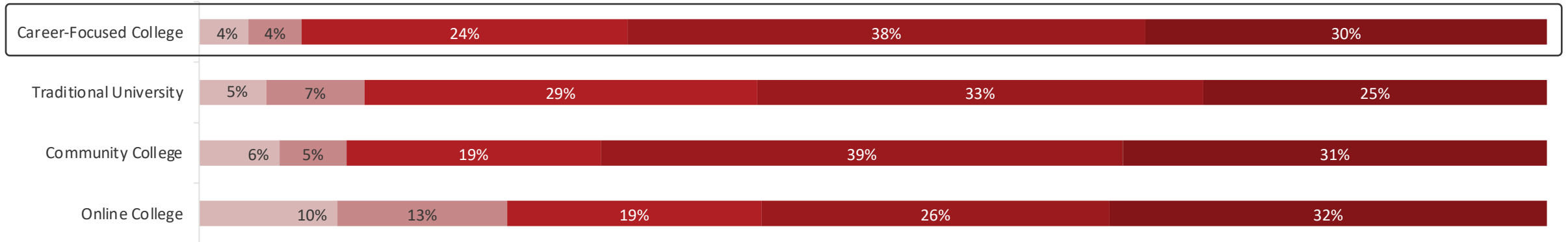
Preference for School Type | Non-Degreed Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=304



Preference for School Type | Young Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=302



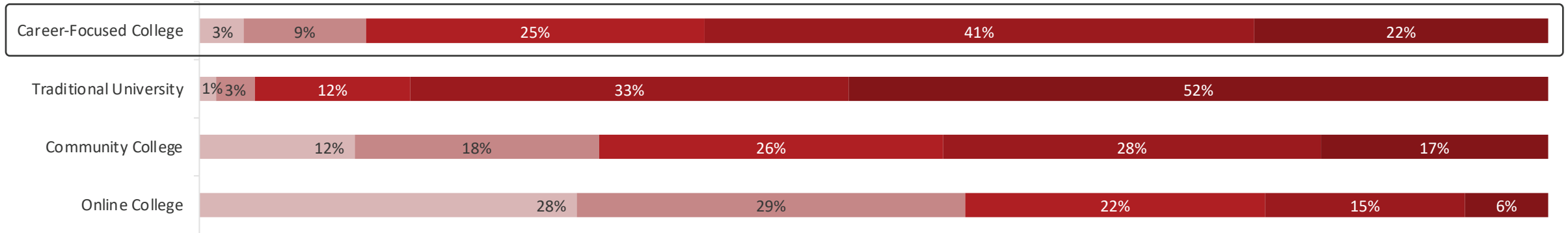
Very Unlikely Unlikely Neither Likely Very Likely

ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Preference for School Type – High School Prospects and Parents

High school students have a much stronger likelihood of considering traditional universities than other groups and are less interested in a career-focused offering than other groups.

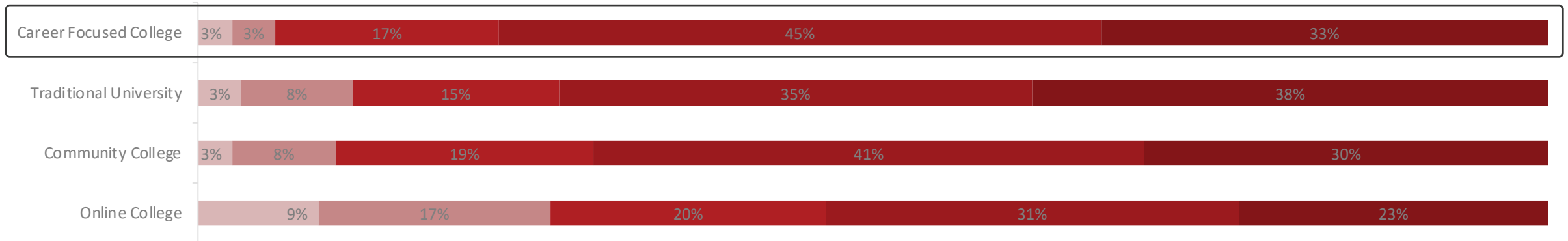
Preference for School Type | High School Prospects

Single Select; n=243



Preference for School Type | Parents of Prospects

Single Select; n=157



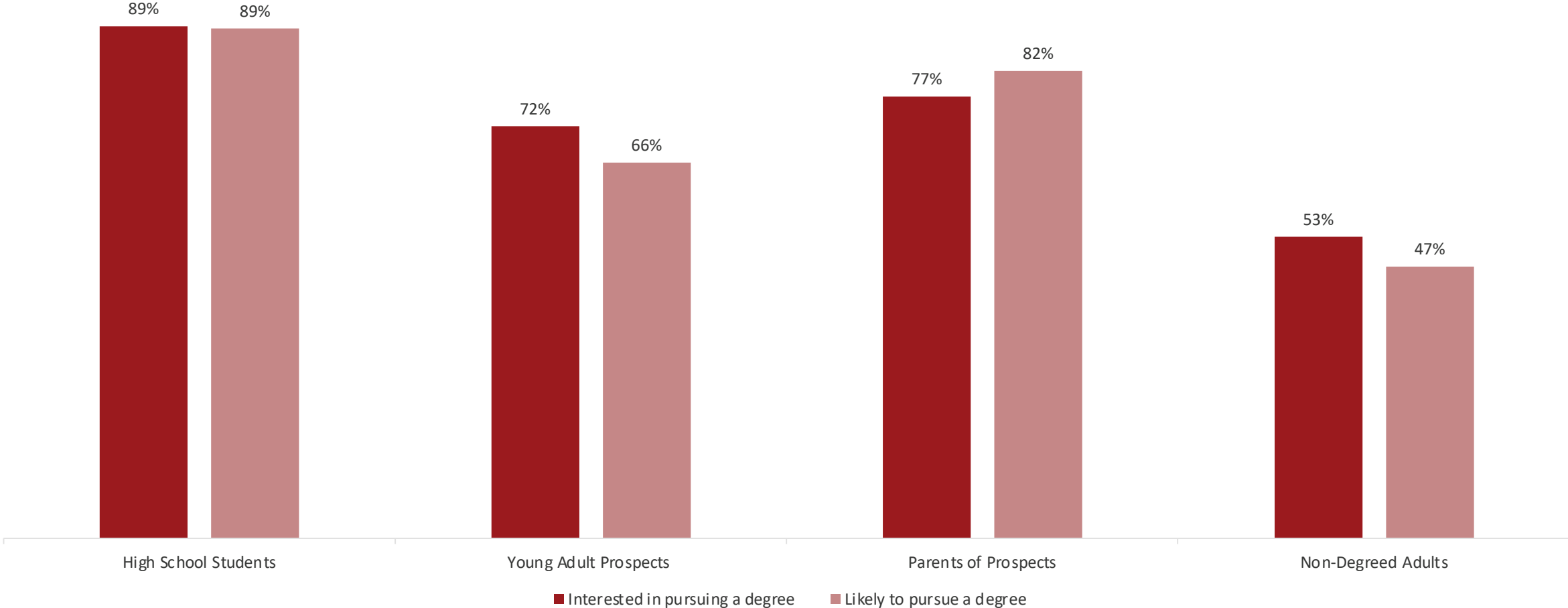
Very Unlikely Unlikely Neither Likely Very Likely

ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Interest and Likelihood of Degree – By Group

High school students and their parents express the strongest interest in pursuing a degree. Non-degreed adults ages 18-49 have the lowest levels of interest and likelihood to pursue a degree.

Interest and Likelihood of Pursuing a Degree

'Top 2' Responses; n=1,015

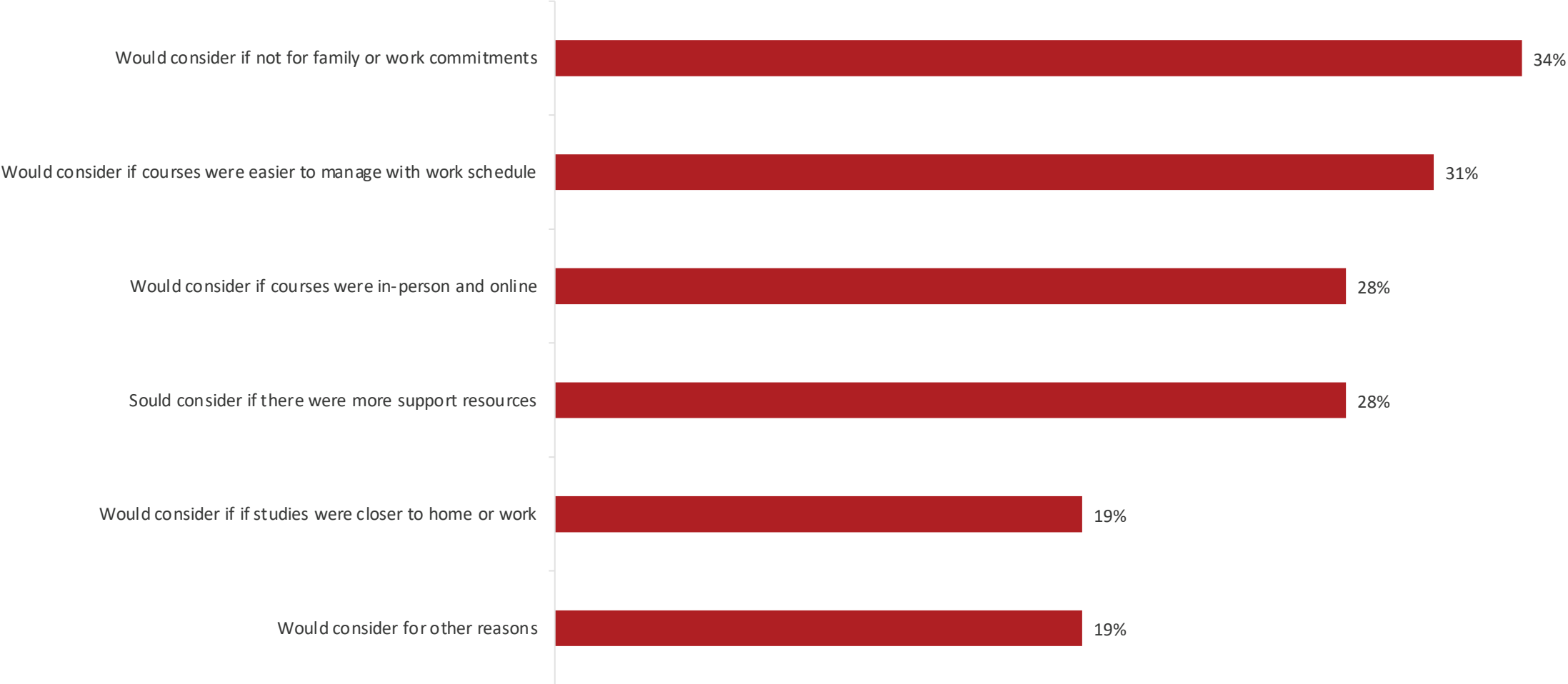


ENROLLMENT DRIVERS | Uninterested and Unlikely Respondents

Among the small number of students and parents who marked that they were both very uninterested and unlikely to pursue a degree, work and family commitments, as well as work schedules tended to be the most limiting factors.

Enrollment Drivers for 'Very Uninterested' and 'Very Unlikely' Respondents

Multiple Select; n=32*



*Note: Low sample size. This question was only shown to respondents who marked that they were both uninterested and unlikely to pursue a degree.

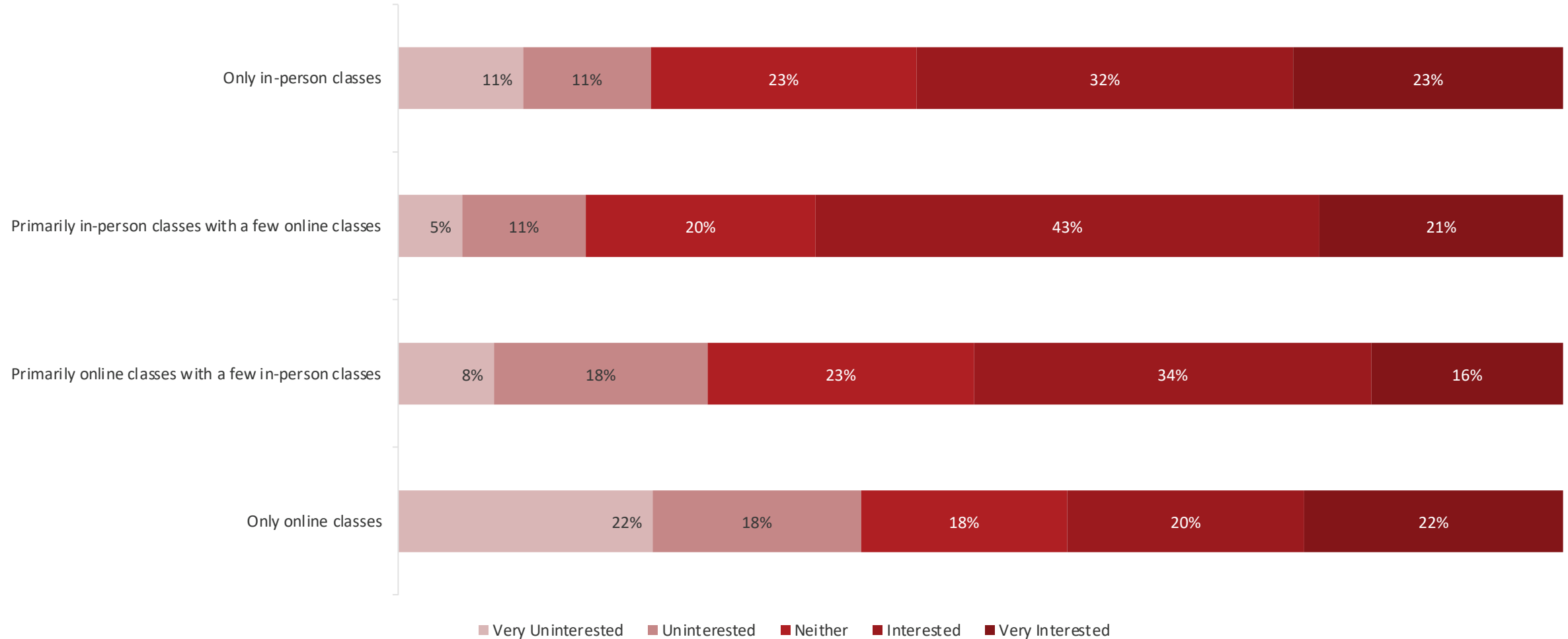
Q10 – “You shared that you/your children are very uninterested and very unlikely to pursue a college degree in the next 5 years. What, if anything, would make you/your children consider pursuing a degree? Select all that apply.”

DELIVERY | Online and In-Person Preferences – Overall

A hybrid format with primarily in-person classes and some online classes is the delivery format that drives the most interest among most students and parents.

Online and In-Person Class Preferences | Overall Population

Single Select; n=1,176

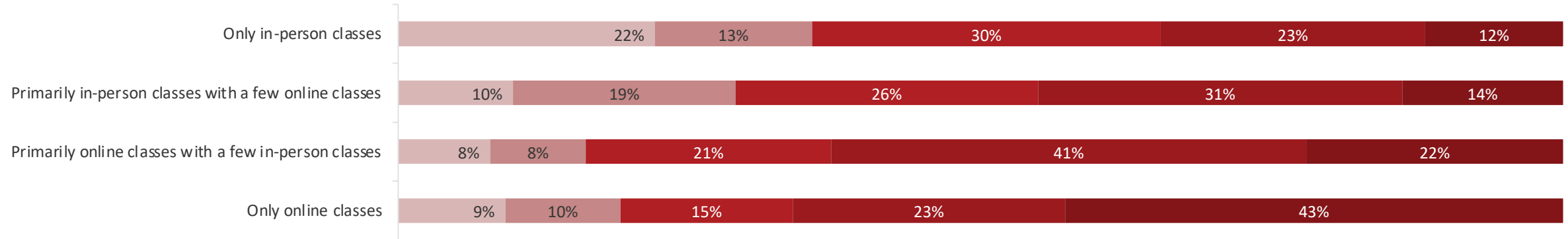


DELIVERY | Online and In-Person Preferences – Non-Degreed and Young Adults

Non-Degreed adults have a stronger preference for online and hybrid classes with mostly online delivery than other groups.

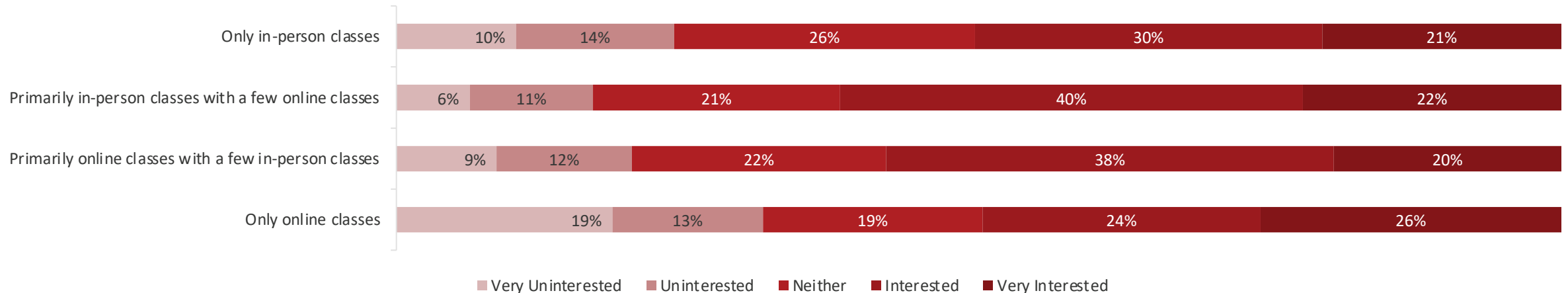
Online and In-Person Class Preferences | Non-Degreed Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=304



Online and In-Person Class Preferences | Young Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=302

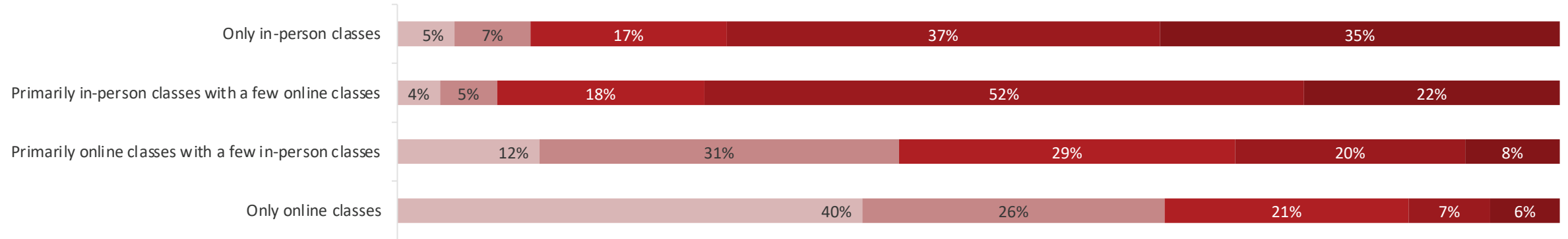


DELIVERY | Online and In-Person Preferences – High School Prospects and Parents

High school students and their parents exhibit stronger preferences for in-person classes over online options.

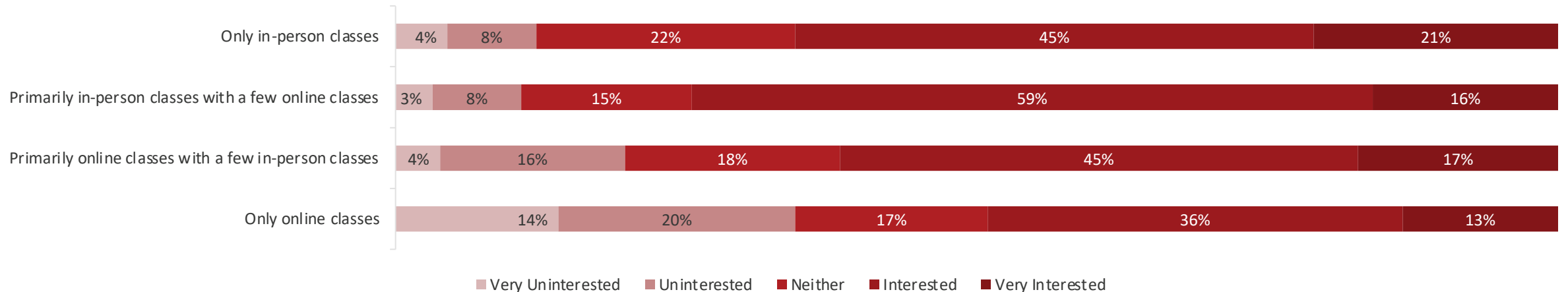
Online and In-Person Class Preferences | High School Prospects

Single Select; n=252



Online and In-Person Class Preferences | Parents of Prospects

Single Select; n=157

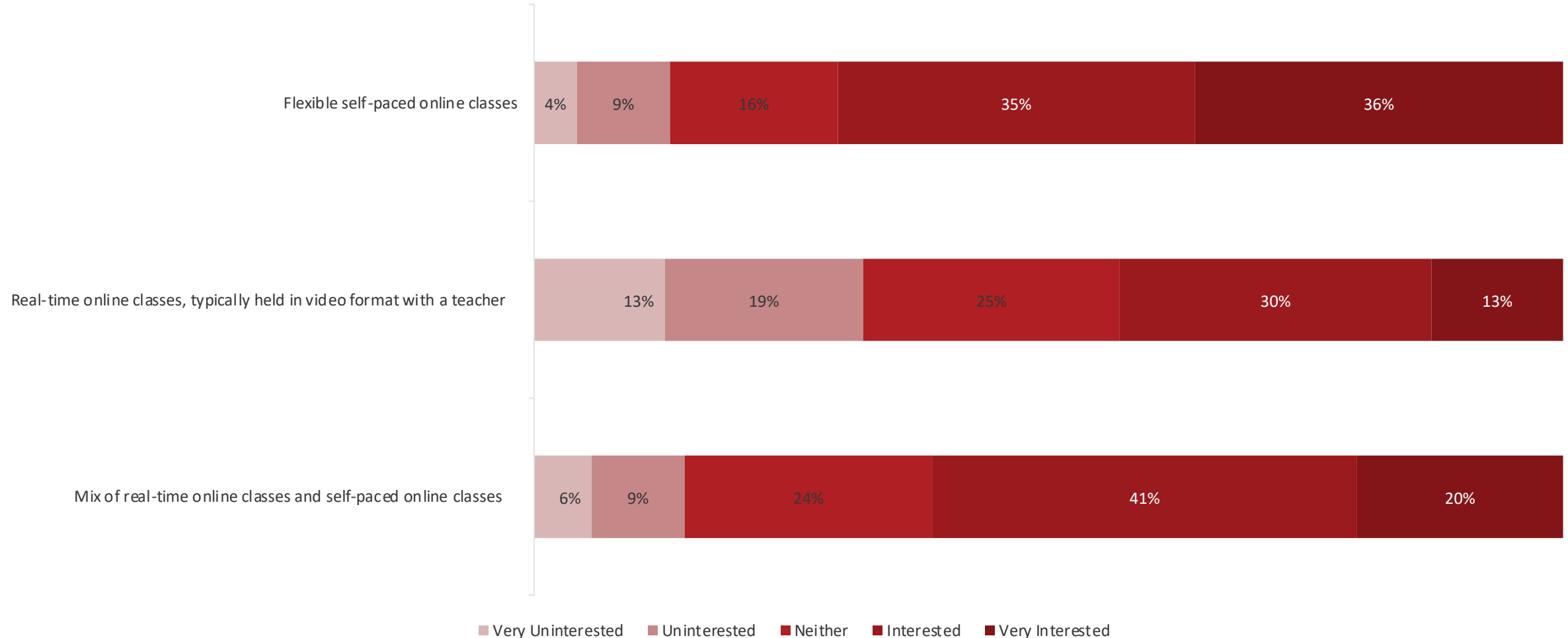


DELIVERY | Online Class Options – Overall

When it comes to online class options, the general preference tends to be for flexible self-paced options over real-time delivery options.

Online Class Preferences | Overall Population

Single Select; n=1,139

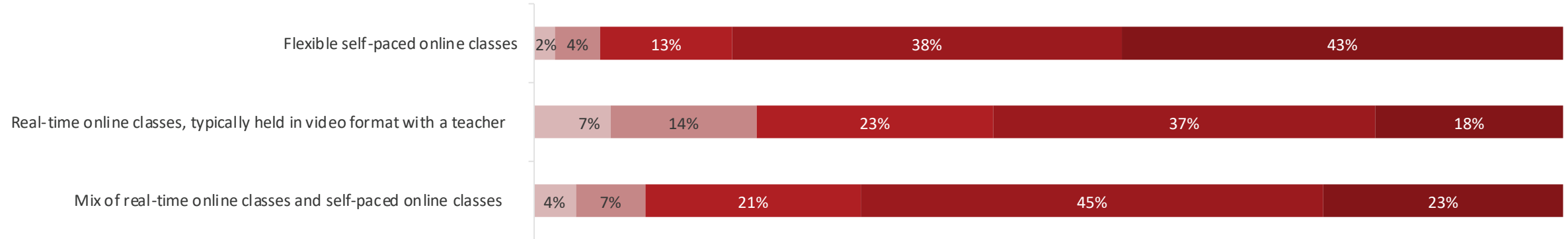


DELIVERY | Online Class Options – Non-Degreed and Young Adults

Both non-degreed adults and young adult prospective students exhibit stronger interest in flexible self-paced courses for online course delivery.

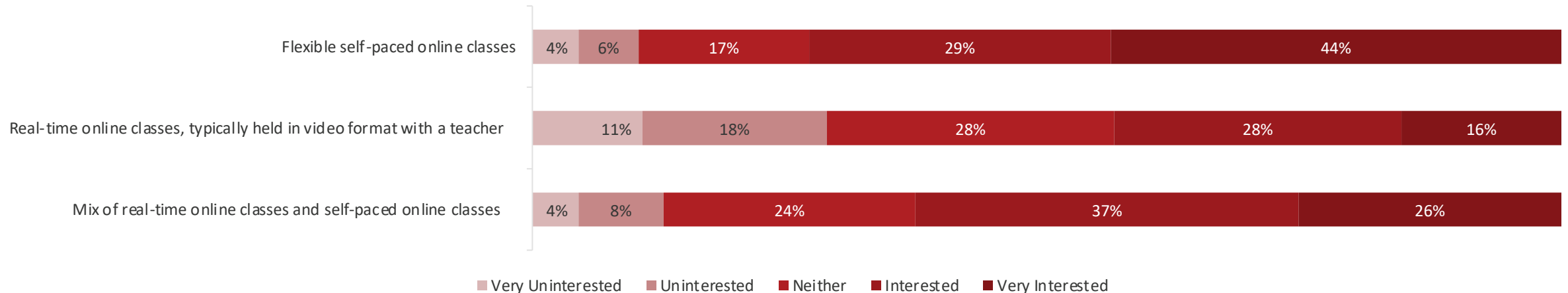
Online Class Preferences | Non-Degreed Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=296



Online Class Preferences | Young Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=290

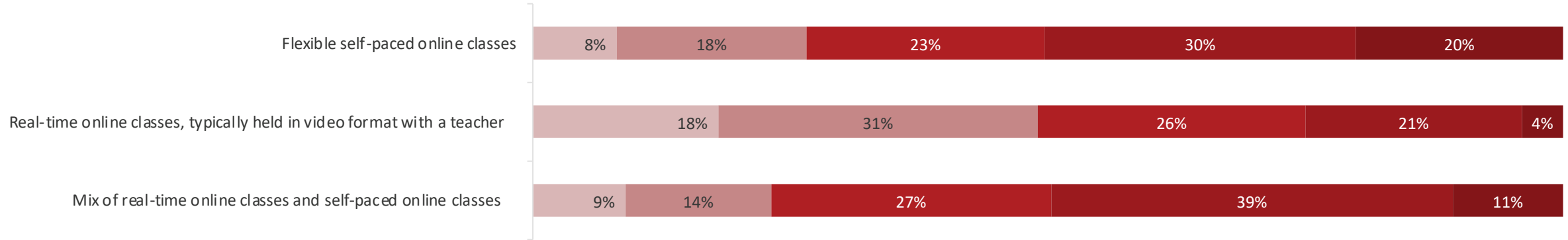


DELIVERY | Online Class Options – High School Prospects and Parents

While high school students and parents prefer self-paced online courses over real-time format, their level of interest is less than that of non-degreed adult and young adult prospects.

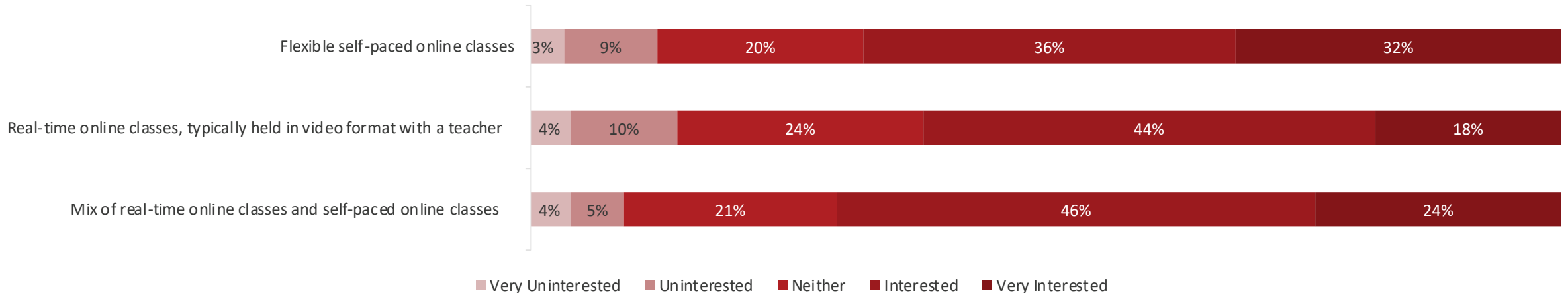
Online Class Preferences | High School Prospects

Single Select; n=239



Online Class Preferences | Parents of Prospects

Single Select; n=155

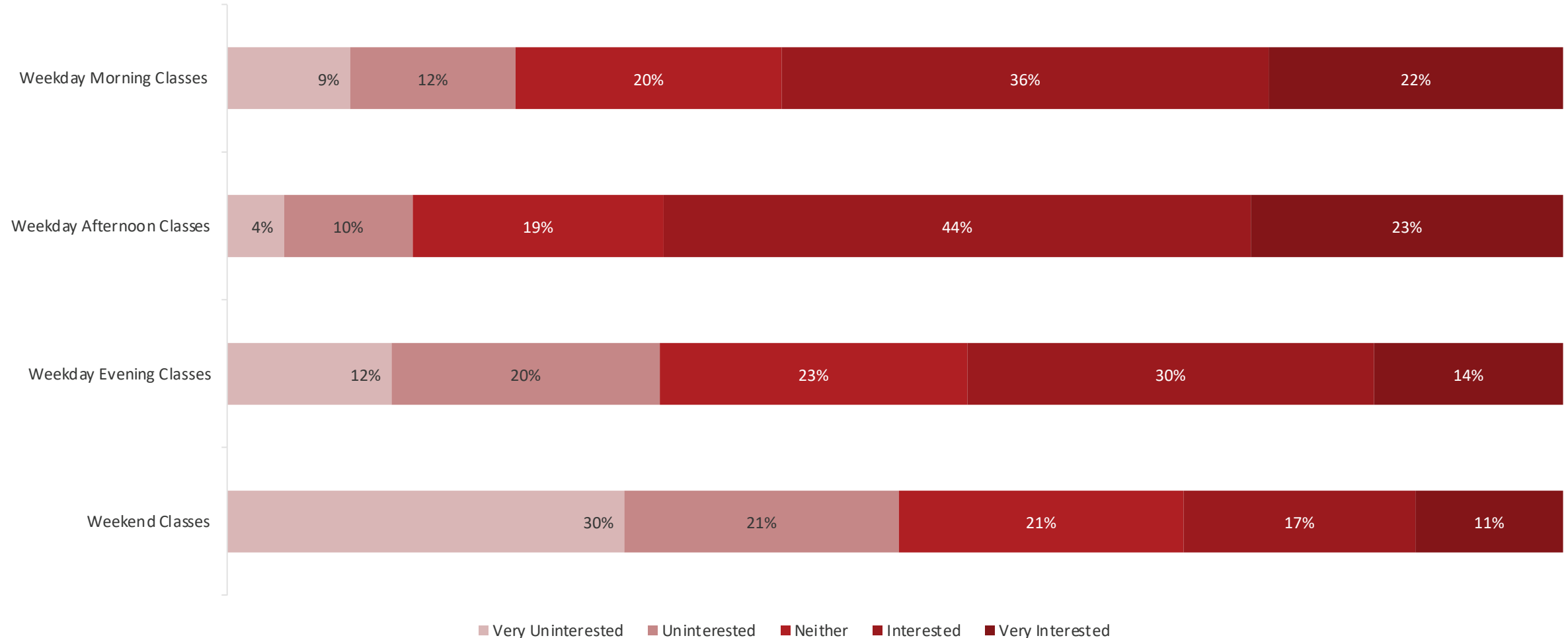


DELIVERY | In-Person Class Options – Overall

Weekday morning and afternoon classes have the highest level of general interest. Weekend and evening classes command lower levels of interest among prospective students and other groups.

In-Person Class Preferences | Overall Population

Single Select; n=1,134

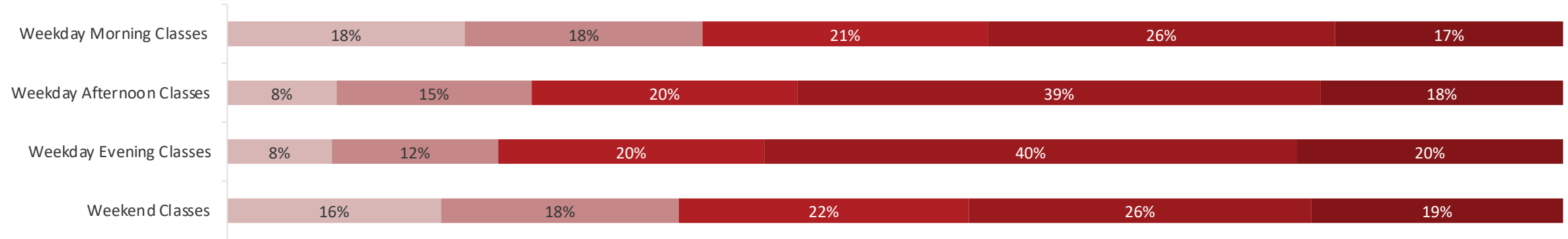


DELIVERY | In-Person Class Options – Non-Degreed and Young Adults

Non-degreed adults have a similar level of interest for each type of in-person class offering. Young adult prospects show a stronger preference for weekday evening classes than other groups.

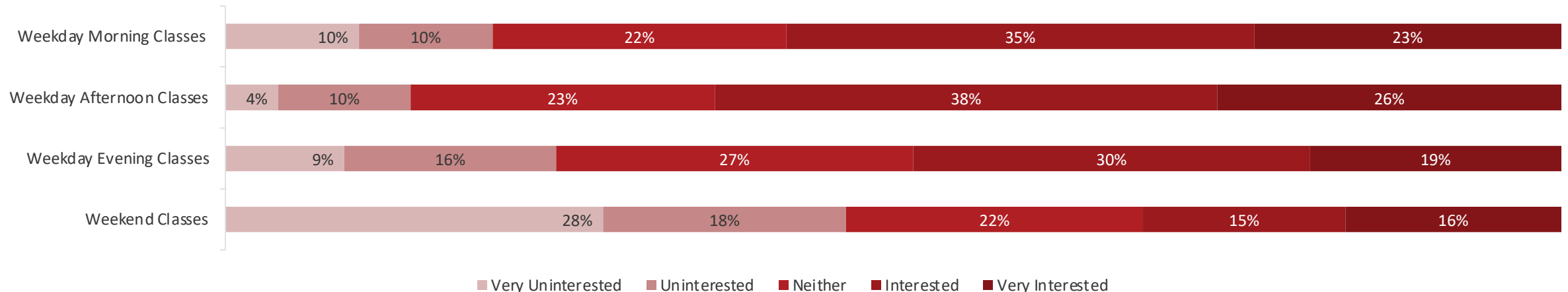
In-Person Class Preferences | Non-Degreed Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=281



In-Person Class Preferences | Young Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=290



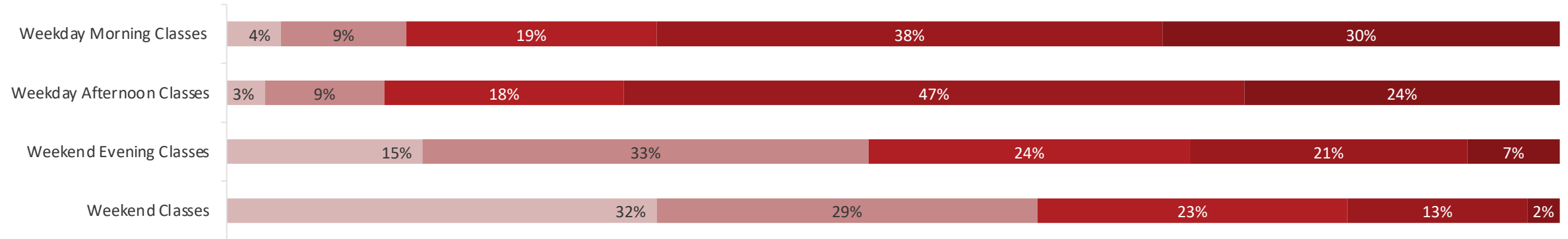
Very Uninterested Uninterested Neither Interested Very Interested

DELIVERY | In-Person Class Options – High School Prospects and Parents

High school students show a stronger preference for weekday morning and afternoon classes and very little interest for weekend classes.

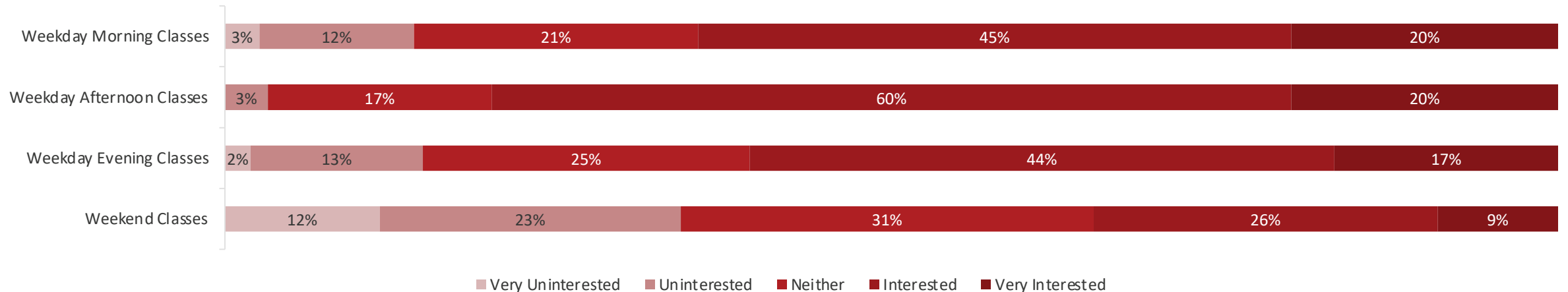
In-Person Class Preferences | High School Prospects

Single Select; n=249



In-Person Class Preferences | Parents of Prospects

Single Select; n=155

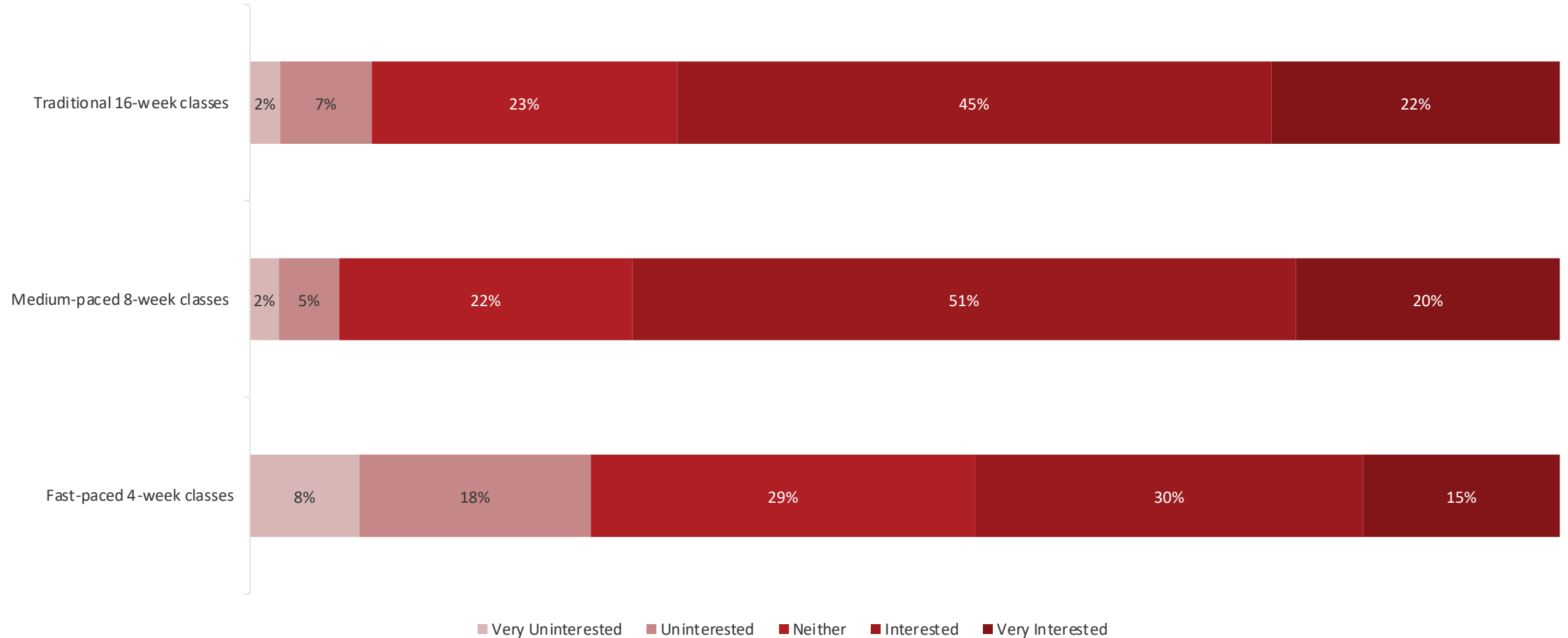


DELIVERY | Class Pace Preferences – Overall

Traditional 16-week classes are the most preferred option, though there is a relatively high level of interest for each course pace option.

Class Pace Preferences | Overall Population

Single Select; n=1,176

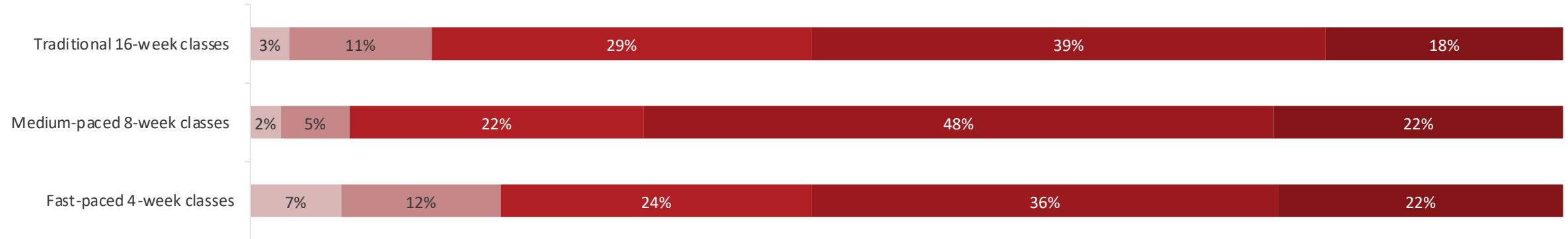


DELIVERY | Class Pace Preferences – Non-Degreed and Young Adults

Non-degreed adult and young adult prospects expressed similar interest in each potential type of class pace option.

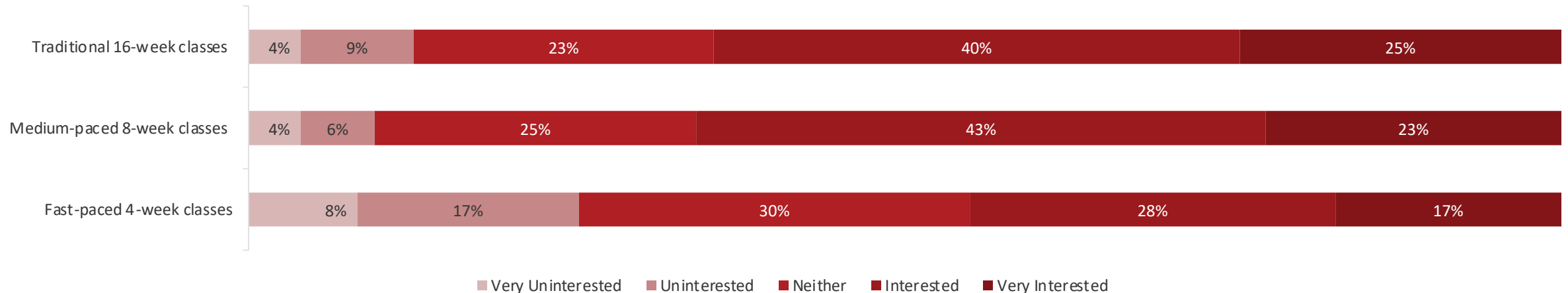
Class Pace Preferences | Non-Degreed Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=304



Class Pace Preferences | Young Adult Prospects

Single Select; n=302

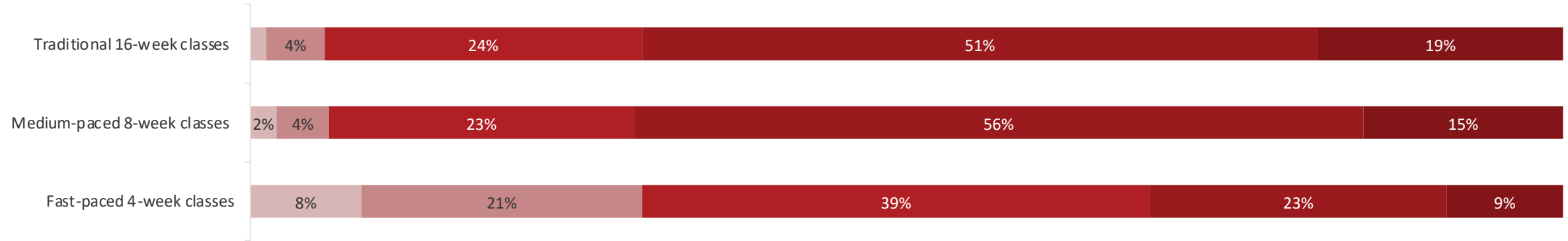


DELIVERY | Class Pace Preferences – High School Prospects and Parents

High school students showed a much lower level of interest in fast-paced 4-week courses than an 8-week or 16-week alternative.

