

A close-up photograph of a black graduation cap with a tassel, resting on a stack of books. A rolled-up white diploma tied with a red ribbon is placed on top of the cap. The background is dark and out of focus.

2020 HIGHER EDUCATION DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STUDENT SURVEY

December 2020

INTRODUCTION

In November 2020, Hanover Research conducted a survey of over 2,100 college students to understand perspectives of diversity, equity, and inclusion among undergraduate and graduate students at higher education institutions in the United States. The findings evaluate how perspectives and experiences regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion differ across populations (e.g., white vs non-white) and institution types (e.g., 2-year vs 4-year institutions) as well as provide insight into how well institutions are currently addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Topics covered in the report include:

- [Institutional Support for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Diversity in Courses](#)
- [Academic Support](#)
- [Diversity of Students](#)
- [Diversity of Faculty & Staff](#)
- [Respect for Identity](#)
- [Sense of Belonging](#)
- [Sense of Safety](#)
- [Instances of Discrimination](#)
- [Importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts](#)
- [Institutional Assistance](#)

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KEY FINDINGS

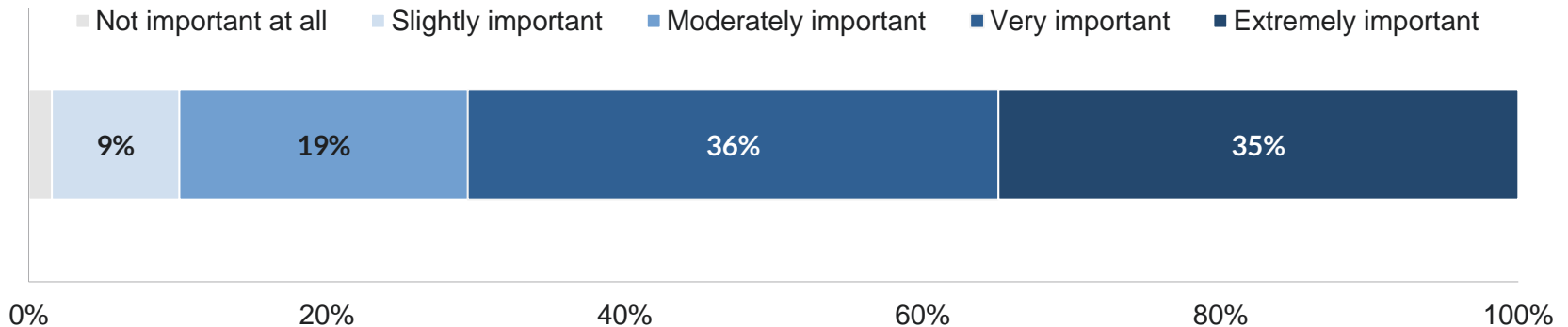
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- **In many cases white respondents attach even greater importance to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion than non-white respondents do. However, they also have more positive perceptions of the current status of diversity, equity, and inclusion at their institutions, as compared to non-white respondents.** For example, white respondents are more likely to believe that their courses reflect diverse perspectives and that their instructors encourage students to speak out against discrimination and racism – illustrating the gap in experiences between the respondent groups.
- **As compared to white respondents, non-white respondents are less likely to feel safe, less likely to feel supported academically, and more likely to feel isolated or that they need to change an aspect of their identity to fit in at their institution.** Among the respondents, feelings of isolation or not fitting in are more common at 4-year institutions than at 2-year institutions.
- **Non-white respondents are more likely than white respondents to have felt singled out in a negative context based on an aspect of their identity at their institution.** Among those who have felt singled out, non-white respondents are most likely to be singled out based on race/ethnicity, while white respondents are most likely to be singled out based on political affiliation or disability.

KEY FINDINGS: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR DEI

Most respondents (71%) believe their institution's leaders consider diversity, equity, and inclusion to be very or extremely important. A similar percentage believe their institution is very or completely supportive of fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, [though non-white respondents \(69%\) and those at private institutions \(67%\)](#) are less likely to believe that is the case compared to white respondents (74%) and those at public institutions (74%).

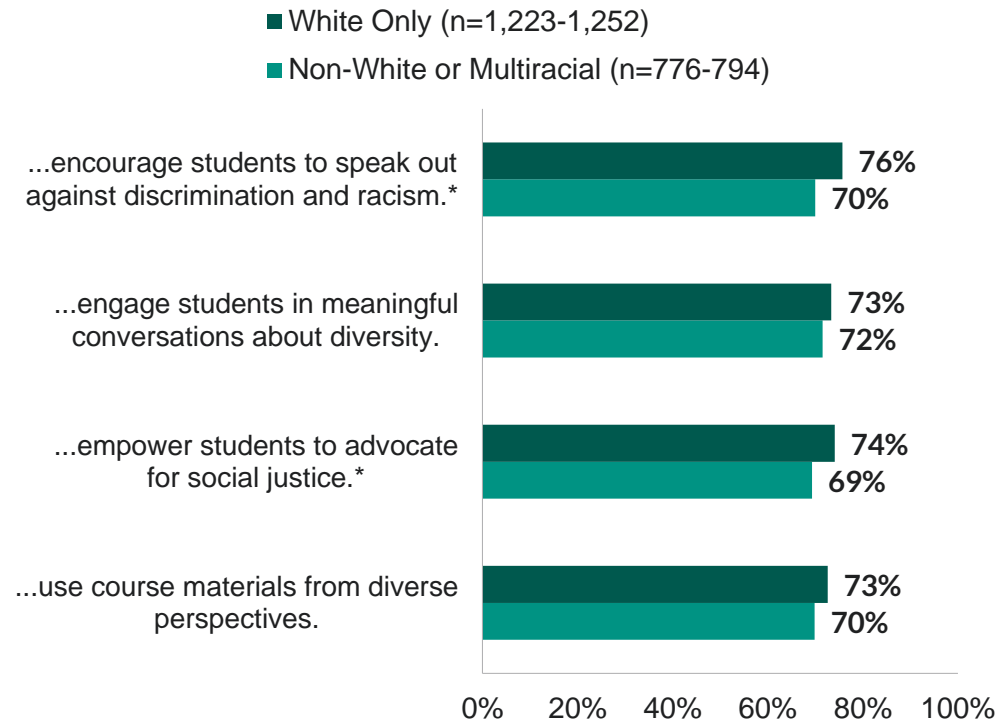
How important do your institution's leaders consider diversity, equity, and inclusion?
(n=2,066)



KEY FINDINGS: DIVERSITY IN COURSES

- Non-white respondents are less likely than white respondents to believe their courses reflect diverse perspectives.
 - Non-white respondents are less likely to report that most or all of their courses include thinking about events from another person's point-of-view (47% vs 53%).
 - They are also less likely to agree that their instructors encourage students to speak out against discrimination (70% vs 76%) or empower students to advocate for social justice (69% vs 74%).
- Only about half of respondents report that **most or all of their courses** include talking or working on projects with students from different backgrounds or thinking about events from another person's point-of-view.

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements. My instructors... - By Race/Ethnicity
% Somewhat or Strongly Agree



Note: An asterisk (*) indicates a statistically significant difference between respondent groups. Click hyperlink to see additional chart.

KEY FINDINGS: ACADEMIC SUPPORT