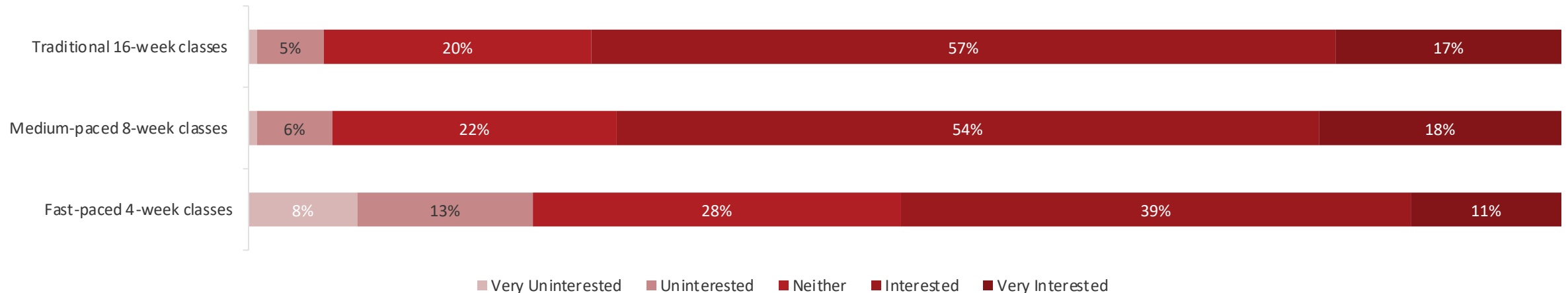
Class Pace Preferences | High School Prospects

Single Select; n=252



Class Pace Preferences | Parents of Prospects

Single Select; n=157



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | College Decision Factors

Qualitative research confirms that cost and financial aid are the top decision factors for students and parents. Other important decision factors include program availability, location, and academic quality.

1st Tier – Most Important for Nearly All Students and Parents



Cost and Financial Aid

2nd Tier – Very Important for Most Students and Parents



Program Availability



Location



Academic Quality

3rd Tier – Important for Many Students and Parents



Safety



Sense of Community



Flexibility



Options to Live on Campus



Accommodation for Special Needs



Accreditation and Transferrable Credits

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Impressions of New University

When students and parents hear about the new university, their attention is caught by the focus on career and the lower cost.



Career Focus

'Career Focus' Catches Students' Attention: Many students comment first on the 'career-focus' feature after hearing a description of the new institution. Students anticipate that a career-focused college would have fewer general education classes and offer a more career-relevant classes and hands-on opportunities. However, some students hear the phrase 'career-focus' and think that it is a trade or technical school.



Brand

Brand is Not the Top Deciding Factor, but Credibility Matters: Most students and parents share that brand is not the most important factor in their decision and they would still consider a new university if it was introduced with an unfamiliar brand. They share that they would check the school's credibility in other ways, like by looking up projected graduation rates, teacher qualities, or reviewing the school's website.

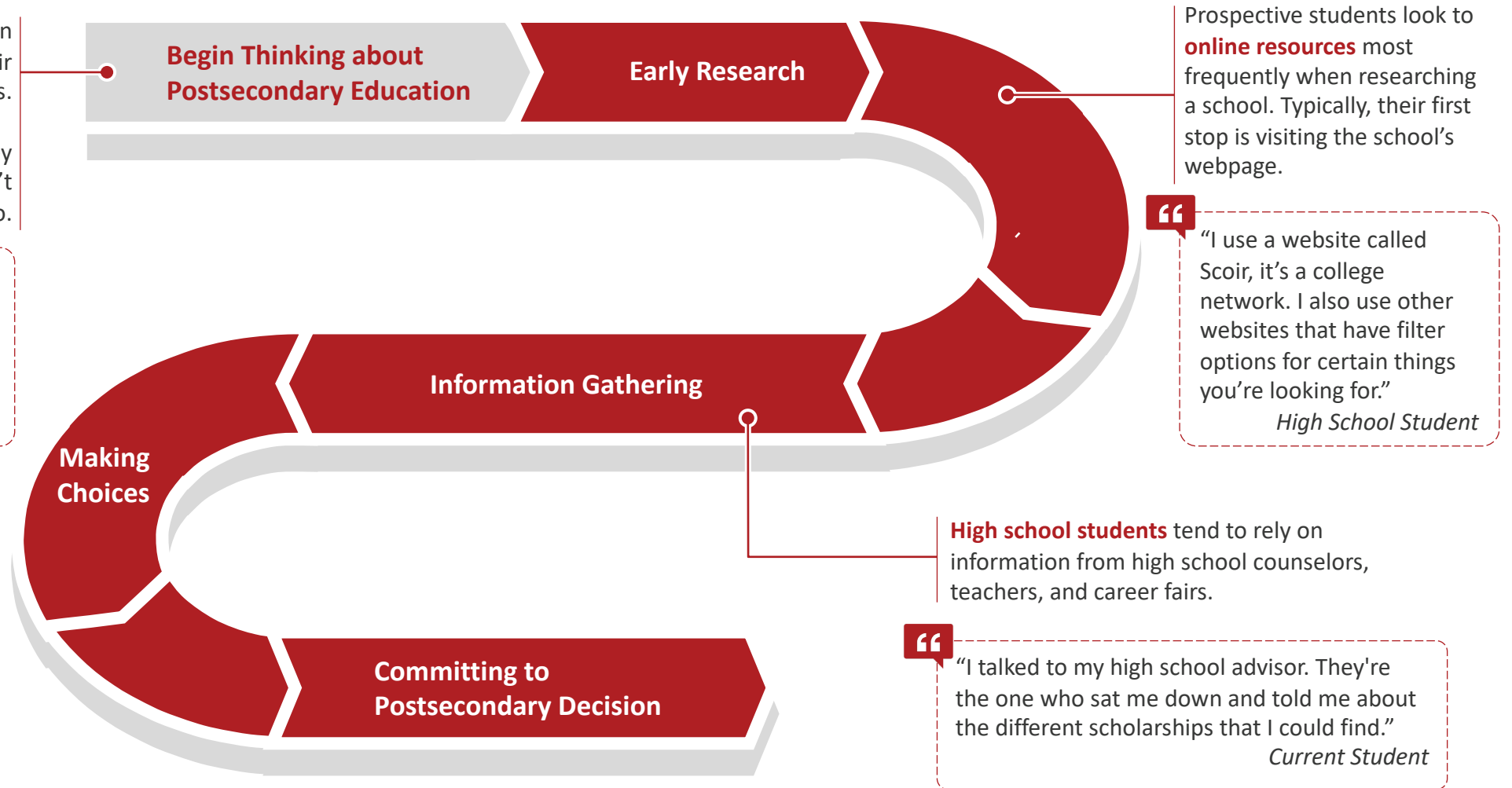


Lower Cost

A Lower Cost is Attractive for Most: The idea of a lower cost university that provides 4-year degrees is compelling to most students and parents. Some share that an annual tuition sticker price of \$7,000 – 8,000 is still higher than what they see as a lower cost option, while others feel that this price would be a welcome cost reduction compared to other universities available in the market.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Student Journey Map

The student journey to college typically starts several years before they begin applying. Many have motivations rooted in family expectations and have always considered going to college as a plan they hope to pursue.



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Motivations

Primary motivations for prospective students considering returning to school include family expectations, career goals, and personal aspirations.

Motivations



Family Expectations

Family expectations and encouragement are strong motivators for many students. Parents often expect their children to pursue higher education, and several students feel a sense of responsibility to fulfill the expectations of their parents or pursue more education than their parents were able to complete.



Career Satisfaction

Some students are motivated to return to school or pursue higher education to reach a specific career goal or because they feel dissatisfied with their current job.



Personal Interest and Aspiration

Students are motivated by their own interests in learning and personal growth. Several share that they enjoy school and have aspired towards college for years.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Emotions and Mindstates

Stress came up most frequently as the emotion experienced by prospective students considering college. In addition to stress, many feel excitement, overwhelm, apprehension, and a sense of accomplishment.

Sadness and Apprehension

Some individuals feel a sense of sadness or apprehension about leaving home and being separated from family members. Parents express some concern about their children leaving the nest and trying something new.

“Externally, I was like, oh, yeah, I'm excited. First time away from parents and all that, but emotionally, I would say apprehensive.”
Current Student

Excitement and Anticipation

Another commonly experienced emotion among students is excitement about starting a new chapter in life, making new connections, and exploring new opportunities.

“I definitely feel stress, interest, curiosity, and I guess happiness. Kind of just being curious to see what everybody offers, and hopeful.”
Young Adult Prospect

Stress and Anxiety

Stress is the most predominant emotion for students considering college. They feel pressure to make the right choice and navigate the application process. Most feel overwhelmed by the future.

Most Common Emotion for Prospective Students

“I feel fear and anxiety. I've always wanted an education, but I feel like I can't get out of where I am to obtain that. I'd feel such crippling anxiety going into debt.”
Young Adult Prospect

Confusion and Overwhelm

Many students express feelings of confusion and overwhelm due to the many factors involved in the college decision-making process and variety of available options.

“It's pretty exciting, just thinking about the future. At the same time, it is also nerve-racking thinking about how I'm not just going to be, like, a high school student anymore. I'm going to be gone.”
High School Student

Pride and Accomplishment

A large share of students share that the prospect of attending college represents a significant accomplishment, especially for first generation students.

“I am mostly excited because I am like, all right, I'm going to do this. No one in my family has gone to college or gotten any degrees.”
Non-Degreed Adult

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Brand Influence in New Postsecondary Offering

Brand is not the most influential feature for most people, but they are interested in seeing the proven quality of an institution



Preference Surrounding Brand – Many prospective students and their parents express low concern about the brand of a new school and are more focused on the quality of program offerings. Some feel that a new brand name may make them more interested in a new brand.

A Different Brand Invites Exploration into the School: “I feel like it honestly might deter me [if the new school were connected to an existing brand] just because they all have so many campuses that I just feel like, “Oh, it's just another campus.” I would just think it was the same.”

Young Adult Prospect

Program Track Record is Essential: “I think just knowing that it's a program that people have done and has proven to be good, they have good passing rates, people have done it. If it was something that nobody had done before, I would be a little bit more hesitant to do because I'm just like, this program has been around forever. Students have graduated with it.”

Non-Degreed Adult

A New Brand Identity Sparks Interest: “Having offshoot universities with larger state schools, it's already a thing. They're actually fairly common. But if it's a new school that's kind of got its own new identity, that is something that I think potential students could see that that going forward could really be beneficial.”

Parent

Brand is Less Essential to Some: “Honestly, brands don't matter to me at all. If anything, I prefer things that aren't big brands just because I feel like everything's kind of like a popularity contest now, and brand is just not important to me at all. So if it didn't have some popular name or big name, it really wouldn't matter to me.”

Non-Degreed Adult

Brand is Less Important to Older Students: “I feel like the only time that that name or prestige know anything carries any weight is like fresh out of high school.”

Non-Degreed Adult

A Different Brand Invites Exploration into the School: “I honestly feel like [the new brand] would make me want to do research on it. Like, if it was something that was clearly set apart from other universities, I feel like that would make me be like, “What's that?” I'd be like, oh, I want to look at that school that looks new and different and tell me a little bit.”

Young Adult Prospect

New Brand Inspires Intrigue: “How would I feel towards [the new brand]? I guess I would feel a little bit invested. I mean, it's not all the time where we hear about new schools. So I feel like if I heard about it, I would be invested in knowing more about it. I think my reaction would be shocked and kind of invested, and I would look into it.”

High School Student

Brand Matters, Alongside Positive Reviews: “I think [brand] would matter a bit. For the new one, I would need to hear people saying, like, “Oh, yeah, it's a good school.” I think I would need reassurance. Maybe I wouldn't be like, “Oh, no,” because it's new. But I wouldn't be like, “Oh, yeah, of course I'll do it.” I would still have to think about it and do research on it and check if it's a good.”

High School Student

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | High School Students

High school students are interested in pursuing an affordable options, while still concerned about having a memorable social experience.



High School Student Priorities

High school students are more interested in dorm life and social experiences than other groups. They are also cost conscious, and many consider starting their degree at a community college to lower the potential cost.



Cost, Location, and Program Availability are Key Factors

“Number one is cost. Number two would be location, like climate and also the culture of the area. And then number three is just the programs that they have at those schools. I looked into rankings of how good those schools were for that specific program.”

High School Student



The College Decision is Emotionally Overwhelming

“Yeah. I mean, I get a lot of emotions when I think about going to college, but I have to be honest, researching about scholarships and what college life looks like and all that stuff is kind of stressful too.”

High School Student



Brand is a Factor That Carries Some Weight for Some

“I think the name or brand would matter a bit. ASU and all of those places, there's a lot of people that go there. For the new school, I would need to hear people saying, “Oh, yeah, it's a good school. I loved it.” I think I would need reassurance. I would still have to think about it and do research on it and check if it's a good.”

High School Student



Scholarships are Critical to the Decision

“After high school, I'm applying to colleges and scholarships, and my plans are to go if I were to get into a university or a college. I'm not sure if I am qualified for a scholarship. If I get a scholarship, I go to school. If I don't, I work for a year or two.”

High School Student



Working to Pay for College is a Priority, Even with Parental Support

“I'm sure if I tell my parents that, “Hey, I'm going to give it all in college,” I'm sure they'll be up to still giving me that money I need, I'm sure they will support me, but I also want a job and get my own money.”

High School Student



Narrowing the College Decision Included Pricing, Programs, and Passing Rate

“When it came to narrowing it down, first I went through which one offers the best program for the career I've chosen. Another factor would be pricing. Like the tuition cost, the scholarships, how one school would offer more than another one. And also narrowing it down would also be the percentage rate of how many students actually pass this program, in this department, at this school.”

High School Student

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Young Adult Prospects

Young adults without degrees are often considering college but typically put off the decision until they can find an affordable option.



Young Adult Prospect Priorities

Young adult prospects are more focused on affordability and practical ways to return to school. Many have considered or even started a program but haven't moved further due to cost or other hurdles.



Community is a Key Element in the College Experience

"Community is super important to me. For me, I have to be able to connect with my peers and everyone in my environment to feel like I'm successful. I do have to be able to feel a deeper connection, not just like, "We're in a class together." I want that sense of camaraderie in the sense that we all can share a common drive."

Young Adult Prospect



The New Institution Has Attractive Features

"It sounds like a pretty good university, something that I would definitely be interested in if they offered my major. It kind of checks all the boxes. It sounds like a really good option for a lot of different people. A lot of inclusivity and flexibility. And that's good that it's not outrageously expensive."

Young Adult Prospect



Hybrid is Preferred to Fully Online Format

"I would probably want to do like a 60/40 split, like 60% in person, 40% online. That is only because my first experience with online classes wasn't as good. I wasn't able to see the teacher, I wasn't able to discuss with the other students. I was on my own on what I was doing."

Young Adult Prospect



Brand is a Lower Priority As Long As Classes and Resources are Quality

"The brand name for me doesn't really matter as long as it has the options you need for your career. So if it's just a low-key college, I'm okay with going there as long as they have resources."

Young Adult Prospect



Cost and Flexibility are Key Resources

"[It is important to] have various time ranges for classes instead of just one set one, because everybody has different schedules. Another factor would be the cost, because every college is going to cost money. That's a big one, unfortunately. If it's super expensive, like WGU, we can't afford that. So unfortunately, even if I really wanted to, it wouldn't be an option."

Young Adult Prospect



Word of Mouth Reviews Have More Sway than the Established Brand

"I decide more based off what students say about university than the brand itself. For example, some people are like, ASU is for party people. Stuff like that kind of does get to me, but at the same time, I feel like the decision is still in my control."

Young Adult Prospect

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Non-Degreed Adults

Cost is key to non-degreed adults, as is a practical education option that fits with their established family and work priorities.



Non-Degreed Adult Priorities

Adults without degrees have a higher focus on practicality and are less concerned with a school's brand. Most still seek community in a college experience but have lower interest in an abundance of extracurricular activities.



Brand Becomes Less Important After High School

"I feel like the only time that that name or prestige carries any weight is fresh out of high school. As an adult, you're like, "I'm going back to school." Nobody asks, "Where are you going?" I have not met a full-fledged adult in my entire life that has bragged about wherever they're going to school."

Non-Degreed Adult



Passing Rates Supersede Sports and Activities in Creating Reputation

"I think a big thing is passing rates. I don't really care about sports teams or swim teams or curricular activities. It is mostly just like, "Are the teachers good?" Are people going through these programs? Are they trying to help their students be successful?"

Non-Degreed Adult



Events, Community, and Diversity are Important to Non-Degreed Adults

"I would definitely want a school to have events where I'm able to explore other communities. Diversity is a really important thing to me because I like learning about other people and other places in the world. So, I would definitely want a school where I'm able to do that."

Non-Degreed Adult



Financial Aid Resources are Key, Especially with Enthusiastic Support

"There's resources at a lot of colleges, but I feel like they could take more of the mentality of being excited to help you. Like if they had a financial aid department that acted like Chick-fil-A or Dutch Bros. Having some sort of fixation on 'We're here to save you money' would definitely be appealing."

Non-Degreed Adult



Hybrid Options are Preferred to Fully Online

"I personally am more of an in-person learner, so if the school was more of an online setting, I could manage, I just have a hard time focusing. I'd probably be more interested in an in-person or minimally online rather than a majorly online. Other than that, I feel like I would be interested in [the new university]."

Non-Degreed Adult



Higher Focus on Practicality for Older Students

"Of course, cost is number one for me. I would budget it out on not getting student loans. I don't know if that's just my age range. But if I actually had the chance to go to NAU up in Flagstaff and I didn't have my daughter, I would have loved that, if I was younger."

Non-Degreed Adult

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS | Parents

Parents focus on finding a school that fits the needs of their children, with many acknowledging that different options work better for each of their children's separate needs.



Parent Priorities

Parents weigh practical factors like tuition and cost of living against their desires for their children to have a positive college experience and gain independence.



Students Coming from High School Benefit from On-Campus Experience

"I just think there's something to be said for that adventure that getting off out of the house, living on campus or whatever, and doing school and having that experience of maturing, that is beneficial."

Parent



Conversations about College Start Early in Some Families

"Conversations about college started happening more seriously in 9th grade, maybe, but it's been their whole life. We go to alumni events or we've gone to other colleges. They know how I feel about it because I'm a high school teacher, so they know I feel when my students make a decision career, college, whatever."

Parent



Finding a Community of Like-Minded People is a Priority for Some

"I think the environment and the type of support my son is going to have is a big one. Our family is Christian, and so he wants to know that he's going to find a group of like-minded people. Any campus will offer that. Obviously, GCU is a Christian college, so we know that it's there. But I also know that there are clubs on campus at ASU and NAU and U of A and probably the community colleges."

Parent



Affordability of Arizona Colleges is Increasingly Difficult

"I do know that in-state tuition in Arizona has changed a lot since I was in school here. It used to be very affordable. Now tuition isn't really affordable. I worked to pay tuition and I was able to just pay tuition. And now I think our kids these days don't really have that option."

Parent



Financial Aid Resources are Key, Especially with Enthusiastic Support

"In our experience, the political life or that kind of atmosphere is kind of low on their things that [my daughters are] looking at. They're definitely looking at affordability, location, and programs as their top interests, and then political factors falls lower in their decision."

Parent



New University is Attractive for Non-Traditional Students

"I think a school like that probably is fitting a very important niche in higher education because what are traditional universities are getting to be prohibitively expensive. That being said, I don't know that that will fit the need for our kids that are starting as college freshmen."

Parent

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Overview of Competitors

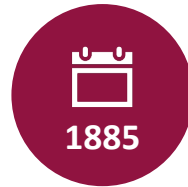
	Competitor	Tuition and Fees	Total Enrollment	% Students Received Any Financial Aid (Undergraduate*)	% Students Enrolled in Only Distance Learning	% Students that are 25 or older (Undergraduate)	% of Students that are Hispanic
Traditional University	Arizona State University (Campus Immersion)	\$11,618	85,163	92%	7%	9%	24%
	University of Arizona	\$13,275	54,374	95%	22%	14%	26%
	Northern Arizona University	\$12,274	32,063	98%	25%	16%	25%
	Grand Canyon University	\$17,800	155,128	100%	83%	53%	20%
Community College	Rio Salado College	\$2,070	30,625	71%	57%	31%	27%
	Mesa Community College	\$2,070	24,462	76%	32%	32%	32%
	Pima Community College	\$2,298	32,415	64%	29%	40%	47%
Online University	University of Phoenix - Arizona	\$9,552	134,853	86%	100%	86%	8%
	Western Governors University	\$8,010	214,229	73%	100%	88%	11%
	Southern New Hampshire University	\$15,380	223,520	86%	96%	74%	10%

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Arizona State University (Campus Immersion)



Mission Statement: “To provide undergraduate and graduate students at Arizona State University with the foundation to succeed as lifelong learners and future leaders in political, economic and social life.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Business Support Services	1,202
#2 Program	Biology	926
#3 Program	Psychology	825

Key Insights

Description: Arizona State University (ASU) is a public research university with several campuses in Arizona and a large offering of online programs.

Location: ASU has five campuses in the Phoenix metro area (downtown, Tempe, West Valley, Lake Havasu, Mesa).

Rankings: ASU ranks #1 for best online bachelor’s degree in business programs and in the top 10 for best online bachelor’s. Additionally, ASU ranks #1 in the U.S. and top 10 in the world for global impact. Additionally, the university ranks #1 in the U.S. and #2 in the world for sustainable practices.

Modalities Offered

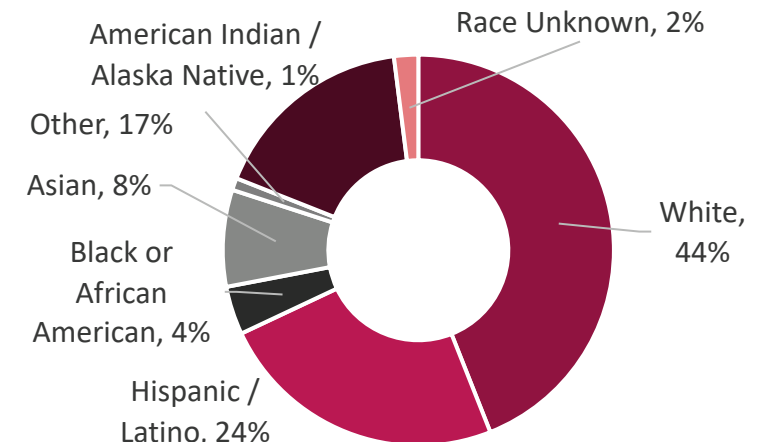
In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“At Arizona State University, you’ll join a community that will help you explore your interests and learn new skills. Through quality academics, enrichment opportunities and support from friends and faculty, you’ll graduate prepared to accomplish your goals throughout your life. Find the experience that fits you.”

Student Demographics



COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – University of Arizona



Mission Statement: “We will continuously improve how we educate and innovate so we can lead the way in developing adaptive problem-solvers capable of tackling our greatest challenges.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Psychology	473
#2 Program	Liberal Arts and Humanities	316
#3 Program	Communications	296

Key Insights

Description: University of Arizona is a public research university in Tucson that offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees.

Location: U of A has multiple campuses, with a main branch in Sierra Vista, as well as Phoenix Biomedical campus and the Near You Network for distance education.

Rankings: University of Arizona is Ranked #115 in National University Rankings. It ranks number 1 in astronomy and astrophysics, as well as in the top 20 of public research universities

Modalities Offered

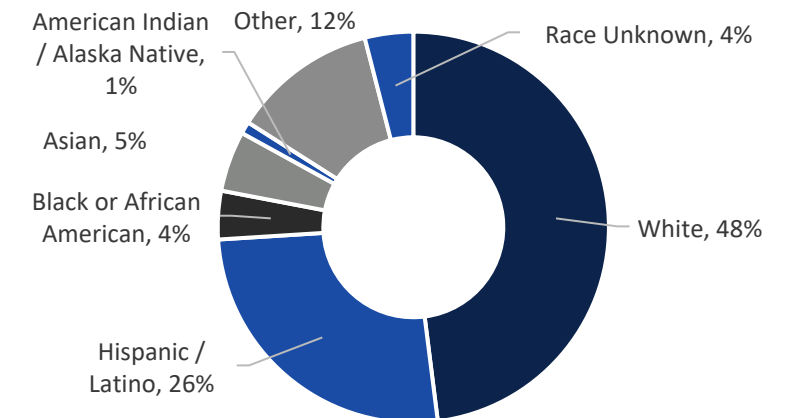
In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“At the University of Arizona, wonder fuels everything we do. It can spark an idea, feed your imagination and shift your mindset. Wonder is at the heart of every achievement – including yours. What will Wonder make you?”

Student Demographics



COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Northern Arizona University



Mission Statement: “Our academic programs, research, public service, and creative endeavors enrich lives and create opportunities in Arizona and beyond. We develop solutions to challenges and drive innovation in a supportive, inclusive, and diverse environment.”

Year Founded



Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Liberal Arts and Humanities	607
#2 Program	Nursing	526
#3 Program	Psychology	361

Key Insights

Description: Northern Arizona University (NAU) is a public university based out of Flagstaff that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Location: NAU has 20 statewide campuses across the state of Arizona, including headquarters in Flagstaff.

Rankings: NAU is #70 in the nation for public institutions without a medical school.

Modalities Offered

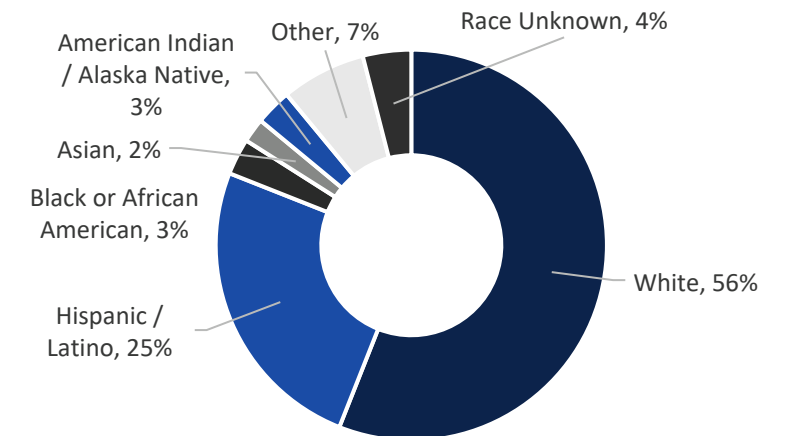
In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“A bold and boundless future for all.”

Student Demographics



COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Grand Canyon University

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

Mission Statement: “Through academic excellence, the university equips students with knowledge of the Christian worldview, instilling in them a sense of purpose and vocational calling that enables them to be innovative thinkers, effective communicators and transformative leaders.”

Year Founded



Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Nursing	4,530
#2 Program	Business	1,514
#3 Program	Elementary Education	913

Key Insights

Description: Grand Canyon University is a private Christian university based in Phoenix that has a wide offering of online and on-campus programs. .

Location: GCU main campus is located in Phoenix. GCU also has multiple learning sites across the country for their accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

Rankings: GCU is ranked as the #17 best college campus in America and the #1 college campus in the state of Arizona.

Modalities Offered

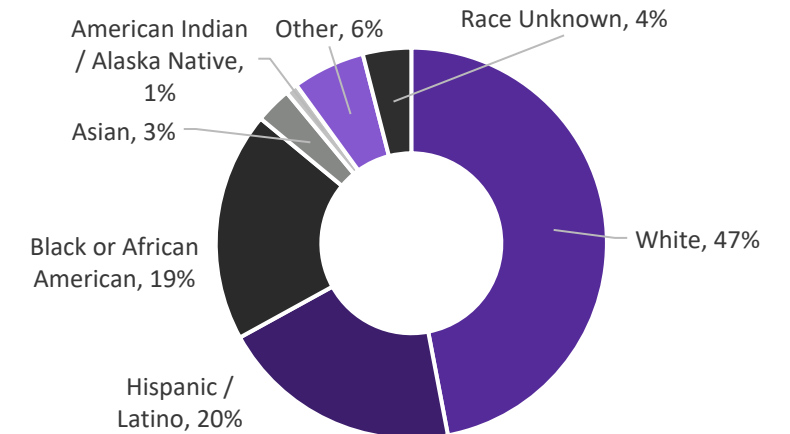
In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“Private. Christian. Affordable.”

Student Demographics

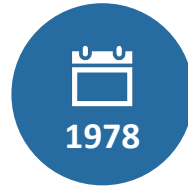


COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Rio Salado College



Mission Statement: “We redefine the educational experience by anticipating the needs of our students and future workforce. We provide high-quality, flexible, and accessible education to empower individual goal attainment, foster partnerships, and strengthen communities.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Key Insights

Description: Rio Salado College is a community college in Tempe that is known for online education and workforce development. It is part of the Maricopa Community College system.

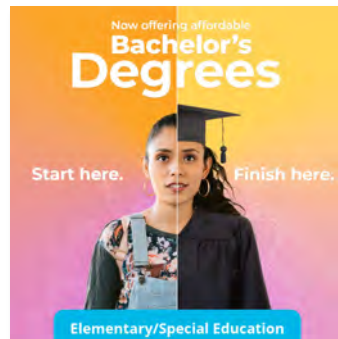
Location: Rio Salado College has multiple campuses, including its primary location in Tempe and other satellite locations, including in Avondale, Surprise, and downtown Phoenix.

Rankings: Rio Salado is one of 23 schools in Arizona to be recognized with the Hispanic Serving Institution designation.

Modalities Offered

In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign

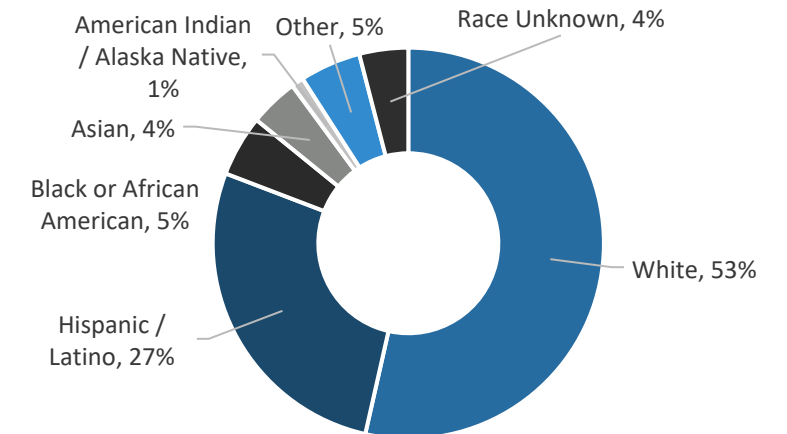


“Introducing our first-ever bachelor’s degree program in elementary education and special education—offering low tuition and high flexibility.”

Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement	942
#2 Program	Business Support Services	795
#3 Program	Police and Criminal Science	641

Student Demographics



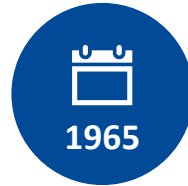
COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Mesa Community College



**MESA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Mission Statement: “We create an inclusive and vibrant learning community where everyone is supported to achieve success.”

Year Founded



Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Arts	800
#2 Program	Liberal Arts and Humanities	772
#3 Program	Business	261

Key Insights

Description: Mesa Community College is a public community college in Mesa that offers a variety of associate degrees and certificates, as well as two bachelor’s degrees. Mesa CC is in the Maricopa CC system.

Location: Mesa Community College has two primary campuses (Southern & Dobson and Red Mountain campuses), as well as a downtown center and online programs.

Rankings: Mesa is the largest of the ten community colleges in the Maricopa Community College system.

Modalities Offered

In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

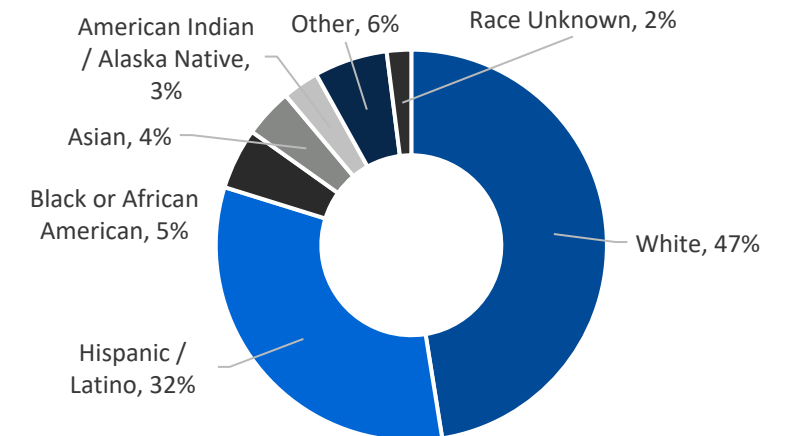
Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“A college education as unique as me!”

- Smaller class sizes
- Multiple transfer programs
- Lower costs
- Hybrid class options
- Bachelor’s degrees now offered”

Student Demographics

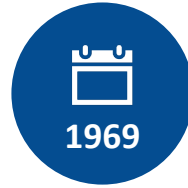


COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Pima Community College



Mission Statement: “Pima Community College strives to empower every learner, every day, for every goal. Embedded within that mission statement is a commitment to equity, equitable practice, and access.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Liberal Arts and Humanities	1,846
#2 Program	Emergency Medical Technician	219
#3 Program	Nursing	197

Key Insights

Description: Pima Community College is a public community college that serves the Tucson metropolitan area.

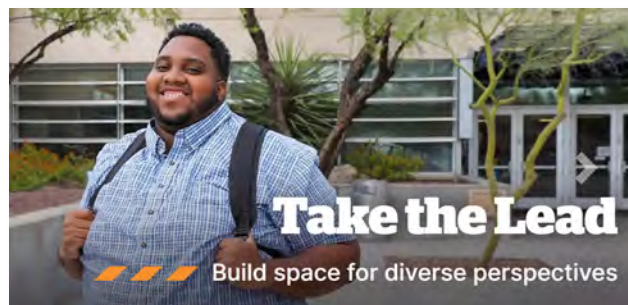
Location: Pima Community College has five campuses (Desert Vista, Downtown, Northwest, East, and West campuses) as well as multiple learning centers.

Rankings: Pima CC was voted in the top 50 in the nation for online programs. The ranking included 4-year universities and community colleges, and Pima was the third ranked community college on the list.

Modalities Offered

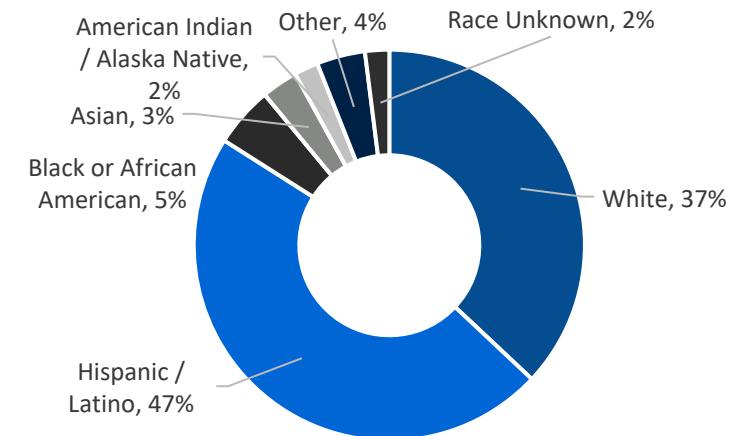
In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“Pima Community College is where affordable and accessible education matters.”

Student Demographics

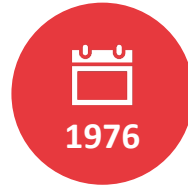


COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – University of Phoenix - Arizona



Mission Statement: “Provide access to higher education opportunities that enable students to develop knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their professional goals, improve the performance of their organizations, and provide leadership and service to their communities.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Key Insights

Description: University of Phoenix is a private for-profit university with headquarters in Phoenix. The university offers certificates, associate, bachelor’s and graduate programs with primarily online offerings.

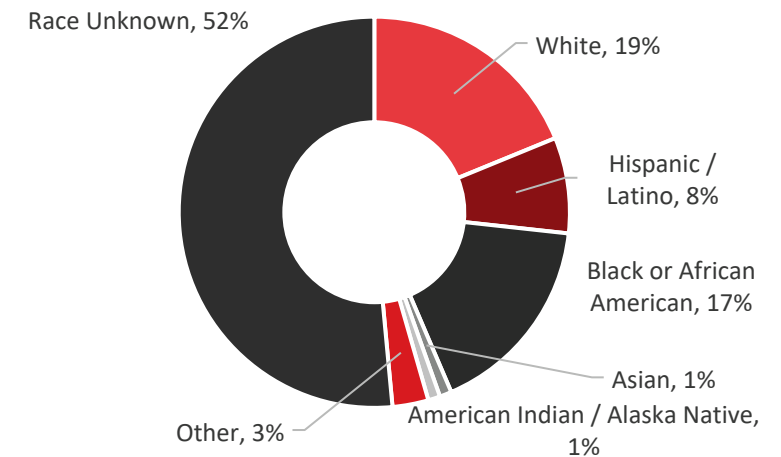
Location: University of Phoenix has an in-person campus in Phoenix and provides a variety of online programs.

Rankings: University of Phoenix was ranked #89 in Health Care Management by US News and World Report. It is ranked #4 in online public administration degrees and #8 in Bachelor’s in Finance degrees by Online U.

Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Business	9,497
#2 Program	Hospital Management	1,603
#3 Program	Information Technology	1,427

Student Demographics



Modalities Offered

In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“Save time and money on your online college degree. Your life, work and school experience could help you graduate faster — for less.”

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Western Governors University



Mission Statement: “We change lives for the better by creating pathways to opportunity.” This is our mission for students and employees.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Nursing	10,730
#2 Program	Business	3,061
#3 Program	Elementary Education	1,815

Key Insights

Description: Western Governors University (WGU) is a private non-profit online university based in Salt Lake City, Utah. The university is known for using a competency-based learning model.

Location: WGU is an online university and does not have campuses; however, it does have eight offices in addition to its headquarters in Salt Lake City.

Rankings: WGU was ranked #5 in both online secondary education and biology degrees by Online U. WGU was named the #1 online school by the Military Friendly Schools survey.

Modalities Offered

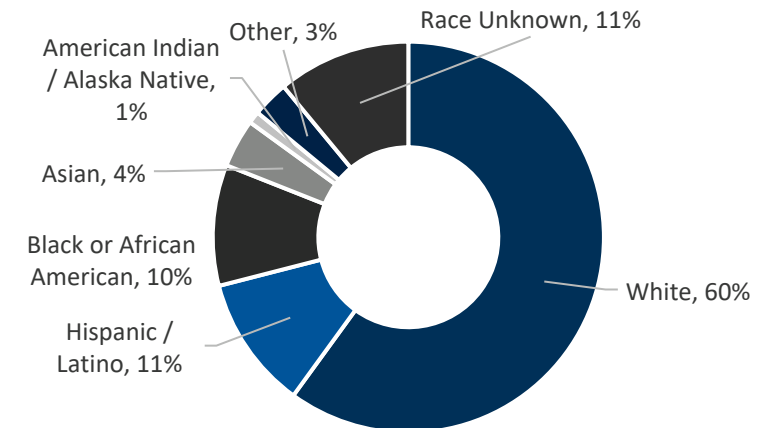
In-Person Classes	
Hybrid Classes	
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



*“The University of You.
Get a degree in your time, in less time.”*

Student Demographics



COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE | Competitor Profiles – Southern New Hampshire University



Mission Statement: “By relentlessly challenging the status quo and providing the best support in higher education we expand access to education by creating high quality, affordable and innovative pathways to meet the unique needs of each and every learner.”

Year Founded Total Enrollment National Ranking



Programs by Popularity

	College/Program	Graduates
#1 Program	Business	4,472
#2 Program	Liberal Arts and Humanities	2,256
#3 Program	Psychology	1,646

Key Insights

Description: Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private university that has a large presence of online programs as well as on-campus offerings.

Location: SNHU has a campus location near Manchester, New Hampshire. The majority of SNHU students are enrolled in the university’s online classes.

Rankings: SNHU was ranked among the most innovative universities by U.S. News and World Report. It is one of the fastest-growing universities in the U.S.

Modalities Offered

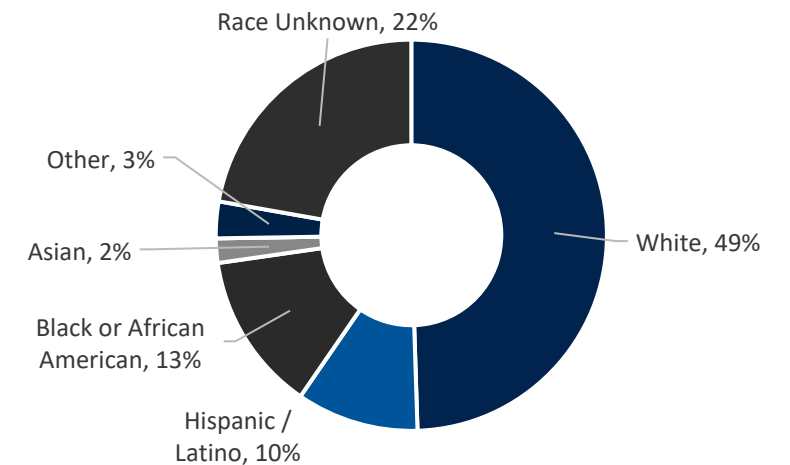
In-Person Classes	✓
Hybrid Classes	✓
Online-Only Classes	✓
Satellite Campuses	✓

Current Tagline/Marketing Campaign



“You have goals. Southern New Hampshire University can help you reach them. SNHU has an online program for you.”

Student Demographics



APPENDIX B: MARKET RESEARCH, INTERVIEWS, AND FOCUS GROUPS, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES



ARIZONA BOARD OF
REGENTS
ASU ♦ NAU ♦ UA

PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

turning questions into answers



ABOR New College Focus Groups Exercise Summary

January 2024

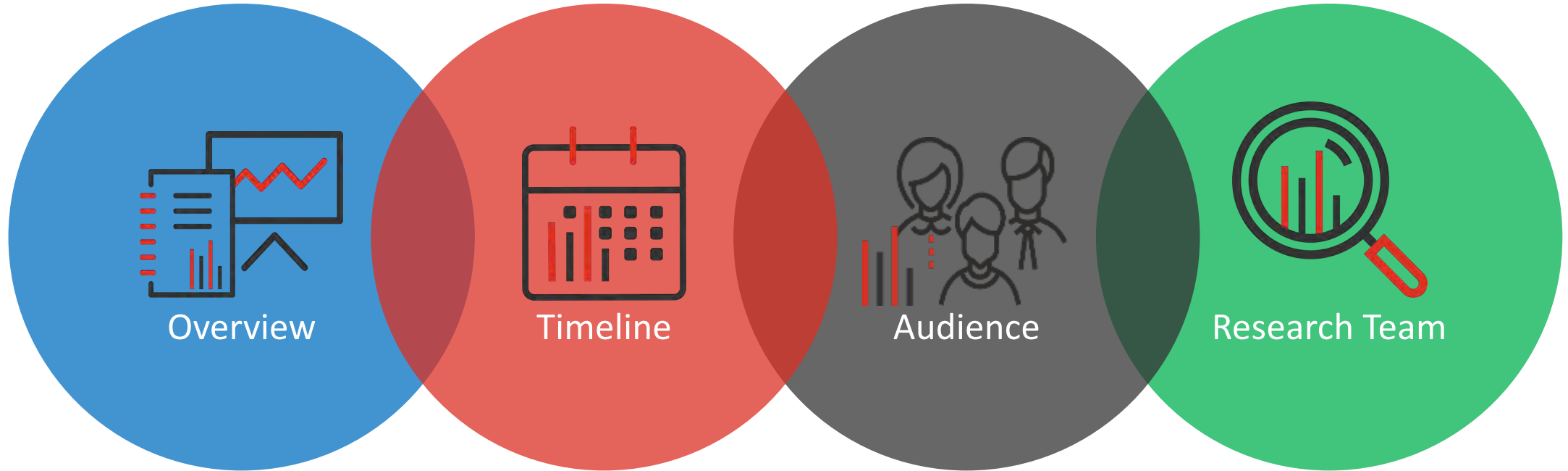
PREPARED BY:

Nicole McCleskey, Partner

Becky Kramer, Vice President of Research & Methodology

#240004

Methodology



- Public Opinion Strategies conducted four focus groups in Phoenix, Arizona and Tucson, Arizona on behalf of the Arizona Board of Regents.
- The focus groups were conducted on January 15, 2024 and January 24, 2024.
- The focus groups were conducted amongst N=18 Traditional and N=19 Adult Learners.
- Nicole McCleskey was the principal researcher on this project. Becky Kramer was the research director and Bond Magevney provided analytical support.

Focus Group Participants



	Number of Participants
Overall	37
Traditional Learners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>One group in Phoenix and one group in Tucson</i>	18
Adult Learners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>One group in Phoenix and one group in Tucson</i>	19

Goal Imagery Exercise



Respondents were asked to select the picture that best represents how they feel about their life today.

Respondents were then asked to select the picture that best represents how they want to feel about their life in ten years.

Goal Imagery



Equality



Excitement



Social Recognition



Accomplishment



Connection



Security



Empowerment



Peace



Independence



Self-Respect

Goal Imagery



Confined



Self-Deprecation



Conflict



Boredom



Isolation



Inequality



Social Neglect



Insecurity





Failure



Powerlessness

Goal Imagery Selection Today

Ranked by Overall

		Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Connection		0	2	5	1	8
Insecurity		1	1	1	1	4
Isolation		1	1	0	1	3
Accomplishment		0	0	0	3	3
Failure		1	0	1	1	3






Goal Imagery Selection Today

Ranked by Overall

		Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Boredom		1	1	0	0	2
Security		1	0	1	0	2
Powerlessness		1	1	0	0	2
Self-Respect		1	1	0	0	2
Excitement		0	0	1	1	2





Goal Imagery Selection Today

Ranked by Overall

		Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Confined		0	0	1	0	1
Self-Deprecation		0	1	0	0	1
Conflict		1	0	0	0	1
Independence		0	0	0	1	1
Empowerment		0	1	0	0	1
Peace		0	0	0	1	1



Goal Imagery Selection in Ten Years

Ranked by Overall

		Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Connection		6	2	2	2	12
Self-Respect		0	3	5	0	8
Empowerment		0	0	2	4	6
Accomplishment		2	1	0	2	5
Excitement		0	1	1	1	3

Goal Imagery Selection in Ten Years



<i>Ranked by Overall</i>		Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Independence		0	1	0	1	2
Security		0	1	0	0	1

Newspaper Exercise



“It’s ten years from now and your local newspaper is writing a story about the people to watch in your community. You’ve been selected. I’d like you to write 2-3 sentences that you would like to see someone write about you in ten years. Think about how you want other people to see you ... what words would you use to describe yourself.”

Newspaper Exercise Responses

All Respondents

- ✓ Successful (9)
- ✓ Caring/Helpful/Loving (7)
- ✓ Inspiring (5)
- ✓ Dedicated/Committed (5)
- ✓ Happy/Content (4)
- ✓ Kind/Generous (4)
- ✓ Open-minded (3)
- ✓ Hard working (3)
- ✓ Honest (3)
- ✓ Family-driven (3)
- ✓ Perseverance/Never gave up (2)
- ✓ Likeable (2)
- ✓ Encouraging (2)
- ✓ Overcame adversity (2)
- ✓ Own a business (2)
- ✓ Independent (2)
- ✓ Followed dreams (2)
- ✓ Goal-driven
- ✓ Strong
- ✓ Ambitious
- ✓ Confident
- ✓ Comfortable
- ✓ Made an impact
- ✓ Creative
- ✓ Community-driven
- ✓ Exciting
- ✓ Responsible
- ✓ Settled/Stable
- ✓ Patient
- ✓ Empathetic

Likely to Attend a Two-Year College

“How likely would you say you are to go to a 2-year college in the next ten years?”

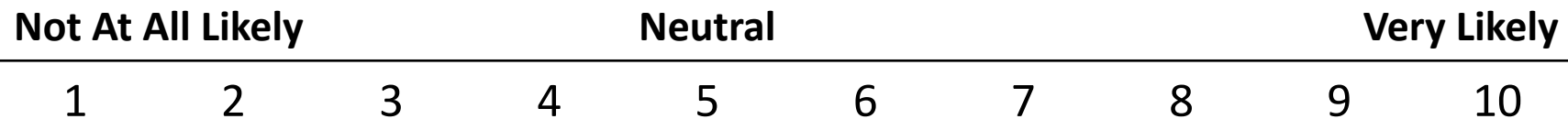
	Mean Score
Overall	6.3
Tucson Traditional Learners	6.1
Tucson Adult Learners	6.0
Phoenix Traditional Learners	6.0
Phoenix Adult Learners	7.1



Likely to Attend a Four-Year College

“How likely would you say you are to go to a 4-year college in the next ten years?”

	Mean Score
Overall	5.4
Tucson Traditional Learners	5.0
Tucson Adult Learners	5.2
Phoenix Traditional Learners	6.1
Phoenix Adult Learners	5.2



Conversation Exercise

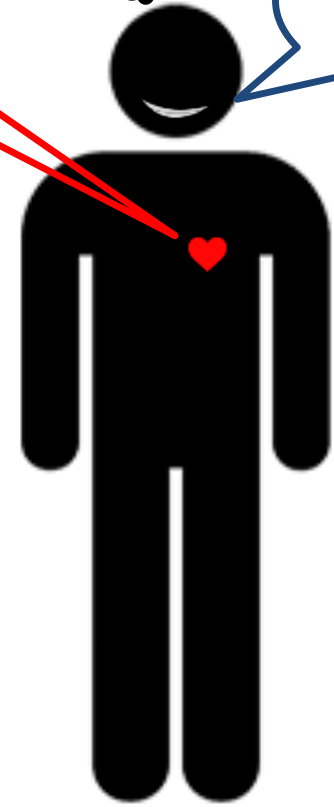
Thinking

Feeling

Saying

"A 4-year college puts you on a path to a brighter future."

Respondents were asked how they would respond to a friend who says, "A 4-year college puts you on a path to a brighter future." Respondents were asked to write down what they would think about what their friend just said, how they feel about what was said, and what they would say in response.



Conversation Exercise: Traditional Learners

Say: "Yeah. I know."

Think: " Do it! Who's going to watch the kids? You got this! You can't afford it."

Feel: "You can give your kids a better life. You'll be the first one to commit to school and graduate." – *Savannah S.*

Say: "Depends on what you study."

Think: "You gotta want it. Faster track to get to a point."

Feel: "Not really, everyone is different."
– *Daniela R.*

Say: "No it doesn't."

Think: "Going to a 4-year college doesn't guarantee anything."

Feel: "You put yourself on a path to a brighter future. Believing a 4-year college is the only way to succeed is just blindly accepting information from people who want you to spend a lot of money, and you are limiting yourself." – *Bella V.*

Say: "I mean it really depends on the person. Personally, I think 4 years isn't for me right now."

Think: "Sure..."

Feel: "They mean well, but..."
– *Michael G.*

Say: "Not necessarily. A lot of people find happiness and success without a 4-year degree."

Think: "The cost of a degree might not be worth it anymore."

Feel: "I'm kind of scared they might be right." – *Isabel L.*

Conversation Exercise: Traditional Learners

Say: "It really depends on the industry. Technical schools could save you a lot of time, money, and sacrifices."

Think: "My life is based on opportunity. A 4-year program wouldn't have gotten me towards the future that I'm hoping for."

Feel: "Everyone should follow the path that they see the clearest. As long as you are learning and growing towards the person you want to be." – *Tanner H.*

Say: "It's a big financial commitment and gives you something to do. 50% of U.S. employers removing bachelors requirements from jobs."

Think: "I can invest that money on something else. Brother is a doctor, but he works so much."

Feel: "Maybe I should just focus on going to school then I'll be able to get a stable well-paying job." – *Leila*

Say: "No thank you but might be great advice."

Think: "Maybe a trade school would have better benefits."

Feel: "I know I want to maybe eventually, but I'm stuck with my job." – *Jashon R.*

Say: "I agree a 4-year would definitely open more opportunities"

Think: "I'd be financially stable. I'd have new knowledge."

Feel: "I would feel more accomplished. Happy with more opportunities. I'd make my family feel proud. Better mindset." – *Leo S.*

Conversation Exercise: Traditional Learners

Say: "While it can some people have bright futures without colleges."

Think: "I'll need more than 4 years for my career."

Feel: "It does but success can be obtained without college." – *Andrea C.*

Say: "Yeah I think it really depends on what you want to do in life."

Think: "I wonder the other possibilities if I need a degree."

Feel: "I think that for myself this is setting me on a good path." – *Thalia G.*

Say: "Why do you feel that way?"

Think: "Open minded"

Feel: "College doesn't give me the brightness my family/children do." – *Jaden B.*

Say: "Not always."

Think: "Just puts you in debt."

Feel: "Not true." – *Brennan C.*

Say: "Why do you say that?"

Think: "I don't believe that."

Feel: "I hope they don't waste my time and money." – *Almaz T.*

Say: "I don't think I could commit to a 4 year."

Think: "I don't need to go to college to be financially independent."

Feel: "If I went to college for 4-years I could have greater job opportunities." – *Jenna J.*

Conversation Exercise: Traditional Learners



Say: "I agree... There are definitely many careers that can apply to that."

Think: "Trade over college"

Feel: "I feel that a 4-year degree does not necessarily make that 100%. Somebody can have a 4-year degree and not be happy or somebody can transfer or otherwise" – *Yamilet F.*

Say: "You're right."

Think: "Trade school."

Feel: "I wish." – *Tyler G.*

Say: "That could be true for some, definitely all. Not everyone's path is going to be the same and that's okay! Surely it does open more opportunity in the business world, but it's not for everyone."

Think: "That's 50/50."

Feel: "Bleh. It sounds stressful and I feel like it constricts growth as a person..." – *Hazel R.*

Conversation Exercise: Adult Learner

Say: "You are right. But sometimes 4-year colleges do not always give you better chances. Not with how things are now adays."

Think: "I am scared to go back to a 4-year college. What if I fail."

Feel: "I feel that they are right. Having a 4-year degree gives you better opportunities." – *Alisha S.*

Say: "Which 4-year degree would you suggest for me."

Think: "If a brighter future means student loan debt."

Feel: "This may or may not be true." – *Zachary W.*

Say: "You really think so. Idk maybe. I know a lot of folks who didn't need it."

Think: "Do I really need 4 years to learn what I can learn in a couple months or less."

Feel: "It would be nice to have it to fall back on maybe like a safety net if I fail." – *Jalen K.*

Say: "I don't believe that to be 100% true."

Think: "You're saying that because you went to college."

Feel: "It would be nice to have a degree." – *John A.*

Say: "It seems so far away but you are correct. Dr. B sounds good, and employers can't mess with my money."

Think: "I know the opportunity it would provide, but how am I going to balance the time into life."

Feel: "Thank you for looking out for what is best for my growth." – *Christine B.*

Conversation Exercise: Adult Learner

Say: "It definitely helps, but there are many other resources that can be used to obtain a brighter future."

Think: "I hope they don't have a lot of student loans."

Feel: "It is good they feel positive about furthering education." – *Eddie F.*

Say: "I think in some cases, that is 100% possible. Personally, I do not believe it to be necessary UNLESS you have something specific in mind."

Think: None

Feel: None – *John R.*

Say: None

Think: "Sometimes, a degree is not necessary in the field I'm interested in."

Feel: "I would love to have a degree for the sense of accomplishment, to further my career and create opportunities." – *Emily W.*

Say: "That's great friend but I see the light on the other side and it's a little dim. Cause I'm paying loans instead of electric bill."

Think: "But does it really?"

Feel: "I spent four years learning to crawl, walk, talk, and grow. Why do another four being robotically trained to do what society wants when I can do what I already know." – *Tinymae L.*

Conversation Exercise: Adult Learner

Say: "You can pay for my education then!"

Think: "I'd rather do this all online in which case it's mainly self taught and moot."

Feel: "Most college graduates would disagree and wish they had done a year at CC first." – *Andrew L.*

Say: "Yes, but how does the possibility of a bright future help me now?"

Think: "Don't pressure me."

Feel: "At the expense of my kid's future." – *Erica O.*

Say: "Why do you feel/think that?"

Think: "I'm not doing it."

Feel: "I'm not sure I can do that." – *Zoie E.*

Say: "Bullshit!!"

Think: "I guess so..."

Feel: "He means well." – *Adam R.*

Say: "I agree but depending on career choice."

Think: "Neutral."

Feel: "It's so true." – *Karen S.*

Say: "I agree and will finish my education when my current situation changes to better accommodate school."

Think: "I know, that's what I'm trying to do."

Feel: "I already was accepted to a professional degree program. However, a tragic life incident forced me to put most of my priorities on hold until I can mentally deal with this problem and school at the same time." – *Jessica T.*

Conversation Exercise: Adult Learner



Say: "It's just a piece of paper."

Think: "Not necessarily."

Feel: "For my own need of accomplishment I will do it." – Vanessa A.

Say: "Cool, cool."

Think: "It's possible to accomplish what I need in two [years]."

Feel: "Don't agree, not necessarily." – Taj W.

Say: "How are you so sure about that."

Think: "People graduate high school all the time."

Feel: "Not true." – Tyler

Say: "How should I finance it?"

Think: "It is too long."

Feel: "It is a long commitment." - Javier

Hesitations About a 4-Year College

“What do we worry about or what are the main hesitations you have about a 4-year college?”

All Respondents

- Cost/debt (4)
- Motivation/drive (3)
- Time commitment (3)
- Family commitment (2)
- Relevancy/Not necessary (2)
- Value/Does it get me where I want to go? (2)
- Balance/intensity (2)
- Lack of support
- Mental health
- Housing
- Quality of teaching
- Fear of failure
- Guilt
- Difficulty focusing
- Network
- Age
- Lack of social opportunity

Respondents were presented with a series of pictures of different tools. Respondents were then asked if they were going to create a brand new college that is perfect for them, what kind of tool would this new college be.



Four-Year College “Tool” Exercise

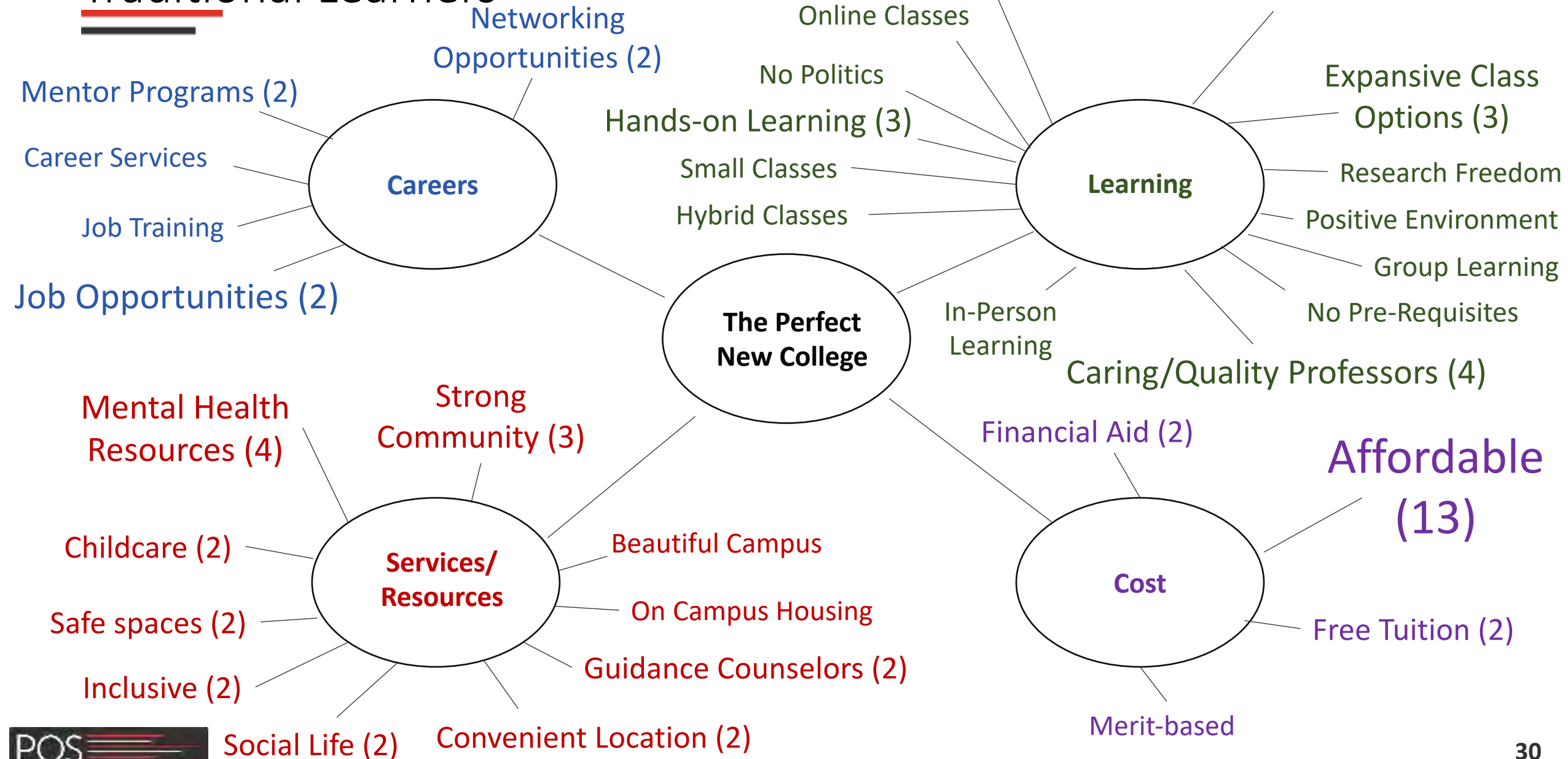
Ranked by Overall

	Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Tape Measure	2	0	4	4	10
Power Drill	2	0	2	3	7
Box Cutter/Swiss Army Knife	0	3	2	1	6
Scissors	1	1	1	0	3
Pliers	1	1	0	1	3
Crowbar	0	2	0	0	2
Hammer	0	2	0	0	2
Screwdriver	1	0	0	0	1
Chainsaw	0	0	0	0	0
Saw	0	0	0	0	0

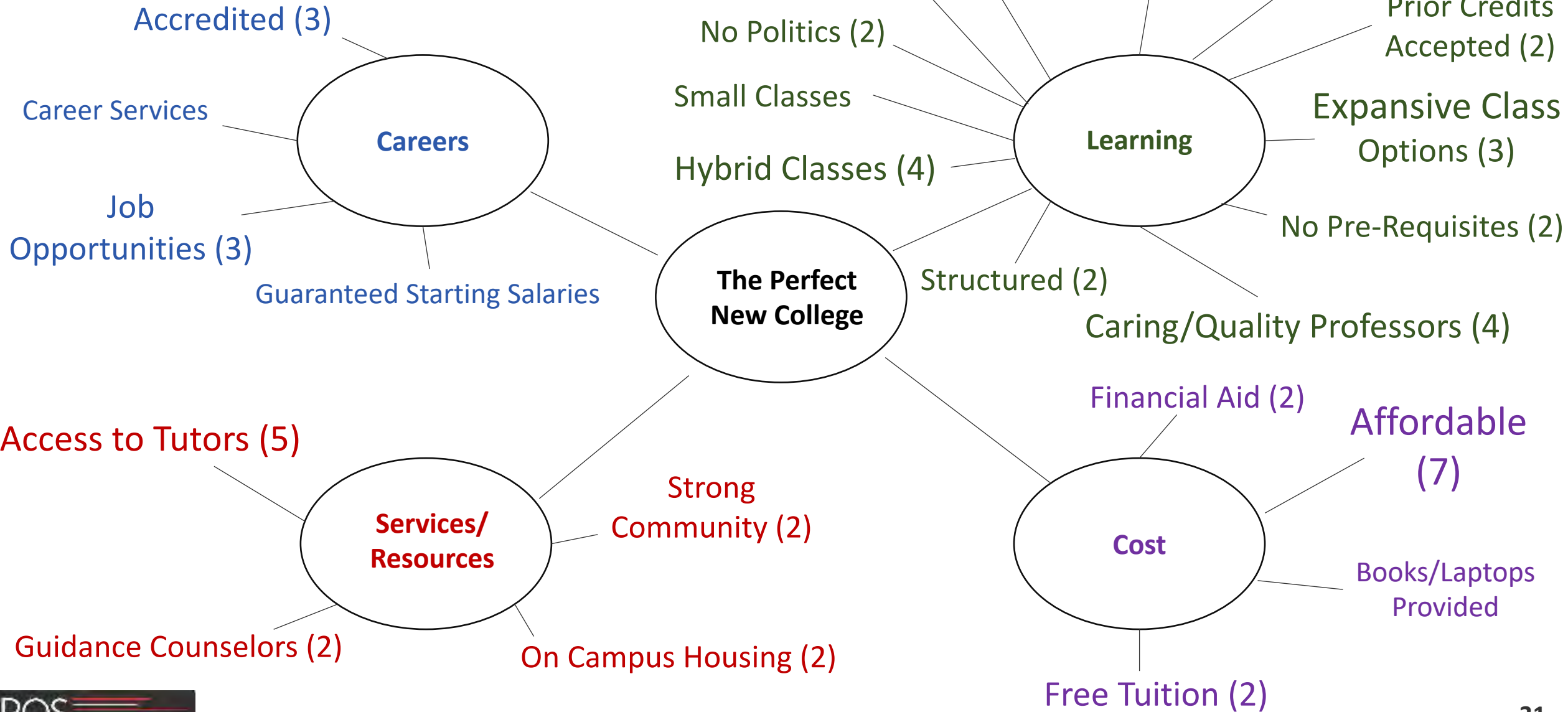
Respondents were asked to write down everything they can think of that would go into a perfect new college for them.

Mind Map: Traditional Learners

Flexible Schedule (11)



Mind Map: Adult Learners



New College Features



Respondents were given a set of features of a new college. Respondents then ranked these features by what is most important to them in a new college. Respondents were asked to write down the three college features most important to them and the two college features least important to them.

New College Features

Campus in Neighborhood	<i>The college campus will be in your neighborhood, or a short distance from your neighborhood.</i>
Flexible Schedule	<i>The college will offer flexible scheduling that includes a blend of online and in-person courses, and evening, weekend or short day schedules.</i>
Shorter Courses	<i>Courses will take place over shorter periods like 1 to 2 months instead of 4 months.</i>
Teaching-Focused	<i>Courses will be taught by faculty who are focused only on teaching and will be more interactive and engaged with the students.</i>
Career-Focused	<i>The college will be career focused from day one and have just a small number of popular majors that go straight into good paying and impactful careers in areas like teaching, business, health care, and computer science.</i>
Full Student Experience	<i>The college will have the full student experience that promotes social connections including clubs and organizations, sports, student center, and an emphasis on a social life.</i>
Credit for Prior Work	<i>The college will give credit towards a degree for previous college work and/or work experience.</i>
Job Certificates/ Credentials	<i>The college will automatically give students the opportunity to earn certificates and other credentials before they have completed the full degree program that they can use to earn promotions or higher salaries in their current job.</i>

New College Features



Hands-On Learning	<i>The college will offer hands-on learning opportunities, like internships, to strengthen what students learn in the classroom.</i>
On-Site Services	<i>The college will include on-site services that make satisfying essential needs easier, including health care services, mental health support, childcare, groceries on site, and transportation.</i>
Fewer Students	<i>The college will have fewer students than other state universities.</i>
One-Stop-Shop	<i>The college will have a one-stop-shop for all services, such as enrollment, financial aid, and academic and career advising.</i>
Affiliated with Another University	<i>The college will be affiliated with another established higher education institution.</i>

New College Features: Like the Most

Ranked by Overall

	Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Flexible Schedule	4	2	6	8	20
On-Site Services	3	5	7	1	16
Shorter Courses	1	5	1	5	12
Teaching-Focused	3	3	2	3	11
Job Certificates/Credentials	2	2	6	1	11
Career-Focused	1	3	3	3	10
Hands-On Learning	3	3	2	1	9
One-Stop-Shop	1	1	2	3	7
Credit for Prior Work	2	2	0	3	7
Full Student Experience	2	0	1	0	3
Fewer Students	1	0	0	1	2
Affiliated with Another University	0	1	0	0	1
Campus in Neighborhood	0	0	0	1	1

New College Features: Like the Least

Ranked by Overall

	Tucson Traditional Learners (N=8)	Tucson Adult Learners (N=9)	Phoenix Traditional Learners (N=10)	Phoenix Adult Learners (N=10)	Total (N=37)
Full Student Experience	2	4	4	5	15
Campus in Neighborhood	4	5	4	2	15
Fewer Students	3	1	5	5	14
Affiliated with Another University	5	2	2	4	13
Shorter Courses	1	0	2	1	4
Flexible Schedule	0	2	0	1	3
Career-Focused	2	0	1	0	3
Hands-On Learning	0	1	1	1	3
On-Site Services	1	1	0	0	2
Teaching-Focused	0	0	1	1	2
One-Stop-Shop	1	1	0	0	2
Job Certificates/Credentials	0	1	0	0	1
Credit for Prior Work	0	0	0	0	0

New College Rating

“Now that we have had a lot more conversation about a new college, how likely would you be to go to this new college?”

	Mean Score
Overall	7.7
Tucson Traditional Learners	7.5
Tucson Adults Learners	7.0
Phoenix Traditional Learners	8.2
Phoenix Adult Learners	8.2



New College Rating: Initial and Post New College Features

“Now that we have had a lot more conversation about a new college, how likely would you be to go to this new college?”

	Initial Rating	Post Features Rating
Overall	5.4	7.7
Tucson Traditional Learners	5.0	7.5
Tucson Adults Learners	5.2	7.0
Phoenix Traditional Learners	6.1	8.2
Phoenix Adult Learners	5.2	8.2





PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

turning questions into answers

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“New College” In-Depth-Interviews Key Findings Summary



Methodology

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	High School Juniors/Seniors	Parents
Number of Participants	13	18	10	9
Audience Description	Ages 18-24	Ages 25-49	Current 11th or 12th graders	Have a child in 11th or 12th grade
	<p>Have graduated from high school or obtained a GED.</p> <p>Have not yet graduated from a four-year college program. Some have completed education beyond high school.</p> <p>Rate their interest in attending college as a 2-10 on a 1 (not at all interested) to 10 (very interested) scale.</p>		<p>Rate their interest in attending college as a 2-10 on a 1 (not at all interested) to 10 (very interested) scale.</p>	<p>Rate their interest in their child attending college as a 2-10 on a 1 (not at all interested) to 10 (very interested) scale.</p> <p>Have not yet graduated from a four-year college program. Some have completed education beyond high school.</p>



Thinking About Their Future

Understanding How Prospective Students Think About Their Future.

- *If there is one word that captures the current emotional state of prospective students it is “unstable.”*
- *Lack of stability is particularly true of the adult and traditional learner participants. High school students are more “uncertain” in some cases.*
- *Providing stability is therefore a critical component in connecting with these audiences.*
- *They also feel trapped by life circumstance and yearn to feel “free” and less burdened.*
- *Enjoyment and contentment with less stress feel remote, but still important.*

Writing Their Story: We asked our participants to help us write their story.

**Chapter 2:
Your Life Today**

**Chapter 3:
The Steps Needed To
Get There**

**Chapter 4:
Where You Want To Be
In 10 Years**

Where do they want to be?

Common Elements Across Audiences:

➤ *Stability*

➤ *Home Ownership*

➤ *Family*

“I definitely want to have my own family. I want to have my own business, something where I'm getting income, income every month and financial stability in 10 years. I also want to have maybe gained a degree in college. I hope to be somewhere, I'd hope to be in a place of just consistency somewhere, stability and consistent.” – Frida (Adult Learner)

“I'd want to be in my own house or apartment, have my dream career, have at least be settled in at least money wise, no debts, nothing like that, and just enjoying life.” – Athena (Traditional Learner)

“I do want to own a home. I know that for sure. I likely won't have it paid off by 28, but I'd like to have a decent amount towards there. I want to live alone currently. I mean, I definitely don't want to be married or anything.” – Anissa (HS Student)

Where do they want to be? There are some differences in our audiences that reflect life circumstances.

Traditional Learners

It is difficult for these participants to see ahead because:

- *Feel and express less direction in their life.*
- *They are struggling, juggling, surviving.*
- *More overwhelmed and stressed.*
- *Financially unstable.*

Adult Learners

- *Owning a business is more common.*
- *Financial security, no debt are important.*
- *Less stress.*

Parents

- *Their child's HAPPINESS is paramount.*
- *Independence.*

In Their Own Words

Traditional Learners

“Well, I always wanted to be stable. That's the thing. I've always wanted to be stable. I always wanted, there's so many things I want... Having my own house, not having to worry about my bills every day. It's basically survival. It is. That's how it's now.” – Andrew (Traditional Learner)

Adult Learners

“My ultimate goal would be I would want to be a therapist, a substance abuse counselor, having my own business in recovery, stable home, married with kids... I just can't fathom how much happiness I would be in just in being stable.” – Lorenzo (Adult Learner)

“That I'd definitely like to be more financially secure, you know what I mean? I would like to definitely not have to worry about living paycheck to paycheck.” – William (Adult Learner)

Parents

“I think for her path, for her career path. Yeah, I think it's definitely going to school, but also, I mean, of course there's a lot of things for her to do to develop itself and have experiences and I don't know, to focus on really what she wants to do and I don't know, I don't really have any path for her. I want her to do well. I want her to be happy and have experiences and you continue to grow.” – Jamilah (Parent)

Do they see college as a route to get where they want to be?

The majority of traditional and adult learners consider education to be a part of their future toward reaching their goals. Yet, there is ambiguity in the way they talk about their education plans. They use phrases like “continuing my education,” “enrolling in classes,” or “getting a degree.”

There is not a level of commitment for most to a 4-year degree. Many see community college or an associate’s degree as part of their educational journey. For many, it feels like less of an investment, and if they are not successful, less of a failure.

“So I did this four times. I did, no three times and I did three different subjects. Each time that I did it at different schools. I couldn’t figure out what I was doing... So I actually might consider only doing a two year to start off with just because of all my failures in the past so that I could get the associates and be done in two years, I got it now let's work on the next two years. Okay. So I think that would actually be more likely what I would be doing.” – Sara (Adult Learner)

“I'm not adverse to a four year school. I just don't know what type of degree or why I would go to it. I can't see myself at a four year school. I just feel like a four year school is much more time consuming for me. You know what I'm saying? I don't see how feasible that would be working my schedule and still being able to do all those classes for a four year school. You know what I mean?” – William (Adult Learner)

Do they see college as a route to get where they want to be?

Some in our adult and traditional learners audiences have started and stopped college at various points in their life. A 4-year college degree is far beyond any commitment they have made to their education to this point.

There are real feelings of self-doubt that they are suited to a 4-year college or could keep the commitment required due to other life circumstances and responsibilities.

“And I set myself up because with a thought process of I am not capable of doing this, I failed these classes [in high school], I'm not smart enough. I'm not that kid. Thinking that only people who went to college were the honor roll straight A kids.” – Vanessa (Adult Learner)

“Well, I honestly think I would like to get a four year degree. I dunno, it's just been something that I've been thinking about for the past year. My older sister just graduated with her associates and she's the first in our family to do it and it just made me feel like for the longest I just felt like I couldn't, it was just too much for me. And seeing her do it as the first person to do it, I was like, well, maybe I can do it.” – Johanna (Adult Learner)

Do they see college as a route to get where they want to be?

Parents and high school students have more mixed views about college and whether it is the right path.

Students wonder whether college will get them where they want to be in their life, with many thinking about trade or professional schools.

“I think he's thinking that if he can go to a community college and get what he's looking for there and then either get what he needs there or be able to go to a university to get what he needs. But like I said, so he might consider after finishing the community college, going onto a university, if he was accepted and had a scholarship or a grant or something, I think that he would go to a university... he doesn't want to be saddled with the debt that you get from school loans.”

– Jessica (Parent)

“I thought I was going to do college, but I was still going to be kind of conservative with it and do community college and then see how it goes from there and what I want to do in university. But I've just realized these last few years that I'm not as interested in an educational career path and I like to work with my hands a lot, so I figured something in the trade industry would be a lot better suited for me.” – Steele (HS Student)

Do they see college as a route to get where they want to be?

Parents mirror their child's views about their college future. Some see trades or community college as the right next step after high school.

There are focused and committed students and parents to a 4-year college. In those cases, the parent and student are aligned on the college objective.

"I think around middle school is when I started realizing I wanted to continue my education past high school... My parents definitely encouraged it. My dad more than my mom at the time, my biological dad because he didn't go to college. So he definitely did put it more in my mind that college is something that he wishes he did. And my mom was a first generation on her side to go to college and she let me think about what I really wanted to do and I think having the balance between that made it more clear to me that I really do want to go." –

Gia (HS Student)

Peer Influence

While not a specific point of focus in our discussions, the impact of peers is incredibly important as participants develop their views of college.

- *Students look to older friends or family members who may, or may not, have gone to college. They are influenced by those who seem to be doing well and did not need college.*
- *Traditional learners look to friends who may be going to college and seem to make it work.*
- *Adult learners often find mentors in the workplace.*
- *They respond to people like them or people they admire.*

“I feel like college is different because I've seen some people that I went to high school with who started more recently going to college and some of them were like, I didn't think I could do it. I did not have good grades in high school. But they're like, but I'm doing it. I'm getting great grades in college and all that. And I don't know, I could just see how it's different.” – Vanessa (Adult Learner)



Goal Imagery



Goal Imagery

We use images to engage participants more deeply and emotionally in defining their goals and aspirations.

Discovering goals and aspirations can assist greatly in finding motivational messaging and approaches to connect with the target audience.

What picture captures the feeling they want to have in 10 years if they reach their goals?



Equality



Excitement



Social Recognition



Accomplishment



Connection



Security



Empowerment



Peace



Independence







Self-Respect







Common Sentiments Expressing Future Goals:

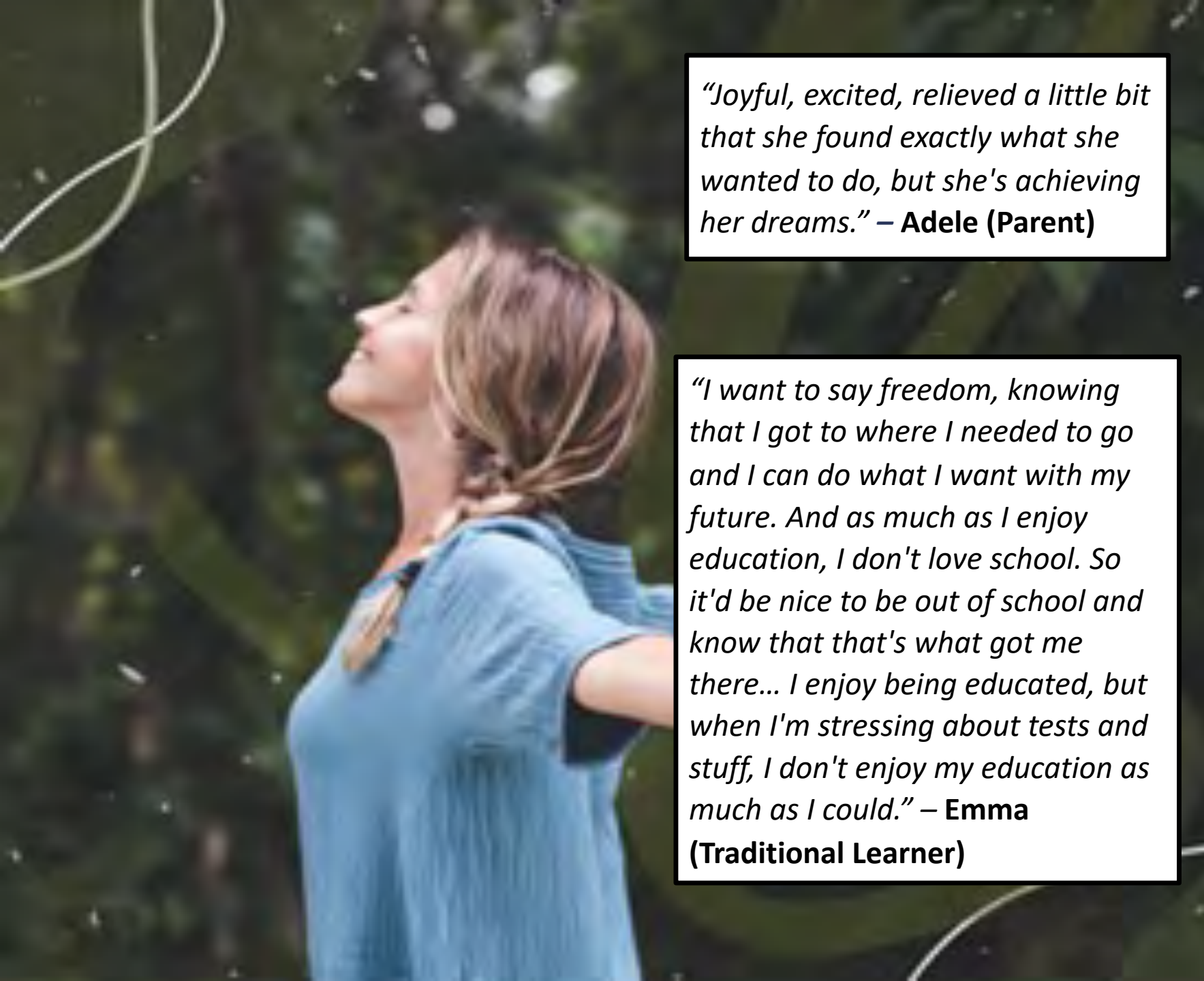
- **Freedom**
- **Relief**
- **Accomplishment**
- **Enjoyment**

Goal Imagery: Top Testing Goal Images Across Audience

<i>Ranked by Total Frequency</i>		Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)	Total (N=50)
Self-Respect		5	8	3	3	19
Connection		1	2	4	3	10
Accomplishment		4	1	2	0	7
Excitement		1	4	0	1	6

Goal Imagery: Low Testing Goal Images Across Audience

<i>Ranked by Total Frequency</i>		Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)	Total (N=50)
Social Recognition		1	1	0	1	3
Equality		0	1	0	1	2
Independence		1	1	0	0	2
Empowerment		0	0	1	0	1
Security		0	0	0	0	0
Peace		0	0	0	0	0



“Joyful, excited, relieved a little bit that she found exactly what she wanted to do, but she's achieving her dreams.” – Adele (Parent)

“I want to say freedom, knowing that I got to where I needed to go and I can do what I want with my future. And as much as I enjoy education, I don't love school. So it'd be nice to be out of school and know that that's what got me there... I enjoy being educated, but when I'm stressing about tests and stuff, I don't enjoy my education as much as I could.” – Emma (Traditional Learner)

What this photo means to them:

- Freedom
- Relief
- Optimism
- Joy
- Feeling good about myself

*“That to me is not stressed,
enjoying the people around me,
happy and living the moment.” –
Hilda (Adult Learner)*

*“Just peace and no stress and life
is just good and calm and kind of
settled in.” – Amanda (Parent)*



**What this photo means
to them:**

- **Contentment**
- **Peace**
- **Connection**
- **Enjoyment**



“He looks like he's just really content with himself, very free and he looks like he's happy where he's at. He looks like he achieved a lot, so it speaks freedom to me. So that's really what I want.” – Jocelyn (Traditional Learner)

What this photo means to them:

- Individual success and self-determination
- Pride
- Hard work/effort paid off
- Relief



“Well, looking at the picture, I could see myself being celebrated with my family. Yes. It gives this family celebration with you. Everyone is happy, just cheering you up, feeling it's nice.” – Trevor (Adult Learner)

“Just excitement, enjoyment, just the feeling of being together, the feeling of having accomplished something.” – Mateo (Adult Learner)

What this photo means to them:

- **Accomplishment**
- **Recognition by valued friends and family**
- **Enjoyment, stress-free**



Career vs. Job

Moving Past the Job Into a Career

- *Participants across our groups recognize the value of a career.*
- *The ability to move into a career they recognize as helping them achieve their goal state.*

Everyone wants a career, and they articulate clearly the difference between a career and a good job.

"I've got a job, but it's not going to be my career. A job is something to make money. A career is something that you should dedicate to and have fun or feel comfortable doing. It should feel like you're making some kind of a difference or doing something important, I think. Whereas a job I don't think necessarily has those requirements... When you have a job, you do it to make money. When you have a career, you do it because that's what you've wanted to do or what you've been striving to do." – **Emma (Traditional Learner)**

"A job is just basically, in my opinion, is living paycheck to paycheck... And a career is actually enjoying what you're doing and climbing up that ladder of success." – **Bernadette (Parent)**

If I'm really thinking about the difference, I would say a career is more like something you go to school for and then you have a profession in it and then a job is, my job at the ice cream store is kind of like anyone can do it. You don't have to be highly qualified for jobs." – **Savannah (HS Student)**

A career in many ways reflects their higher level goals that include less struggle, stability and enjoyment.



Building the Ideal College

Building the Ideal College

- *Where prospective students meet is in their need to feel supported by a new college. To goal state, this addresses their need for greater stability and security.*
- *Feeling connected is also important, creating opportunity and security.*
 - *Traditional and adult learners have challenges that make college seem an unlikely goal, namely supporting or caring for family or financial insecurity. Feeling connected to others helps build confidence.*
 - *Students and their parents are looking for social connections which can lead to general “happiness.”*
 - *Adult and traditional learners differ fairly significantly from high school students in what “social connections” might look like at an ideal college.*
- *In person learning is important to all prospective students.*

Participants helped to build their “ideal college,” first through their own ideation and then guided by a series of prompts.

Common elements of an ideal college across the audience segments:

- *Feel supported and cared for, valued.*
- *Smaller classes.*
- *Diverse.*
- *Goal oriented students.*
- *Connect with teachers/professors.*

“The feeling of learning, I guess the feeling of I know what I’m going to be doing. Feeling of feeling supported, feeling like confident.” – Sara (Adult Learner)

“By actually having an interest in their student success, or at least either in the short run or the long run. Short run being for that class. Long run being for the whole time that they’re there at the university. I feel like I would say to me that’s very important. And going to three different schools now, I’ve definitely noticed the difference. And then I guess high school is, I mean, all school is school, but even in high school, I felt like people really cared as well, and that really helped.” – David (Traditional Learner)

Traditional and Adult Learners differ in significant ways from high school students in describing the ideal college.

Traditional and Adult Learners describe:

- *More flexible learning opportunities that allow them to continue to work and manage families.*
- *Close to home.*
- *“Social interaction” more important than “social life.”*
- *Clear roadmap and direction.*

Additionally, adult learners express more concerns about “fitting in” and their academic ability returning to school. As such they describe the ideal college as specifically addressing their needs and interests (moms clubs, networking organizations, return to school orientation, etc).

High School Students describe:

- *Wanting to be further from home.*
- *More people.*
- *More social opportunities.*
- *All in-person (parents agree).*

In-Person vs. Online

An interesting point of conversation was about online learning versus in-person courses. Even our adult and traditional learners with work and family responsibilities **prefer in-person learning** as better suited to their learning style and success. While they may need a hybrid approach to accommodate work and other responsibilities, they do want in-person opportunities.

In-person learning:

- *Promotes greater focus and attention.*
- *Allows for more teacher/professor interaction.*
- *Interaction and connection between students.*

"It's easier for me to focus if I know I get to go in as well. If it's just strictly, and that's the thing with whether it be school or working from home, I always need to be there and be present. I like interacting with people on a face-to-face basis. So that definitely helps. I feel like I need to get out and be there." – Brian (Adult Learner)

"Absolutely in person. I cannot function in virtual classes... I mean you can offer it, it's always good to have an option, but every class that I need to take has to at least have the option of in-person I need to be there and ask questions and be able to interact with the people around me and the teacher, which is something you just can't do in a virtual space I feel." – Jaden (Traditional Learner)



New College Features

Participants considered 13 potential features of a new college. Each feature was rated on an “emoji emotion scale” which were translated into a 1-10 scale.



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

New College Features

What matters to participants:

- *Maximize opportunity for success through learning style (hands on, in person).*
- *Student-focused approach, whether that is scheduling, recognition/value of previous experience or services provided.*
- *Create opportunity for greater connection.*

These elements and approaches help address basic motivations and goal states: stability, connection, enjoyment.

With the student at the center it also helps build confidence among a student population that experiences self-doubt and lack of confidence.

New College Features: Mean Scores

<i>Ranked by Total Mean</i>	Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)	Total (N=50)
Hands-On Learning	9.8	9.3	9.1	9.4	9.4
Flexible Schedule	9.0	9.7	9.1	9.1	9.2
On-Site Services	9.6	8.9	9.0	9.2	9.2
Job Certificates/Credentials	8.8	9.3	8.5	9.4	9.0
Credit for Prior Work	8.6	9.6	8.7	8.9	8.9
Teaching-Focused	8.8	8.9	8.4	8.7	8.7
One-Stop-Shop	8.5	9.0	8.0	9.3	8.7
Full Student Experience	9.2	8.1	9.4	7.7	8.6
Career-Focused	7.5	8.4	7.7	8.0	7.9
Social Life	7.6	7.4	8.4	7.7	7.8
Fewer Students	7.5	7.8	6.2	8.7	7.5
Campus in Neighborhood	6.8	8.0	4.7	6.9	6.6
Shorter Courses	5.9	8.0	5.5	6.2	6.4

New College Features: Like the Most

<i>Ranked by Frequency Liked the Most</i>	Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)	Total (N=50)
On-Site Services	6	13	6	5	30
Flexible Schedule	4	7	3	2	16
One-Stop-Shop	3	8	1	3	15
Teaching-Focused	4	2	3	3	12
Hands-On Learning	3	2	3	3	11
Campus in Neighborhood	2	4	1	2	9
Full Student Experience	4	1	3	1	9
Fewer Students	2	3	0	3	8
Shorter Courses	1	4	0	2	7
Social Life	1	1	4	0	6
Career-Focused	2	1	2	0	5
Job Certificates/Credentials	1	1	1	2	5
Credit for Prior Work	1	2	0	0	3

Top Five Features by Audience

<u>Traditional Learners</u> <i>(N=13)</i>	<u>Adult Learners</u> <i>(N=18)</i>	<u>High School Juniors/Seniors</u> <i>(N=10)</i>	<u>Parents</u> <i>(N=9)</i>
Hands-On Learning <i>9.8</i>	Flexible Scheduling <i>9.7</i>	Full Student Experience <i>9.4</i>	Hands-On Learning <i>9.4</i>
On-Site Services <i>9.6</i>	Credit for Prior Work <i>9.6</i>	Hands-On Learning <i>9.1</i>	Job Certificates/ Credentials <i>9.4</i>
Full Student Experience <i>9.2</i>	Hands-On Learning <i>9.3</i>	Flexible Scheduling <i>9.1</i>	One-Stop-Shop <i>9.3</i>
Flexible Scheduling <i>9.0</i>	Job Certificates/ Credentials <i>9.3</i>	On-Site Services <i>9.0</i>	On-Site Services <i>9.2</i>
Job Certificates/ Credentials <i>8.8</i>	One-Stop-Shop <i>9.0</i>	Credit for Prior Work <i>8.7</i>	Flexible Scheduling <i>9.1</i>

The college will offer hands-on learning opportunities, like internships, to strengthen what students learn in the classroom.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
9.8	9.3	9.1	9.4

“That's always a bonus, something to give you that, because there's always something you can't really learn in class. There's something you need to learn while doing while working with your hands. So that would be a big plus.” – **Mateo (Adult Learner)**

“That's one thing that I kind of like about the idea of trade school as well is you can earn while you're learning in some instances and so if I were to go to college, I would definitely like to have the ability to work for something that I'm already learning about.”
– **Steele (HS Student)**

- **Very important across audience.**
- **Strong “learn-by-doing” style preference for these audiences.**
- **Attractive to those who are motivated by experience as the primary mechanism to reach professional goals.**
- **Ability to make connections and network is important for older learners.**

The college will include on-site services that make satisfying essential needs easier, including health care, mental health support, childcare, groceries, and transportation.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
9.6	8.9	9.0	9.2

“That would be amazing. That would make life so much easier. I feel like a lot of the reasons that people don't or aren't able to go to school is because of these very reasons. They're struggling to already afford healthcare, mental health support, childcare for when they're at work. Groceries, maybe they have to take the bus. That would be fantastic if the school could address all of those things.” – Lea (Adult Learner)

“I feel like everybody needs a helping hand every now and then, especially when you're trying to focus on your education. I feel like it's an awesome stepping stone... That [child care] would make me feel a lot weight off of my shoulders knowing that she's also or nearby and I can run up and check on her.” – Johanna (Adult Learner)

- This works well across audience.
- Beyond “convenience,” this makes the college seem different than others, student-focused and caring about the student experience/lifestyle.
- Students assume these services are “free” so some clarity may be required.
- For adult and traditional learners, this makes the experience seem less overwhelming and do-able. They feel supported.

The college will offer flexible scheduling that includes a blend of online and in-person courses, and evening, weekend or short day schedules.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
9.0	9.7	9.1	9.1

"I know that my life is all over the place and knowing that I fit a class into my day regardless of the time of when it would happen, is something that I like." – **Heath (Adult Learner)**

"It gives people that option... For my son, it would be easier for him to do the nine to four, but for me, depending on work-wise, children, the whole works, I'd be looking more at the evening time or having that fluctuation of I can go when I need to go rather than when I have to go." – **Joseph (Parent)**

- An important feature across audience.
- All learners want an in-person component. Flexibility ensures they can participate.
- Adult and traditional learners would like to be on campus a couple times a week. Students and parents want more in person learning.
- Evenings are generally preferred for the working learner. Most adult and traditional learners will continue to work at least part time.

The college will automatically give students the opportunity to earn certificates and other credentials before they have completed the full degree program that they can use to earn promotions or higher salaries in their current job.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
8.8	9.3	8.5	9.4

- Reward-as-you-go is an appreciated approach.
- Removes some of the concern about the “long” time to earn a 4-year degree.
- Removes some pressure of having to stop at some point for “life events” and have nothing to show for it, especially among adult learners.

“I think it's good because it gives the opportunity to the students to open up different opportunities that are actually going to help them with their life or their career.” – Yajaria (Traditional Learner)

“I could get a higher salary raise in my current job. That could be a big boost to help me out on where I want to go.” – Dalee (HS Student)

The college will allow and give credit towards a degree for previous college work and/or work experience.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
8.6	9.6	8.7	8.9

"I had 34 credits and they all transferred as lower division credits, so I basically had to start over... So that's kind of frustrating to have to start from scratch." – **Maxwell (Traditional Learner)**

"I feel like there's a lot of, and especially in community college or university, I hear often about people saying, oh my God, I have to take this again. I already learned about this, I already know this... So I think that would be great." – **Johanna (Adult Learner)**

- Really important feature to adult learners who generally have more experience and can see this translating into accelerated graduation with less need to “repeat” courses.
- This generally “makes sense” to all audiences. They want to maximize their educational time and resources.

"Because just because you haven't gotten a degree, because you have experience in that field or you've gone to a different school and didn't graduate, it doesn't mean you haven't learned anything from that. You pick up that experience along the way and you should be given credit for that experience." – **Ashley (Adult Learner)**

The college will have a one-stop-shop for all services, such as enrollment, financial aid, and academic and career advising.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
8.5	9.0	8.0	9.3

“It just makes it easier for me. It would make it easier for me to get the help that I need and be able to access it versus contact this department and contact that department. And there's so many different departments to contact. The accessibility is really important.” – **Hilda (Adult Learner)**

“It's just very helpful. It's all in the one, I mean, part of the reason we put it off is because we have to talk to the counselor and then we have to do FAFSA, then you have to, and career advising. He doesn't know what he wants to do. So it's like we're seeing multiple people and that's kind of nice.” – **Amanda (Parent)**

- **An important convenience factor for the traditional learners, adult learners and parents.**
- **Students rate lower and have less experience navigating these aspects of the college process.**
- **Another student focused feature that makes the process less overwhelming.**

Courses will be taught by faculty who are focused only on teaching and will be more interactive and engaged with the students.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
8.8	8.9	8.4	8.7

"I feel like that interaction is really important because it's good to have communication with your professors, especially if you don't understand something or you have questions about a certain assignment. I feel like communication is a really huge part of learning in general." – **Jocelyn (Traditional Learner)**

"I understand the importance of a balanced ratio between faculty and students. When I took classes before in person, just being in front of someone and being able to ask them a question in person and not wait for an answer. That was very helpful." – **Lorenzo (Adult Learner)**

- **An important feature to all audiences. They want to feel faculty is accessible to help meet their needs.**
- **Helps to alleviate some insecurity and concern about ability to succeed.**
- **All audiences like lower student-to-teacher ratio to facilitate greater interaction.**

"I would want the ability to talk to the teacher when I needed to and not feel like I'm so little that it doesn't matter. I've had where they're like, we'll just set an appointment and we'll talk at some point. I want them to be engaged. You guys have questions, see me after class. Things like that." – **Sara (Adult Learner)**

The college will have the full student experience, including clubs, sports and a student center.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
9.2	8.1	9.4	7.7

“Yeah, all that college energy. I wanted to feel like they're welcome. It's like, yes, when come to school every day I'm going to be here. I want 'em to feel like they're waiting to meet your soulmate or your friends or you're waiting to reach your goals or be active and show them that you're willing to do what you anything for your school.” –

Andrew (Traditional Learner)

“It keeps the students engaged with campus as well as what's going on with it and kind of gives a community connection for it. It also allows for places for things like studying or just working out or hanging out with friends to be facilitated and encouraged by the school itself.” –

Tiozoc (HS Student)

- **More important to high school students and younger traditional learners.**
- **For adult learners, may contribute positively to the atmosphere but they are not as likely to participate.**
- **Adult learners are looking for opportunities to connect and network (clubs that allow them to do that specific to their lifestyle would be attractive, i.e., “mom’s clubs” or “entrepreneur clubs”).**

The college will be career focused from day one and have just a small number of major areas that go straight into a good paying and impactful career in areas like teaching, business, health care, and computer science.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
7.5	8.4	7.7	8.0

“Well, career is my end goal. That's pretty much the only reason I really want to go to college is to get that. So anything, any information, any skills I can pick up that will land me an interview and maybe even connections to know people in the field already would be really good.” – **Ivan (Adult Learner)**

“Right off the bat, you're focused, you have your end goal, you're not wasting time on everything else. So the fast track, it's laser line focused. You're not doing anything else but the end result.” – **Amanda (Parent)**

- Very important to adult learners who have a more defined career path in mind.
- Adult learners like a more focused and prescribed approach to getting a degree.
- For those without a clearly defined career objective, they are not certain this is a fit for them.
- Parents rate much higher than the students as they want their child to be “focused.”

The college will have an emphasis on creating a social life for students so they feel connected to the school and other students.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
7.6	7.4	8.4	7.7

“I just feel like it'd be more geared toward the younger people. You know what I'm saying? I don't see why you would need to create a social life for students. Students are going to create their own social life regardless of what you do. You mean we're going to interact with each other, we're going to go on dates, we're going to go out to eat. We're going to do everything a normal person would do. So I don't see why the college would need to put an emphasis on creating a social life... It's more like networking for me.” – William (Adult Learner)

- Bigger segmentation between audiences, with high school students most interested in the social aspects of college life.
- Traditional and adult learners want to make social connections but are less interested in what they interpret are aspects of a “social life” (i.e., parties).
- Social connections are bonds made with other people that may be social but also utility for academic or networking purposes.
- Traditional and adult learners believe this might be important to a younger student.

The college will have fewer students than other state universities.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
7.5	7.8	6.2	8.7

“It would probably mean smaller class sizes and more person to person contact in all aspects of the university.” – Emma (Traditional Learner)

“I think on one hand, more students makes the social atmosphere of the college more enjoyable, but then on the other hand, I think fewer students in classrooms benefits the learning atmosphere more.” – Anissa (HS Student)

“Because it's again, going into having a classroom of 20 kids rather than having a classroom of 80. You want have that more. One-on-one, you want to have that... But if you have that opportunity to have a smaller classroom, you feel more like a student rather than you're a number. Your teacher can learn your name a lot easier and remember it.” – Joseph (Parent)

- The number of students in the college is less relevant than the student-to-teacher ratio and class size.
- Adult and traditional learners would feel more comfortable in smaller-medium size setting.
- High school students want larger student body to increase social opportunities.

The college campus will be in your neighborhood.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
6.8	8.0	4.7	6.9

“Just because the community that I'm in, my neighborhood is like a trailer park and I can't see a college being here.” – Danitza (Traditional Learner)

“I could stay close to my family and the commute is such a big issue. I would lose very little time commuting to the college, which means saves me time to study or get to my job or whatever.” – Ivan (Adult Learner)

- **“Neighborhood” may be too close to home, especially for high school students.**
- **15-20 minutes still feels close enough but maybe not “in the neighborhood.”**
- **Very important to adult learners with families – a more do-able commitment.**

“I feel near home is good, but in my neighborhood I don't think as much. I wouldn't like it as much. This is going to sound funny and very ironic, contradictory. Too close... I think it's good independence and although I said I like to immerse myself, there are times where you just want to get away and that'd be the point of living in the dorm is to immerse myself. And then when I want to get away, I go to my neighborhood visit home.” – Gia (HS Student)

Courses will take place over shorter periods like 1 to 2 months instead of 4 months.

Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)
5.9	8.0	5.5	6.2

- Rated on the lower end across audience.
- Concerns expressed that they may not be able to meet the demands of a faster-paced course.
- Some appeal that a degree could be obtained faster. Might be useful for a course or two.

“That sounds appealing at first, but then I'm like, does that mean that everything is just going really fast and it's like either you get it and you're on board or you don't get it and you're lost.” – Vanessa (Adult Learner)

“That means I would be getting my courses done faster... I think it's manageable for me. I am a fast learner, so I often find in work training classes, I feel like most of those things can get cut and down.” – Sara (Adult Learner)

“I feel like if the classes were shorter, then everything is just crammed into those two months and it's just like it would probably be harder.” – Savannah (HS Student)



Considering Costs

Considering Costs

- *Most of our participants have little basis for discussing what college costs beyond a few who may have taken some community college courses.*
- *What they believe is that college is “expensive.”*
- *A tuition cost of \$7,000-\$8,000 is a lot of money. But many consider it “reasonable” if the college lives up to its promise and they have financial aid.*
- *Financial assistance is a game changer as many see a path forward and opportunity with substantial aid.*
- *\$150/month is do-able for many. It may put a bit of a strain on their resources, but they feel they can make that payment.*

There is little consensus among these participants about what college costs. There is consensus that 4-year college is “expensive” and likely a barrier to attendance.

- **High school students have very little idea at all about what it costs to go to college.**
- **Parents worry about costs.**
- **For traditional and adult learners, many would struggle to come up with anything more than a minimal payment. Anything stretches their financial situation.**

When we introduce the tuition cost at between \$7,000-\$8,000, it is a lot of money for most participants, but with many comments about it seeming “reasonable” or “do-able” if the college lives up to its promise.

Importantly, most participants have very little point of reference in gauging the new college tuition. Many do not know what it costs to go to another in-state 4 - year college or university.

The most consistent point of reference among adult or traditional learners is the cost for community college.

“I think it's attainable. I honestly thought it would be more just because colleges tend to be a lot more money, but I feel like that's very attainable.” – **Ahnali (HS Student)**

“I mean, I couldn't handle an upfront cost of that amount just because we don't have that kind of money in savings or what have you. But if there was a payment plan, if I could pay it per month, then I think that would be doable.” – **Heath (Adult Learner)**

“I would say I would be able to pay at least half of it and then try to get the financial aid, but I think it's possible... It [financial aid] would definitely make it possible, especially with all the positives that the school would have and mostly other colleges that would have, it would be a really good thing.” – **Yajaria (Traditional Learner)**



Likely To Attend

Likely to Attend

At the end of the discussion, we asked participants how likely they would be to consider going to this college.

	Overall Mean
Overall	9.0
Traditional Learners	9.5
Adults Learners	8.9
High School Juniors/Seniors	8.6
Parents	9.2

Not At All Likely				Neutral		Very Likely			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Likely to Attend Quotes

“I think just being able to get financial aid to go to these classes. The flexibility of the classes, whether it's hybrid or if it's on weekends or if it's a shorter period rather than it being like four months for example. Where it's not just a lecture. There is activities.” – **Celeste (Traditional Learner)**

“I would go because it is affordable. I would go because there would be more emphasis on field work and on-hand learning. It's accessible in numerous ways. I mean, I would also, if it had that social aspect as well, that's huge. I'd like to feel more connected with not only other programs and fields of study, but just with other people in general. I would want also the more in-depth, specialized education, being able to learn specifically about what I want to do rather than just having a generalized overview with maybe one little class here and there that teaches what I want to learn.” – **Emma (Traditional Learner)**

“Right now, I'm very focused on trying to get to a point in my education where, I mean, I'm barely starting again. I mean, I do have some credit, but in my mind, I'm starting from the beginning again. And if this were available to make things a lot more easier, I would jump into the opportunity.” – **Lorenzo (Adult Learner)**

“I definitely would consider it very heavily. Right now our finances are stretched pretty thin, so if I was in my exact situation, I don't know that I would be able to still afford it. However, if we were doing a little bit better financially, that would definitely be something I'd be like, you know what, let's do it...I just keep coming back to just the support. The one where they said you would get more support from the school health-wise, mental health wise, childcare, all that kind of stuff. That would definitely be the biggest draw for me.” – **Lea (Adult Learner)**

“It seems pretty great. It seems like it has everything like I'd want, but also I don't know how the money thing is. I don't really have the perspective of that. So I don't know if it's too expensive or it's really cheap, but it sounds pretty good.” – **Savannah (HS Student)**

“The idea that the costs are limited out of pocket is very enticing and the fact that it's close and it really fits what he's looking for.” – **Brian (Parent)**



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

turning questions into answers

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PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

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ABOR New College Survey

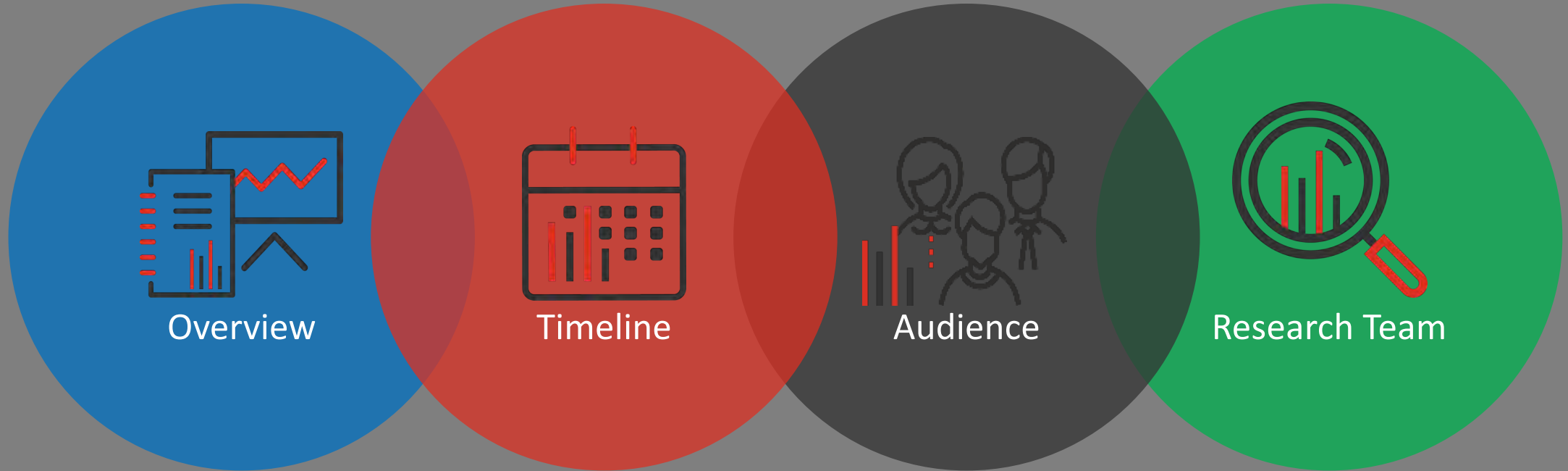
April 2024

PREPARED BY:

Nicole McCleskey, Partner

#240083

Methodology



- Public Opinion Strategies conducted a mixed mode survey in target counties in Arizona on behalf of the Arizona Board of Regents.

- The survey was conducted from February 26 – March 22, 2024.

- The survey was conducted among five target audiences.

- Nicole McCleskey was the principal researcher on this project. Becky Kramer was the research director and Bond Magevney provided analytical support.

Methodology

	Number of Respondents	Margin of Error/ Credibility Interval	Methodology
Overall	1,303	-	Mixed Mode
Traditional Learners: Ages 18-24 without a four-year degree	316	±6.29%	Text-to-Web/ Online Panel
Adult Learners: Ages 24-49 without a four-year degree	306	±6.39%	Text-to-Web/ Online Panel
Parents of High School Juniors and Seniors	112	±10.56%	Text-to-Web/ Online Panel
High School Juniors and Seniors	214	±7.64%	Text-to-Web/ Email/ Online Panel
Current Students: NAU undergraduate students ages 18-49	355	±5.16%	Text-to-Web/ Email

Target Counties: Maricopa, Coconino, Yavapai, Pima, Pinal, and Yuma.



Connecting with the Audience

Key Findings

- **Across our audiences, respondents are looking to create better lives. This is particularly true of our “learner” respondents (adult and traditional) who find themselves struggling more financially.**
- **It therefore makes sense given some of the financial instability that life goals such as “peace” and “security” are valued.**
- **Traditional and adult learners appear more college ambivalent and lacking a strong motivation to attend. Parents of high school students and the students themselves demonstrate higher levels of motivation.**
- **Within the learner community, ambivalence is coupled with a higher fear of failure.**

Quality of Life: Could life be better? Certainly.

“Generally speaking, how would you rate the overall quality of your life?”

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Excellent	8%	13%	24%	27%	18%
Good	48%	44%	55%	47%	54%
Fair	38%	36%	13%	23%	25%
Poor	6%	7%	8%	3%	3%

Financial Situation: Some additional struggle among traditional and adult learners.

“Thinking some more about you and your family, which one of the following best describes your financial situation?”

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Doing well, with few financial worries	12%	7%	20%	33%	17%
Doing Ok, not all that worried about day-to-day bills	28%	25%	25%	34%	36%
Total Doing Well/Ok	40%	32%	45%	67%	53%
Total Making It/Worrying	60%	68%	55%	33%	47%
Making it, but living paycheck-to-paycheck	41%	39%	38%	27%	36%
Constantly worrying about making ends meet	19%	29%	16%	6%	11%

Professional Life: Our audiences want to make professional changes.

*“Which of the following statements better describes you...”**

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Current Students
I want to make significant changes in my professional life to have the life I want.	68%	73%	76%
I am comfortable in my life and big changes professionally may rock the boat too much.	22%	13%	10%
Neither	10%	13%	14%

Life Goals

In an effort to understand base motivations that may underpin messaging, we ask:

LEARNERS, HS STUDENTS, and CURRENT STUDENTS:

*“From the list below, which one or two items are the most important for you to achieve in life?”**

PARENTS:

“From the list below, which one or two items are the most important for your child to achieve in life?”

Life Goals: Finding security, peace are important to our audiences.

<i>Ranked by Traditional Learners*^</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Peace	30%	29%	12%	17%	23%
Independence	26%	15%	44%	20%	17%
Comfort	22%	21%	8%	17%	23%
Freedom	20%	19%	11%	19%	13%
Accomplishment	20%	17%	24%	27%	22%
Security	19%	32%	24%	27%	31%
Joy	16%	20%	23%	19%	25%
Connection with others	16%	11%	10%	19%	22%
Self-Respect	13%	14%	20%	14%	5%
Equality	6%	6%	2%	6%	8%
Respect of others	5%	6%	11%	9%	7%
Empowerment	2%	7%	7%	3%	3%

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners, N=153 Adult Learners, N=185 Current Students) and all Parents/HS Students

^Highlight denotes top 2 achievements for each group

Life Goals by Financial Situation

Combined Learners*

	Total Doing Well/Ok (32%)	Total Making It/Worrying (68%)
Peace	29%	30%
Independence	19%	22%
Comfort	24%	20%
Freedom	22%	18%
Accomplishment	21%	18%
Security	21%	27%
Joy	16%	18%
Connection with others	21%	10%
Self-Respect	12%	15%
Equality	2%	8%
Respect of others	8%	4%
Empowerment	4%	5%

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners and N=153 Adult Learners)

Life Goals by Interest in Four-Year College

Combined Learners*

	Interest in 4-Year Program: High (39%)	Interest in 4-Year Program: Mid (37%)	Interest in 4-Year Program: Low (25%)
Peace	26%	31%	33%
Independence	18%	22%	23%
Comfort	23%	23%	18%
Freedom	21%	18%	20%
Accomplishment	25%	12%	19%
Security	22%	25%	32%
Joy	13%	24%	16%
Connection with others	16%	13%	10%
Self-Respect	16%	11%	14%
Equality	3%	7%	8%
Respect of others	7%	6%	2%
Empowerment	9%	4%	-

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners and N=153 Adult Learners)

Personal Attributes

LEARNERS and HS STUDENTS:

*“Please rate how well each of the following statements describe you using a scale from 1-10, where 1 means it does not describe you at all and 10 means it describes you perfectly.”**

PARENTS:

*“Please rate how well each of the following statements describes your child using a scale from 1-10, where 1 means it does not describe your child at all and 10 means it describes your child perfectly.”**

Personal Attributes: Traditional and adult learners are more college ambivalent.

<i>Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students
I am college material	5.8	5.5	7.5	7.3
I would like to get a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university, but four years is a big life commitment.	5.7	5.5	5.0	5.9
I am afraid I will fail college.	5.7	4.7	3.1	5.2
I want to go to college badly.	5.4	4.9	6.3	7.1

Not Describe At All				Neutral		Describes Perfectly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Asked in Replicate 1 only (N=158 Traditional Learners, N=153 Adult Learners, N=58 Parents, N=104 HS Students)

Younger learners slightly more interested in college, and more anxious.
White men least interested.

Combined Learners*

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Age 18-24 (51%)	Age 25-34 (25%)	Age 35-49 (25%)	White Men (25%)	White Women (22%)	Men of Color (22%)	Women of Color (28%)
I am college material	5.8	5.3	5.7	4.8	6.3	6.0	5.5
I would like to get a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university, but four years is a big life commitment.	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.4
I am afraid I will fail college.	5.7	5.1	4.2	4.8	4.5	4.6	6.4
I want to go to college badly.	5.4	4.9	5.0	4.1	5.6	5.3	5.6

Not Describe At All			Neutral				Describes Perfectly		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Asked in Replicate 1 only (N=158 Traditional Learners and N=153 Adult Learners)

Among learners segment, highest failure anxiety among those with highest level of interest.

Combined Learners*

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Interest in 4-Year Program: High (33%)	Interest in 4-Year Program: Mid (39%)	Interest in 4-Year College: Low (28%)
I am college material	7.8	5.6	3.1
I would like to get a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university, but four years is a big life commitment.	7.2	6.0	3.2
I am afraid I will fail college.	5.6	5.4	4.4
I want to go to college badly.	7.9	5.1	2.0

Not Describe At All				Neutral		Describes Perfectly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Asked in Replicate 1 only (N=158 Traditional Learners and N=153 Adult Learners)

Personal Attributes by Ethnicity: High School Students

High School Students*

<i>By Mean Score</i>	White (40%)	Hispanic (45%)	Total People of Color (60%)
I am college material	7.5	7.1	7.2
I would like to get a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university, but four years is a big life commitment.	6.4	5.4	5.6
I am afraid I will fail college.	5.2	5.5	5.2
I want to go to college badly.	7.2	7.2	7.0

Not Describe At All				Neutral				Describes Perfectly	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Asked in Replicate 1 only (N=104 HS Students)

Ambition

LEARNERS, HS STUDENTS, and CURRENT STUDENTS:

“Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means it does not describe you at all and a 10 means it describes you perfectly.”

PARENTS:

“Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means it does not describe your child at all and a 10 means it describes your child perfectly.”

Does Not Describe At All			Neutral				Describes Perfectly		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ambition: Learners are slightly more cautious.



<i>% 8-10 – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
I look for changes to improve my life even when things are going well.	46%	43%	54%	54%	48%
I am very ambitious.	44%	43%	56%	56%	55%
I am not afraid to take risks in my life to achieve my goals.	35%	42%	46%	45%	37%

Does Not Describe At All			Neutral				Describes Perfectly		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Combined Learners High Achievers



Gender	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
Men	47%	50%
Women	50%	49%



Last Grade Completed	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
High School or Less	48%	44%
Some College/ No Degree	31%	29%
Vocational/Technical/ 2-Year College	21%	27%



Age	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
Ages 18-24	51%	53%
Ages 25-34	25%	29%
Ages 35+	25%	18%



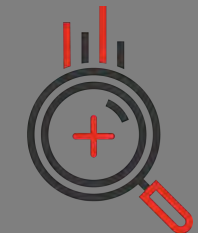
Parents	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
Parents	35%	39%
Non-Parents	65%	61%



Ethnicity	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
White	47%	43%
Hispanic	39%	39%
Total People of Color	53%	57%



Employment Status	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
Employed	59%	67%
Total Not Employed	41%	33%



Dominant Language	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
Spanish Dominant	16%	18%
English Dominant	60%	56%
Bilingual	23%	26%

Combined Learners High Achievers



Region	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
<i>Maricopa County</i>	66%	66%
<i>Pima County</i>	17%	16%
<i>Rest of Target Area</i>	17%	18%



School Enjoyment	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
<i>High (8-10)</i>	36%	65%
<i>Mid (4-7)</i>	44%	28%
<i>Low (1-3)</i>	20%	7%



Grades in School	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
<i>Mostly A's</i>	10%	14%
<i>A's and B's</i>	41%	48%
<i>Lower</i>	46%	36%



College Experience	Overall	High Achievers (23%)
<i>Total Yes</i>	52%	44%
<i>Total No</i>	48%	56%



Perceptions of College

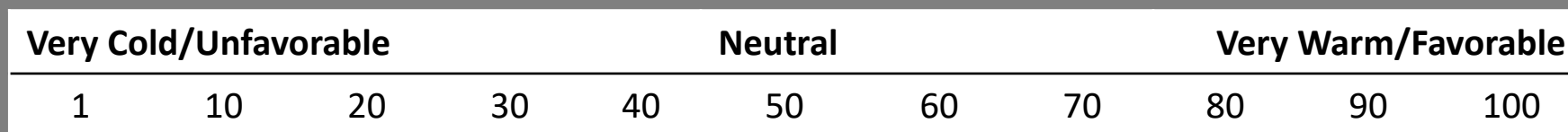
Key Findings

- A “new career-focused university” rates higher than all other institutions tested across all audiences.
- Of note, while still ranking highly, parents with college degrees and students with a college educated family member rate the career focused university slightly lower.
- The “cost” of college is a concern, and the learner audiences in particular wonder if a degree is worth it.
- Couching as an “investment” and “launching a career” is stronger language than focusing on “costs” and “a good job.”

Arizona Higher Education Image Ratings: A new career focused university rates higher across all audiences.

“Please rate how you feel about each of the following colleges and universities using a one to one hundred scale, where one means you have a very cold and unfavorable feeling and one hundred means you have a very warm and favorable feeling.”

<i>Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
A new career-focused university	69.2	66.6	70.5	68.5	68.1
Your local community college*	62.4	58.6	51.3	55.7	64.2
Northern Arizona University	57.6	60.9	55.4	63.6	78.7
University of Arizona^	53.6	65.7	60.1	64.4	51.9
Arizona State University*	51.3	62.2	59.3	63.7	56.2
Grand Canyon University^	46.1	56.4	47.1	51.8	41.0
Western Governors University*	35.7	38.8	47.5	51.4	51.9



*Asked in Replicate 1 only (N=158 Traditional Learners, N=153 Adult Learners, N=58 Parents, N=104 HS Students, N=170 Current Students);

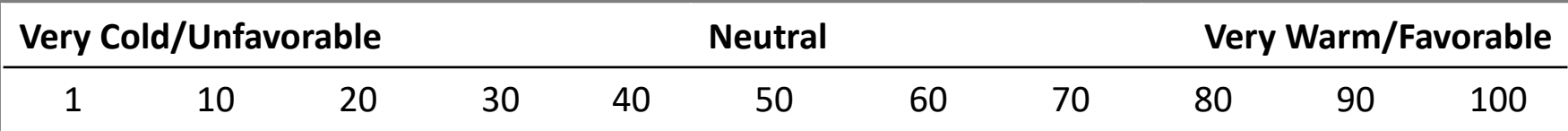
^Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners, N=153 Adult Learners, N=54 Parents, N=110 HS Students, N=185 Current Students)



New College Image Rating by Key Subgroups: Combined Learners

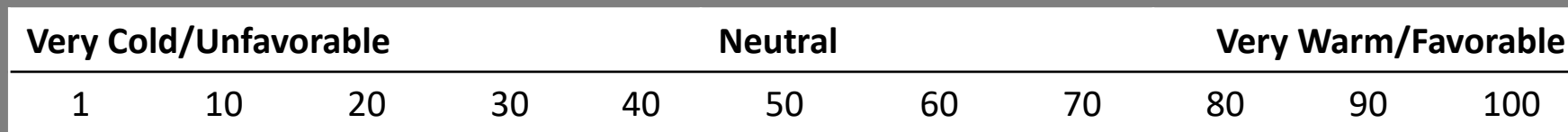
Combined Learners

<u>By Mean Score and % 80-100</u>		Age 18-24 (51%)	Age 25-34 (25%)	Age 35-49 (25%)	White Men (24%)	White Women (23%)	Men of Color (24%)	Women of Color (27%)	Interest in 4-Year College: High (36%)	Interest in 4-Year College: Mid (38%)	Interest in 4-Year College: Low (26%)
		A new career-focused university	Mean	69.2	66.7	66.5	67.7	70.8	66.8	66.5	78.8
%80-100	42%		39%	42%	41%	44%	35%	46%	61%	38%	18%



New College Image Rating by Key Subgroups: Parents and High School Students

		Parents		High School Students				
		Less Than College (61%)	College Graduate (39%)	Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes (50%)	Family Have 4-Year Degree: No (43%)	Mostly A's (32%)	A's/B's (42%)	Lower (26%)
<i>By Mean Score and % 80-100</i>								
A new career-focused university	Mean	73.5	65.8	67.1	69.4	69.2	68.9	66.8
	%80-100	49%	45%	35%	44%	43%	39%	39%



Is a bachelor's degree worth the cost? Differing views between learners and other audiences.

*“When it comes to getting a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university, which of the following statements comes closer to your point of view? A four-year college education is...”**

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Worth the cost because people have a better chance to get a good job and earn more money over their lifetime	43%	43%	60%	69%	56%
Not worth the cost because people often graduate without specific job skills or a large amount of debt to pay off	57%	57%	40%	31%	44%

*Asked in Replicate 1/Sample A only (N=79 Traditional Learners, N=77 Adult Learners) and Replicate 1 only (N=58 Parents, N=104 HS Students, N=170 Current Students)

Is a bachelor's degree worth the investment? Focus on career and investment changes perspective of adult learners.

*“When it comes to getting a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university, which of the following statements comes closer to your point of view? A four-year college education is...”**

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Worth the investment of time and money because it will increase my chances of launching a career and earning more money over my lifetime	42%	58%	69%	81%	89%
Not worth the investment of time and money because I will accumulate debt and lose out on years of earnings that I will struggle to pay off and make back over my lifetime	58%	42%	31%	19%	11%

*Asked in Replicate 2/Sample B only (N=79 Traditional Learners, N=77 Adult Learners) and Replicate 2 only (N=54 Parents, N=110 High School Students, N=185 Current Students)

Is a bachelor's degree worth the cost/investment? Older learners gravitate to investment language.

	Combined Learners			
	Worth the Cost*	Not Worth the Cost*	Worth the Investment^	Not Worth the Investment^
Age 18-29 (62%)	43%	57%	43%	57%
Age 30+ (38%)	42%	57%	61%	39%

*Asked in Replicate 1/Sample A only (N=79 Traditional Learners and N=77 Adult Learners);

^Asked in Replicate 2/Sample B only (N=79 Traditional Learners and N=77 Adult Learners)



Will They Come?

Key Findings

Traditional and adult learners express a modest level of interest in attending a 4-year college. They are more likely to attend a 2-year institution.

- *Demographically, interest in a 4-year degree and associated importance levels are higher among women (traditional learner), younger respondents, Hispanic respondents, and those with some college experience.*
- *Among the learners audiences, those more interested in college also self-identify as more ambitious by personality. Language engaging their ambitious nature will likely have a positive effect.*

Interest and importance levels in a 4-year degree are much higher among parents and high school students.

- *Among parents, interest and importance levels are elevated among dads, Hispanic parents, and those with a college degree.*
- *There are no demographic differences among the student population.*

INTEREST in a Four-Year College

LEARNERS and HS STUDENTS:

“How interested are you in attending a four-year college or university to earn a bachelor’s degree? Please rate your interest on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not interested at all and 10 means you are very interested.”

PARENTS:

“How interested are you in having your child attend a four-year college or university to earn a bachelor’s degree? Please rate your interest on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not interested at all and 10 means you are very interested.”

IMPORTANCE of a College Degree

LEARNERS, HS STUDENTS, and CURRENT STUDENTS:

“How important is a college degree to where you want to get in life? Please rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is very important.”

PARENTS:

“How important is a college degree to where you want your child to get in life? Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 means it is not at all important and 10 means it is very important.”

Traditional and adult learners attach slightly more importance to a degree as interest wanes.

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>		Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Interest in a Four-Year College	Mean	6.1	5.9	8.2	8.6	N/A
	%8-10	37%	35%	73%	79%	N/A
Importance of a College Degree	Mean	6.5	6.3	7.7	8.4	8.8
	%8-10	44%	38%	66%	73%	82%

Interest in a Four-Year College and Importance of a College Degree by Key Subgroups: Traditional Learners

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>	Interest in a 4-Year College		Importance of a College Degree	
Men (45%)	5.9	35%	6.1	38%
Women (50%)	6.2	38%	6.9	49%
Age 18-20 (38%)	6.3	40%	6.8	53%
Age 21-24 (62%)	5.9	35%	6.4	38%
White (41%)	5.6	31%	6.0	39%
Hispanic (43%)	6.6	44%	6.9	49%
Total People of Color (59%)	6.5	41%	6.9	48%
High School or Less (52%)	5.3	25%	5.7	32%
Some College/No Degree (34%)	7.2	54%	7.8	62%
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (13%)	6.3	36%	6.6	46%

Interest in a Four-Year College and Importance of a College Degree by Key Subgroups: Adult Learners

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>	Interest in a 4-Year College		Importance of a College Degree	
Men (50%)	5.9	35%	6.1	38%
Women (50%)	5.8	35%	6.5	40%
Age 25-34 (50%)	6.2	39%	6.3	39%
Age 35-44 (36%)	6.0	36%	6.5	39%
Age 45-49 (14%)	4.3	20%	5.7	34%
White (54%)	5.7	32%	6.1	35%
Hispanic (34%)	6.3	41%	6.7	46%
Total People of Color (46%)	6.0	39%	6.5	43%
High School or Less (43%)	5.5	30%	6.0	37%
Some College/No Degree (28%)	6.1	37%	6.2	32%
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (29%)	6.2	41%	6.8	47%

Interest in a Four-Year College and Importance of a College Degree by Region: Combined Learners

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>	Interest in a 4-Year College		Importance of a College Degree	
Maricopa County: Sun City/NW Valley (8%)	5.7	38%	6.2	36%
Maricopa County: South (25%)	6.0	35%	6.4	38%
Maricopa County: Central/East/Scottsdale (13%)	5.5	31%	6.3	42%
Maricopa County: Tempe/Mesa (20%)	6.0	33%	6.1	36%
Pima County (17%)	6.4	41%	6.7	51%
Rest of Target Area (17%)	6.1	39%	6.6	44%

Interest in a Four-Year College and Importance of a College Degree by Key Subgroups: Combined Learners

Higher interest scores among those who consider themselves ambitious, risk takers, and want to make a change in life.

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Interest in a 4-Year College	Importance of a College Degree
Ambitious: High (43%)	6.7	7.1
Ambitious: Mid (50%)	5.6	6.1
Ambitious: Low (6%)	3.9	4.5
Not Afraid to Take Risks: High (38%)	6.6	7.1
Not Afraid to Take Risks: Mid (50%)	5.8	6.2
Not Afraid to Take Risks: Low (12%)	4.6	5.2
Look for Changes: High (45%)	6.8	7.2
Look for Changes: Mid (48%)	5.6	6.1
Look for Changes: Low (8%)	3.6	4.0
Financial Situation: Doing Well (9%)	6.2	6.3
Financial Situation: Doing Ok (27%)	6.0	6.3
Financial Situation: Making It (40%)	5.8	6.5
Financial Situation: Worrying (24%)	6.2	6.4

Top Groups Most Interested in Attending a Four-Year College

Top Groups Most Interested in Attending a Four-Year College: Combined Learners (6.0)*

Student	7.7	Women of Color	6.4
Currently Enrolled in 2-Year Program	7.6	Pima County	6.4
Graduated 2-Year Program	6.8	Pima/Yuma	6.4
Language: Bilingual	6.8	Family Income: \$65K-\$80K	6.4
Look for Changes: High (8-10)	6.8	Family Income: \$80K-\$100K	6.4
Some College/No Degree	6.7	Total People of Color	6.3
Enrolled/Did Not Graduate 4-Year Program	6.7	Enrolled/Did Not Graduate 2-Year Program	6.3
Ambitious: High (8-10)	6.7	Parents	6.3
Dads	6.6	Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes	6.3
Language: Spanish Dominant	6.6	Language: English Dominant	6.3
Not Afraid to Take Risks: High (8-10)	6.6		
Age 30-39	6.5		
Hispanic	6.5		

*Shaded subgroups are top groups for both "Interest in 4-Year College" and "College Degree Importance"

Top Groups College Degree Importance: Combined Learners

Top Groups College Degree Importance: Combined Learners (6.4)*

Currently Enrolled in 2-Year Program	8.0	Moms	6.8
Student	8.0	Women	6.7
Dads	7.4	Age 30-39	6.7
Graduated 2-Year Program	7.3	Total People of Color	6.7
Language: Spanish Dominant	7.3	Pima County	6.7
Language: Bilingual	7.3	Vocational/Technical/2-Year College	6.7
Look for Changes: High (8-10)	7.2	Enrolled/Did Not Graduate 2-Year Program	6.7
Some College/No Degree	7.1	Family Income: \$65K-\$80K	6.7
Ambitious: High (8-10)	7.1		
Not Afraid to Take Risks: High (8-10)	7.1		
Women of Color	7.0		
Parents	7.0		
Women Age 18-29	6.8		
Hispanic	6.8		
Pima/Yuma	6.8		
Family Income: \$20K-\$40K	6.8		

*Shaded subgroups are top groups for both Interest in 4-Year College and College Degree Importance

Interest in a Four-Year College and Importance of a College Degree by Key Subgroups: Parents

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>	Interest in a 4-Year College		Importance of a College Degree	
Dads (44%)	8.7	81%	8.2	68%
Moms (56%)	7.8	67%	7.3	66%
Age 25-44 (49%)	8.3	72%	7.9	71%
Age 45+ (51%)	8.1	73%	7.5	62%
White (51%)	7.6	62%	7.3	54%
Hispanic (32%)	9.0	88%	8.4	85%
Total People of Color (49%)	8.8	83%	8.1	80%
Maricopa County (74%)	8.5	76%	7.9	68%
Rest of Target Area (26%)	7.2	62%	7.0	63%
Less Than College (61%)	7.9	70%	7.5	67%
College+ (39%)	8.6	77%	7.9	65%
Child Grade: Junior (52%)	8.2	69%	7.5	61%
Child Grade: Senior (48%)	8.2	76%	7.9	72%

Interest in a Four-Year College and Importance of a College Degree by Key Subgroups: High School Students

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>	Interest in a 4-Year College		Importance of a College Degree	
Male (45%)	8.4	76%	8.1	66%
Female (50%)	8.9	82%	8.8	80%
Junior (40%)	8.5	74%	8.2	69%
Senior (60%)	8.7	81%	8.5	76%
White (40%)	8.6	78%	8.3	72%
Hispanic (45%)	8.7	80%	8.4	74%
Total People of Color (60%)	8.7	79%	8.5	74%
Maricopa County (75%)	8.6	77%	8.4	72%
Pima County (16%)	8.8	81%	8.3	74%
Rest of Target Area (9%)	8.9	84%	8.6	80%

Likelihood of Attending a Two-Year and Four-Year College

LEARNERS and HS STUDENTS:

“How likely are you to attend a two-year community college to earn an associate’s degree*/four-year college or university to earn a bachelor’s degree? Please rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are very likely.”

PARENTS:

“How likely is your child to attend a two-year community college to earn an associate’s degree/ four-year college or university to earn a bachelor’s degree? Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 means your child is not at all likely and 10 means your child is very likely.”

Traditional and adult learners more inclined to try the two-year route; parents and high school students a four-year program.

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10 (Off Total Base)*</i>		Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students
Two-Year College	Mean	6.4	5.7	5.8	5.6
	%8-10	36%	24%	31%	36%
Four-Year College	Mean	5.8	5.1	7.0	8.3
	%8-10	34%	24%	50%	76%

Not At All Likely				Neutral		Very Likely			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Not asked if graduated from two-year college (N=282 Traditional Learners and N=236 Adult Learners)

Traditional Learners Most Likely to Attend a Four-Year College

Top Groups Most Likely to Attend a Four-Year College (5.8)			
Current Student	7.4	Not Afraid to Take Risks: High (8-10)	6.3
Currently Enrolled in 2-Year Program	7.3	Financial Situation: Worrying	6.3
Some College/No Degree	6.9	Total People of Color	6.2
Language: Spanish Dominant	6.8	Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program	6.2
Enrolled/Did Not Graduate Four-Year Program	6.6	Family Income: \$40K-\$65K	6.2
Rest of Target Area	6.5	Quality of Life: Excellent/Good	6.2
Ambitious: High (8-10)	6.5		
Look for Changes: High (8-10)	6.5		
Parents	6.4		
Women of Color	6.3		
Pima County	6.3		
Pima/Yuma	6.3		
Enrolled/Did Not Graduate 2-Year Program	6.3		
Family Income: \$65K+	6.3		
Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes	6.3		

Adult Learners Most Likely to Attend a Four-Year College

Top Groups Most Likely to Attend a Four-Year College (5.1)			
Language: Bilingual	6.7	Hispanic	5.5
Graduated 2-Year Program	6.0	Hourly Employee	5.5
Look for Changes: High (8-10)	6.0	Family Income: \$65K-\$80K	5.5
Enrolled/Did Not Graduate 4-Year Program	5.9	Moms	5.5
Dads	5.9	Men Age 25-34	5.4
Ambitious: High (8-10)	5.9	Women of Color	5.4
Not Afraid to Take Risks: High (8-10)	5.9	Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes	5.4
Family Income: \$20K-\$40K	5.7		
Parents	5.7		
Vocational/Technical/2-Year College	5.6		
Part-Time Employee	5.6		

Likelihood of Attending a Two-Year and Four-Year College: Combined Learners

<i>By Mean Score (Off Total Base)</i>	2-Year College*	4-Year College
Men Age 18-29 (29%)	6.0	5.5
Men Age 30-39 (12%)	6.1	5.5
Men Age 40-49 (6%)	5.4	4.8
Women Age 18-29 (31%)	6.2	5.8
Women Age 30-39 (10%)	6.5	5.3
Women Age 40-49 (9%)	5.1	4.5
White Men (24%)	5.9	5.3
White Women (23%)	5.6	4.8
Men of Color (24%)	6.1	5.6
Women of Color (27%)	6.5	5.9
Maricopa County: Sun City/NW Valley (8%)	6.7	5.5
Maricopa County: South (25%)	5.9	5.3
Maricopa County: Central/East/Scottsdale (13%)	5.9	5.2
Maricopa County: Tempe/Mesa (20%)	5.8	5.3
Pima County (17%)	6.2	5.9
Rest of Target Area (17%)	6.3	5.7
High School or Less (48%)	5.5	4.9
Some College/No Degree (31%)	6.9	6.1
Vocational/Technical/2-Year College (21%)	6.0	5.8

*Not asked if graduated from two-year college (N=282 Traditional Learners and N=236 Adult Learners)

Likelihood of Attending a Two-Year and Four-Year College: High School Students

<i>By Mean Score</i>	2-Year College	4-Year College
Male (45%)	5.5	8.0
Female (50%)	5.6	8.7
Junior (40%)	5.3	8.1
Senior (60%)	5.9	8.5
White (40%)	5.6	8.3
Hispanic (45%)	5.6	8.3
Total People of Color (60%)	5.7	8.4
Maricopa County (75%)	5.6	8.2
Pima County (16%)	5.5	8.6
Rest of Target Area (9%)	5.9	8.8



Finding the Rationale

Key Findings

- **Most important to all of our audiences:**
 - *To get a job you want or advance in your career.*
 - *To get into a field with a rewarding career.*
- **A strong third contender: to make more money.**
- **“Prestige” and “social opportunities” are notably less important to our learner audiences and parents.**
- **High school students also want to do more academic exploration through different opportunities. This is particularly true of high achieving students.**

Reasons to Get a Bachelor's Degree

LEARNERS, HS STUDENTS, and CURRENT STUDENTS:

*“Listed below are several different reasons people say it is important to get a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university. Please rate how important each item is to you personally.” (Main Reason/Important, But Not Main Reason/Not a Reason)**

PARENTS:

*“Listed below are several different reasons people say it is important to get a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university. Please rate how important each item is to you personally when thinking about your child’s future.” (Main Reason/Important, But Not Main Reason/Not a Reason)**

Getting into the career they want tops the list.

<i>By % Main Reason*</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
To get the job you want or advance in your career	72%	65%	57%	77%	89%
To get into a field with a rewarding career	62%	51%	60%	66%	76%
To make more money	52%	59%	44%	66%	58%
To explore academic opportunities	32%	22%	26%	44%	40%
To have a sense of accomplishment	29%	32%	36%	27%	27%
To have the prestige of having a college degree	17%	17%	14%	23%	17%
To explore different types of people and perspectives	15%	15%	20%	18%	19%
To enjoy different social opportunities	10%	14%	14%	21%	13%

Prestige, socialization, exploration NOT high on the list of reasons for learners.

<i>% Not a Reason Ranked by Traditional Learners*</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
To have the prestige of having a college degree	48%	36%	46%	30%	43%
To enjoy different social opportunities	35%	43%	37%	20%	30%
To explore different types of people and perspectives	29%	38%	33%	29%	21%
To have a sense of accomplishment	21%	19%	15%	23%	17%
To explore academic opportunities	13%	24%	13%	10%	8%
To get into a field with a rewarding career	8%	13%	8%	7%	2%
To make more money	8%	12%	17%	4%	5%
To get the job you want or advance in your career	5%	12%	5%	5%	1%

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners, N=153 Adult Learners, N=54 Parents, N=110 HS Students, all Current Students)

Those most interested in a college degree among the learners audience want a career AND more money.

Combined Learners*

<i>By % Main Reason</i>	Interest in 4-Year Program: High (39%)	Interest in 4-Year Program: Mid (37%)	Interest in 4-Year College: Low (25%)
To get the job you want or advance in your career	78%	66%	56%
To get into a field with a rewarding career	69%	55%	40%
To make more money	63%	60%	38%
To explore academic opportunities	33%	23%	24%
To have a sense of accomplishment	39%	31%	16%
To have the prestige of having a college degree	26%	11%	13%
To explore different types of people and perspectives	16%	16%	11%
To enjoy different social opportunities	14%	11%	10%

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners and N=153 Adult Learners)

Reasons to Get a Bachelor's Degree by Grades: High School Students

High School Students*

<i>By % Main Reason</i>	Mostly A's (33%)	A's/B's (46%)	Lower (20%)
To get the job you want or advance in your career	88%	74%	66%
To get into a field with a rewarding career	75%	68%	47%
To make more money	69%	63%	68%
To explore academic opportunities	55%	40%	32%
To have a sense of accomplishment	32%	18%	39%
To have the prestige of having a college degree	30%	15%	29%
To explore different types of people and perspectives	13%	27%	5%
To enjoy different social opportunities	18%	17%	33%



New College Features

Key Findings

- **Very similar to our qualitative work, highest testing attributes focus on career outcomes, flexibility and student support.**
- **There are ranking differences between our audiences.**
 - *More important to our learner audiences are flexibility and some student support services that recognize their life circumstances.*
 - *Slightly more important to high school students are having the full student experience.*
- **There are also differences within our audience segments.**
 - *Among learners, women prioritize flexibility, men put a premium on career focus.*
 - *Younger learners elevate student support; older learners (25+) prioritize flexibility and career focus.*
- **Likelihood of attending does increase significantly among the learner audiences after hearing about new features.**
- **Likelihood of attending does go down among high school students. The biggest declines come among the higher achieving students.**

“Features” Testing

Respondents rated a series of 17 potential attributes and features of a new college that could open in Arizona.

“Next, please read some different features of a new four-year college that could open here in Arizona.

Keeping in mind that it is difficult for everything to be equally important, how important are each of the following features to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all.”

In the survey, the attributes were shown to respondents in a random order; however, for the purposes of our analysis, the features were divided into four categories:

- Flexibility attributes
- Student-centered attributes
- Career-focused attributes
- Milestones attributes

For each item, a mean score was calculated by assigning a point value from 5 (extremely important) to 1 (not important at all).

Not Important At All					Extremely Important	
1	2	3	4	5		

New College Attributes

<i>Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will have programs and services that help get you the experience you need to get a job after you graduate and position you well for a prosperous and impactful career. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.4
The college will offer flexible scheduling that includes a blend of online and in-person courses, and evening, weekend or short day schedules. (FLEXIBILITY)	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.2
The college will offer hands-on learning opportunities, like internships, to strengthen what students learn in the classroom. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.4
Courses will be taught by faculty who are focused only on teaching and will be more interactive and engaged with the students. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.1
The college will include on-site services that make satisfying essential needs easier, including health care services, mental health support, childcare, a food bank, and transportation. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	4.1	3.7	3.6	3.8	4.2
The college will be known for high quality academic programs that are well aligned with your career goals and employer needs. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.2

New College Attributes

Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will feature a Student Success Center that provides services to students like tutoring and help with scheduling so all students get the support they need. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.2
The college will automatically give students the opportunity to earn certificates and other credentials before they have completed the full degree program that they can use to earn promotions or higher salaries in their current job. (MILESTONES)	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.1
The college will offer career-focused jobs on campus. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0
The college will give credit towards a degree for previous college work or work experience. (MILESTONES)	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.2
The college will be career focused from day one and have just a small number of popular majors that go straight into good paying and impactful careers in areas like teaching, business, health care, and computer science. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6
General education requirements, like math and English courses, will be better focused on a student's major area of study and geared toward workplace skills and can be taken at any time during the four year period. (FLEXIBILITY)	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9

New College Attributes

<i>Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will have programs and services that help you start your own business. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.4
Students will have the option to take one course at a time that will last approximately five weeks in-stead of multiple courses over three to four months. (FLEXIBILITY)	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.3
The college campus will be in your neighborhood, or a short distance from your neighborhood. (FLEXIBILITY)	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.2
The college will have the full student experience that promotes social connections including clubs and organizations, sports, student center, and an emphasis on a social life. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7
The college will have fewer students than other state universities. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	3.0	3.2	3.4	2.7	2.8

New College Attributes by Likely to Attend Four-Year College: Combined Learners

Combined Learners

Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners

	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: High (29%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Mid (41%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Low (30%)	Likely to Attend New College: Move to High Likely (21%)
The college will have programs and services that help get you the experience you need to get a job after you graduate and position you well for a prosperous and impactful career. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.4
The college will offer flexible scheduling that includes a blend of online and in-person courses, and evening, weekend or short day schedules. (FLEXIBILITY)	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.3
The college will offer hands-on learning opportunities, like internships, to strengthen what students learn in the classroom. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.2	4.0	3.8	4.2
Courses will be taught by faculty who are focused only on teaching and will be more interactive and engaged with the students. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	4.2	3.9	3.8	4.3
The college will include on-site services that make satisfying essential needs easier, including health care services, mental health support, childcare, a food bank, and transportation. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	4.2	3.9	3.6	4.2
The college will be known for high quality academic programs that are well aligned with your career goals and employer needs. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.3	4.0	3.7	4.2

New College Attributes by Likely to Attend Four-Year College: Combined Learners

Combined Learners

Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners

	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: High (29%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Mid (41%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Low (30%)	Likely to Attend New College: Move to High Likely (21%)
The college will feature a Student Success Center that provides services to students like tutoring and help with scheduling so all students get the support they need. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	4.2	4.0	3.6	4.2
The college will automatically give students the opportunity to earn certificates and other credentials before they have completed the full degree program that they can use to earn promotions or higher salaries in their current job. (MILESTONES)	4.1	3.9	3.7	4.2
The college will offer career-focused jobs on campus. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	4.0	4.0	3.7	4.2
The college will give credit towards a degree for previous college work or work experience. (MILESTONES)	4.2	3.8	3.7	4.1
The college will be career focused from day one and have just a small number of popular majors that go straight into good paying and impactful careers in areas like teaching, business, health care, and computer science. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	3.9	3.8	3.6	4.1
General education requirements, like math and English courses, will be better focused on a student's major area of study and geared toward workplace skills and can be taken at any time during the four year period. (FLEXIBILITY)	4.0	3.7	3.5	4.1

New College Attributes by Likely to Attend Four-Year College: Combined Learners

Combined Learners

Mean Score – Ranked by Traditional Learners

	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: High (29%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Mid (41%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Low (30%)	Likely to Attend New College: Move to High Likely (21%)
The college will have programs and services that help you start your own business. (CAREER-FOCUSED)	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.9
Students will have the option to take one course at a time that will last approximately five weeks in-stead of multiple courses over three to four months. (FLEXIBILITY)	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.9
The college campus will be in your neighborhood, or a short distance from your neighborhood. (FLEXIBILITY)	3.7	3.7	3.2	3.8
The college will have the full student experience that promotes social connections including clubs and organizations, sports, student center, and an emphasis on a social life. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.6
The college will have fewer students than other state universities. (STUDENT-CENTERED)	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.2

Top Attributes by Age: Combined Learners

<u>Age 18-24</u> (51%)	<u>Age 25-34</u> (25%)	<u>Age 35-49</u> (25%)
Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.2	Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.0	Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.1
Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 4.2	Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 3.9	Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 4.1
Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 4.1	Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 3.8	Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 4.0
Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 4.1	Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 3.8	Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 4.0
Will Include On-Site Services 4.1	Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals 3.8	Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals 4.0

Top Attributes by Ethnicity/Gender: Combined Learners

<u>White Men</u> (24%)	<u>White Women</u> (23%)	<u>Men of Color</u> (24%)	<u>Women of Color</u> (27%)
Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.0	Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.2	Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.0	Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job 4.2
Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 3.9	Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 4.2	Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 4.0	Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 4.2
Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 3.9	Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 4.0	Will Offer Flexible Scheduling 3.9	Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities 4.2
Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 3.9	Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 4.0	Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 3.9	Will Include On-Site Services 4.2
Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals 3.8	Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals 4.0	Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals 3.9	Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching 4.1

Top Attributes by High School Grades: High School Students

<u>Mostly A's</u> (32%)	<u>A's/B's</u> (42%)	<u>Lower</u> (26%)
<p>Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching</p> <p>3.8</p>
<p>Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Will Offer Flexible Scheduling</p> <p>3.8</p>
<p>Will Have Programs that Help You Get the Experience Needed to Get a Job</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Will Be Known for High Quality Programs That are Aligned with Career Goals</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Will Feature a Student Success Center</p> <p>3.8</p>
<p>Courses Will Be Taught by Faculty Who are Focused on Teaching</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Will Give Credit For Prior Work/Experience</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>Will Offer Hands-On Learning Opportunities</p> <p>3.8</p>
<p>Will Give Credit For Prior Work/Experience</p> <p>4.0</p>	<p>Will Offer Flexible Scheduling</p> <p>4.0</p>	<p>Will Give Students Opportunity to Earn Job Certificates</p> <p>3.8</p>

Forced Choice Attribute Testing

Respondents who rated two or more features as “extremely important” to them in a category (flexibility, career focused, student centered, milestones) were then asked to identify the MOST IMPORTANT item to them within that category (forced choice).

The following slides show the responses to this forced choice question combined with the responses of those who only selected one feature as extremely important to them in that category.

Respondents who did not rate any items as extremely important within a category are not shown.

Flexibility Attributes

*“Please select which ONE of the following features is most important you personally.”**

<i>Off Total Base – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will offer flexible scheduling that includes a blend of online and in-person courses, and evening, weekend or short day schedules.	36%	27%	20%	28%	34%
General education requirements, like math and English courses, will be better focused on a student’s major area of study and geared toward workplace skills and can be taken at any time during the four year period.	12%	10%	16%	18%	15%
Students will have the option to take one course at a time that will last approximately five weeks instead of multiple courses over three to four months.	10%	12%	10%	6%	5%
The college campus will be in your neighborhood, or a short distance from your neighborhood.	9%	6%	5%	5%	8%

*Asked if Rated 1+ Flexibility Attributes as “Extremely Important” (N=214 Traditional Learners, N=167 Adult Learners, N=57 Parents, N=119 HS Students, N=217 Current Students)

Student-Centered Attributes

*“Please select which ONE of the following features is most important you personally.”**

<i>Off Total Base – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will include on-site services that make satisfying essential needs easier, including health care services, mental health support, childcare, a food bank, and transportation.	24%	17%	16%	16%	28%
Courses will be taught by faculty who are focused only on teaching and will be more interactive and engaged with the students.	16%	13%	18%	20%	18%
The college will feature a Student Success Center that provides services to students like tutoring and help with scheduling so all students get the support they need.	16%	12%	15%	15%	13%
The college will have the full student experience that promotes social connections including clubs and organizations, sports, student center, and an emphasis on a social life.	6%	5%	8%	6%	10%
The college will have fewer students than other state universities.	2%	9%	3%	4%	1%

*Asked if Rated 1+ Student-Centered Attributes as “Extremely Important” (N=202 Traditional Learners, N=168 Adult Learners, N=68 Parents, N=129 HS Students, N=248 Current Students)

Career-Focused Attributes

*"Please select which ONE of the following features is most important you personally."**

<i>Off Total Base – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will have programs and services that help get you the experience you need to get a job after you graduate and position you well for a prosperous and impactful career.	22%	19%	20%	23%	28%
The college will offer hands-on learning opportunities, like internships, to strengthen what students learn in the classroom.	15%	12%	21%	17%	25%
The college will have programs and services that help you start your own business.	11%	10%	4%	4%	1%
The college will be known for high quality academic programs that are well aligned with your career goals and employer needs.	10%	7%	12%	16%	13%
The college will offer career-focused jobs on campus.	8%	7%	7%	3%	3%
The college will be career focused from day one and have just a small number of popular majors that go straight into good paying and impactful careers in areas like teaching, business, health care, and computer science.	6%	9%	7%	10%	5%

*Asked if Rated 1+ Career-Focused Attributes as "Extremely Important" (N=229 Traditional Learners, N=194 Adult Learners, N=79 Parents, N=155 HS Students, N=270 Current Students)

Milestones Attributes

*“Please select which ONE of the following features is most important you personally.”**

<i>Off Total Base – Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will automatically give students the opportunity to earn certificates and other credentials before they have completed the full degree program that they can use to earn promotions or higher salaries in their current job.	28%	20%	25%	25%	28%
The college will give credit towards a degree for previous college work or work experience.	24%	21%	18%	22%	29%

*Asked if Rated 1+ Milestones Attributes as “Extremely Important” (N=165 Traditional Learners, N=127 Adult Learners, N=48 Parents, N=101 HS Students, N=201 Current Students)

What Matters Most

Then, we asked the following:

“Which of the following is most important to you?”*

- **The college will offer more flexibility in course scheduling and timing**
- **The college will be student-centered and include services to support student success**
- **The college will be career focused**
- **The college will recognize milestones with certificates and credentials**

What Matters Most: It's a combination of flexibility, career focus, and support.

<i>Ranked by Traditional Learners*</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
The college will offer more flexibility in course scheduling and timing	36%	36%	13%	35%	34%
The college will be student-centered and include services to support student success	30%	18%	35%	31%	29%
The college will be career focused	28%	33%	30%	29%	31%
The college will recognize milestones with certificates and credentials	7%	13%	22%	5%	6%

Those most likely to attend in the learners audience elevate flexibility.

	Combined Learners*			
	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: High (27%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Mid (41%)	Likely to Attend 4-Year College: Low (33%)	Likely to Attend New College: Move to High Likely (19%)
The college will offer more flexibility in course scheduling and timing	37%	37%	33%	41%
The college will be student-centered and include services to support student success	29%	20%	24%	24%
The college will be career focused	25%	34%	30%	20%
The college will recognize milestones with certificates and credentials	9%	9%	12%	15%

Flexibility really matters to women.

Combined Learners*

	Men (47%)	Women (50%)	Age 18-24 (51%)	Age 25-34 (25%)	Age 35-49 (25%)	Employed (59%)	Total Not Employed (41%)	Dads (14%)	Moms (21%)	Non- Parents (65%)
The college will offer more flexibility in course scheduling and timing	27%	45%	36%	33%	39%	38%	32%	17%	48%	36%
The college will be student-centered and include services to support student success	27%	20%	30%	19%	18%	21%	28%	42%	15%	23%
The college will be career focused	37%	25%	28%	30%	35%	28%	33%	25%	23%	34%
The college will recognize milestones with certificates and credentials	9%	11%	7%	17%	8%	12%	7%	16%	14%	8%

Likelihood of Attending New College

LEARNERS and HS STUDENTS:

“Based on the information you just read, how likely would you be to attend this four-year college? Please rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are very likely.”

CURRENT STUDENTS:

“Based on the information you just read, if this college existed when you were deciding where to attend school, how likely would you be to attend this four-year college? Please rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are very likely.”

PARENTS:

“Based on the information you just read, how likely would your child be to attend this four-year college? Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 means your child is not at all likely and 10 means your child is very likely.”

Not At All Likely				Neutral		Very Likely			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Likelihood of Attending New College: Learner likelihood bumps up, goes down among high school students.

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>		Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Generic Four-Year College	Mean	5.8	5.1	7.0	8.3	N/A
	%8-10	34%	24%	50%	76%	N/A
New College	Mean	6.9	6.5	7.5	7.8	7.3
	%8-10	45%	44%	62%	60%	54%

Not At All Likely				Neutral			Very Likely		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Biggest Increases in Likely to Attend: Traditional Learners

Overall, 52% of Traditional Learners report a higher level of likely to attend following the features testing.

Top Groups Move to More Likely to Attend from Generic (52%)			
Likely to Attend 4-Year Program: Mid (4-7)	73%	White Women	61%
College Degree Importance: Mid (4-7)	72%	Vocational/Technical/2-Year College	61%
More Likely to Attend 2-Year College	72%	Maricopa County	60%
Language: Bilingual	71%	Part-Time Employee	60%
Interest in 4-Year Program: Mid (4-7)	68%	Ambitious: Mid (4-7)	60%
Interest in 4-Year Program: Low (1-3)	67%	Look for Changes: Mid (4-7)	59%
Likely to Attend 2-Year Program: Mid (4-7)	67%		
Not Afraid to Take Risks: Low (1-3)	66%		
Likely to Attend 4-Year Program: Low (1-3)	66%		
Maricopa County: Tempe/Mesa (Combined Learners)	65%		
College Degree Importance: Low (1-3)	62%		

Biggest Increases in Likely to Attend: Adult Learners

Overall, 58% of Adult Learners report a higher level of likely to attend following the features testing.

Top Groups Move to More Likely to Attend from Generic (58%)	
More Likely to Attend 2-Year College	85%
Likely to Attend 4-Year Program: Mid (4-7)	70%
Some College/No Degree	67%
Family Income: <\$20K	67%
Likely to Attend 4-Year Program: Low (1-3)	67%
Men Age 35-49	66%
Interest in 4-Year Program: Mid (4-7)	66%
Unemployed	65%
Likely to Attend 2-Year Program: Mid (4-7)	65%

Biggest Increases in Likely/Less Likely to Attend: Parents

Overall, 47% of Parents report a higher level of likely to attend following the features testing.

Top Groups Move to More Likely to Attend from Generic (47%)	
Interest in 4-Year Program: 1-7	79%
Likely to Attend 4-Year Program: 1-7	79%
Quality of Life: Fair/Poor	72%
Rest of Target Area	64%
Family Have 4-Year Degree: No	62%
Child Look for Changes: 1-7	62%
College Degree Importance: 1-7	62%
Pima/Yuma	61%
Financial Situation: Making It/Worrying	58%

Groups Less Likely to Attend from Generic (7.5)	
Likely to Attend 4-Year Program: 8-10	-1.1
College Process: Applied/Accepted	-0.7
Financial Situation: Doing Well/Ok	-0.6
College Graduate	-0.5
Age 45+	-0.2
Family Income: \$65K+	-0.2
Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes	-0.2
Interest in 4-Year Program: High (8-10)	-0.2
Child Enjoys School: 8-10	-0.1
Child Look for Changes: 8-10	-0.1

Biggest Increases in Likely to Attend: High School Students

Overall, 28% of High School Students report a higher level of likely to attend following the features testing.

Top Groups Move to More Likely to Attend from Generic (28%)	
Plan After High School: Other	61%
Plan After High School: Not Sure	57%
College Degree Importance: 1-7	49%
Quality of Life: Fair/Poor	46%
Honors Class: Don't Plan	45%
Financial Situation: Making It/Worrying	41%
Thought About Post-Grad Plans: Some	40%
AP/IB Class: Don't Plan	39%
White	38%
Part-Time Job: Yes	38%
High School Grades: Lower	36%
Family Income: <\$65K	36%

Groups Less Likely to Attend from Generic (7.8)	
High School Grades: Mostly A's	-1.5
Driving Conversation About College: Both	-1.5
Family Income: \$65K+	-1.2
Plan After High School: College	-1.2
Female	-1.1
Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes	-1.1
College Process: Accepted	-1.1
AP/IB Class: Taken	-1.0
College Process: Exploring	-1.0
Thought About Post-Grad Plans: A Lot	-1.0
Financial Situation: Doing Well/Ok	-1.0
College Degree Importance: 8-10	-1.0

Among learners, mid-level interest in college sees biggest bump.

Combined Learners

By Mean Score and % 8-10

		Interest in 4-Year College: High (36%)	Interest in 4-Year College: Mid (38%)	Interest in 4-Year College: Low (26%)
Generic Four-Year College	Mean	8.2	5.2	2.0
	%8-10	66%	13%	2%
New College	Mean	8.4	6.9	4.0
	%8-10	75%	40%	9%

Not At All Likely			Neutral				Very Likely		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



College Activities

College Activities

LEARNERS, HS STUDENTS, and CURRENT STUDENTS:

*“Which of the following would you be most likely to participate in in college? Please select all that apply.”**

PARENTS:

*“Which of the following would your child be most likely to participate in in college? Please select all that apply.”**

College Activities

<i>Ranked by Traditional Learners</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Special interest clubs like gaming club	47%	30%	38%	42%	48%
Volunteer or charitable groups	42%	35%	35%	47%	47%
Professional networking groups	33%	42%	46%	26%	33%
Athletic events like football or basketball games	31%	26%	42%	38%	30%
Interest groups like parents' club or spiritual groups	26%	29%	12%	21%	13%
Fraternities and sororities	13%	10%	16%	25%	10%
Student government	11%	14%	24%	21%	10%
None of the above	12%	17%	10%	10%	13%

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learners, N=153 Adult Learners, N=54 Parents, N=110 HS Students, N=185 Current Students)

^Highlight denotes top 2 activities for each group



Cost of Attendance

Key Findings

- **All audiences benefit from additional perspective about the new college tuition, whether that is relative to other Arizona institutions, how financial aid can help, or perspective about what it means to their monthly budget.**
- **Initially, the \$7,000-\$8,000 tuition tilts modestly in the affordable direction. Learners are square in the middle between not affordable and very affordable.**
- **Introduction to the tuition at other public universities provides useful perspective and helps to boost perception that the new college is more affordable across all audiences.**
- **The conversation about federal scholarship opportunities further boosts affordable numbers across all audiences.**
- **After the cost conversation, likelihood to attend numbers go up again significantly among the learner audiences. Again, we see the drop in high school students' likelihood of attendance with the most significant drop among high achieving students.**
- **When asked their most important reason to consider this new college in an open ended question at the end of the survey, “affordable” and “cost” was the most frequent response across audiences, followed by career focus.**

Cost of Attendance: Still a consideration, particularly for learners.

“Tuition for this new four-year college is between \$7,000-\$8,000 a year for a student with a full load of courses.

Based on this information, please rate how affordable this new college seems on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means it is not affordable at all and 5 means it is very affordable.”

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
% Total Affordable (4-5)	30%	41%	46%	56%	50%
Mean Score	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5

Not Affordable					Very Affordable
1	2	3	4	5	

Cost of Attendance by Key Subgroups: Traditional Learners

<i>By Mean Score and % 4-5</i>	Traditional Learners	
Men (45%)	2.9	30%
Women (50%)	3.0	31%
Age 18-20 (38%)	3.1	33%
Age 21-24 (62%)	2.9	28%
White (41%)	3.0	31%
Hispanic (43%)	2.9	27%
Total People of Color (59%)	3.0	30%
High School or Less (52%)	2.9	28%
Some College/No Degree (34%)	3.0	30%
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (13%)	3.3	41%
Family Income: <\$65K (62%)	2.9	28%
Family Income: \$65K+ (24%)	3.2	35%

Not Affordable						Very Affordable
1	2	3	4	5		

Cost of Attendance by Key Subgroups: Adult Learners

By Mean Score and % 4-5

	Adult Learners	
Men (50%)	3.2	40%
Women (50%)	3.2	41%
Age 25-34 (50%)	3.0	33%
Age 35-44 (36%)	3.4	48%
Age 45-49 (14%)	3.5	51%
White (54%)	3.2	41%
Hispanic (34%)	3.1	40%
Total People of Color (46%)	3.1	41%
High School or Less (43%)	2.9	29%
Some College/No Degree (28%)	3.3	47%
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (29%)	3.6	51%
Family Income: <\$65K (62%)	3.1	38%
Family Income: \$65K+ (34%)	3.4	48%

Not Affordable

Very Affordable

1

2

3

4

5

Cost of Attendance by Region: Combined Learners

<u>By Mean Score and % 4-5</u>	Combined Learners	
Maricopa County: Sun City/NW Valley (8%)	3.5	50%
Maricopa County: South (25%)	3.0	32%
Maricopa County: Central/East/Scottsdale (13%)	3.1	32%
Maricopa County: Tempe/Mesa (20%)	3.1	38%
Pima County (17%)	3.0	30%
Rest of Target Area (17%)	3.1	39%

Cost of Attendance by Key Subgroups: Parents

<i>By Mean Score and % 4-5</i>	Parents	
Dads (44%)	3.7	51%
Moms (56%)	3.3	43%
Age 25-44 (49%)	3.4	43%
Age 45+ (51%)	3.5	49%
White (51%)	3.7	56%
Hispanic (32%)	3.4	40%
Total People of Color (49%)	3.3	36%
Maricopa County (74%)	3.5	46%
Rest of Target Area (26%)	3.5	46%
Less Than College (61%)	3.3	40%
College+ (39%)	3.7	56%
Child Grade: Junior (52%)	3.4	47%
Child Grade: Senior (48%)	3.5	45%
Family Income: <\$65K (46%)	3.0	30%
Family Income: \$65K+ (52%)	3.9	59%

Not Affordable

Very Affordable

1

2

3

4

5

Cost of Attendance by Key Subgroups: High School Students

<i>By Mean Score and % 4-5</i>	High School Students	
Male (45%)	3.8	61%
Female (50%)	3.5	52%
Junior (40%)	3.6	55%
Senior (60%)	3.7	57%
White (40%)	3.8	61%
Hispanic (45%)	3.4	49%
Total People of Color (60%)	3.5	53%
Maricopa County (75%)	3.6	56%
Pima County (16%)	3.5	49%
Rest of Target Area (9%)	3.9	72%
Family Income: <\$65K (32%)	3.3	49%
Family Income: \$65K+ (47%)	4.0	68%

Not Affordable

Very Affordable

1

2

3

4

5

Cost of Attendance by Key Subgroups: Current Students

<i>By Mean Score and % 4-5</i>	Current Students	
Men (34%)	3.4	45%
Women (61%)	3.5	51%
White (57%)	3.5	49%
Hispanic (27%)	3.5	53%
Total People of Color (43%)	3.5	52%
Coconino County (51%)	3.4	51%
Maricopa County (36%)	3.4	46%
Rest of Target Area (13%)	3.6	55%
High School or Less (23%)	3.3	41%
Some College/No Degree (49%)	3.4	50%
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (28%)	3.7	57%
Freshman (29%)	3.5	48%
Sophomore (22%)	3.6	59%
Junior (23%)	3.4	49%
Senior (25%)	3.4	45%
Family Income: <\$65K (39%)	3.4	49%
Family Income: \$65K+ (36%)	3.5	53%

Not Affordable

Very Affordable

1

2

3

4

5

Cost of Attendance Post-Tuition Comparison: Perspective helps.

“The average annual college tuition for other Arizona public universities like ASU, UA, or NAU is approximately \$13,500.

*Knowing that, please rate how affordable this new college with a tuition of \$7,000-\$8,000 a year seems on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means it is not affordable at all and 5 means it is very affordable.”**

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Initial % Total Affordable (4-5)	30%	41%	46%	56%	50%
Post-Tuition Comparison % Total Affordable (4-5)	49%	55%	61%	71%	65%
Initial Mean Score	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5
Post-Tuition Comparison Mean Score	3.3	3.5	3.8	4.0	3.8

Not Affordable					Very Affordable	
1	2	3	4	5		

*Asked in Replicate 1 only (N=158 Traditional Learner, N=153 Adult Learners, N=58 Parents, N=104 HS Students, N=170 Current Students) 193

Familiarity with Financial Aid

“How familiar are you with the financial aid process for college? (Very Familiar, Somewhat Familiar, Not Too Familiar, Not At All Familiar)”

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Very Familiar	24%	24%	32%	18%	45%
Total Familiar	72%	69%	76%	63%	88%
Total Not Familiar	28%	31%	24%	37%	12%

Cost of Attendance Post-Scholarship: Additional information and perspective makes it seem much more affordable.

“The federal financial aid scholarship can cover up to \$7,000 per year in tuition costs depending on your income. These are not loans and do not have to be paid back.

If you were to qualify for scholarships up to \$7,000, please rate how affordable this new college with a tuition of \$7,000-\$8,000 a year seems on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means it is not affordable at all and 5 means it is very affordable.”

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Initial % Total Affordable (4-5)	30%	41%	46%	56%	50%
Post-Scholarship % Total Affordable (4-5)	75%	69%	83%	80%	87%
Initial Mean Score	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5
Post-Scholarship Mean Score	4.1	4.0	4.4	4.3	4.5

Not Affordable					Very Affordable	
1	2	3	4	5		

Monthly Cost of Attendance: Also helpful in making college within financial reach.

*“If the total out-of-pocket cost to attend this college was roughly \$150 per month if you received the full federal scholarship, please rate how affordable this new college seems on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means it is not affordable at all and 5 means it is very affordable.”**

	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Initial % Total Affordable (4-5)	30%	41%	46%	56%	50%
Post-\$150/Month % Total Affordable (4-5)	69%	71%	90%	84%	78%
Initial Mean Score	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.6	3.5
Post-\$150/Month Mean Score	4.0	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.3

Not Affordable					Very Affordable	
1	2	3	4	5		

*Asked in Replicate 2 only (N=158 Traditional Learner, N=153 Adult Learners, N=54 Parents, N=110 HS Students, N=185 Current Students)

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost

LEARNERS and HS STUDENTS:

“How likely would you be to attend this four-year college? Please rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are very likely.”

CURRENT STUDENTS:

“If this college existed when you were deciding where to attend school, how likely would you be to attend this four-year college? Please rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, where 1 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are very likely.”

PARENTS:

“How likely would your child be to attend this four-year college? Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 means your child is not at all likely and 10 means your child is very likely.”

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost

<i>By Mean Score and % 8-10</i>		Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Generic Four-Year College	Mean	5.8	5.1	7.0	8.3	N/A
	%8-10	34%	24%	50%	76%	N/A
New College Post-Attributes	Mean	6.9	6.5	7.5	7.8	7.3
	%8-10	45%	44%	62%	60%	54%
New College Post-Cost	Mean	7.1	6.7	7.8	7.5	7.6
	%8-10	53%	47%	67%	59%	63%

Not At All Likely			Neutral				Very Likely		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost by Key Subgroups: Traditional Learners

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Generic 4-Year College	New College Post-Attributes	New College Post-Cost
Men (45%)	5.8	6.5	6.7
Women (50%)	5.9	7.2	7.4
Age 18-20 (38%)	6.1	6.9	7.0
Age 21-24 (62%)	5.6	6.9	7.1
White (41%)	5.3	6.6	6.7
Hispanic (43%)	6.0	7.1	7.5
Total People of Color (59%)	6.2	7.0	7.3
High School or Less (52%)	5.0	6.4	6.7
Some College/No Degree (34%)	6.9	7.4	7.5
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (13%)	6.2	7.3	7.7

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost by Key Subgroups: Adult Learners

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Generic 4-Year College	New College Post-Attributes	New College Post-Cost
Men (50%)	5.1	6.5	6.7
Women (50%)	5.0	6.5	6.6
Age 25-34 (50%)	5.3	6.7	6.6
Age 35-44 (36%)	5.0	6.5	6.9
Age 45-49 (14%)	4.2	5.7	6.2
White (54%)	4.8	6.3	6.7
Hispanic (34%)	5.5	6.8	6.7
Total People of Color (46%)	5.3	6.7	6.6
High School or Less (43%)	4.8	6.1	6.3
Some College/No Degree (28%)	5.0	6.7	7.1
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (29%)	5.6	6.8	6.9

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost by Region: Combined Learners

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Generic 4-Year College	New College Post-Attributes	New College Post-Cost
Maricopa County: Sun City/NW Valley (8%)	5.5	7.4	7.9
Maricopa County: South (25%)	5.3	6.5	6.8
Maricopa County: Central/East/Scottsdale (13%)	5.2	6.2	6.4
Maricopa County: Tempe/Mesa (20%)	5.3	6.9	7.3
Pima County (17%)	5.9	6.6	6.5
Rest of Target Area (17%)	5.7	6.8	6.8

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost by Key Subgroups: Parents

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Generic 4-Year College	New College Post-Attributes	New College Post-Cost
Dads (44%)	7.8	7.8	8.2
Moms (56%)	6.4	7.3	7.5
Age 25-44 (49%)	6.9	7.9	8.2
Age 45+ (51%)	7.2	7.0	7.4
White (51%)	6.8	7.3	7.5
Hispanic (32%)	7.6	8.3	8.5
Total People of Color (49%)	7.3	7.6	8.1
Maricopa County (74%)	7.3	7.5	7.8
Rest of Target Area (26%)	6.2	7.3	7.8
Less Than College (61%)	6.5	7.6	8.1
College+ (39%)	7.8	7.3	7.3
Child Grade: Junior (52%)	6.9	7.6	8.0
Child Grade: Senior (48%)	7.2	7.3	7.5

Likelihood of Attending New College Post-Cost by Key Subgroups: High School Students

<i>By Mean Score</i>	Generic 4-Year College	New College Post-Attributes	New College Post-Cost
Male (45%)	8.0	7.9	7.7
Female (50%)	8.7	7.6	7.2
Junior (40%)	8.1	7.4	7.3
Senior (60%)	8.5	8.0	7.7
White (40%)	8.3	7.8	7.6
Hispanic (45%)	8.3	7.9	7.7
Total People of Color (60%)	8.4	7.7	7.5
Maricopa County (75%)	8.2	7.6	7.3
Pima County (16%)	8.6	8.5	8.2
Rest of Target Area (9%)	8.8	8.3	8.1
Family Have 4-Year Degree: Yes (50%)	8.8	7.7	7.5
Family Have 4-Year Degree: No (43%)	8.0	8.0	7.8
High School Grades: Mostly A's (32%)	9.3	7.8	7.8
High School Grades: A's/B's (42%)	8.2	7.9	7.6
High School Grades: Lower (26%)	7.5	7.5	7.1

Cost of Attendance by Key Subgroups: Current Students

<i>By Mean Score</i>	New College Post-Attributes	New College Post-Cost
Men (34%)	7.3	7.6
Women (61%)	7.4	7.6
White (57%)	7.0	7.5
Hispanic (27%)	7.7	7.8
Total People of Color (43%)	7.8	7.8
Coconino County (51%)	7.2	7.5
Maricopa County (36%)	7.5	7.8
Rest of Target Area (13%)	7.3	7.9
High School or Less (23%)	7.2	7.5
Some College/No Degree (49%)	7.0	7.4
Vocational/Technical/2-Year Program (28%)	7.9	8.2
Freshmen (29%)	7.4	7.8
Sophomore (22%)	7.4	7.9
Junior (23%)	6.8	7.2
Senior (25%)	7.6	7.6
Family Income: <\$65K (39%)	7.5	7.7
Family Income: \$65K+ (36%)	7.1	7.6



Attending New College

Open End Summary: Traditional Learners

“What would you say is the most important reason you would consider attending this college? Please be as specific as possible in your response.”

Among Traditional Learners (N=278)*

- ✓ Affordable/Cost (29% mentioned)
- ✓ Good Job/Career Opportunities (18%)
- ✓ Flexible Schedule (13%)
- ✓ Career-Focused College (12%)
- ✓ Better Life/Future (5%)
- ✓ High Quality Academics/Faculty (4%)
- ✓ Student-Centered (4%)
- ✓ On-Site Services (3%)
- ✓ Location/Close to Home (3%)
- ✓ Job Placement in Career Field After Graduation (3%)
- ✓ Learning/Personal Growth (3%)
- ✓ To Earn a Degree (3%)
- ✓ Career-Focused Classes/Majors (3%)
- ✓ Gain More Experience in Career Field (3%)
- ✓ Hands-On Learning (2%)

Open End Summary: Adult Learners

“What would you say is the most important reason you would consider attending this college? Please be as specific as possible in your response.”

Among Adult Learners (N=251)*

✓ Affordable/Cost (22% mentioned)	✓ Career-Focused College (4%)
✓ Job/Career Opportunities (22%)	✓ High Quality Faculty/Academics (3%)
✓ Career/Personal Growth (12%)	✓ To Achieve Success (2%)
✓ Flexible Schedule (8%)	✓ Student-Centered (2%)
✓ Better Life/Future (8%)	✓ On-Site Services (2%)
✓ Increase Earning Power (8%)	✓ Career-based Classes/Majors (2%)
✓ Do It For My Family/Kids (6%)	✓ Job Placement After Graduation (2%)
✓ To Get a Degree (4%)	✓ Location (2%)

Open End Summary: Parents

***“What would you say is the most important reason your child would consider attending this college?
Please be as specific as possible in your response.”***

Among Parents (N=106)*

✓ Affordable/Cost (21% mentioned)	✓ Student-Centered (5%)
✓ Career-Focused College (17%)	✓ Sports (3%)
✓ Job/Career Opportunities (15%)	✓ Financial Stability (3%)
✓ Classes/Majors Offered (10%)	✓ Flexible Schedule (2%)
✓ High-Quality Academics (7%)	✓ Fewer Students (2%)
✓ To Get a Degree (7%)	✓ Hands-On Learning (2%)
✓ Close to Home (6%)	
✓ Personal Growth/Learning (6%)	

Open End Summary: High School Students

“What would you say is the most important reason you would consider attending this college? Please be as specific as possible in your response.”

Among High School Students (N=200)*

✓ Affordable/Cost (30% mentioned)	✓ Quality of Academics (5%)
✓ Job/Career Opportunities (16%)	✓ Flexible Schedule (4%)
✓ Career-Focused College (10%)	✓ On-Site Services (4%)
✓ Career-Focused Majors/Classes (10%)	✓ Close to Home (3%)
✓ Learn/Personal Growth (8%)	✓ Social Opportunities (3%)
✓ Hands-On Learning (7%)	✓ Helps Achieve Dreams/Goals (2%)
✓ Student-Centered (6%)	✓ Become Financially Stable (2%)
✓ To Get a Degree (5%)	✓ Good Faculty (2%)

Open End Summary: Current Students

“What would you say is the most important reason you would consider attending this college? Please be as specific as possible in your response.”

Among Current Students (N=336)*

✓ Affordable/Cost (46% mentioned)	✓ Student-Centered (4%)
✓ Career-Focused (15%)	✓ Learning/Personal Growth (3%)
✓ Job/Career Opportunities (13%)	✓ Fewer Students (2%)
✓ Flexible Schedule (8%)	✓ To Get a Degree (2%)
✓ Quality of Academics (8%)	
✓ Major/Career-Focused Classes (7%)	
✓ Location/Close to Home (7%)	
✓ Hands-On Learning (5%)	

Time Spent on Education

Asked if Self/Child Likely to Attend New College

LEARNERS, HS STUDENTS, and CURRENT STUDENTS:

*“If you were to attend this college, how many hours per week would you be able to spend on your education, including attending classes and completing your coursework?”**

PARENTS:

*“If your child were to attend this college, how many hours per week would your child be able to spend on his/her education, including attending classes and completing coursework?”**

Time Spent on Education

<u>Off Total Base*</u>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Parents	High School Students	Current Students
Less than 5 hours per week	3%	2%	2%	1%	-
5 to 10 hours per week	19%	23%	10%	13%	9%
10 to 20 hours per week	42%	34%	23%	30%	46%
20 or more hours per week	13%	17%	48%	37%	35%
Unsure	10%	6%	11%	13%	5%

Professional Life: Modest increase among traditional learners in wanting to make a change after hearing about the new college.

*“Which of the following statements better describes you...”**

	Pre-Test			Post-Test		
	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Current Students	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	Current Students
I want to make significant changes in my professional life to have the life I want.	68%	73%	76%	73%	72%	71%
I am comfortable in my life and big changes professionally may rock the boat too much.	22%	13%	10%	17%	15%	16%
Neither	10%	13%	14%	10%	13%	13%

*Asked in Replicate 2/Sample B only (N=79 Traditional Learners, N=77 Adult Learners) and all of Replicate 2 (N=185 Current Students)



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

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APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND BUSINESS MODEL

Institutional Design and Business Model

Approach

Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) partnered with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to assist in the design and business model portion of the project. This project to complete President Cruz Rivera's "at risk" goal of the development and presentation of a series of proposed actions for endorsement by the Board, focused on a.) assessment of the market; b.) differentiated concept and structural mission; c.) funding and advocacy strategies, and d.) design specifications for a statewide network of colleges powered and coordinated by NAU. NCHEMS brings relevant expertise in designing novel approaches to delivering higher education to groups of students not well served by existing institutions across many other states and college/university systems.

NCHEMS' role in this project has been to collaborate with ABOR and NAU in:

- Clarifying principles and assumptions that ground the work.
- Identifying design features that meet the needs of the target audience, as identified in the market research.
- Creating blueprints and business models for various options that meet ABOR/NAU's goals and the needs/desires of the target audiences.
- Identifying approximate costs and revenues for each blueprint and determining the necessary conditions for the venture to be financially sustainable.
- Developing a legislative/budgetary ask to help secure funding should this project move to implementation.

Upon contract execution, NCHEMS began reviewing background materials, data analyses and relevant ABOR policies. Beginning in late January 2024 with a day-long in-person meeting in Phoenix with NAU and ABOR staff, NCHEMS organized biweekly meetings with the core team. These meetings were designed to ensure NCHEMS' efforts were tightly connected to the results of the market research activities as they bore fruit. The meetings were also to raise questions about important design features and elicit feedback from the core group of NAU and ABOR planners. NCHEMS compiled all that information into draft products for ongoing discussions and to shape the development of a business model.

NCHEMS additionally built an analytical tool designed to calculate the costs and revenues of operating a new entity. The tool allows the project team to identify the different costs of various decisions and trade-offs in the institutional design, particularly alternative approaches to meeting the needs of the target student populations. It estimates revenues based on choices around tuition, discounting, state appropriations and other funding sources. This tool is the source of the financial estimates in this report and is available for NAU and ABOR to continue to use in the future as they further refine the business model. In early May 2024, the NAU/ABOR core team and NCHEMS gathered in Flagstaff for a retreat. During the retreat, key decisions about principles and assumptions were made. Also at the retreat, the group put forward a series of options for what form the new low-

cost entity would eventually take, testing these concepts with the other consultants and with Regent Penley.

Following the retreat, NCHEMS and the core team met weekly to further refine design options, financial assumptions and other necessary decision points. This report is the product of that work.

Proposed Principles

As a critical step toward ensuring the new low-cost option can directly address the objectives outlined in the at-risk goal in a sustainable way, the following set of guiding principles will shape decisions about the way the new enterprise will look and function.

1. Form should follow function. Functions should be designed to best meet the needs of the target population as revealed by the extensive market research that has been conducted and informed by the expertise of the group.
2. Although it is likely unavoidable that any new entrant into Arizona's higher education marketplace will create new competition for existing providers, the proposed option(s) will augment the state's existing postsecondary infrastructure specifically to expand the number of Arizonans who access and complete a postsecondary credential.
3. Decisions being made about organizational design, programs, delivery modes, outreach methods, etc. are evidence-based. They are informed by market research, demographic and location analysis, design research, workforce demand research, and ongoing brand research that has incorporated, among other data, student needs and current and future economic/workforce needs.
4. The new entity will operate in a manner that frees it from policies and procedures that stifle its ability to innovate and keep costs in check while preserving educational quality and relevance.
5. The new entity will focus on students' achievement of workforce-relevant credentials, especially those that respond to high-demand local workforce needs, and on sustaining low operating costs that ensure affordability for students. As such, it will be organized in pursuit of upward economic mobility and social impact. Its performance will be measured by its capacity to promote attainment and support postgraduate prosperity for people, communities and economies.
6. The new entity will offer programs that lead to bachelor's degrees, at a minimum, though it will likely also incorporate sub-baccalaureate degrees and credentials; its programs will offer a limited choice architecture to students to streamline their educational pathways.
7. The institution will seek out creative ways to shorten time and/or credits to degree completion through ongoing strategic collaborations with high schools, community colleges, NAU's Flagstaff campus and other ABOR institutions, and accreditors.
8. Transfer out from the new entity to other institutions is not a primary goal.

Assumptions

This section outlines the assumptions that set conditions for the design of the models to be advanced for consideration.

1. The new entity's specific mission to promote upward mobility and assure statewide access fits squarely into and complements NAU's mission. This explains the assignment of its development to NAU and President Cruz Rivera. Therefore, the new entity will be developed as a quasi-independent entity under NAU's broad oversight and accreditation.
2. The new entity will benefit from leveraging those existing elements of NAU — and perhaps those of other partners — that can accelerate its development (e.g., services like the SIS and functional expertise such as human resources) without stifling the creativity, flexibility and independence that will be needed from existing NAU policies, procedures and practices. Which will apply to the new entity, among NAU's existing services and policies, will be exclusively at the discretion of NAU's president in consultation with the new entity's appointed leader.
3. Tuition prices will not vary by program. The use of fees will be kept to a minimum.
4. The new entity's initial target population will be 20- to 39-year-olds with either no prior college experience, some college but no college credentials, or an associate degree. In addition to being focused on working learners, the institution will also appeal to students directly from high school who are not attracted to any of the available options. These recent high school graduates may share enough characteristics with the primary target population to find the new option appealing enough to enroll.
5. The new entity will offer a limited number of streamlined programs of study that are directly connected to the economic and social needs of Arizonans. The approach will position program completers to attain living wage jobs and pursue careers that lead to prosperity and contribute to societal needs.

Features Expected by the Target Audience

Drawing directly from the extensive market research conducted to support planning for this new entity, it is possible to specify a set of features that should be common to any subsequent models that are formulated.

1. A low price point and straightforward pricing that is simple to communicate to prospective students will be clear differentiators for this entity.
2. The new entity will strive to accelerate students' progress to the completion of their degree or other credential, and entry/reentry into a career, however possible. This can be accomplished in various ways including the design of the program as leading to a bachelor's degree within 90-105 semester credit hours, the use of prior learning assessments to reduce the number of course modules that are required for degree completion, providing course credit for experiential learning, offering

courses year-round, creating college academies in the high school, and leveraging dual enrollment.

3. Students will have a user-friendly experience when matriculating, registering for courses, and acquiring necessary support services to accelerate their success.
4. Every effort will be made to ensure that students are not required to take courses that lead to learning outcomes, knowledge or skills that they can demonstrate having already obtained or mastered.
5. Program and courses/modules will be developed to offer students “effective flexibility.” This means that it will be the policy of the new entity to prioritize offering learning experiences (courses, internships, etc.) and vital services (financial aid, advising) available at times and through modalities that fit with students’ busy lives — without compromising student success and equitable postsecondary value. At the same time, the entity will avoid “unfettered” flexibility that gives students too many choices and risks students being left behind by adopting a limited choice architecture for course selection (i.e., programs consist of a clear curricular path with few electives and unobstructed paths to the next course or module in a sequence) and, as pedagogically appropriate, required check-ins.
6. The entity will offer a mix of in-person and virtual courses and services. Modalities will be carefully selected to maximize student success and high-touch service while promoting effective flexibility.
7. The new entity’s baccalaureate programs will be comprised of modular courses that lead to the award of validated credentials of value, including industry-recognized certifications and associate degrees.
8. To meet accreditation requirements, the new entity will offer instructional modules designed to teach the general education outcomes specifically needed for each major program (for example, communication skills tailored to the needs of business majors and different communication skills needed by health care professionals, entrepreneurship, etc.).
9. Each student will be matched with a single full-time employee who will serve as a concierge to help students navigate the institution and the choices they will face on their education-to-career pathway. This individual will be matched to the potential student at the time of initial inquiry about enrolling in the new enterprise.

Common Elements

These three preceding concepts — the principles, assumptions and features to be expected by the target audiences — lead directly to certain elements that will be common to any design that achieves the specified goals. In effect, the findings from the market research, the pre-work that the NAU/ABOR team did prior to NCHEMS’ engagement, and discussions from our planning conversations have narrowed the array of design options considerably. This is constructive as it allows us to know with confidence which features or characteristics of the eventual design will be essential to the success of a new entity — which may be optional — and what is unnecessary or could be harmful. These insights help us settle on the function which form must follow (from our first principle). That is to say, how NAU and ABOR provide organizational structure to the final design remains to

be determined, but those decisions should support the mix of essential and optional features that the blueprints below describe.

In any case, it seemed useful to specify what features or characteristics are essential elements of all of the blueprints that follow. The new venture will:

1. Have a low sticker price of no more than \$8,000.
2. Minimize operational costs and support student success by featuring heavily prescribed programs built with a heavy emphasis on instructional design, owned by the new institution, and taught using a novel faculty model focused primarily on teaching with limited choice architecture and other innovations.
3. Ensure all programs are focused on economic mobility and social impact through intentional and ongoing engagement with partners from the private sector, government and civic society in a deliberate and sustained manner.
4. Provide “effective flexibility” through delivery mechanisms and scheduling that recognize students’ immediate life commitments while maintaining simple, straightforward degree paths.
5. Adopt mechanisms that accelerate students’ progress along their respective pathways.
6. Bachelor’s and sub-baccalaureate programs are broken down into smaller stackable components that tangibly enhance students’ employment circumstances along the way, and which incentivize continued enrollment and eventual completion of a bachelor’s degree.
7. Assure that students have a single point of contact for navigating the institution and its curriculum and obtaining needed support services.
8. Employ faculty and other staff through nimble human resource models that maximize the strengths of different types of employees without compromising effective and equitable learning. For example, while faculty will not be eligible for tenure, they will likely be full-time and contracted. Instructors will be selected for their ability to effectively teach the subject matter and apply their knowledge to real-world applications, and their desire and willingness to teach and adapt their pedagogy based on student preferences, institutional priorities, and promising practices.

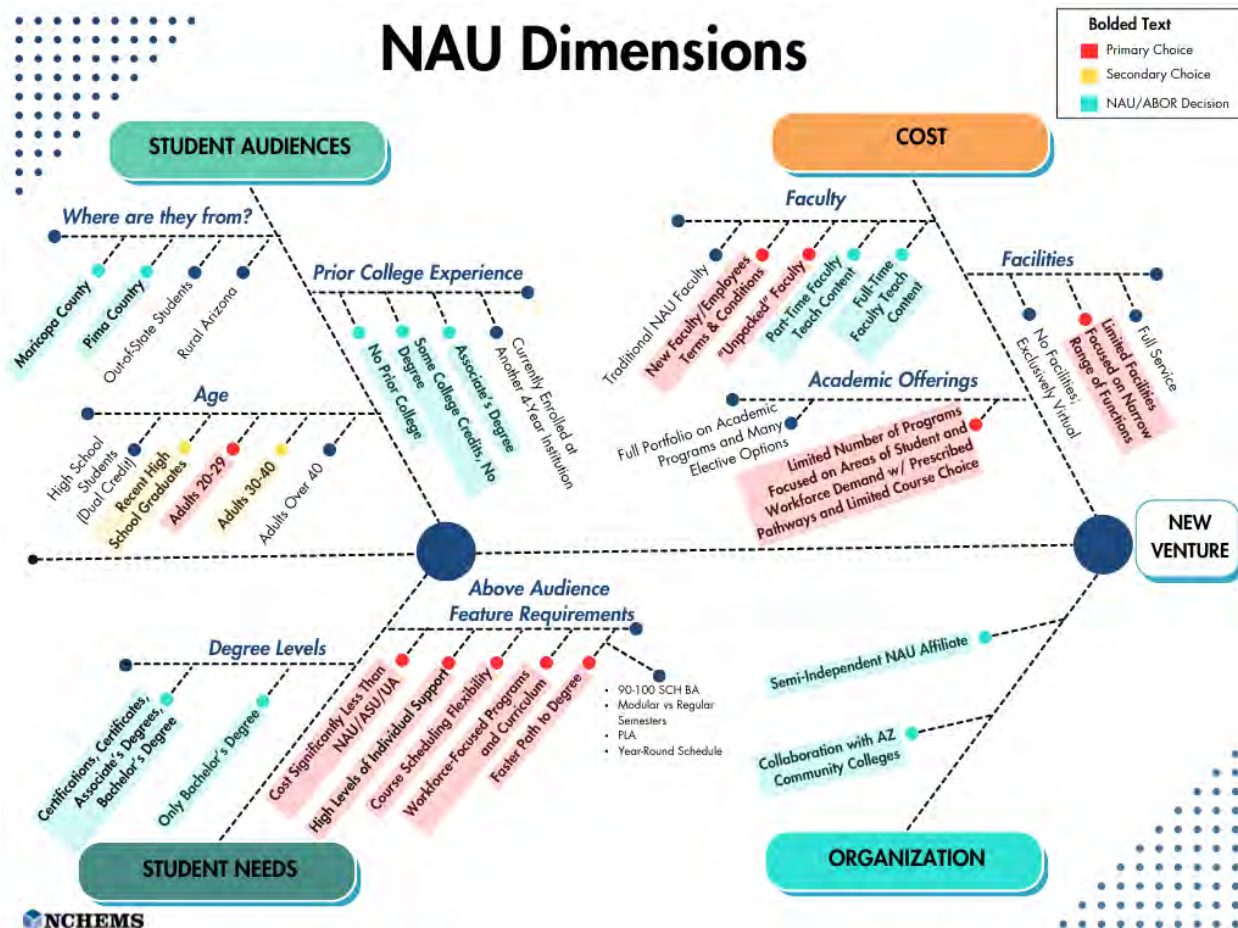
How these features are implemented will vary based on each blueprint, though each scenario below maintains these features at its core.

Blueprints for Delivery

Having arrived at a set of principles, assumptions and common features, partners developed a series of possible options, or blueprints, for how the new entity would be designed and operated. Throughout the spring as the core team met repeatedly, culminating in the May retreat. After the May retreat, it became increasingly apparent that the options for the design of the new entity were not just becoming clearer but were coalescing around a shared vision for how Arizona can best fill the existing hole in its postsecondary structure. In the process, it became evident that these blueprints were not

just separate, mutually exclusive alternatives from which the regents might choose, but that they could be viewed as design feature “kits” with interchangeable parts. Many of the features may be mixed and matched between models, and some more innovative/audacious design features may be phased in over time or piloted within the smaller laboratory of a single academic program.

The diagram below illustrates how our discussions have tended toward an unapologetically ambitious model with features that respond directly to the preferences expressed by potential audiences and incorporate promising practices from the field. It also shows how the alternative blueprints could be seen as waypoints on an evolutionary path to that more ambitious model, or as their terminus — a complete vision for how the new entity is structured and operates. In short, the diagram is intended to convey the sense that there has been enough work done that the way forward constitutes a shared vision with many common elements, along with some decisions yet to be made. This by no means is intended to suggest that questions remaining to be decided are easy or straightforward, just that there seems to be little disagreement about some of the basics. Note the legend indicates decisions that have been made by priority and where they still need to be made by NAU/ABOR.



The blueprints differ in the following key ways, which will be important discussion points for NAU and ABOR moving forward.

1. Which among the primary differentiating features should the new venture prioritize, and how should implementation be sequenced?
2. What are the trade-offs between a richer set of student support services versus more expensive delivery modes and/or faculty models when deciding on the operating model for the new venture?
3. Should the venture offer lower-level coursework, including associate degrees and other sub-baccalaureate credentials, or leave that task to the existing community colleges and instead focus primarily on the final 60 credits of the bachelor's degree? The three models of focus all offer lower-level coursework, but some of the alternative options detailed in a later section do not.
4. Should the venture incorporate close collaboration with Arizona community colleges, or be a semi-independent NAU affiliate? The three models of focus are all semi-independent, but some of the alternatives lean on community college resources, expertise, and infrastructure instead.
5. Should the new venture be focused on optimization and enhancement of existing options, innovating something entirely new, or be sequenced to try and achieve both objectives? Cost and implementation speed are trade-offs to consider in determining this. The three models of focus all emphasize innovating something new, but we offer alternatives if they prove not to be feasible or ideal.

Additionally, there are options within each blueprint. These options relate to how the core features are implemented. These options are highlighted here because they differ in their levels of innovation, expense, and difficulty/timeline of implementation.

Blueprints for a New, Re-Imagined, NAU-Affiliated University

The following three models are those selected by the core team as the options most aligned with market research, student and state goals and needs, emerging best practices, and the expectations of both NAU and ABOR. These blueprints outline each model's key features as well as considerations around feasibility, impact, cost and implementation. Initial modeling indicates that the costs and revenues of the three proposed models are not likely to vary greatly, so more detailed financial estimates that pertain to all the models are included in the subsequent section.

New Public University

Overview	A new, freestanding institution that operates in affiliation with NAU and offers undergraduate degrees and credentials in programs that are tightly connected to workforce demands. A key feature of the institution is a 90- to 105-credit bachelor's degree, which incorporates all major and general education content while reducing students' time to degree by one or two full-time semesters. The institution would provide both lower-division and upper-division instruction. The lower-division instruction will narrowly focus on teaching general knowledge and skills and major content that gives students
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	<p>enough knowledge to prepare them for entry-level jobs in their chosen professions. The institution pursues a mission focused on meeting local employers' needs through deep engagement with them and by designing around students' lives and learning requirements. Students receive coordinated wraparound services throughout streamlined programs and in aligned field experiences developed in close collaboration with industries and employers. Accelerating students' progress through programs and workforce readiness is a high priority. Both general education and major curricula emphasize the application of learning to real-world problems, in part by thoughtfully incorporating trained instructors whose regular jobs are in a related industry. Inasmuch as possible, the institution and its employer partners commit to providing all students with meaningful work experience – optimally paid internships that include experiences for which students receive academic credit. The new institution has its own administrative structure and systems, though it may opt to enter into performance contracts with NAU for the provision of selected services.</p>	
Core Common Features	Feature	Implementation
	Low Sticker Price	Tuition and fees of approximately \$8,000 per year.
	Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success	Costs are kept low through limited range of programs, courses, services, and amenities as well as employment of low-cost delivery models.
	Workforce-Relevant Programs and Involvement of Industry/Employers	<p>Academic programs are selected for local workforce relevance and the ability to provide graduates with a middle-class income.</p> <p>The institution cultivates an advisory group of key local employers (or industry organizations) that have hiring needs that the institution's programs are expressly designed to address. The institution seeks to ensure that the involvement of industry and employers in operations is as immersive as possible. For example, this group may maintain some (limited) formal oversight over the curricula that are to be taught. This oversight is expected to assist in the coordination of field experiences and the recruitment of part-time teaching faculty. One approach to oversight</p>

		<p>may be to serve as judges of senior projects as a way of assessing the extent to which a program produces graduates with the requisite knowledge and skills. Employers also help find qualified instructors for this new entity from their workforce and create and supervise internship opportunities for students.</p> <p>General education courses developed for each meta-major — general education skills tailored to the major.</p> <p>Students earn industry-recognized credentials upon completion of corresponding requirements. Other module sequences are packaged into credentials that are co-designed by employer advisors who commit to giving preference in hiring and in compensation to bearers of those credentials.</p> <p>There is an experiential learning component to all programs. Efforts made to ensure that students have paid internships that come with academic credit. Consider whether a “guaranteed internship” offer would be sustainable.</p> <p>There is a capstone senior project designed to demonstrate mastery of the array of knowledge and skills expected of graduates.</p>
	<p>Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students’ Lives</p>	<p>A thoughtful mix of virtual and in-person coursework offered on days/times most likely to work for the target audience.</p> <p>Courses are offered in eight week blocks.</p> <p>Courses are available year-round, with programs designed to engage students in continuous enrollment to reach between 24-30 credits per year.</p>
	<p>Accelerated Pathways</p>	<p>Bachelor’s degrees can be completed within 90-105 semester credit hours.</p>

		<p>Students assessed for competencies at time of admission and awarded credit for prior learning.</p> <p>May incorporate competency-based education components in intentional and pedagogically appropriate ways, i.e., where evidence indicates that self-paced learning is a particularly effective way for students to develop certain competencies within a program.</p>
	<p>Bachelor's Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.</p>	<p>Offers a mix of baccalaureate degrees as well as associate and sub-baccalaureate credentials, primarily employer-recognized workplace certifications.</p>
	<p>High Student Support Through Concierges</p>	<p>A coach/concierge is assigned to students at time of their first interaction with the university; the coach remains with the student for the duration of their university enrollment.</p>
	<p>Nimble Staffing Model</p>	<p>The typical faculty role will be divided into different functions (e.g., course development, assessment, advising, tutoring, monitoring student performance) to be performed by a range of employees; instruction (delivery of content) will be provided predominately by non-traditional faculty.</p>
<p>Feasibility & Impact</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some of these more innovative approaches to delivery may create difficulties for students who opt to transfer out. 2. A freestanding institution with multiple programs offered in ways that differ from current NAU practices will have higher administrative costs and may encounter more implementation challenges, and while at a distance, cultural resistance. 3. It will take longer to get this venture started compared to other options. 4. It will be essential to sequence the implementation of various features rationally for their adoption to be effective. Attempting too many initiatives at once is a recipe for lingering issues that will negatively impact the student experience and the organizational culture. This will extend the implementation timeline. 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The development of a freestanding institution will be seen as a greater competitive threat by other ABOR institutions and the community colleges. 6. The vision for the field experiences/paid internship element of this model is ambitious and requires engagement from local employers at a level not typically found within higher education. Whether it is feasible to offer some level of direct oversight over curricula to a formal group of employers or not, this model envisions a sincere blurring of the lines between jobs and programs that is designed more as a weave than a linear process in which students earn a credential largely constructed and taught by faculty and then find employment in a related occupation. There will be natural apprehension among members of the more traditional ABOR/NAU communities.
<p>Cost Considerations</p>	<p>The distinguishing feature of this model is that students can complete a bachelor's degree in 90 to 105 credits. From the institutional standpoint, this modestly reduces course design costs, as fewer course offerings will be needed. The overall budget reduction is likely to be between \$240,000 and \$360,000 for 90-credit programs, and less for 105-credit programs.</p> <p>At the same time, because students will graduate more quickly, a larger incoming class will be needed each year to maintain the same number of student FTE. This will likely raise recruiting and admissions costs, reducing or eliminating any savings that come from a streamlined set of course offerings.</p>
<p>Variations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course modules taught by full-time faculty vs. adjuncts. 2. Ratios of concierges to students. 3. Number of sites. 4. Degree of independence from NAU. 5. Option to remove/adjust/delay some of the more difficult-to-implement innovative features.
<p>Organization</p>	<p>This institution would be organized as a separately organized university within the NAU "system" — it would have its own leadership structure with the CEO reporting to the President of the NAU Flagstaff campus. It would operate under a separate set of policies regarding admissions requirements, faculty employment and workload, and program design and delivery. It would buy administrative services from NAU on a performance contract basis when NAU could provide those services more cost-effectively than other vendors.</p>

<p>Implementation & Timeline</p>	<p>Implementation of the many innovations embedded in this model will take considerable time, patience, and a deliberate plan for how to sequence initiatives in a manner that keeps stakeholders from stymying the effort. Examples of other states making too many, too-ambitious reforms too fast abound; one such case is the effort to centralize the 12 previously separately accredited community colleges in Connecticut. Those institutions have been working toward this consolidation for about a decade. Though their substantive change effort to combine the institutions under single accreditation – primarily to reduce costs and ease student transfers – was finally approved in July 2023, the clash of cultures and hard feelings still linger, and will for a long time, diminishing the reason behind such an effort. A reasonably ambitious timeline for adopting the reforms in this model would be 5-7 years.</p>
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Flipped University

<p>Overview</p>	<p>A new, freestanding institution that operates in affiliation with NAU and offers undergraduate degrees and credentials in programs that are organized to introduce students to workforce-relevant content immediately. The curriculum will be designed such that students master technical content that satisfies major requirements as early as possible. To the extent possible general education content will be integrated into major courses. The general education coursework that can't readily be integrated into major courses will be offered towards the end of their baccalaureate program. General education content may be incorporated into capstone courses. Courses/modules to meet those requirements will cover essential elements of the liberal arts and sciences but will be deliberately geared toward content that is correlated with career advancement, e.g., leadership skills, working with diverse coworkers, communications, problem-solving, quantitative literacy, etc., in the specific context. In addition, this institution will accelerate students' progress using prior learning assessment, competency-based education, and a streamlined path to a baccalaureate degree. Students will be assessed at entry and awarded credit toward general education or major requirements for which they can demonstrate competency. In keeping with the orientation toward early involvement with content in the major, the program will provide students with work-based experiences early in their college career.</p>
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Core Common Features	Feature	Implementation
	Low Sticker Price	Tuition and fees of approximately \$8,000 per year.
	Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success	<p>Costs are kept low through limited range of programs, courses, services, and amenities as well as employment of low-cost delivery models.</p> <p>Program and course options are limited. Program sequencing is deliberate and selected by the institution to front-load programs with workforce-oriented coursework. Credit for prior learning will be a central feature of the institution.</p>
	Workforce-Relevant Programs Drawing From Involvement of Industry/Employers	<p>Academic programs are selected for local workforce relevance and the ability to provide graduates with a middle-class income.</p> <p>Students are introduced to content applicable to their major, and critical technical skills, as early as possible. General education courses are tailored to focus on career advancement and are timed to occur toward the end of the program when not integrated into major courses.</p> <p>Students earn industry-recognized credentials upon completion of corresponding requirements at intermediate points during the program.</p>
	Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students' Lives	<p>A thoughtful mix of virtual and in-person coursework offered on days/times most likely to work for the target audience.</p> <p>Courses are offered in eight week blocks.</p> <p>Courses are available year-round, with programs designed to engage students in continuous enrollment to reach between 24-30 credits per year.</p>

	Accelerated Pathways	<p>Students assessed for competencies at time of admission and awarded credit for prior learning.</p> <p>Further incorporates competency-based education components in intentional and pedagogically appropriate ways, i.e., where evidence indicates that self-paced learning is a particularly effective way for students to develop certain competencies within a program.</p>
	Bachelor's Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.	Offers a mix of baccalaureate degrees as well as associate and sub-baccalaureate credentials, primarily employer-recognized workplace certifications.
	High Student Support Through Concierges	A coach/concierge is assigned to students at the time of their first interaction with the university; the coach remains with the student for the duration of their university enrollment.
	Nimble Staffing Model	The typical faculty role will be divided into different functions (e.g., course development, assessment, monitoring student performance) to be performed by a range of employees; instruction (delivery of content) will be provided predominately by non-traditional faculty.
Feasibility & Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turning the curriculum upside-down may create difficulties for students who opt to transfer out. 2. A freestanding institution with multiple programs offered in ways that differ from current NAU practices will have higher administrative costs and may encounter more implementation challenges. 3. There may also be concerns from NAU's accreditor about the curricular approach. 4. The development of a freestanding institution will be seen as a greater threat by other ABOR institutions and the community colleges. 5. NAU's main campus members may find this option to be particularly threatening to the NAU brand. 	

	6. There is no certainty that students will stick around to obtain their bachelor's degree if they feel they received the technical skills that provide them a boost in the labor market. This option would likely require student-friendly policies to assist any who eventually return for their baccalaureate degree.
Cost Considerations	This model's distinguishing feature is course sequencing that front-loads programs with career-specific coursework and workforce-relevant credentials. There are no cost differences specific to this sequencing.
Variations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course modules taught by full-time faculty vs. adjuncts. 2. Ratios of concierges to students. 3. Number of sites. 4. Level of employer involvement in curriculum.
Organization	This institution would be organized as a separately organized university within the NAU "system" – it would have its own leadership structure with the CEO reporting to the President of the NAU Flagstaff campus. It would operate under a separate set of policies regarding admissions requirements, faculty employment and workload, and program design and delivery. It would buy administrative services from NAU on a performance contract basis when NAU could provide those services more cost-effectively than other vendors.
Implementation & Timeline	This is a radical departure from orthodoxy in higher education, although there are examples of institutions individually and collectively trying to make this work. ¹ Implementation would require a lengthy planning cycle and NAU's main campus constituents would likely see this option as especially threatening, either to the institution itself or to its brand. Launching this option would likely require two years of planning followed by a year of putting the pieces together before it could enroll students. This option may prove to be a more natural fit with the A++ or upper-division stand-alone options that each work in concert with the community colleges.

¹ See Fairhaven College of Western Washington University as an example: <https://fairhaven.wvu.edu/upside-down-degree>.

Learn and Earn University

<p>Overview</p>	<p>This institution would be organized as a separate, freestanding institution under the oversight of NAU and would offer undergraduate degrees in areas of high workforce demand. It would be characterized by unusually high levels of employer involvement in every facet of the program. Employers would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be heavily engaged in specifying the learning outcomes for each program. 2. Participate in designing the program, specifically helping in determining which knowledge and skills would be taught in the classroom and which would be taught on the jobsite. 3. Employ students in positions that provide them with both income and organized learning experiences. These could be in the form of paid internships, apprenticeships, co-op education, etc. The important features are that students would be paid at the going rate for the work involved and would get academic credit for the learning that occurs on the job. 4. Provide on-the-job instructors/mentors to provide content knowledge. 5. Participate in reviewing/judging capstone projects. 6. Agreeing to hire students (or give them preference in hiring) after completion of a program of study. <p>The majority of the learning would occur in an employment setting. The classroom component of the program (1/4 to 1/3) would focus on teaching general education content specifically designed for application in the major.</p> <p>Additionally, it is assumed that students at this institution will complete coursework in periodic chunks scattered along their career paths rather than all at once before securing a position in their field.</p>	
<p>Core Common Features</p>	<p>Feature</p>	<p>Implementation</p>
	<p>Low Sticker Price</p>	<p>No more than \$8,000 per year.</p>
	<p>Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success</p>	<p>Program includes paid work, so students have a source of income throughout their time in the program.</p> <p>Costs are kept low through limited range of programs, courses, services, and amenities as well as employment of low-cost delivery models.</p>

	<p>Workforce-Relevant Programs Drawing From Involvement of Industry/Employers</p>	<p>The program is designed around the involvement of employers. Relevance is guaranteed by the substantial amount of learning that will occur at a worksite.</p>
	<p>Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students' Lives</p>	<p>Workday and instructional time are synonymous for much of the program. Classroom time (whether virtual or in-person) is coordinated with work time, so students won't have scheduling conflicts as a matter of program design.</p> <p>Courses are available year-round.</p>
	<p>Accelerated Pathways</p>	<p>Students do not have to wait until after graduation to get a job in their field; they gain education and work experience simultaneously.</p> <p>Students assessed for competencies at time of admission and awarded credit for prior learning.</p>
	<p>Bachelor's Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.</p>	<p>Workforce certifications can be acquired as an intermediate product of the program.</p>
	<p>High Student Support Through Concierges</p>	<p>Most services will be geared toward helping students get placed in work experiences.</p> <p>Concierges will maintain close contact with students during "work" portions of their working-learning journey, so they stay connected to the institution even while not actively engaged in coursework.</p>
	<p>Nimble Staffing Model</p>	<p>This option requires a very different staffing model than the other options with a much heavier allocation of people resources to working with employers in all facets of the program, but especially in arranging student work experiences. Classroom teaching is integrated into the work experience in a way that requires</p>

		fewer instructional employees. Much of the teaching will be done by practice faculty on the job site.
Feasibility & Impact		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This would likely be the most difficult of the options to implement because of the need to get major commitments from employers to make it feasible. 2. Enrollment may be limited based on work placement opportunities. 3. Not all academic programs would make sense under this model. For example, teacher education has credentialing requirements and an already-established student-teaching structure that may make it unsuited for this model.
Cost Considerations		<p>This model assumes that students will be working, probably full-time, as they attend school, and may take breaks throughout their path to a bachelor's degree. The reduction in costs of classroom instruction of this model likely will be offset by additional costs of faculty assigned to ensuring the academic value of students' work experiences. Retention of students in this model is likely to be more difficult due to students' reduced level of classroom connection to the institution, so increased concierge staff to maintain relationships with students during the work phases of their working-learning journey will be necessary. These costs will likely increase the institution's total budget by an estimated \$1 million to \$2 million.</p>
Variations		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many of the features of this option could be incorporated into other models. 2. Could be scaled back to involve only internships (a less intensive work experience) which would require more classroom instruction.
Organization		<p>This institution would be organized as a separately organized university within the NAU "system" – it would have its own leadership structure with the CEO reporting to the President of the NAU Flagstaff campus. It would operate under a separate set of policies regarding admissions requirements, faculty employment and workload, and program design and delivery. It would buy administrative services from NAU on a performance contract basis when NAU could provide those services more cost-effectively than other vendors.</p>
Implementation & Timeline		<p>This option is particularly amenable to being initiated on a small scale and subsequently expanded. As a result, it could be implemented fairly quickly.</p>

Financial Estimates

To assist in defining a business model for the new venture, NCHEMS developed an interactive tool that allows partners to experiment with different configurations of cost drivers and revenue sources to assess the impact of those choices on the sustainability of the enterprise.

Costs

Initial modeling indicates that the costs of the three proposed new-university models are not likely to vary greatly. While the sequence of learning activities and extent of work-based learning varies across the different models, the levels of student support and overall instructional activity are essentially the same for the various options. NCHEMS, in close consultation with NAU and ABOR, estimated ongoing costs for the new venture according to the following methodology:

1. Various functions associated with course delivery, course design, academic program design and oversight, student services, academic support, institutional support, and administration were identified.
2. Staff were allocated to each of those various functions based on appropriate student-to-staff ratios in close consultation with experienced team members from NAU and ABOR, hours required to complete certain tasks (e.g. course design), and minimum numbers of employees needed to perform the basic leadership functions of an institution (e.g., one CEO is necessary). The instructional costs are sensitive to the number and mix of academic programs as well as the number of courses offered via each modality (e.g., online, face-to-face, etc.). It's important to note that student-to-staff ratios are based on student FTE, not headcount. Given that the primary target audience is working adults, most students are likely to attend part-time, though the institution is designed to facilitate continuous part-time enrollment in a manner that leads to 24-30 credits accrued per academic year. Still, the average number of enrolled credits per student is guesswork. This leads to some imprecision in our student-to-staff ratios and resulting cost estimates.
3. The calculated number of staff of each category was multiplied by salary and benefits costs that are based on NAU averages for the corresponding category of employees, then increased slightly to account for higher wage rates in Maricopa County.
4. Following this, additional operations costs necessary to operate an institution such as course materials, leased facilities, marketing expenses, equipment, and so on were estimated. These estimates are based on actual NAU expenses to the extent possible. Among these anticipated expenses are functions to be partially sourced from NAU's flagship campus or other ABOR institutions at a reasonable cost. We assumed that salaries and benefits would comprise approximately 70% of overall expenses, a ratio that was determined in consultation with NAU and ABOR leaders and based on both NAU's experience and on data drawn from IPEDS about other institutions of a similar size.
5. Independently, the working group created a general organizational chart with staff numbers and salaries for a traditional, comprehensive university for comparative

purposes. Major differences between the “traditional” organization and the new cost model include:

- a. The new cost model removes some functions that are not expected to be needed, such as bookstore, dining and athletics. Additionally, due to the streamlined set of functions, some necessary functions will require fewer staff than a traditional university, such as facilities and capital planning. In the end, staff FTE are expected to be approximately 10% lower in the new model compared to a traditional comprehensive university based on a streamlined set of functions.
 - b. The new cost model disaggregates the faculty role into several functions, including course design, course delivery, assessment, student advisement, etc., and assigns different functions to different categories of employees based on their specific skill sets. This assignment of employees to functions yields a slightly lower cost than delivery models in which full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty are responsible for the full array of instructional functions.
 - c. The new model emphasizes high levels of student support, primarily through “concierges,” or single-point-of-contact staff members who help shepherd students through their academic experience from start to finish, answer many questions, and connect students to appropriate academic and student support resources when needed.
 - d. The new model allocates more staff than a traditional university to internship placement and employer partnerships.
6. Beyond the assumptions built into salary costs and staff allocation, we made the following specific cost assumptions in our initial modeling. All of these can be adjusted in the tool as planning progresses further:

Academic Programs

Programs	Expected Year 8 Student FTE
Education (Early Childhood)	500
Business & Management (E.G., Management Analytics, Logistics and Supply Chain, Applied Management).	2,000
IT (Software Development, Computer and Information Systems Management, Data and Analytics)	1,250
Healthcare Administration Management	1,250

- In Year 8, 10% of courses will need to be designed/launched, and 20% of the curriculum of each program will need to be updated/maintained.
- Faculty salaries in Business, IT and Healthcare will be 125% of those in Education.
- Each program offers 48 3-credit courses (which impacts course design/maintenance costs).
- All programs are structured similarly. Each program’s offerings will be 50% hybrid, and the rest a mix between face-to-face, online, credit-for-prior-learning and experiential credits. The mix of staff members performing various instructional

and design functions will vary between modalities but be the same across programs.

- 70% of course delivery is done by full-time, non-tenure-track faculty. The rest is done by part-time faculty.
- The cost of materials, supplies, and assessments per credit hour is \$40.
- Facilities costs are based on leased facilities and there are few additional costs beyond ongoing maintenance.
- Equipment will cost \$1 million per year.
- Marketing will cost \$3 million per year.
- Additional operations costs will be \$3.5 million per year.
- There will be costs in contracting with NAU for some services, though which services those are at what price is still yet to be determined.

The base version of the financial model, which applies to all of the new-university options, forecasts costs of \$53 million. Given the imprecision of making financial predictions, this can best be understood as a range between \$42 million and \$62 million. Startup costs will be additional to these ongoing costs. The start-up costs will include, at a minimum, renovations of leased facilities, program (as opposed to course) design, marketing, equipment, software and enough reserves to meet ABOR's minimum threshold for cash on hand. The investment required is likely to be substantial. Estimating this amount will be a later phase of the project.

Revenues

We estimated revenues based on the following assumptions:

1. In its eighth year of operation, the institution will enroll approximately 5,000 student FTE.
2. Based on calculations, the sticker-price tuition and fees will be \$7,980 for 30 credits, and the average institutional discount rate will be 20%, which means net tuition revenue of \$6,384 per student FTE.

We estimate tuition revenues to be approximately \$32 million, leaving between \$10 million and \$30 million in costs that would need to be paid for by a combination of state funding and other sources. State appropriations at NAU's level, \$4,510 per FTE, would yield \$22.5 million and likely cover the remainder of the institution's costs. It would not, however, be enough to generate the ABOR-required financial cushion of 140 days of cash-on-hand, which would be between \$16 million and \$24 million.

This level of state funding is lower than UA, higher than ASU and modest from a national perspective. In most states, lower-tuition regional teaching institutions (with similar missions to this new venture) receive a greater percentage of their revenue from state appropriations than do research universities, given their different missions and abilities to raise revenues from non-state sources. State policy often explicitly establishes different shares of state support for different types of institutions. This is not the case in Arizona. According to IPEDS data, there are 200 public, four-year institutions in the country with published in-state tuition and fees under \$8,500, excluding tribal colleges. In 2022, the median state appropriation per student FTE at these institutions was \$8,551. The new

Arizona venture is specifically designed to be streamlined in a way that reduces costs and therefore will require below-average levels of public investment. This being said, state appropriations per FTE student at levels higher than the NAU rate could be argued for (and would be justified).

Additional funding sources could include regular philanthropy to support student tuition, in-kind support of professors-of-practice by industry partners (thereby defraying instructor expenses), and private foundation support for new initiatives. Foundation support is more likely to be received for start-up costs than for ongoing operations.

Enrollment Considerations

A larger institution can achieve economies of scale that reduce the cost per student substantially; at higher enrollment levels, tuition will cover a larger share of the institution’s expenses. At 10,000 student FTE, tuition revenues would be about \$64 million, and expenses would be between \$75 million and \$112 million, leaving between \$11 million and \$48 million to be paid for with state and private sources. \$4150 per FTE in state appropriations would yield \$45.1 million, which would almost certainly cover the institution’s costs, and would perhaps generate a surplus.

Additional Blueprints (NAU+)

The following blueprints represent alternative options the team considered but elected not to focus on. Many of these alternatives represent more incremental options, in that they do not entail creating an entirely new four-year institution from whole cloth. We include them here to demonstrate the breadth of options that were considered and because they may represent evolutionary steps along the path to a more ambitious vision, recognizing that some aspects of a larger vision will take longer to create and implement. These alternate options will generally come with fewer costs, shorter implementation timelines and simpler change management.

These additional blueprints serve as images for the continued optimization of Arizona’s postsecondary ecosystem through A++, an initiative that is particularly well-suited to being operated in parallel or as a precursor to the development of the new institution.

Upper-Division Stand-Alone University

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Under this scenario, a new division within NAU, or an affiliated but otherwise separate institution, develops upper-division programming to be connected to associate degrees at community colleges. Students can access bachelor’s degree programs (in limited fields) by completing an associate degree – whether actual receipt of the associate degree is a prerequisite or not is still to be determined – and transferring to upper-division courses/modules offered by the new venture. The new venture will offer their upper-division courses/modules on campus (and online) at participating community colleges. Upon seeking to transfer, students will be assessed by the institution to determine their readiness for upper-</p>
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	<p>division courses/modules in the program of their choice. Rather than an ordinary transcript review, this assessment would focus on the expected competencies. This model differs from a typical 2+2 relationship by introducing elements common to the other models, namely that it will focus narrowly on a limited number of workforce-relevant programs, provide high-touch guidance through a prescribed curriculum and assigned concierges, and integrate options to accelerate student progress.</p>	
Core Common Features	Feature	Implementation
	Low Sticker Price	<p>Students complete the first two years at community college prices and the second two years at a reduced rate of approximately \$8,000 per year.</p>
	Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success	<p>Costs are kept low through a limited range of programs, courses, services and amenities and low-cost delivery models.</p> <p>Entry into programs is limited to students who have completed specific associate programs at the community colleges — programs that have been selected based on their alignment with the baccalaureate programs being offered.</p> <p>Students who come with an associate degree but don't possess all the entry competencies will be provided with instruction that lets them become prepared for upper-division work. This "catch-up" work is most likely to consist of gen ed instruction designed to better align with the meta-major in which the student is enrolled.</p>
	Workforce-Relevant Programs Drawing from Involvement of Industry/Employers	<p>Academic programs are selected for local workforce relevance and their ability to provide graduates with a middle-class income.</p> <p>Integration of optional or required work experience/internship into each program.</p>

	<p>Students may earn industry-recognized credentials upon completion of corresponding requirements at intermediate points during the program.</p> <p>Employer advisory groups are invited to contribute to policies concerning program selection and articulation, design of upper-division courses, and competency requirements.</p>
Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students' Lives	<p>A thoughtful mix of virtual and in-person coursework offered on days/times most likely to work for the target audience.</p> <p>Courses are offered in blocks as short as eight weeks.</p> <p>Courses are available year-round.</p>
Accelerated Pathways	<p>Upper-division programs are clearly articulated with lower-division programs.</p> <p>Students are assessed for competencies at time of entry into each program.</p>
Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.	<p>Each student will earn (or will have already earned) an associate degree along this path. Sub-baccalaureate credentials, primarily employer-recognized workplace certifications, are also available.</p>
High Student Support Through Concierges	<p>A coach/concierge is assigned to students when they first express interest in transferring; the coach remains with the student for the duration of their university enrollment.</p>
Nimble Staffing Model	<p>The typical faculty role will be divided into different functions (e.g., course development, assessment, monitoring student performance) to be performed by a range of employees; instruction (delivery of content) will be provided predominately by non-traditional faculty.</p>

Feasibility, Impact, and Cost Considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new venture will forfeit access to any cross-subsidies from lower-division courses, which is an important financial offset to offering upper-division courses, making the selection of program arrays incredibly important to the bottom line. 2. This approach relies on community colleges and their pipeline of students. The new venture's intake is dependent on community colleges' outreach and recruitment, as well as their ability to generate graduates ready for the next step in their educational journey. The ability to reach a new, as-yet-unserved population may be lower than other options. 3. The work/internship experience is likely to have to occur within a compressed timeline for students who arrive at NAU with 60 credits. 4. Requires effective close working relationships between the community college and NAU to get early access to students who express an interest in transfer. 5. May create internal dynamics between the NAU of today, which is already pursuing some version of this work through traditional transfer, and the NAU of tomorrow, which may view the work as vital though its vision for implementation may differ.
Variations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course modules taught by full-time faculty vs. adjuncts. 2. Ratios of concierges to students. 3. Number of sites. 4. Level of employer involvement in curriculum. 5. Degree of overlap with ongoing NAU/community college work related to transfer.
Organization	<p>This university would be organized as a branch campus of NAU with policy being established by NAU and implementation of those policies being delegated to campus business and academic leaders. Separate policies for student admissions, faculty qualifications and workload, and program design and delivery would be established specifically for the branch campus. All administrative support systems would be provided by NAU Flagstaff — this university would not have its own administrative support infrastructure. The campus CEO — a Dean or Site Manager, not a President — would report to the President of NAU Flagstaff or to another Flagstaff officer to whom oversight responsibilities were delegated by the Flagstaff President.</p>
Implementation & Timeline	<p>This alternative requires somewhat less implementation effort than the more ambitious options described below but will still require all of the planning necessary to launch a new semi-independent institution that could also have some perceived overlap with ongoing NAU efforts. The most significant barriers, besides those</p>

	<p>this option shares with the “Optimized A++” version, are in significantly differentiating this option, as a wholly new entrant into the postsecondary marketplace, from what NAU already does as a matter of course in accepting transfer students in a way that the market will respond to. A reasonable expectation for beginning to offer programs to students would be within two to three years.</p>
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Co-Branded/Co-Mingled Baccalaureate Programs

<p>Overview</p>	<p>An arrangement in which NAU and participating community colleges are tightly integrated, at least for affected programs. Students seeking a degree in an affected program (e.g., business management) can opt into the co-branded option at entry, be assessed, and be co-admitted and co-enrolled in the community college and NAU. (Students who opt-out will simply be community college students and follow a typical, existing transfer pathway if their goal is a baccalaureate degree.) Participating students gain access to community college and NAU services and follow a curriculum that incorporates limited choice architecture and seeks to accelerate their time to a degree. They also gain access to NAU services alongside community college services, including advising and career and internship placement. NAU assumes shared accountability for participating students’ success in this model.</p>	
<p>Core Common Features</p>	<p>Feature</p>	<p>Implementation</p>
	<p>Low Sticker Price</p>	<p>Students are co-admitted and co-enrolled to a local community college and NAU. The sticker price is based on a mix of community college tuition and NAU tuition.</p> <p>Consortium agreements ensure that students receive all financial aid to which they are entitled.</p>
	<p>Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success</p>	<p>Costs minimized through little additional administration and overhead compared to what currently exists. Uses existing facilities and shared (existing) faculty and staff.</p> <p>NAU and partner community colleges would jointly design curriculum pathways that prescribe the mix of community</p>

		<p>college and NAU courses to meet program outcomes.</p> <p>Participating students would be limited to specific courses in a sequence specified by NAU and the partner community college.</p>
	<p>Workforce-Relevant Programs Drawing from Involvement of Industry/Employers</p>	<p>Applicable only to specific programs designed to meet workforce needs, not all programs at collaborating institutions.</p> <p>Integration of optional or required work experience/internship into each program.</p> <p>Students earn industry-recognized credentials upon completion of corresponding requirements at intermediate points during the program.</p>
	<p>Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students' Lives</p>	<p>A thoughtful mix of virtual and in-person coursework offered on days/times most likely to work for the target audience.</p> <p>Courses could be offered in blocks as short as eight weeks.</p> <p>Courses could be available year-round.</p> <p>Students never need to leave their nearby community college campus to complete their bachelor's degree. NAU would bring its faculty (and other student support services staff) and curriculum to the students who will take those courses at their respective community college campus.</p>
	<p>Accelerated Pathways</p>	<p>Under appropriate advisement, students can enroll in upper-division and lower-division coursework at the same time, rather than sequentially.</p> <p>The barrier of transferring (and credit loss that can occur during transfer) is eliminated because students enroll in the jointly-administered program from the beginning.</p>

	<p>Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.</p>	<p>The student earns an associate degree along this path. Sub-baccalaureate credentials, primarily employer-recognized workplace certifications, are also available.</p>
	<p>High Student Support Through Concierges</p>	<p>A coach/concierge is assigned to students at the time of their first interaction with the program; the coach remains with the student for the duration of their joint enrollment.</p> <p>Concierge student services would be an addition to current staffing levels. Advising and student support would be offered in partnership between NAU and the community college.</p>
	<p>Nimble Staffing Model</p>	<p>Efforts will be made to minimize faculty costs by centralizing the development of course syllabi and the selection of course materials.</p>
<p>Feasibility, Impact, & Cost Considerations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A potential advantage is that this approach undercuts the rationale for community colleges to develop their own baccalaureate programming by ensuring that access to such a program is readily available for students, at least for those community colleges with whom NAU would partner in this way. Though if successful, other community colleges could conceivably pair up with NAU as well. An arrangement such as this one keeps Arizona’s postsecondary institutions in clear “lanes,” with community colleges focused on producing sub-baccalaureate awards at a low cost and the four-year institutions producing bachelor’s degrees. In co-mingling a new NAU entity with the existing community colleges, the arrangement potentially reduces unproductive competition across sectors and eliminates the difficulties of managing a “dual mission” institution (such are common in Utah), while still offering students a streamlined, low-cost pathway to a bachelor’s degree. 2. Compared to a traditional transfer model or the A++ program, this option gives the NAU/ABOR venture more influence over student success during a student’s first 60 credits, while still partnering with community colleges. 3. Requires much more detailed integration between NAU and a participating community college, including dimensions such as technology (e.g., student information systems), culture, curriculum committees, etc. 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. May be difficult to explain to the market. 5. Defining where the boundaries between NAU and a participating community college will not be straightforward. Nor will figuring out which institution and its corresponding staff have primacy over processes and bear the greater share of accountability for ensuring student success. 6. Sharing revenue and expenses will require careful attention, along with regular review and evaluation. What may be “fair” for one participating community college may not be for another.
Variations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Courses taught by full-time faculty vs. adjuncts. 2. Ratios of concierges to students. 3. Level of employer involvement in curriculum. 4. NAU may consider offering a reduced tuition rate to students in these programs.
Organization	<p>An MOU that is durable, along with annual operating agreements that are renegotiated yearly.</p> <p>Program leadership would take the form of an individual with the status of Dean or comparable within NAU and would be accountable to both NAU and the partner community college.</p>
Implementation & Timeline	<p>Some implementation considerations for this option are similar to those of the two preceding options. Additional considerations include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to develop the market positioning strategy that clearly articulates the value this option brings to deepening the relationship with community colleges in ways that lead to better student success while helping community colleges double down their investments on lower-division and developmental success. 2. How the partnering schools (NAU and each community college) must reach some level of integration in technology and other critical systems for the option to be effective. 3. The need for much more intensive collaboration around curriculum planning. Instead of articulation agreements, there will need to be coordination of the entire program curriculum as well as course sequencing/scheduling/modality. This is necessary to ensure that the core features are implemented with fidelity and that the program does not end up becoming, in practice, just a re-branded 2+2 agreement. 4. The need for detailed plans and agreements on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How students will access various support services, and what the role of each institution will be. b. How the partnering institutions will divide costs and revenues.

	<p>c. How staff will maintain accountability to their employer institution and also to this program separately. Perhaps more so than the other options, starting with a single academic program and a single partnering institution will be important. Depending on how many snags the partnering institutions encounter around integration, it may not be unreasonable to expect a single program to be effectively launched in two years. Scaling up from there would grow marginally easier and speedier with each successive program.</p>
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Freestanding NAU-Affiliated “Conventional” University

Overview	A new institution that operates in affiliation with NAU and offers undergraduate degrees and credentials in programs that are tightly connected to workforce demands. The institution is innovative by incorporating all of the common elements described above but otherwise steers clear of innovations that are likely to be controversial, less familiar to the marketplace, or harder to implement.	
Core Common Features	Feature	Implementation
	Low Sticker Price	Tuition and fees of approximately \$8,000 per year.
	Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success	Costs are kept low through limited range of programs, courses, services, and amenities as well as employment of low-cost delivery models.
	Workforce-Relevant Programs Drawing from Involvement of Industry/Employers	<p>Academic programs are selected for local workforce relevance and the ability to provide graduates with a middle-class income.</p> <p>The institution cultivates a group of key local employers (or industry organizations) that has a purely advisory role.</p> <p>Optional work experience/internship in each program.</p> <p>General education courses are developed for each meta-major—general education skills tailored to the major.</p>

		Students earn industry-recognized credentials upon completion of corresponding requirements at intermediate points during the program.
	Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students' Lives	<p>A thoughtful mix of virtual and in-person coursework offered on days/times most likely to work for the target audience.</p> <p>Courses are generally offered on a more typical semester basis, though some may be offered in eight week blocks and in the summer.</p>
	Accelerated Pathways	Students assessed for competencies at time of admission and awarded credit for prior learning.
	Bachelor's Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.	Offers baccalaureate degrees within the typical 120 semester credit hour limit, as well as associate and sub-baccalaureate credentials, primarily employer-recognized workplace certifications.
	High Student Support Through Concierges	A coach/concierge is assigned to students at time of their first interaction with the university; the coach remains with the student for the duration of their university enrollment.
	Nimble Staffing Model	The typical faculty role will be divided into different functions (e.g., course development, assessment, monitoring student performance) to be performed by a range of employees; instruction (delivery of content) will be provided predominately by non-traditional faculty.
Feasibility, Impact, & Cost Considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development of a freestanding institution will be seen as a greater competitive threat by other ABOR institutions and the community colleges. 2. The more conventional aspects of this university will likely speed up the implementation timeline, assuming it can run the political traps associated with a new institution that will look like clear competition for existing providers. 	

	3. The more conventional aspects of the university may make it less attractive to the target audience, a group of people who are currently choosing not to attend a college or university.
Variations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course modules taught by full-time faculty vs. adjuncts. 2. Ratios of concierges to students. 3. Number of sites. 4. Option to incorporate some of the additional innovations available in other blueprints.
Organization	This university would be organized as a branch campus of NAU with policy being established by NAU and implementation of those policies being delegated to campus business and academic leaders. Separate policies for student admissions, faculty qualifications and workload, and program design and delivery would be established specifically for the branch campus. All administrative support systems would be provided by NAU Flagstaff – this university would not have its own administrative support infrastructure. The campus CEO – a Dean or Site Manager, not a President – would report to the President of NAU Flagstaff or to another Flagstaff officer to whom oversight responsibilities were delegated by the Flagstaff President.
Implementation & Timeline	As this option is more familiar than several of the others, it stands to reason that implementing it would be more straightforward. What needs special attention will be how this entity will grow the stream of students seeking postsecondary education. Special attention is also needed for how it will do so in ways sufficiently distinct from existing options that it would not simply be a competitor for both the four- and two-year sectors in Arizona. A reasonable expectation for beginning to offer no-frills programs to students would be within two years.

Optimized A++

Overview	Grow and enhance the Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++), the existing partnership between NAU and Arizona’s community colleges, as well as expand strategically into more high schools throughout the state. This blueprint expands current efforts to serve more students and to incorporate the core design features specified above.	
	Feature	Implementation

Core Common Features	Low Sticker Price	The sticker price will be based on two years of community college tuition and two years of NAU tuition.
	Innovations to Minimize Costs and Boost Success	<p>Requires only incremental additional administration and overhead compared to what currently exists.</p> <p>Participating students would be limited to specific courses in a sequence specified by NAU (in consultation with community colleges). These limits would apply to ensure transferability of credits and to speed student progress.</p> <p>New college academies in high school would be developed.</p>
	Workforce-Relevant Programs Drawing From Involvement of Industry/Employers	<p>Applicable only to specific programs designed to meet workforce needs, not all programs at participating institutions.</p> <p>An optional or required work experience/internship component would be added to each of these programs.</p> <p>Faculty for the NAU portion will be selected based on their ability to bring real-world experience to their classes.</p> <p>Could expand to include a reimagined “extension” suite of programs that more closely resemble University to Business (U2B) collaborations.</p>
	Scheduling/Delivery Designed Around Students’ Lives	<p>A thoughtful mix of virtual and in-person coursework offered on days/times most likely to work for the target audience.</p> <p>Courses may be offered in eight-week blocks, though this will be constrained by the distinct nature of 10 institutions, each with their own governance.</p>
	Accelerated Pathways	Clear (guided) pathways that prescribe courses to be taken at community colleges

		and how those courses transfer into the degree program at NAU. Courses would be jointly designed with community colleges. Alternatively, NAU would work with the community colleges to define competencies required of students entering upper-division coursework in specified programs.
	Degrees Comprised of Smaller, Workforce-Relevant Components.	The student will earn an associate degree from a community college along their path. Sub-baccalaureate credentials, primarily employer-recognized workplace certifications, are also available.
	High Student Support Through Concierges	<p>A coach/concierge is assigned when a student first indicates interest in A++ programs; the coach remains with the student for the duration of their A++ enrollment. Concierge student services would be an addition to the current A++ model.</p> <p>Integrated/Joint academic advising that includes both NAU and the partner community college.</p>
	Nimble Staffing Model	Efforts will be made to minimize faculty costs by centralizing and standardizing the development of course syllabi and the selection of course materials.
Feasibility & Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of this option is underway, as A++ already exists. Even without any action on the part of the Regents, NAU plans to continue to support and grow A++, so this optimization represents only an incremental change from the status quo. 2. Partnerships between NAU and each participating community college will have their own distinct characteristics, whether it is based on how a specific prerequisite or general education course is taught or on how student support services are offered. These differences will resist standardization. 3. It will take some effort to sort out which institution — NAU or each community college — will take primary responsibility for key elements of the design, e.g., how will NAU and a community college work together to ensure students can be placed in an internship experience? 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Cultivating constructive relationships with the different participating community colleges will require additional personnel. These will be critical for building and sustaining a culture of collaboration. 5. Accountability will be shared among multiple organizations with distinct governance. 6. Students' costs for lower-division courses are not under NAU's control, and by not doing the lower-division instruction, NAU's expenses for running exclusively upper-division courses cannot be offset by cross-subsidies from lower-division courses. 7. This arrangement may appeal primarily to the same pool of students who already choose to attend Arizona's community colleges, rather than a new, as-yet-unserved population.
Cost Considerations	<p>Calculations of basic costs will include additional personnel for student services, academic affairs, and career services to support concierges, to manage agreements with partnering community colleges, to develop streamlined pathways in selected degree programs, and to create and support internship programs with employers, respectively. These costs are in addition to NAU's existing costs of operating A++ as it currently operates. NAU estimates between 1,000–2,000 additional students will enroll each year based on early returns from programs like Universal Admissions and the AZ Ahead program.</p>
Variations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NAU may consider offering a reduced tuition rate to students who join the A++ program at the beginning of their academic journey.
Organization	<p>No changes from the current structure.</p>
Implementation & Timeline	<p>As this option appears to require no significant organizational redesign at the leadership level, it will be the least disruptive to NAU and the community colleges of the options. Implementation can be fluid and ongoing, as the existing A++ team can choose which changes to prioritize on what schedule. The most major changes would be adding staffing at NAU necessary to provide additional services and working with the community colleges to implement these changes. NAU/ABOR may anticipate that the most significant resistance will come from faculty and focus on the scheduling changes — shifts to eight week courses and to the timing and delivery mechanisms to better meet students' needs. NAU/ABOR might also have resistance from faculty on efforts to ensure there are standardized syllabi and perceived administrative overreach in the way internships are to be offered, supervised and credited. (These sources of resistance are likely common to all the models.)</p>

Features Summary Matrix

The below matrix summarizes the features of the three models of focus, plus the ongoing A++ project. It is important to note that some features from the wireframe may be included/excluded from particular models without changing fundamentals. Additionally, some features may be possible to implement at various levels of cost/effort; for example, the feature of “Gen-ed courses tailored to meta-majors” might be as simple as offering different math courses for education majors versus healthcare majors, or, alternatively, it could involve a more intensive effort of distributing math outcomes/competencies across a variety of discipline-specific courses for each program.

✓ Built-in
 ? Optional
 ✗ Not included

New Public Univ
 Flipped Univ
 Learn and Earn Univ
 Optimized A++

Core Features

Lower cost	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heavily prescribed programs with limited choice architecture	✓	✓	✓	✓
Limited range of programs, courses, services, and amenities; low-cost delivery models	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic programs are selected for local workforce relevance, student economic mobility and social mobility	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work experience/internships	✓	✓	✓	?
Employer advisory groups	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gen-ed courses tailored to meta-majors	✓	✓	✓	✗
8-week blocks of courses	✓	✓	?	✗
Thoughtful selection of modality, days, and times	✓	✓	✓	?
Year-round offerings	✓	✓	✓	?
Opportunities to earn credit for prior learning	✓	✓	✓	?
Competency-based components	?	?	✓	✗
Associate degrees	?	?	?	✓
Employer-recognized certifications/credentials	✓	✓	✓	?
Coach/concierge assigned to each student	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standardized syllabi and course materials	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deconstructed faculty role	✓	✓	✓	✗

Differentiating Features

Experiential learning built in to every program	✓	?	✓	✗
Employers integrated into curriculum design, teaching, and learning	?	?	✓	✗
Programs are front-loaded with workforce-oriented coursework	✗	✓	✓	✗
90-105 credit Bachelor's degree	✓	?	?	✗
Utilizes existing CC infrastructure, expertise, pricing	✗	✗	✗	✓

Conclusion

This Appendix summarizes a large amount of collaborative work between the NCHEMS staff and the NAU/ABOR work group. The results of this work are a set of innovative, cost-effective models for delivering postsecondary education to students who have here-to-fore not availed themselves of the benefits derived from education beyond high school. After much deliberation, three models were selected for further investigation from the broader set of options proposed and investigated by the group. The NCHEMS staff is grateful for the collaborative way in which the NAU/ABOR work group members engaged in the work and are confident that the product of our collective efforts will serve NAU and the state of Arizona well.

APPENDIX D: NEW INSTITUTION COST MODEL OVERVIEW

New Venture Cost Modeling - Northern Arizona University and Arizona Board of Regents

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2024

Note: All values are associated with a single hypothetical academic year.

Note: User entry cells in yellow



Programs and Enrollment

Programs	Expected Annual Student FTE	Percent of courses that need to be designed/launched	Percent of courses that need to be maintained	Program Cost Weights (Applied to Faculty Salaries Only)
Education (Early Childhood)	500	10%	20%	100%
Business & Management (E.G., Management Analytics, Logistics)	2,000	10%	20%	125%
IT (Software Development, Computer and Information Systems)	1,250	10%	40%	125%
Healthcare Administration Management	1,250	10%	20%	125%
Total Student FTE	5,000	<i>one FTE = 30 annual credits</i>		

Defaults (Adjust for each program, if desired, on next tab)

Defaults may not be the values applied below if they are adjusted on the following tab

Average credits per course	3	Length of program	120	% of courses with two options	20%
Total credits offered per program	144				
Materials cost per credit hour (assessments, supplies, etc)	\$40				

Modalities	Percent of each program (default)	Tuition and Fees per credit	
Face-to-face	15%	\$280	\$1,260
Online	15%	\$280	1260
Hybrid	50%	\$280	4200
Competency-Based Ed	0%	\$280	0
Credit for Prior Learning	10%	\$140	420
Experiential	10%	\$280	840
Dual Credit	0%	\$280	0
Total should equal 100%	100%		

		\$7,980	Total Annual Tuition & Fees for 30 credits
Average Institutional Discount	20%	\$6,384	Net tuition revenue reflects institutional discount

Operations Costs	Ongoing	One-Time			
Course materials (assessments, supplies, course software, etc)	\$6,000,000				
Facilities- Lease(s)	\$2,025,000		\$per mo/sq ft * 12	sq ft --> 75,000	\$/mo/sq ft --> \$2.25
Facilities- Maintenance/Staffing	\$60,000		sq ft / 6000 (pp per day)	daily sq ft per FTE staff --> 50,000	avg FTE comp. --> \$40,000
Facilities- Utilities	\$315,000				
Facilities- Renovations		\$10,000,000	cost per sq ft/mo		\$0.35
Equipment	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000			
Marketing (not staff)	\$3,000,000	\$2,000,000			
Other operations costs (Contracts with NAU, software, travel, office supplies, insurance, other)	\$3,500,000		For 10K students, change to \$9,500,000		
Total	\$15,900,000	\$14,000,000	goal total (30% of expenses) =		\$15,918,412.63

RESULTS

Revenues	Annual Tuition Revenues	Annual State Revenues	Philanthropic Support	Total Annual Revenues
	\$31,920,000	\$22,550,000	\$4,000,000	\$58,470,000
		\$4,510		per FTE funding (\$4510 is equivalent to NAU)

Expenses	Annual Staffing Costs	Annual Benefits Costs	Annual Operations Costs	Total Expected Cost	Total Salaries & Benefits
	\$25,111,423	\$12,031,540	\$15,900,000	\$53,042,963	\$37,142,963
			\$14,000,000		\$0
					base- for comparison when changing things
					\$37,142,963
					\$0
					Range = 42434370.2380952 to 63651555.3571429

Net Revenue (Revenues Less Costs)	\$5,427,037	Ongoing only
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APPENDIX E: BRAND RESEARCH, RED CACTUS

New College Promises and Names for Consideration and Discussion



What is a Brand Promise?

- A one-of-a-kind promise about who we are and what we want to be known for
- The brand promise is a pledge upon which we build our brand and stake our reputation
- It is not a tagline but a foundation from which to develop future marketing and branding campaigns
- It does not need to include a list of features and benefits – those will be developed as brand pillars and key messages once we establish our brand promise statement

Promise as Position

In essence...

What do we want people to know and think when they hear New College (or whatever name we choose)?

This is our opportunity to define, then own, our position.

Potential Brand Promise Statements (Examples)

Following a pre-work exercise and workshop with partners, the following brand promises emerged as top considerations. They were crafted through market research and refined based on partner feedback and discussion.

The goal is to have several different promises to test (via focus groups and an online survey) to determine what resonates and what doesn't. We will use the insights gathered from the research to select and refine our final promise statement (which may be a combination of several statements). Once we have a final promise statement, we will develop brand pillars, key messages, and brand personality.

New College Potential Promises (Examples)

1. Through hands-on, career-focused education, New College equips you with the knowledge, skills, and valuable connections they need to advance their career prospects and succeed sooner.
2. At New College, your career aspirations shape our curriculum with personalized learning experiences that combine online flexibility with hands-on experiences designed around your ambitions (to accelerate your potential).
3. New College leads the way in career-focused education that aligns with the needs of the workforce, ensuring you are ready for immediate employment in some of the fastest-growing industries.
4. At New College, you will learn in-demand skills and gain valuable networks, expand your career options and earning potential to build the future you want.
5. Discover unmatched value at New College, where our streamlined college experience connects you with industry professionals and peers both online and in person so you can fast-track your future.

Potential Names for the New College

The following names resonated most among partners. While not a finalist, “State Forty-Eight University” was also maintained to round out a diverse selection of names for further discussion and testing. Any one of these names could be aligned with NAU.

New College Potential Names (in no particular order)

Arizona Nexus College (University)

The term "Nexus" signifies connections and the central point where paths intersect. "Arizona Nexus College" positions the college as a pivotal point in students' lives, linking education with career opportunities. It suggests innovation, connectivity, and a forward-thinking approach to learning, aligning with the new college's mission to meet workforce needs through an innovative, hybrid educational model.

Arizona Tech (Arizona University of Innovation & Technology)

The name encapsulates the institution's commitment to providing cutting-edge education that meets the demands of the modern workforce. This name emphasizes our focus on technology, innovation, and practical application, positioning the college as a leader in preparing students for successful careers in rapidly evolving industries.

Copper State College (University)

This name resonates with Arizona's identity as the "Copper State," highlighting its rich mining history and abundance of natural resources. This unique and notable name emphasizes a connection to the state's heritage, while also symbolizing the college's commitment to providing a foundation as strong and valuable.

Ironwood Innovation University

"Ironwood Innovation University" resonates with strength, resilience, and a forward-thinking approach to education. This name is particularly powerful, combining the enduring qualities of the ironwood tree, native to the Sonoran Desert, with a commitment to innovation, a cornerstone of modern education and career preparedness.

State Forty-Eight University

A name imbued with historical significance and pride, it reflects Arizona's identity as the 48th state admitted to the United States. The name is distinctive and memorable and carries a strong sense of place and belonging, symbolizing the institution's deep roots in the state and its commitment to serving the educational and career aspirations of its residents.

Vision

Vision: To be Arizona's leading institution for working learners, providing accelerated, career-focused education that seamlessly integrates learning with practical, real-world experiences, fostering immediate employability and lifelong success.

Or

Vision: To be Arizona's top choice for working learners, providing affordable, career-focused education that integrates real-world experience with academic excellence, enabling students to achieve their career aspirations quickly and efficiently.

Values

1. **Career-Centric Learning:** Providing education that directly prepares students for their desired career paths with practical, hands-on experiences.
2. **Flexibility & Accessibility:** Ensuring that our affordable programs accommodate the schedules and needs of working professionals through flexible learning options.
3. **Workforce Integration:** Aligning our curriculum with current industry standards and future workforce demands to ensure immediate employment opportunities.
4. **Innovation & Efficiency:** Adopting innovative teaching methods and accelerated programs that reduce time to degree completion.
5. **Community & Collaboration:** Building valuable connections between students, industry professionals, mentors and peers to enhance career growth and earning potential.

Next Steps

- Fine-tuning our Vision and Values with input from the Regents
- Testing 3-4 potential brand promise statements and 3-4 potential names for with key audiences via focus groups and an online survey to determine which promises and names have the greatest traction/resonance with key audiences
- The testing results will inform the final brand positioning strategy and college name before moving forward with creative concepting (logo design, visual identity, tagline, etc.)

THANK YOU



RED CACTUS
MARKETING

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Appendix A

Pre-Work and Workshop Discussion Notes

New College Potential Promises

1. New College goes beyond the traditional classroom, **integrating real-world projects and virtual collaboration to prepare you for the careers of today and tomorrow.**

xxxx

2. Discover a **vibrant community** at New College, where our **hybrid college experience** connects you with **industry professionals** and **peers both online and in person**. You will build **in-demand skills** and **valuable networks while advancing your career prospects.**

xxxxx

3. Through **hands-on, career-focused education**, New College equips **hard-working students** with the knowledge, skills, and **entrepreneurial foundation** **they** need to succeed sooner, **no matter their chosen field.**

x

4. New College welcomes students from all backgrounds and empowers **them** with the skills and determination to achieve their goals with the support of **engaged faculty** who **bring real-world experiences** to the classroom.

xxxxx

5. At New College, your **career aspirations** shape our curriculum with **personalized learning paths** that **combine online flexibility with hands-on experiences** designed around your ambitions.

xx

6. **No matter which path you choose**, New College supports your journey toward **achievement and fulfillment** by providing **affordable** education and training that prepares you to **expand your career options and earning potential.**

xxxxxx

7. New College leads the way in **career-focused** education that aligns with the **needs of the workforce**, ensuring graduates are **ready for immediate employment in some of the nation's fastest-growing industries.**

xxx

8. Forge your path to success with New College, where we're **redefining higher education** by **focusing on future-ready skills through a unique hybrid approach.** You will gain the **expertise** and **adaptability** needed to **thrive in an ever-evolving job market.**

xxxxx

9. At New College, students become part of a **peer-supported** learning community that **thrives on the strength of in-demand, career-focused programs.** Together, students explore and expand their potential and **emerge ready to step into a career that matters.**

Potential Names for the New College

	New College Potential Names (Examples)
XXXXX	<p>1. Copper State College This name resonates with Arizona's identity as the "Copper State," highlighting its rich mining history and abundance of natural resources. This name emphasizes a connection to the state's heritage, while also symbolizing the college's commitment to providing a foundation as strong and valuable.</p>
XXXXX	<p>2. Sonoran College of Innovation and Technology The Sonoran Desert is a defining feature of Arizona, representing resilience, adaptability, and a unique ecosystem. This name draws on these qualities, emphasizing the college's dedication to fostering resilience and adaptability in its students, preparing them for successful careers through innovative education.</p>
X	<p>3. Paloverde College of Entrepreneurship and Technology The paloverde tree, with its green bark and vibrant yellow flowers, is a symbol of life and vitality in the desert. This name represents the college's role in fostering growth, sustainability, and innovation within its community. The inclusion of "Entrepreneurship and Technology" explicitly highlights the college's dedication to these dynamic and rapidly evolving fields, equipping students with the skills and mindset needed to innovate, start new ventures, and lead in the tech-driven economy.</p>
	<p>4. Kino Polytechnic University The name "Kino" honors Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, a Jesuit missionary, explorer, and cartographer who played a pivotal role in the history of northern Mexico and present-day Arizona in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The term "Polytechnic" suggests a strong focus on technical and applied sciences, engineering, and other practical fields of study; it aligns with modern educational trends that emphasize career-focused education.</p>
XXX	<p>5. Ironwood Innovation University "Ironwood Innovation College" resonates with strength, resilience, and a forward-thinking approach to education. This name is particularly powerful, combining the enduring qualities of the ironwood tree, native to the Sonoran Desert, with a commitment to innovation, a cornerstone of modern education and career preparedness.</p>

Potential Names for the New College

	New College Potential Names (Examples)
XXXX	<p>6. Sun Valley Polytechnic By incorporating "Sun Valley," a name that resonates with Arizona's sunny landscape, this name localizes the college while also suggesting a bright and promising future for its students. Combined with "Polytechnic" this name positions the college as a forward-thinking institution distinctive from other options in the state.</p>
XXXXX	<p>7. Arizona Nexus College The term "Nexus" signifies connections and the central point where paths intersect. "Arizona Nexus College" positions the college as a pivotal point in students' lives, linking education with career opportunities. It suggests innovation, connectivity, and a forward-thinking approach to learning, aligning with the new college's mission to meet workforce needs through a hybrid educational model.</p>
XX	<p>8. State Forty-Eight University A name imbued with historical significance and pride, it reflects Arizona's identity as the 48th state admitted to the United States. The name is distinctive and memorable and carries a strong sense of place and belonging, symbolizing the institution's deep roots in the state and its commitment to serving the educational and career aspirations of its residents.</p>
	<p>9. NAU + The name "NAU+" encapsulates the concept of Northern Arizona University offering an expanded, enhanced education model. The "+" symbol commonly indicates added value, and in the context of NAU, it suggests an extra dimension to the university's existing qualities. It denotes an expansion of the core NAU brand with additional innovative programs or approaches to learning.</p>
XXX	<p>10. NAU Polytechnic "NAU Polytechnic" positions the new college as a specialized institution within the broader NAU system. The "Polytechnic" label often conveys a close relationship with industries and a commitment to producing graduates who are immediately employable, highly skilled, and relevant to the needs of the workforce.</p>

Potential Names for the New College

Top Performing Names

Arizona Nexus College
Copper State College
Sonoran College of Innovation and Technology

Ironwood Innovation University
Sun Valley Polytechnic
NAU Polytechnic

State or Arizona
College vs University
Arizona Public University

NAU's

Powered by NAU
ASU Poly

Suggested combinations/variations:

Arizona Nexus University
Arizona's College
Arizona's Network of Career Colleges
Arizona State College
Arizona Tech (Arizona Polytechnic University)
Arizona University for Innovation & Technology
Central Arizona University
Copper State Career College
Copper State College for Career Advancement
Copper State University
Ironwood College for Business and Innovation
Ironwood State College
NAU – New Arizona University
NAU Sun Valley Polytechnic
NAU's State 48 College
Paloverde College for Business and Technology
Sonoran Career College
Sonoran College for Leadership and Technology
State College of Arizona
The Arizona State College
University of the Arches

APPENDIX F: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RELATED TO BRAND, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

“New College” In-Depth-Interviews Executive Summary



Methodology

<i>Each interview lasted approximately one hour</i>	Traditional Learners	Adult Learners	High School Juniors/Seniors	Parents
Number of Participants	13	18	10	9
Audience Description	Ages 18-24	Ages 25-49	Current 11th or 12th graders	Have a child in 11th or 12th grade
	<p>Have graduated from high school or obtained a GED.</p> <p>Have not yet graduated from a four-year college program. Some have completed education beyond high school.</p> <p>Rate their interest in attending college as a 2-10 on a 1 (not at all interested) to 10 (very interested) scale.</p>		<p>Rate their interest in attending college as a 2-10 on a 1 (not at all interested) to 10 (very interested) scale.</p>	<p>Rate their interest in their child attending college as a 2-10 on a 1 (not at all interested) to 10 (very interested) scale.</p> <p>Have not yet graduated from a four-year college program. Some have completed education beyond high school.</p>

Understanding How Prospective Students Think About Their Future.

- *If there is one word that captures the current emotional state of prospective students it is “unstable.”*
- *Lack of stability is particularly true of the adult and traditional learner participants. High school students are more “uncertain” in some cases.*
- *Providing stability is therefore a critical component in connecting with these audiences.*
- *They also feel trapped by life circumstance and yearn to feel “free” and less burdened.*
- *Enjoyment and contentment with less stress feel remote, but still important.*



Goal Imagery

We use images to engage participants more deeply and emotionally in defining their goals and aspirations.

Discovering goals and aspirations can assist greatly in finding motivational messaging and approaches to connect with the target audience.

Common Sentiments Across Audience Expressing Future Goals:

- **Freedom**
- **Relief**
- **Accomplishment**
- **Enjoyment**



Do they see college as a route to get where they want to be?

The majority of traditional and adult learners consider education to be a part of their future toward reaching their goals. Yet, there is ambiguity in the way they talk about their education plans. They use phrases like “continuing my education,” “enrolling in classes,” or “getting a degree.”

There is not a level of commitment for most to a 4-year degree. Many see community college or an associate’s degree as part of their educational journey. For many, it feels like less of an investment, and if they are not successful, less of a failure.

“So I did this four times. I did, no three times and I did three different subjects. Each time that I did it at different schools. I couldn’t figure out what I was doing... So I actually might consider only doing a two year to start off with just because of all my failures in the past so that I could get the associates and be done in two years, I got it now let's work on the next two years. Okay. So I think that would actually be more likely what I would be doing.” – Sara (Adult Learner)

“I'm not adverse to a four year school. I just don't know what type of degree or why I would go to it. I can't see myself at a four year school. I just feel like a four year school is much more time consuming for me. You know what I'm saying? I don't see how feasible that would be working my schedule and still being able to do all those classes for a four year school. You know what I mean?” – William (Adult Learner)

Do they see college as a route to get where they want to be?

Parents and high school students have more mixed views about college and whether it is the right path.

Students wonder whether college will get them where they want to be in their life, with many thinking about trade or professional schools.

“I think he's thinking that if he can go to a community college and get what he's looking for there and then either get what he needs there or be able to go to a university to get what he needs. But like I said, so he might consider after finishing the community college, going onto a university, if he was accepted and had a scholarship or a grant or something, I think that he would go to a university... he doesn't want to be saddled with the debt that you get from school loans.”

– Jessica (Parent)

“I thought I was going to do college, but I was still going to be kind of conservative with it and do community college and then see how it goes from there and what I want to do in university. But I've just realized these last few years that I'm not as interested in an educational career path and I like to work with my hands a lot, so I figured something in the trade industry would be a lot better suited for me.” – Steele (HS Student)

Participants helped to build their “ideal college,” first through their own ideation and then guided by a series of prompts.

Common elements of an ideal college across the audience segments:

- *Feel supported and cared for, valued.*
- *Smaller classes.*
- *Diverse.*
- *Goal oriented students.*
- *Connect with teachers/professors.*

“The feeling of learning, I guess the feeling of I know what I’m going to be doing. Feeling of feeling supported, feeling like confident.” – Sara (Adult Learner)

“By actually having an interest in their student success, or at least either in the short run or the long run. Short run being for that class. Long run being for the whole time that they’re there at the university. I feel like I would say to me that’s very important. And going to three different schools now, I’ve definitely noticed the difference. And then I guess high school is, I mean, all school is school, but even in high school, I felt like people really cared as well, and that really helped.” – David (Traditional Learner)

Traditional and Adult Learners differ in significant ways from high school students in describing the ideal college.

Traditional and Adult Learners describe:

- *More flexible learning opportunities that allow them to continue to work and manage families.*
- *Close to home.*
- *“Social interaction” more important than “social life.”*
- *Clear roadmap and direction.*

Additionally, adult learners express more concerns about “fitting in” and their academic ability returning to school. As such they describe the ideal college as specifically addressing their needs and interests (moms clubs, networking organizations, return to school orientation, etc).

High School Students describe:

- *Wanting to be further from home.*
- *More people.*
- *More social opportunities.*
- *All in-person (parents agree).*

New College Features

Participants considered 13 potential features of a new college (See the full list in the Appendix).

What matters to participants:

- *Maximize opportunity for success through learning style (hands on, in person).*
- *Student-focused approach, whether that is flexible scheduling, recognition/value of previous experience or services provided.*
- *Create opportunity for greater connection.*

These elements and approaches help address basic motivations and goal states: stability, connection, enjoyment.

With the student at the center it also helps build confidence among a student population that experiences self-doubt and lack of confidence.

Considering Costs

- *Most of our participants have little basis for discussing what college costs beyond a few who may have taken some community college courses.*
- *What they believe is that college is “expensive.”*
- *A tuition cost of \$7,000-\$8,000 is a lot of money. But many consider it “reasonable” if the college lives up to its promise and they have financial aid.*
- *Financial assistance is a game changer as many see a path forward and opportunity with substantial aid.*
- *\$150/month is do-able for many. It may put a bit of a strain on their resources, but they feel they can make that payment.*

Likely to Attend

At the end of the discussion, we asked participants how likely they would be to consider going to this college.

	Overall Mean
Overall	9.0
Traditional Learners	9.5
Adults Learners	8.9
High School Juniors/Seniors	8.6
Parents	9.2

Not At All Likely				Neutral		Very Likely			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Appendix

New College Features

- **(Hands-On Learning)** The college will offer hands-on learning opportunities, like internships, to strengthen what students learn in the classroom.
- **(Flexible Schedule)** The college will offer flexible scheduling that includes a blend of online and in-person courses, and evening, weekend or short day schedules.
- **(On-Site Services)** The college will include on-site services that make satisfying essential needs easier, including health care, mental health support, childcare, groceries, and transportation.
- **(Job Certificates/Credentials)** The college will automatically give students the opportunity to earn certificates and other credentials before they have completed the full degree program that they can use to earn promotions or higher salaries in their current job.
- **(Credit for Prior Work)** The college will allow and give credit towards a degree for previous college work and/or work experience.
- **(Teaching-Focused)** Courses will be taught by faculty who are focused only on teaching and will be more interactive and engaged with the students.

New College Features

- **(One-Stop-Shop)** The college will have a one-stop-shop for all services, such as enrollment, financial aid, and academic and career advising.
- **(Full Student Experience)** The college will have the full student experience, including clubs, sports and a student center.
- **(Career-Focused)** The college will be career focused from day one and have just a small number of major areas that go straight into a good paying and impactful career in areas like teaching, business, health care, and computer science.
- **(Social Life)** The college will have an emphasis on creating a social life for students so they feel connected to the school and other students.
- **(Fewer Students)** The college will have fewer students than other state universities.
- **(Campus in Neighborhood)** The college campus will be in your neighborhood.
- **(Shorter Courses)** Courses will take place over shorter periods like 1 to 2 months instead of 4 months.

New College Features: Mean Scores

<i>Ranked by Total Mean</i>	Traditional Learners (N=13)	Adult Learners (N=18)	High School Juniors/Seniors (N=10)	Parents (N=9)	Total (N=50)
Hands-On Learning	9.8	9.3	9.1	9.4	9.4
Flexible Schedule	9.0	9.7	9.1	9.1	9.2
On-Site Services	9.6	8.9	9.0	9.2	9.2
Job Certificates/Credentials	8.8	9.3	8.5	9.4	9.0
Credit for Prior Work	8.6	9.6	8.7	8.9	8.9
Teaching-Focused	8.8	8.9	8.4	8.7	8.7
One-Stop-Shop	8.5	9.0	8.0	9.3	8.7
Full Student Experience	9.2	8.1	9.4	7.7	8.6
Career-Focused	7.5	8.4	7.7	8.0	7.9
Social Life	7.6	7.4	8.4	7.7	7.8
Fewer Students	7.5	7.8	6.2	8.7	7.5
Campus in Neighborhood	6.8	8.0	4.7	6.9	6.6
Shorter Courses	5.9	8.0	5.5	6.2	6.4



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

turning questions into answers

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APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC AND LOCATION ANALYSIS

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Demographics and Suitability Analysis

Current Demographics

Census data were analyzed with the goal of understanding demographic patterns in the select four county study area. 2022 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data sets were used to develop 700+ cross tabulations to help identify factors for use in the suitability analysis. Factors in the cross tabulations included: population by age, gender, educational attainment, Hispanic ethnicity, marital status, workers in household, household income, and population in poverty. Using this analysis along with results from the market research survey studies, demographic factors were determined for use in a composite suitability analysis.

The preliminary suitability analysis was conducted using data from the 2018-2022 American Community Survey estimates at the block group and Census tract levels (depending on availability). Based on information from the market research studies, a total of 14 factors relating to income (poverty status), age, sex, ethnicity, and educational attainment were utilized for the analysis. Each factor was allocated to Census Blocks and 1-mile hexagons. Once allocated, each location (block or hexagon) was scored based on weighted suitability factors. Areas with large group quarters populations in comparison to the total population of the area were excluded from the analysis.

Preliminary findings reveal potential target areas for locating the new school. These eight locations, indicated on the map, will be further defined based on commute sheds and additional analyses begin conducted.

Long Range Projections

Population projections by select age cohorts were developed for 2025, 2030, 2035, and 2040. These projections were developed utilizing existing regional and subregional projections. The age cohort projections by Census tract will be integrated into the composite analysis.

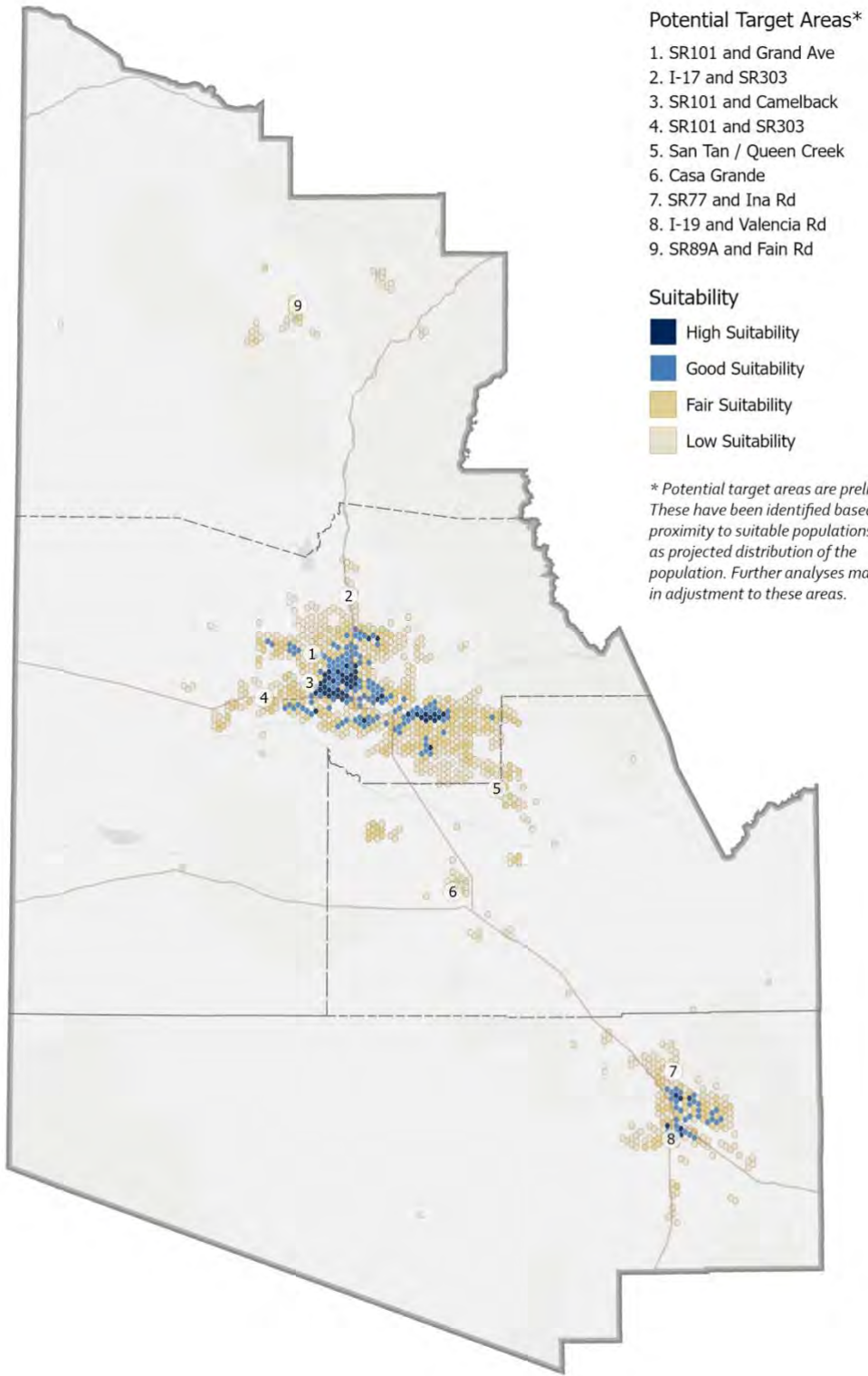
Current student and competitive institution analysis

Trends in high school graduates pursuing further education were mapped and analyzed by school district. Additionally, high school student enrollment was utilized to understand growth rates in student population. Both these trends analyses are planned to be used in the suitability analysis as short term indicators. Competitive schools were mapped and classified to better understand underserved sub-regions.

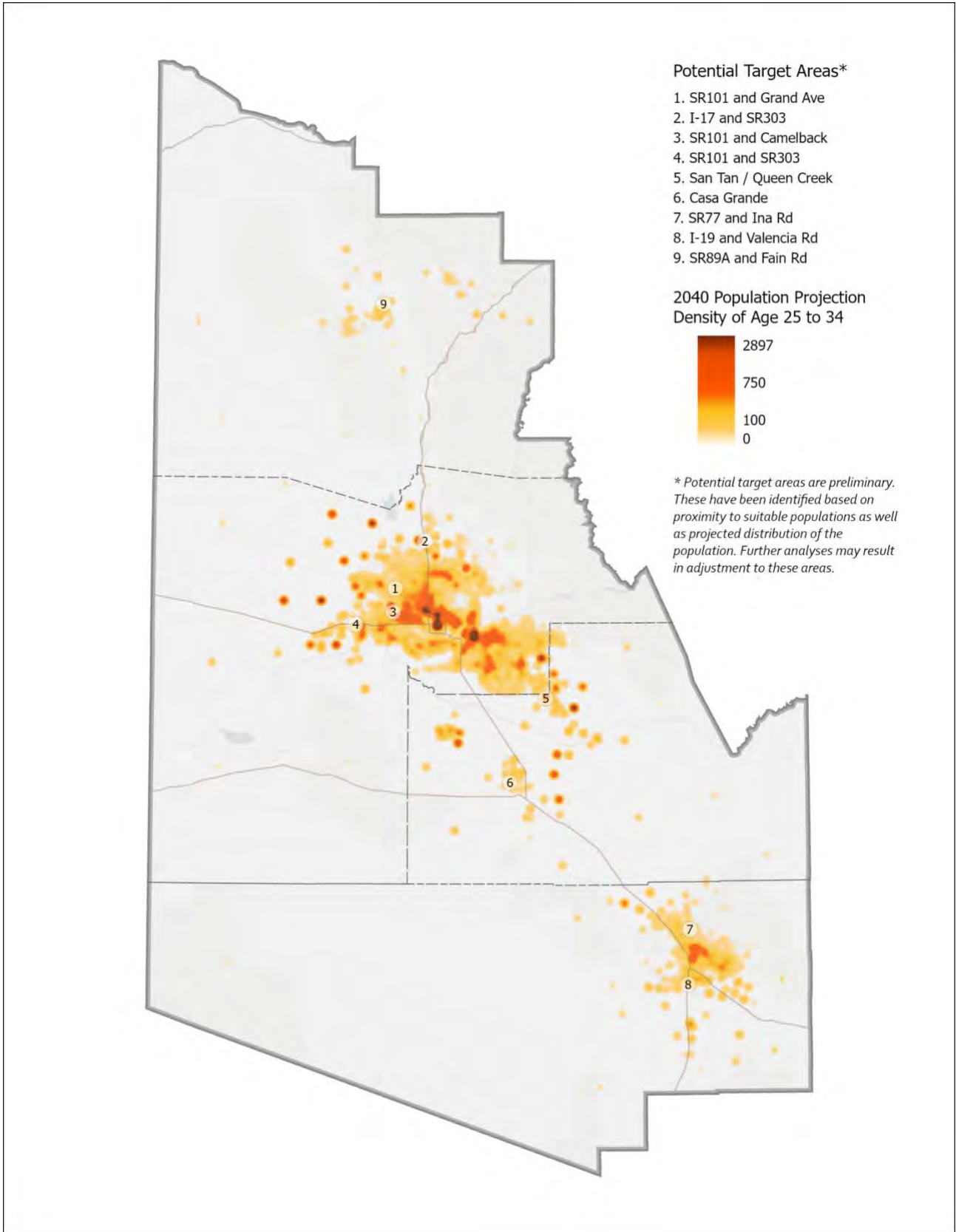
Demographic Segmentation Tool

An online Demographic Segmentation Tool was created to present the findings and allow further review and study of the data analyses developed for this project. The tool provides interactive maps of demographics, high school enrollment and graduation trends, NAU students, population projections by age, employment by industry, and results of the suitability analysis.

APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC AND LOCATION ANALYSIS



APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC AND LOCATION ANALYSIS



CONFIDENTIAL

To: Cecilia Mata, Chair, Arizona Board of Regents
CC: Arizona Board of Regents
From: José Luis Cruz Rivera, President, Northern Arizona University
Date: August 1, 2024
Re: NAU 2021-2024 Multiple-Year At-Risk Goals



This memorandum presents a high-level statement of achievement describing how the incentive goals in reference were met and how the corresponding efforts will be maintained to ensure that NAU can continue to advance the mission of the enterprise strategic plan, as it pertains to ABOR's Strategic Goals. Sections of this memorandum that describe **confidential** personnel or proprietary information are marked appropriately and should be limited to executive session review by the Board.

Multiple-Year Goal Statements

- **Goal #1:** Develop and implement a plan to expand the number of students from working class families enrolled by NAU, increase overall graduation rates, and narrow completion gaps for working class, first-generation, and minoritized groups, to enhance NAU's contribution to equitable postsecondary value.
- **Goal #2:** Develop and submit a plan for implementation of statewide expansion of NAU's Allied Health Programs and traditional NAU programs to include programs in Maricopa County, Pima County, Yuma County and distributed learning centers outside these three counties.
- **Goal #3:** Develop and implement a plan to increase the University's profile and visibility within the Phoenix, Statewide, and National Latino communities to enhance NAU's Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status and develop partnerships, programs, and student engagement efforts to better serve Hispanic students and the communities they represent.
- **Goal #4:** Develop and implement a plan to further enhance NAU's profile as a national leader in the service of Native American students and the communities they represent. Successful implementation of the plan will lead to increased numbers of degrees and credentials awarded to Native American students, as well as strengthened partnerships leading to enhanced direct benefits to Native American and Indigenous communities.

Executive Summary

Over the past three years, Northern Arizona University has strategically advanced a comprehensive agenda to establish itself as the nation's leading institution for opportunity, economic mobility, and social impact. This agenda focuses on providing equitable postsecondary value to the people of Arizona and beyond.

To help guide this work, in Fall 2021, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) set four three-year at-risk goals for NAU in 2021. These goals were designed to help set a strong foundation for the university's 17th

presidency in the areas of access, healthcare and statewide programs, and standing in the Hispanic and Indigenous communities. These interconnected goals have guided significant progress in strengthening operations, clarifying the university's mission, enhancing its unique value proposition, and serving Arizona's communities through accessible and affordable education.

This report describes the achievements related to each of these goals, demonstrating NAU's efforts to increase educational opportunities for working-class and first-generation students, expand its statewide impact, particularly in health-related fields, and strengthen its role as a leading Hispanic Serving and Native American Serving Institution. With a strong foundation laid over the past three years as highlighted below, NAU's efforts to advance the multiannual goals referenced in this report has positioned the university well to continue its mission-focused efforts on access, attainment, and success for all Arizonans.

Overall, NAU's progress in achieving ABOR's FY21-FY24 multiannual goals and the broader successes during a time of significant change in higher education demonstrate the university's leadership and distinction within Arizona's higher education landscape. With a clear mission and bold vision, NAU provides pathways to educational attainment, economic prosperity, and social impact for the people of Arizona and beyond.

CONFIDENTIAL Goal #1 Broadening Access and Boosting Success

Goal #1: Develop and implement a plan to expand the number of students from working class families enrolled by NAU, increase overall graduation rates, and narrow completion gaps for working class, first-generation, and minoritized groups, to enhance NAU's contribution to equitable postsecondary value.

During the past three years, NAU has developed and implemented a series of plans and initiatives geared toward broadening access and boosting student success, guided by the university's "Elevating Excellence" strategic roadmap, with an emphasis on serving the students of Arizona and providing them with an affordable, high-quality education. A small sample of these efforts are noted below.

- **Access2Excellence:** Since fall 2023, NAU provides a tuition-free college education for every undergraduate Arizona resident with a household income of \$65,000/year or below. In its first year, approximately 40% of all new incoming students qualified for this program, which emphasizes price transparency for working-class students and their families. Since its launch, the program has generated a significant amount of positive attention from higher ed leaders and policy makers in the state and beyond (see **Appendix B**).
- **Access2Excellence Native American Expansion:** NAU expanded the eligibility criteria for Access2Excellence to include all members of Arizona's 22 federally recognized Native American tribes, consistent with the university's commitment to Indigenous Peoples. This has resulted in a 47% increase in the new entering class of Native American students at NAU.
- **Admissions Pilot:** NAU removed a longstanding barrier to admissions by aligning university admissions standards with Arizona high school graduation requirements, shifting from a 16 core to a 14 core requirement. This change, effective fall 2023, impacted over 50,000 students attending 20% of the high schools in Arizona.
- **Admissions Pilot Amendment:** NAU aligned its assured admissions criteria with institutional practice, clearly messaging that all qualified students with a 2.75 high school GPA or higher can be admitted into the university. This change was effective in fall 2024.
- **Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++):** Serving over 280,000 students and launched in fall 2022, this alliance convened by NAU brings together nine of the ten state community college districts, as

well as the Arizona Commerce Authority, to collaborate on strengthening the state’s attainment ecosystem, with a particular focus on equitable access and outcomes for the diverse people in every corner of Arizona. A++ has a footprint throughout the state, contributing to rural, urban, and Indigenous community attainment efforts, and early initiatives like Universal Admissions are already yielding results to expand postsecondary participation and success. (See 2023-2024 Annual Goal #2 report for additional detail and Appendix C for what “people are saying” about the innovative A++ model.). NAU’s A++ partners are [Arizona Commerce Authority](#), [Arizona Western College](#), [Central Arizona College](#), [Cochise College](#), [Coconino Community College](#), [Eastern Arizona College](#), [Maricopa Community Colleges](#), [Mohave Community College](#), [Northland Pioneer College](#), and [Pima Community College](#).

- **HIGH5 Network to Reimagine High School:** Led by NAU’s Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy (AIEE), founded in July 2023, the university has developed plans for a robust expansion of partnership efforts into the K-12 realm. These plans aim to boost the immediate college-going rate and launch bold initiatives to bolster the state’s postsecondary attainment rates. The High school to Higher education to High demand, High wage, High skill employment network (HIGH5 Network), will publicly launch in September 2024 and will advance efforts around college admission redesign, high school to higher education academic pathways, workforce embeddedness, and more. Currently the HIGH5 Network is composed of 20 high school districts representing a broad cross section of the state—both urban and rural centers—and several key workforce organizations, such as Greater Phoenix Leadership, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, and the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, among others. Several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have already been signed by district governing boards, with the remainder to be completed in advance of the public launch in September. The potential held in redesigning high school and higher education has resonated strongly across philanthropic partners, with nearly \$2M in private support helping to propel the HIGH5 Network and more funding opportunities in the proposal phase. (See 2023-2024 Annual Goal #2 report for additional detail.)
- **100% Career Ready:** NAU’s 100% Career Ready Initiative is amplifying the value of an NAU degree by strengthening the college-to-career journey for all students. NAU expects this will be an integral component of recruitment strategy for prospective students seeking to meet their full potential and ensuring equitable outcomes.
- **Elevating Student Success:** As part of NAU’s efforts to advance its strategic plan, NAU 2025 – Elevating Excellence, the university issued competitive calls for proposals to faculty and staff for projects designed to elevate student success, with a focus on increasing undergraduate and graduate student success. This has helped build new and enhance existing programs to support student success across the board.
- **Lumberjack CARE Center:** Opened in Fall 2022, the Lumberjack Case Management, Advocacy, Resources, and Essential Needs (CARE) Center is a central hub on NAU’s Flagstaff campus focused on addressing concerns such as food insecurity, financial needs, and wellness.
- **Jacks on Track:** Initially funded by the Lumina Foundation and now fully institutionalized, this program supports former students who are within 60 credits of graduation, empowering them to reengage at NAU and complete their degree or credential. In the program’s first year, 192 students enrolled and 64 completed their degree.
- **Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program:** An evidence-based model for improved academic achievement and retention, SI has been expanded to two additional colleges at NAU (Social and

Behavioral Sciences and Arts and Letters). SI has historically resulted in higher grades for students participating in the program and contributes to retention and academic success.

- **RAISE Plan:** recognizing the imperative for access efforts to be safeguarded by a healthy enrollment and revenue mix, NAU has a multi-year strategic enrollment and attainment plan that is positioning the university for long-term success across the domains of access, attainment and success, and impact, with the goal of awarding 100,000 credentials by 2035. Developed over the course of 2022-2023 and grounded in the priorities of Elevating Excellence, the plan is in effect and driving strategies and tactics around recruitment and yield, digital presence, student supports, and more. NAU's strength across key financial metrics, including days cash on hand and credit rating, as well as record auxiliary revenues in both FY23 and FY24, underscore how embedded this work is in the university's strategic resource management approach. A graphical representation of RAISE is presented below, see 2022-2023 Annual Goal #3 and the 2023-24 EEC Attainment Goal report for additional details on this plan.

Importantly, beyond the examples described above, through the university's strategic plan and the infusion of equitable postsecondary value into institutional decision making, student success with the goal of upward economic mobility and social impact is a priority for all units. While the efforts listed are emblematic and demonstrate the range of work being undertaken, NAU is proud to have made significant progress over the past three years to truly broaden participation and create the conditions for equitable student success and postgraduate outcomes.

Even in the short time these efforts have been in place, they have positively impacted enrollment and retention outcomes, as described below.

- **New First-Year Students Entering Fall 2023:** The largest number of Arizona resident students in NAU's history. The largest number of Native American students ever. The highest percentage of Hispanic/Latino students ever. And an average core high school GPA for new students that surpasses previous records.
- **New Undergraduate Students (Includes Transfers) Entering Fall 2023:** Arizona resident enrollment increased by 3%. Flagstaff Mountain Campus saw a 7% increase in Arizona resident students. Statewide sites also experienced a 7% increase in Arizona resident students. Approximately 40% qualified for the Access2Excellence program.
- **Serving Working Class Students:** NAU's undergraduate, Pell-eligible student population has increased by 5% in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023, demonstrating the immediate impact of A2E to drive participation in postsecondary education.
- **Retention Rates:** As a result of these efforts, retention from fall 2023 to spring 2024 for first year students increased from 89.1% to 91.3% and preliminary retention numbers are trending strongly upward for fall 2024, which will be confirmed at census, with increases across multiple key sectors.
- **Closing Gaps:** The most recent 6-year graduation rates show that NAU has narrowed completion gaps for first-generation, Hispanic, and Native American students.
- **Increasing Success:** Overall, NAU's first-time, full-time 6-year graduation rates have increased by 2.2 percentage points compared to three years ago; for transfer students the increase is nearly a percentage point compared to three years ago, while the graduation rates of full-time transfer students have increased by nearly 1.5 percentage points over the same period.

Finally, these efforts have been instrumental in raising the university's external profile as a true exemplar of equitable postsecondary value in action. The Third Way Economic Mobility Index ranks NAU in Tier I—their highest institutional ranking level—with students beginning to achieve positive returns on their educational investment less than three years after graduating. The Institution for Higher Education Policy

showcased NAU as a beacon for how equitable postsecondary value can be delivered through a 2022 case study focused on the transformational vision set forth in Elevating Excellence and the corresponding actions taken to realize the strategic roadmap's priorities. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has specifically invested in studying the university's equitable value efforts being advanced through Elevating Excellence and A++. And the Lumina Foundation has awarded NAU a grant to serve as part of the great admissions redesign for promising initiatives that increase access to postsecondary education.

Additional efforts that support broadening access and delivering value for students of all backgrounds are highlighted in the strategic initiatives section that follows. Many of these efforts are closely interrelated to the other multiple-year goal reports provided here, as NAU's statewide presence is vital for expanding access, and both Hispanic/Latino and Native American student populations are a key focus of the university's efforts.

Guided by a cohesive strategic roadmap and anchored by signature initiatives and complementary services, investments, and ongoing assessment, NAU has a clear vision and value proposition for the people of Arizona. Looking ahead, the university will continue to responsibly build on this foundation and provide a differentiated offering in the state's educational ecosystem that foregrounds student access, success, and workforce outcomes.

CONFIDENTIAL Goal #2 Allied Health, Statewide and Online Programs

Goal #2: Develop and submit a plan for implementation of statewide expansion of NAU's Allied Health Programs and traditional NAU programs to include programs in Maricopa County, Pima County, Yuma County and distributed learning centers outside these three counties.

During the past three years, NAU has developed and implemented plans and initiatives geared toward the expansion of the university's Allied Health Programs and the evaluation and optimization of traditional statewide programs in Maricopa County, Pima County, Yuma County and distributed learning centers outside of these three counties. This includes future growth opportunities facilitated by initiatives like A++, the emerging HIGH5 network, and the development of the NAU-powered network of colleges (see 2023-2024 Annual Goal #2 report for additional detail.)

On the Allied Health front, NAU has expanded its reach, capacity, and offerings across nursing, physical health, and behavioral health programming. The focus of this work has been to develop a cohesive and transformative strategy for how NAU's healthcare education offerings will contribute to the ABOR Healthy Tomorrow initiative.

The framework NAU has built emphasizes bold goals for continued expansion of programs, optimization of existing healthcare education assets to best communicate the university's value to students and employers in the state, differentiation from Arizona State University and the University of Arizona in terms of programmatic focus (primary healthcare needs present across Arizona's urban, rural, and Indigenous communities), and new interventions to meet key short falls and areas of need in the healthcare education marketplace in Arizona. Below is a listing of key strategic efforts that have been pursued, which together will contribute nearly 950 new health care professionals into the workforce:

Program Expansions

- Nursing—220 additional graduates per year across program sites.
- Dental Hygiene (Yuma)—new program site producing 40 graduates per year.
- Doctor of Physical Therapy—40 additional graduates from Flagstaff and PBC immersion programs by Fall 2025 (subject to accreditation approval).
- Social Work—48 additional graduates per year.
- Interdisciplinary Health PhD—expand capacity to enroll 40 per year.

New Programs

- Hybrid Doctor of Physical Therapy—launched in January 2024, this program will grow to 100 graduates per year.
- Doctor of Medical Science program for Physician Assistants (D.Msc.)—focused on expanding knowledge, competencies, and professional opportunities for Physician Assistants, the program will enroll 170 full-time and 210 part-time students per year.
- MS in Medical Science—launching in fall 2025, this pre-med/health profession preparation program will graduate 30 students per year.
- Post Graduate Fellowship Program in Rural and Underserved Community Practice for Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, and community health practitioners—practitioner training focused on evidence based best practices and resilience impact in rural and underserved communities; 5 graduates per year, with 45 trained by 2029.
- BS in Health—launching in fall 2025, this meta-degree pipeline program will graduate 40 students per year.
- Interprofessional Education Program (IPE)—featuring enriched training and preparation for practice that will be incorporated into all health profession programs, the IPE will include preparation for interprofessional collaboration, inter-cultural competency, communication, and team science.

NAU's distributed sites are uniquely positioned to address healthcare workforce needs in various areas of the state. As such, the ongoing investments by the state and ABOR in healthcare have been leveraged by NAU to strengthen not only core Flagstaff programs and infrastructure, but also to expand statewide. Results are significant, with NAU's statewide allied health program enrollments growing by 37% between fall 2019 and fall 2023. With more than 950 students enrolled last fall in statewide health programs, NAU's impact in this area is clear.

For additional details, see 2023-24 Annual Report Goal #1, which also describes NAU's approach to further its health education agenda by creating a responsive and much-needed College of Medicine that builds upon the university's strengths and existing programmatic assets to better serve the people of Arizona. This effort is a vital component of NAU's strategy for AZ Healthy Tomorrow; however, due to program cost and uncertain state investment levels this roadmap goal is subject to modification. Should sustained funding not be available, NAU would appropriately modify plans to consolidate on its current strengths and ensure program continuity.

On the statewide and online programs front, NAU has undertaken three main workstreams in statewide operations over the past three years:

- **Organizational Optimization:** NAU streamlined its operations by consolidating various units under the umbrella of Academic and Workforce Alliances. This includes Statewide Initiatives and Alliances, Workforce Development, Curriculum and Assessment, and Academic Program Support Services. Four regional hubs were established (Northern, Central, Southeast, and Southwest) to focus on local needs and program development. Key milestones include the launch of the Mesa Workforce Development Center and the expansion of metrology training programs.
- **Academic Program Portfolio Review:** A comprehensive review of statewide academic offerings led to the adaptation, consolidation, and discontinuation of certain programs to ensure a responsive and non-duplicative portfolio. The outcome included discontinuing 22 programs, consolidating two academic plans, and adapting two others to be more impactful.

- **Development of an Attainment-Focused Ecosystem:** The Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++), launched in fall 2022, collaborates with community colleges and the Arizona Commerce Authority to enhance postsecondary attainment. Key achievements include the Universal Admissions initiative and the AZ Ahead grant-funded transfer student support program. The A++ initiative has attracted significant philanthropic support for its transformative efforts.

For reference, NAU's Mountain Campus in Flagstaff offers full residential amenities, a global draw, and a wide range of programs and enrichment activities that enhance student life. It serves as a model for a comprehensive university experience. NAU's Statewide and Online Programs, on the other hand, cater to Arizona residents seeking flexibility, affordability, and proximity to industry. These programs are tailored to meet local workforce needs and are particularly appealing to non-traditional students, including transfers, those with some college experience, and adult learners.

Supplementing existing sites, NAU's strategic roadmap for statewide attainment impact is anchored in an ecosystem-based approach. The College Network initiative, as outlined in the 2023-2024 Annual Goal #2 report, presents a future vision for these efforts, either through a new postsecondary provider or optimizing existing assets. This bold proposal is supported by significant achievements registered by NAU in building partnership networks that will enable statewide attainment-focused work to flourish, with NAU serving as coordinator and preferred partner in both community college and K-12 arenas.

Led by NAU, the Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++), launched in fall 2022, continues to collaborate with community college partners and the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) to develop initiatives aimed at dramatically boosting Arizona's postsecondary attainment in areas that align with the high-demand, high-paying jobs that are fueling the new Arizona economy. Through ongoing efforts and strategic planning retreats, A++ has made strides that leverage NAU's statewide infrastructure, tighten connections with community colleges and industry, and position students for seamless pathways to success. Key milestones include the pilot launch and Alliance-wide scaling of Universal Admissions, the AZ Ahead grant-funded transfer student support initiative that is propelling success from regional community colleges to NAU, robust efforts to build data-sharing and joint technical infrastructure that enhance student success, and the early development of milestone credential plans and workforce-informed academic pathways informed by ACA workforce data, among other initiatives. This partnership-based approach has garnered significant philanthropic support to pilot and scale transformative efforts, including from the Helios Education Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, WICHE, and Georgetown Data Labs program.

In addition to the work of A++, NAU is developing a parallel approach to engaging with high school districts across the state. Under the leadership of NAU's Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy (AIEE), founded in summer 2023, the university is in the early phases of developing a portfolio of partnership-based initiatives to be deployed at the intersection of high school, higher education, and business and industry. Termed the H5 Network—high school, higher education, and high wage, high skill, high demand careers—this partnership group will formally launch in fall 2024 and has already attracted nearly \$2 million in external support from philanthropic foundations, business organizations, and other partners.

Through these efforts, NAU is seeking to leverage the system-like infrastructure of partnerships throughout the state to take full advantage of the university's own statewide presence. Thanks to a range of entry points—Flagstaff, statewide, and online—NAU can deploy initiatives that drive access, attainment, and success on a much broader scale when plugging into community colleges and high school districts in the future.

The approach highlighted here is designed to sustain momentum and progress in NAU's statewide

operations. The RAISE strategic enrollment plan further emphasizes the need to pursue responsible growth through a range of learner types (transfers, adult learners, workforce partnerships) outside of Flagstaff to enable NAU to meet its attainment goals and achieve a mission-driven enrollment mix. Thus, through partnerships, statewide operations, and impactful health education programs, NAU will continue to focus access endeavors that can boost attainment through its statewide offerings.

CONFIDENTIAL Goal #3 Elevating NAU’s Work as a Hispanic Serving Institution

Goal #3: Develop and implement a plan to increase the University’s profile and visibility within the Phoenix, Statewide, and National Latino communities to enhance NAU’s Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status and develop partnerships, programs, and student engagement efforts to better serve Hispanic students and the communities they represent.

Northern Arizona University (NAU) first achieved Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status in 2021, with the NAU-Yuma campus holding the designation since 2007. Since attaining university-wide HSI status, NAU has significantly elevated its profile and impact as a leading institution for serving Arizona’s growing Hispanic population. NAU’s strategy for enhancing its role in the Hispanic community focuses on two main areas: 1) comprehensive access and student success initiatives aimed at enrolling, retaining, supporting, and graduating Hispanic students and 2) public positioning and media engagement strategies designed to strengthen NAU’s leadership and reputation within Hispanic communities.

On the access and success front, NAU has implemented key access initiatives—including the Access2Excellence tuition program, Admissions Pilot, and A++ initiatives like the Yuma YES and AZ Ahead transfer success programs—focused on increasing participation among working-class and diverse populations in Arizona. Hispanic students, a significant and growing demographic, are central to these efforts. These programs have been instrumental in sustaining NAU’s HSI status and enhancing its visibility as a leader in serving Hispanic communities in Arizona.

As part of the A++ ecosystem, NAU collaborates with nine of Arizona’s ten community college districts, six of which are community college HSIs. This collaboration creates a robust, interconnected network of institutions committed to supporting Hispanic students' success. Additionally, NAU has strengthened local connections through initiatives like NAU Day with Flagstaff Unified School District, which brings Hispanic and Native American students to campus, inspiring college aspirations and showcasing the value of an NAU education.

These initiatives have shown early success, with the fall 2023 entering class having the largest percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in NAU’s history. These programs are crucial for NAU’s mission to serve Hispanic students in Arizona and beyond.

To support Hispanic students academically, NAU offers a range of tailored support and enrichment programs. These include several impactful initiatives launched in the last three years, including the Hispanic/Latine Youth Media Workshop and enhanced programs and supports through the Office of Leadership & Engagement that provide a robust infrastructure for diverse Student Clubs and Organizations that foster a sense of belonging and community. Support extends to transfer students with programs like Transfer Jacks, Yuma YES, and AZ Ahead, all contributing to Hispanic student success. Completion gaps for Hispanic students are narrowing with a 1.1 percentage point increase in 6-year graduation rates in the last three years signaling that the early impacts of these programs are significant.

Numerous faculty-led training grants further bolster student participation and success, particularly in STEM fields. These include the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (LSAMP), U.S. Department of Agriculture HSI Education Grants, and Multi-Institutional Transformation and Graduate Student Support Initiative (MITSI) grants.

Recently, NAU was awarded a U.S. Department of Education Title V grant for Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions, which will commence in fall 2024 with a \$3 million investment over a five-year term. This grant will support efforts across University Advising, First-Year Seminars, the Teaching & Learning Center, and Student Affairs to focus on retaining and ensuring the success of first-year Hispanic students. This funding will amplify existing initiatives and help all NAU students reach their full potential.

On the public positioning front, NAU's direct support for Hispanic students is complemented by a public engagement strategy that enhances the university's reputation and recruitment potential within the growing Hispanic population in Arizona and nationwide.

President Cruz Rivera has played a key role in national Hispanic higher education leadership. His contributions include congressional testimony on the importance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, keynote speeches at major conferences like the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), and participation in organizations such as the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) and the Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. His leadership has attracted significant partnership opportunities, including NAU's involvement in the Dream.US scholarship program supporting undocumented students and a unique partnership with College Track (CT). CT's program includes an embedded cohort in NAU's Honors College, and a "Semester Zero" college preparatory experience hosted at NAU.

NAU's Hispanic media and outreach efforts highlight the overall value of higher education and NAU's specific benefits. A notable partnership with Univision, the largest Spanish-language media provider in Arizona and the U.S., includes a content-sharing agreement for educational capsules produced by NAU. These capsules, featured on Univision's platforms, provide Spanish-language resources and advisement, enhancing NAU's outreach and recruitment efforts. This partnership, unique among U.S. universities, is complemented by media collaborations with Telemundo. NAU also engages Spanish-speaking audiences through its fully Spanish-language website, *NAU en Español*, which distinguishes the university as a welcoming destination for Hispanic students.

Several additional highlights related to the advancement and achievement are noted in Appendix A.

CONFIDENTIAL Goal #4 Enhancing NAU's Profile as a Native American Serving Institution

Goal #4: Develop and implement a plan to further enhance NAU's profile as a national leader in the service of Native American students and the communities they represent. Successful implementation of the plan will lead to increased numbers of degrees and credentials awarded to Native American students, as well as strengthened partnerships leading to enhanced direct benefits to Native American and Indigenous communities.

Long recognized as one of the nation's leading institutions serving Native Americans, NAU has redoubled efforts in the past three years to deliver on this promise, leverage its regional distinctiveness, and serve as a national model for student access and success, impactful scholarship, and meaningful engagement with tribal communities in the United States and beyond.

As noted in the other multiple-year reports, a fundamental component of this strategy is broad-based access initiatives. For Native American populations, that is most evident in the Access2Excellence initiative, which provides full tuition coverage not only for Arizona residents with a household income of \$65k/year or less, but also for all members of Arizona's 22 federally recognized Native American Tribes—regardless of state of residency or household income. With the launch of this program in fall 2023, NAU saw an increase of 47% in new Native American student enrollment, bringing total Native American enrollment to an all-time high.

The university also provides robust student supports for its Native American population, including the Native American Cultural Center, the Office of Indigenous Student Success, the newly launched and rapidly

expanding Indigenous Peoples Living Learning Community, and numerous bridge programs and STEM preparation pathways, many supported by faculty-led grants. A top priority is to continue efforts to bolster momentum and completion rates for all students, including the Native American student population. Early indicators for fall 2024 retention are strong, with final results to be calculated at census.

The transfer pathways and partnerships NAU has forged also represent a significant opportunity to expand access and completion pathways. With close ties to Coconino Community College and Northland Pioneer College in particular, which serve large Native American populations, NAU's Universal Admissions and AZ Ahead programs are expected to drive further success. NAU is also expanding partnerships with Tribal Colleges and Universities. In spring 2024, NAU signed an Intergovernmental Agreement with San Carlos Apache Tribal College, enabling unique partnerships, faculty exchange, student supports, and more to flourish between these institutions.

In addition to strengthening pathways and enrollments, NAU has seen tremendous success in its commitment to Native Americans as evidenced by being among the nation's leaders in students served and degrees awarded, according to *Diverse Issues in Higher Ed*. Importantly for the communities these students represent in Arizona, many disciplinary areas where NAU is a leader are of tremendous need, including the health-related fields, where NAU's ranking has increased over the last three years.

- Top 15 highest counts of enrolled Native American students among all 4-year public schools in the U.S (top 15 undergraduate; top 10 graduate).
- Ranked 8 in the nation for awarding bachelor's degrees to Native American students in all disciplines.
- Ranked 6 in the nation for awarding master's degrees to Native American students in all disciplines.
- Ranked top 10 in the nation in twelve specific disciplines for baccalaureate-graduating Native Americans, including Hospitality Administration/Management (1st), Public Health (1st), Biological and Biomedical Sciences (3rd), Public Administration and Social Service Professions (3rd), Natural Resources and Conservation (5th), and Education (7th).

Furthermore, NAU has realized several milestones in scholarship focused on Indigenous Peoples in the last three years. Two important factors are the Mellon Foundation's \$5m investment in the Seven Generations Signature Initiative (7GSI), supported by a further \$5m investment by the NAU Foundation, as well as the \$30m NSF Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science (CBIKS) grant, which NAU researchers are helping to lead in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Together, a focus of both grants is strengthening and integrating the scholarly understanding and connections of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives with the arts and Western sciences.

The 7GSI grant supports faculty recruitment and development, helping NAU build a critical mass of scholars working in fields connected to Indigenous knowledges; builds NAU's capacity to implement its Indigenous Peoples perspective general studies courses and develop Open Educational Resource materials from this knowledge base; and opens scholarly exchange pathways with Tribal Colleges and Universities. The CBIKS grant approaches complex and evolving challenges faced by Indigenous communities, including climate change, archeological site and cultural preservation, and challenges to food systems through an integrative lens. With NAU faculty serving as co-PIs on the project and leading the Southwest regional hub, the university will play a leading role in infusing Indigenous perspectives into scholarship that is truly global in reach, with 57 Indigenous communities participating in the grant worldwide.

In addition to this grant funded work, NAU has a robust portfolio of Indigenous Peoples-focused scholarly and academic activities. This includes the general studies curriculum that will deploy in 2025, with an

embedded Indigenous Peoples perspective requirement, leveraging NAU's distinctive place, space, and scholarly expertise to broaden student perspectives. Similarly, the infusion of Indigenous Perspectives into the early design considerations of NAU's College of Medicine are significant in creating a responsive model for the underserved communities of Arizona and emblematic of the deep commitment the university has to this work.

At the intersection of scholarship, policy, and practice, the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) at NAU, which recently celebrated its 30th year, continues to grow as a vital resource and center for expertise on tribal capacity building, environmental and natural resource management, and culturally relevant education, research, and partnership grounded in policy-based services. ITEP has served over 95% of all 574 U.S. Tribal nations in environmental professional development. As the premier Tribal environmental training and policy organization in the U.S., ITEP annually conducts more than 50 training programs, hosts four conferences, and convenes eight policy committees, serving over 22,000 Native American students in K-12. ITEP's publications have been cited at the U.S. Senate and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The Institute for Native-serving Educators (INE) is a collaborative initiative to strengthen schools across Indian Country through which NAU partners with Native Nations, Indigenous-serving schools, and public-school districts on and bordering reservation communities to create and implement professional development opportunities that meet community needs. INE has six programs serving approximately 100 Tribal teachers in Arizona by building capacity throughout these tribal communities. The programs' topics include culturally responsive curriculum development, early childhood development, and counselor development, as well as honing leadership and paraprofessional skills. INE's program participation has nearly doubled as NAU has responsibly grown the program. The DINE partnership, for instance, began with only nine teachers in 2018 and now has nearly 50 teachers participating annually.

NAU has also bolstered the oversight and implementation of its tribal consultation policy. At a time when additional scrutiny has been placed on institutions of higher education, museums, and others for their alignment with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the handling of cultural artifacts and tribal engagement processes, NAU has proactively invested in a robust and comprehensive consultation approach. This aids in positioning NAU to comply with our commitments to NAGPRA, which has come into sharper focus in recent years at colleges and universities. Among the direct outcomes of this work are a renewed agreement with the Hopi Tribe's Cultural Preservation Office, which works closely with NAU's Cline Library on a range of collaborative endeavors.

Finally, NAU's Native American Advisory Board, which brings the perspectives of tribal leaders to inform the university's work, has been reconstituted with a renewed membership, charter, and purpose to enhance authentic tribal engagement and further strengthen NAU's ties to Native American leaders in Arizona and beyond.

NAU's strength in serving, supporting, and partnering with Native American and Indigenous communities is well documented. However, continued attention and investment is important to truly fulfil the university's strategic commitment. In the years ahead, attention will be directed to securing private support to expand the Native American Cultural Center to bring together the university's many Native serving programs under a single roof; continue to buttress student success initiatives to close completion gaps and ensure that the booming Native American student enrollment at NAU is backed with exceptional student outcomes; expand reach throughout Arizona to more tribal communities via statewide access points, Tribal College partnerships, A++ pathways, the new College of Medicine, and more; and continue focused efforts to build the density and excellence of NAU's scholarship and engaged partnership with Native and Indigenous Peoples as a national and world leader.

CONFIDENTIAL Appendices

- A. Select Highlights of 2021-2024 Initiatives that Support Multiple-Year Goal Achievements
- B. Access to Excellence Social Media post from Higher Ed leaders in Arizona and Beyond
- C. A++ quotes from higher ed leaders in Arizona and beyond

Appendix A: Select Highlights of 2021-2024 Initiatives that Support Multiple-Year Goal Achievements

Access and Success Initiatives

Select listing of student access and success initiatives as they relate to broadening participation across student populations, enhancing statewide access and impact, and serving Hispanic and Indigenous student populations.

Access2Excellence: The Access2Excellence tuition commitment program at NAU offers full tuition coverage to all Arizonans with a household income of \$65k/year or less, as well as all members of Arizona's 22 federally-recognized Native American tribes, regardless of income level or state of residence. This program is part of NAU's commitment to equitable postsecondary value and aims to broaden access and increase affordability for Arizonans. In its first year (2023), approximately 40% of all new students qualified for this program.

Admissions Pilot: NAU has worked to create a structural differentiation through its admissions practices as the state's Arizona-serving access institution to drive attainment. The Admissions Pilot program at NAU allows for modified admissions criteria beginning for the fall 2023 entering class through the fall 2028 entering class. Specifically, ABOR approved NAU's assured and delegated admissions to be based on 14-core courses, rather than 16-core courses, allowing for greater alignment with Arizona high school graduation requirements, enhanced transparency to help students and parents understand what is necessary to be admitted, and enabling NAU to fully carry out its access mission for the state and support the college-going aspirations of talented, hardworking Arizonans. A second phase of this pilot is poised to deploy with assured admission at the 2.75 GPA level, which is consistent with longstanding admissions practices and focuses on transparency in driving college participation.

Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++). In seeking to drive access for all Arizonans, NAU has evaluated statewide attainment pathways and considered how to amplify its efforts through strengthened partnerships that empower students to enroll in college and persist to earning high-value degrees. The Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++) is the signature effort on this front, which brings together nine of the state's ten community college districts, with a scope of nine counties and approximately 280,000 students. Together, NAU has coordinated and launched several initiatives, which are currently yielding early results and will continue to deploy across all A++ partners. At the center of this work is the creation of seamless and holistic admissions and transferability for students, anchored by the Universal Admissions program, as well as data and technical infrastructure partnerships, academic and career advising programs, and a milestone credential initiative to provide students from throughout the Alliance credentials of value that also encourage persistence to earning a bachelor's degree from NAU.

Universal Admissions: The Universal Admissions initiative from A++ is an affordable path for students to complete a bachelor's degree, focusing on reducing exclusivity and promoting access to higher education in partnership with Arizona community colleges. Every student who applies to NAU receives either admission to NAU or an offer to begin their education at a local community college and then transfer to NAU after completing appropriate coursework to satisfactorily meet NAU's full admissions criteria. Once a student has attended the community college and is prepared to succeed academically at NAU, no additional admissions application is necessary. The program piloted in fall 2023 with Coconino Community College and expanding in two phases in fall 2024 (five colleges) and fall 2025 (three colleges).

HIGH5 Network to Reimagine High School: Led by NAU's Arizona Institute for Education and the Economy (AIEE), founded in July 2023, the university has developed plans for a robust expansion of partnership efforts into the K-12 realm. These plans aim to boost the immediate college-going rate and launch bold initiatives to bolster the state's postsecondary attainment rates. The High school to Higher education to High demand, High wage, High skill employment network (HIGH5 Network), will publicly launch in September 2024 and will advance efforts around college admission redesign, high school to higher

education academic pathways, workforce embeddedness, and more. Currently the HIGH5 Network is composed of 20 high school districts representing a broad cross section of the state—both urban and rural centers—and several key workforce organizations, such as Greater Phoenix Leadership, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, and the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, among others. Several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have already been signed by district governing boards, with the remainder to be completed in advance of the public launch in September. The potential held in redesigning high school and higher education has resonated strongly across philanthropic partners, with nearly \$2M in private support helping to propel the HIGH5 Network and more funding opportunities in the proposal phase. (See 2023-2024 Annual Goal #2 report for additional detail.)

RAISE Plan: recognizing the imperative for access efforts to be safeguarded by a healthy enrollment and revenue mix, NAU has a multi-year strategic enrollment and attainment plan that is positioning the university for long-term success across the domains of access, attainment and success, and impact, with the goal of awarding 100,000 credentials by 2035. Developed over the course of 2022-2023 and grounded in the priorities of Elevating Excellence, the plan is in effect and driving strategies and tactics around recruitment and yield, digital presence, student supports, and more. NAU's strength across key financial metrics, including days cash on hand and credit rating, as well as record auxiliary revenues in both FY23 and FY24, underscore how embedded this work is in the university's strategic resource management approach. A graphical representation of RAISE is presented below, see 2022-2023 Annual Goal #3 and the 2023-24 EEC Attainment Goal report for additional details on this plan.

Jacks on Track. Originally launched in 2022 with philanthropic support from the Lumina Foundation, Jacks on Track addresses the need to support Stop-Out students in persisting to earn a degree. Focused on students with 60 or more cumulative credits who have stopped out of higher education, the program provides personalized, hands-on support to students, including academic advising, enrollment, financial aid, and assistance with university processes. During its first 14 months, Jacks on Track helped re-enroll 238 students, with 81 degrees awarded. Now an institutionalized commitment at NAU, the program helps NAU serve learners from all walks of life in reaching their full potential.

AZ Ahead Program. Funded by \$7.8 million from the Helios Education Foundation and the NAU Foundation, the AZ Ahead and Yuma Educational Success Program is a key transfer student success initiative deployed through the A++ network. With AZ Ahead, NAU has built a wraparound model of enrollment management and financial aid support, academic and career advising, and student supports including family engagement. This multidimensional support model reimagines how student services can be designed specifically for the needs of students and serves as a blueprint for future student success initiatives that will be developed through NAU's statewide sites.

100% Career Ready. The 100% Career Ready initiative at NAU is a project designed to prepare all NAU students to successfully launch into meaningful careers upon graduation. The initiative serves as a critical linkage to the university's value proposition as an engine of opportunity and vehicle of upward social and economic mobility. The initiative encompasses all students' academic journeys, regardless of college or major, and aims to provide a universal baseline for career preparation. The initiative has been approved by the Higher Learning Commission as NAU's Quality Initiative Project, and funding has been secured to hire career advisement professionals in each college.

General Studies Curriculum. NAU's General Studies refresh is designed to provide all NAU graduates with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and intellectual habits necessary for success in their professional lives and to take their place in our republic and the world. The program was approved by ABOR in Fall 2021 and is being implemented with a Fall 2025 launch. The program requires coursework in math, natural sciences, English, humanities, and social sciences, and includes an American Institutions requirement that emphasizes U.S. history and economic literacy. This new program will ensure that students develop a

breadth of knowledge and perspectives to promote lifelong learning, professional success, and civic engagement.

Supplemental Instruction. NAU's Supplemental Instruction (SI) program is an evidence-based model for improved academic achievement and retention. The program has been expanded to two additional colleges at NAU, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the College of Arts and Letters. Historically, SI has resulted in higher grades for students participating in the program and contributes to retention and academic success.

Peer Mentoring. NAU's Peer Jacks program is a support program designed to assist first-year, out-of-state students in transitioning to university life. Eligible students have the opportunity to participate in meaningful one-on-one peer mentoring and attend social and academic events. The program helps students develop social networks, become familiar with campus resources and tools for monitoring academic success and progress, learn more about themselves, and deepen their commitment to obtaining a degree. As part of the strategic roadmap focus on student success, the Peer Jacks mentoring program has been expanded to serve Arizona residents, with a particular focus on working class and diverse students who are eligible for the Access2Excellence tuition program. This expansion will entail scaling current staffing and curriculum, improving participation in mentoring through institutionalizing the mentor role and increasing students' awareness of mentors, and collaborating with smaller mentoring programs to avoid duplication of efforts as well as limit the need for increased staffing.

Lumberjack CARE Center. Opened in fall 2022 Lumberjack CARE Center at Northern Arizona University (NAU) serves as a vital resource for students facing challenges during their college journey. Its primary purpose is to address concerns related to food insecurity, financial needs, and wellness. By collaborating with both on-campus and community partners, the center refers students to supportive services that best meet their individual needs. The center's mission is to create seamless pathways to success by providing essential resources and assistance to students in distress. It is not a counseling or therapy center; rather, it focuses on developing helping relationships, coaching students toward appropriate resources, and empowering them toward self-care and self-advocacy. Additionally, NAU offers Jacks Care 24/7, which provides free emergency and short-term counseling support via text, chat, and phone/video to further support student well-being.

Elevating Student Success: As part of NAU's efforts to advance its strategic plan, Elevating Excellence, the university issued competitive calls for proposals to faculty and staff for projects designed to elevate student success, with a focus on increasing undergraduate and graduate student success. This has helped build new and enhance existing programs to support student success across the board.

Hispanic and Indigenous Initiatives

Select listing of programs and initiatives that support the success of Hispanic and Indigenous students and enhance NAU's contributions to leadership in these areas of emphasis in its mission.

Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI): NAU's status as a federally designated HSI was renewed again. First granted in 2021 thanks to an enrollment of 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment, NAU has made concerted efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student population and has access to numerous federal opportunities as well as a nationally recognized distinction for its work.

NAU en Español: In Spring 2023, NAU launched a fully Spanish-language website thanks to a collaboration between the university's HSI team and University Marketing. The new site provides key information about enrollment, degree programs, tuition and financial aid, campus life, and more—and NAU is the first university in Arizona to have a full Spanish-language web presence built from the ground up specifically to welcome and engage Hispanic communities.

Family, Access, Communication, Transition, and Support (FACTS) Program: An early-outreach program for middle and high school student families, FACTS aims to increase college-going and attainment rates by supporting students and families throughout their educational journey with culturally responsive approaches and services. A focus of FACTS is on first generation families which includes both Hispanic student recruitment and Native American student recruitment, the latter of which is facilitated by a tribal elders outreach program.

Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC) Scholarship Program: Launched in Fall 2022 out of NAU-Yuma, whose student population is nearly 80 percent Hispanic, CPLC has invested in a significant scholarship program that will remove barriers to higher education for Hispanic students, by covering tuition, fees, and other expenses for Yuma County residents pursuing a degree at NAU.

Partnership with TheDream.US: NAU partnered with TheDream.US, the nation's largest college and career success program for undocumented immigrant students. This collaboration builds on the passage of Proposition 308 in Arizona and will provide additional scholarship opportunities for Arizona Dreamer students seeking to meet their full potential at NAU. NAU's first cohort of TheDream.US scholars start their journey in fall 2024, and TheDream.US has provided additional funding to the university in recognition of NAU's efforts to elevate the partnership and ensure the success of participating students.

College Track National Partnership: Semester Zero and Honors College Cohort: NAU's innovative partnership with College Track has officially launched, with Semester Zero bringing nearly 400 rising juniors to the university for an immersive learning experience in summer 2024. Additionally, NAU will have an embedded College Track cohort in its Honors College to host students through their college careers. Many participating students are of Hispanic background and as the nation's most comprehensive college access and completion nonprofit, NAU's unique partnership with College Track provides tremendous national visibility and impact for both organizations.

Fulbright HSI Leader: NAU was recognized by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as one of only 43 universities with the Fulbright HSI Leader distinction, thanks to the university's comprehensive efforts to prepare students for global opportunities and engagement.

Engagement with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU): NAU has placed several leaders into competitive HACU development programs, which are designed to specifically enhance institutions' ability to promote success among Hispanic students.

Hispanic/Latine Youth Media Workshop: Launched in summer 2024 through NAU's School of Communications—and building off of the successful pre-college Indigenous Youth Media Workshop—this new program partners local middle school students with NAU and Spanish-language media partners for academic and career exploration that sharpens their college going aspirations.

NAU Day with FUSD: NAU has strengthened local connections through initiatives like NAU Day with Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD), which brings Hispanic and Native American students to campus, inspiring college aspirations and showcasing the value of an NAU education.

Title V Grant for Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions: NAU secured a \$3 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to advance its work as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Beginning in fall 2024, the grant will strengthen first-year transition, academic support, and success coaching for Hispanic students pursuing an education at NAU and is projected to propel increased retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

Univision-NAU Partnership: NAU has formed a signature partnership with Univision, the largest provider of Spanish-language media content in Arizona and throughout the country. NAU and Univision have established a content sharing agreement where NAU produces educational capsules that are shared on both Univision Arizona and Univision national websites. Through two distinct programs— Educación para Tus Hijos and TuConexiónNAU—these multi-media capsules, which are available in prominent locations on the Univision website, engage Hispanic viewers directly through Spanish-language content that offers insights into the value of higher education, vital resources and advisement on FAFSA completion and other critical college-readiness efforts, and shine a light on NAU’s impactful academic programs and student supports to drive organic recruitment opportunities. This is a significant and unique partnership, as no other university in the country has a content creation and sharing agreement with Univision that taps into this far-reaching Spanish-language market.

Seven Generations Signature Initiative: In 2023, NAU was awarded a transformational \$5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, matched by an additional \$5 million investment from the Northern Arizona University Foundation (NAUF), to develop and implement the Seven Generations Signature Initiative (7GSI) over the next three years. This wide ranging program will elevate Indigenous Scholarship at NAU, strengthen partnerships through efforts that include a tribal college faculty exchange program, and propel student success.

NSF Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science (CBIKS): NAU researchers will help lead the NSF Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science (CBIKS)—a five-year, \$30 million international NSF Science and Technology Center based at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Announced in fall 2023, the center will focus on connecting Indigenous knowledges with “western” sciences to address some of the more pressing issues affecting people worldwide, with NAU playing a pivotal role in leading the effort as co-Principle Investigator and Southwest Hub co-lead. The center will work on complex, evolving challenges brought on by climate change, including dire impacts affecting land, water and plant and animal life; the danger posed to irreplaceable archaeological sites, sacred places and cultural heritage; and the challenges of changing food systems, all of which disproportionately affect Indigenous communities.

Tribal Consultation Policy: NAU has bolstered the oversight and implementation of its tribal consultation policy. At a time when additional scrutiny has been placed on institutions of higher education, museums, and others for their alignment with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the handling of cultural artifacts and tribal engagement processes, NAU has proactively invested in a robust and comprehensive consultation approach. This aids in positioning NAU to comply with our commitments to NAGPRA, which has come into sharper focus in recent years at colleges and universities.

Native American Advisory Board: NAU’s Native American Advisory Board, which brings the perspectives of tribal leaders to inform the university’s work, has been reconstituted with a renewed membership, charter, and purpose to enhance authentic tribal engagement and further strengthen NAU’s ties to Native American leaders in Arizona and beyond.

State and National Leadership

Select highlights of NAU’s growing position as a national leader in delivering equitable postsecondary value and serving as a model for HSIs and Native American serving institutions.

Third Way Economic Mobility Ranking: The Third Way Economic Mobility Index ranks NAU in Tier I—their highest institutional ranking level—with students beginning to achieve positive returns on their educational investment less than three years after graduating.

Institute for Higher Education Policy Case Study: The Institution for Higher Education Policy showcased NAU as a beacon for how equitable postsecondary value can be delivered through a 2022 case study focused on the transformational vision set forth in Elevating Excellence and the corresponding actions taken to realize the strategic roadmap's priorities.

Congressional Testimony on Hispanic Serving Institutions: President Cruz Rivera testified before congress on the importance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions in 2022, highlighting the critical need for increased access and the impact that institutions like NAU can have on propelling economic mobility for Americans.

Greater Phoenix Leadership Latino Attainment Task Force: President Cruz Rivera was asked by GPL to lead and reimagine the group's Latino Attainment Task Force in 2023, as a leading statewide voice in educational access and attainment.

Media Engagement: President Cruz Rivera has engaged in numerous media interviews touting university initiatives. A focus has been enhancing visibility in the Yuma region, Spanish-language media, and statewide recognitions that elevate the university's profile and allow for strong storytelling associated with the value of NAU. Highlights include recognition by the Phoenix Business Journal (most admired leader), a Spanish-language profile by Telemundo, and more.

Public Engagements: Among many public engagements in the Hispanic community in Arizona and beyond, highlights include keynotes at the State of Arizona Latino Education, Power, and Influence convening; the annual conference of the Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents; and the SACNAS, Advancing Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science annual conference in Puerto Rico.

Appendix B: Access to Excellence Social Media post from Higher Ed leaders in Arizona and Beyond



NAU **NORTHERN ARIZONA** UNIVERSITY

Access 2 Excellence



Posts highlighting engagement from leaders in the state and nationally on **NAU A2E**



José Luis Cruz Rivera ✓
@NAUPresident

Access to Excellence! @NAU to provide a tuition-free, world-class college education to AZ residents with household incomes of < \$65K – assuring tuition will be fully covered by scholarships & financial aid for half of all AZ households. ➡ All the details: nau.edu/a2e



Arizona Board of Regents

8:55 AM · 4/28/22

71 Retweets 42 Quote Tweets 221 Likes



Greater Phoenix Chamber @phxchamber · Apr 28

The Chamber applauds @NAU - President & CEO @TSandersGPC's alma mater - on their new program, giving many more Arizona students access to world-class secondary education.



Arizona Commerce Authority @azcommerce · May 12

@NAU is eliminating an access barrier for thousands of high-achieving Arizona high school students, making higher education more attainable! bit.ly/3FI4Qv7



Helios Ed Foundation @HeliosEdFnd · Apr 28
 Amazing announcement from @NAU! This will make a college education accessible to more students and increase the number of Arizonans with a degree. #Access2Excellence @NAUPresident



azcentral.com
 NAU will offer free tuition to thousands of Arizona students starting in...
 It's "a message that no other university in Arizona can share right now — perhaps others will follow our lead," President José Luis Cruz Rivera...



Gates United States @GatesUS · Jun 2
 We're thrilled to see @NAU announce a bold **tuition-free** opportunity for AZ residents with household incomes of \$65,000 or less — meeting the needs of approximately half of all AZ households. Learn more: bit.ly/3NclPsl



Imagine Bell Canyon @IBCPreK8 · May 9
 Have you heard about the NAU's **Access2Excellence (A2E)** program?! This exciting, new program is going to help A LOT more students gain a college education!

Learn more today: bit.ly/3whhq0p

NAU President Cruz Rivera ...
 Access to Excellence! @NAU to provide a tuition-free, world-class college education to AZ residents with household incomes of < \$65K – assuring tuition will be fully covered by scholarships & financial aid for half of all AZ households.



Education Forward Arizona @EdForwardAZ · Apr 28
 Incredible news from @NAU for Arizona students! Northern Arizona University will be **tuition-free** for AZ residents with household incomes of < \$65K. Learn more 🌟

José Luis Cruz Rivera @NAUPresident · Apr 28
 Access to Excellence! @NAU to provide a tuition-free, world-class college education to AZ residents with household incomes of < \$65K – assuring tuition will be fully covered by scholarships & financial aid for half of all AZ households. 📌 All the details: nau.edu/a2e



Danny Seiden @dbseiden · Apr 28
 Big announcement today from @NAU & @NAUPresident on their new program to help provide qualified Arizona students with **free tuition!** @NAU is rising to meet the challenge that AZ families are facing in this era where every dollar matters. 🌲 #LumberjackCountry #arizona #tuition

azcentral @azcentral · Apr 28
 NAU will offer free tuition to thousands of Arizona students starting in 2023. Here's who qualifies azcentral.com/story/news/loc...



IHEP @IHEPTweets · Apr 28
 We applaud @NAU for its commitment to equitable #PostsecValue! Inside @NAU's **Access2Excellence** initiative is a tuition-free opportunity for #Arizona residents with household incomes at or below \$65,000. Learn more: news.nau.edu/access-2-excel...



The Education Trust @EdTrust · May 7
 Congratulations to @NAU for launching the **Access2Excellence** initiative — a new tuition-free opportunity at @NAU for AZ residents with household incomes of \$65,000 or less. Learn more: news.nau.edu/access-2-excel...



AASCU Policy @AASCUPolicy · Apr 28
 Congratulations to @NAU for launching the **Access2Excellence** initiative on campus—a tuition-free opportunity for AZ residents with household incomes below \$65,000. Should generate a conversation about broadening state-investments in higher ed. Learn more: news.nau.edu/access-2-excel...



Kyrsten Sinema @SenatorSinema · May 7
 This is awesome news! @NAU's **Access2Excellence** program fully covers tuition for every Arizonan with a household income of \$65,000 or less. 🌟

More information: nau.edu/a2e.

NAU @NAU · Apr 28
 Introducing the @NAU **Access2Excellence** initiative
 NAU will provide a tuition-free college education for EVERY AZ resident with a household income of \$65,000 or below – assuring tuition will be fully covered by scholarships and financial aid.
 📌 nau.edu/a2e



Appendix C: A++ quotes from higher ed leaders in Arizona and beyond

- **James Kvaal, U.S. Under Secretary of Education:** “Our vision for college excellence is to ensure that students throughout the country are afforded opportunities to participate and complete valuable postsecondary credentials. We appreciate the work that’s taking place in Arizona in the A++ partnership, orchestrated by NAU, and the contribution toward a common goal of increasing attainment and transforming lives.”
- **Mildred García, President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities:** “NAU is a leader in the equitable value movement and their recent efforts to broaden access through Access2Excellence and pilot changes to admissions policies represent huge strides in equitably serving more students. With the launch of A++, NAU is again at the forefront of innovation by committing with a group of partners to better addressing the root cause of low college participation and completion rates through a system that’s accessible to all throughout the state of Arizona.”
- **John King, President of The Education Trust and former U.S. Secretary of Education:** “As important engines of opportunity, colleges and universities must ensure effective educational pathways that broaden participation in their programs and equip students for productive careers and civically engaged lives. The Arizona Attainment Alliance, launched by NAU and Arizona’s independent community college districts, exemplifies intentionality around increasing educational attainment so more Arizonans can benefit from and contribute to the state’s economic growth.”
- **Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor Emeritus of the State University of New York and director of the Power of Systems at the National Association of System Heads:** “By leveraging a community of like-minded institutions and creating a system through which to scale their work, A++ represents an innovative approach to accelerating both access and attainment. We know the ‘Power of Systems’ is real when unaffiliated campuses begin to band together to make authentic, tangible change. NAU is taking best practices from institutions across the country and applying it in a way that is tailored for Arizona, in close partnership with government and the private sector. Collaboration is higher education’s best bet for accelerating postgraduate success.”
- **Ted Mitchell, President of the American Council on Education:** “I’m excited to see the work at NAU and the Arizona Attainment Alliance unfold. Looking across the nation, I haven’t seen an approach this innovative and moving this quickly. NAU and A++ is a place to watch that’s truly at the leading edge of delivering value from higher education to students and their communities.
- **Neil Giuliano, President and CEO of Greater Phoenix Leadership:** “Arizona is a hub for business, but we’ve long needed to get more Arizonans educated and prepared to be a part of our growing knowledge economy and workforce. To have a group of education partners so focused on meeting the state’s workforce and attainment needs, in close collaboration with business development organizations, is a game-changer. The vision that NAU and A++ bring make me more optimistic than ever about the vitality and opportunity we have to build a strong and prosperous future for all Arizonans.”
- **Danny Seiden, President and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** “As Arizona continues to grow and attract businesses, improving postsecondary attainment and developing a prepared workforce have become increasingly urgent. Linking NAU, our state’s community college districts and the ACA represents the kind of collaboration Arizona needs to address our educational and economic challenges and ensure a more vibrant future for our state. I know our businesses will be excited to partner with A++ institutions as they support and enhance Arizona’s continued growth and competitiveness.”
- **Rich Nickel, President and CEO of Education Forward Arizona:** “NAU’s work to boost attainment is a critical step in meeting our state’s Achieve60AZ attainment goal. As the champion

for the attainment goal, the A++ initiative presents an opportunity to increase high-quality, high value degrees for students. Increasing attainment will ensure greater economic opportunities for our students and will strengthen our overall economy in Arizona.”

- **Maricopa Community Colleges Chancellor Steven Gonzales:** “Maricopa is thrilled that NAU is leading the charge alongside the Maricopa Community Colleges to improve quality of life in through the A++ initiative. This unique partnership will increase the value and impact of our work enabling more of our students to realize pathways to a brighter future through the strength of our collective partnerships.”\
- **Pima Community College Chancellor Lee Lambert:** “We’re thrilled to work closely with NAU to develop new seamless pathways between education and workforce systems. With college-going and degree attainment rates significantly below the national average, this initiative has exciting potential to break down long-time barriers and create new models that make higher education more affordable and accessible to students and more relevant to our workforce partners.”
- **Daniel P. Corr, President of Arizona Western College:** “The collaboration of our state’s community college districts with NAU to boost attainment is a crucial step in meeting Arizona’s clear need for high-quality, high value degrees to be attainable by students wherever they live and learn. A++ will build on NAU and AWC’s longstanding partnership and leverage our collective work in serving our students to remove barriers, create access to opportunity, and power prosperity in Yuma and La Paz Counties and beyond.”
- **Stacy Klippenstein, President of Mohave Community College:** Mohave Community College is excited to join Northern Arizona University and many other agencies to create efforts aimed at increasing post-secondary attainment levels across Arizona. As a community college serving Northwest Arizona and a growing industry-rich economy, we know a trained workforce is a number one need. Getting more involved in the education and training enterprise is paramount and this alliance will create the right environments and mechanisms to ensure we are meeting the needs of the individual students and industries we serve.
- **Northland Pioneer College President Chato Hazelbaker:** “The A++ partnership, which brings Northland Pioneer College, NAU, and other statewide partners together to collaborate and build pathways to a better future for our students and communities, is unique. NPC is excited to part of this endeavor and to help drive attainment and prosperity in Navajo and Apache counties.
- **Cochise College President J.D. Rottweiler:** “This is a pivotal moment for Cochise College. We are excited to collaborate and partner with NAU in the A++ initiative. Our partnership will strengthen the work we have been doing in support of the state’s Achieve60 initiative, provide a more attainable pathway to post-secondary education, and increase the accessible educational opportunities to the citizens of Cochise County.”
- **Yavapai College President Lisa Rhine:** “At Yavapai College see this as another opportunity to positively impact the lives of our students, our local economies, and the future of our communities by expanding our educated and prepared workforce to be valuable contributors to the future financial viability of our state.”

**ANNUAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT OF AFFILIATIONS
AND
OUTSIDE COMPENSATION
FOR PRESIDENT**

Arizona Board of Regents Policy 6-1101 and the president’s employment require annual disclosure of all organizations with which the president is affiliated and all outside compensation received. Outside compensation includes any consideration related to outside board affiliation, consulting or other services, or provided by a university foundation or university-affiliated entity. However, presidents are not required to report personal and passive investment income.

Please complete this disclosure form, and update this form throughout the applicable fiscal year as information changes.

Board appointments, including current and anticipated appointments and any related compensation, excluding payments for honoraria and speaking engagements: *(If no appointment or compensation, state “none.”)*

Name of Organization	Amount of Compensation (if any)
National Advisory Committee for Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)	None
Arizona Commerce Authority	None
President’s Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration	None
Big Sky President’s Council	None
Arizona State Board of Education <i>(Appointment forthcoming)</i>	None

Outside employment, consulting relationships and related compensation, excluding payments for honoraria and speaking engagements: *(If no employment, consulting relationship or related compensation, state “none.”)*

Name of Outside Employer or Name of Entity Receiving Consulting Services	Amount of Compensation (if any)

Other organizations with which the president is affiliated and any outside compensation not otherwise identified above:

Name of Organization	Amount of Compensation (if any)

Signature of President 

Date 8/01/2024

Printed Name of President José Luis Cruz Rivera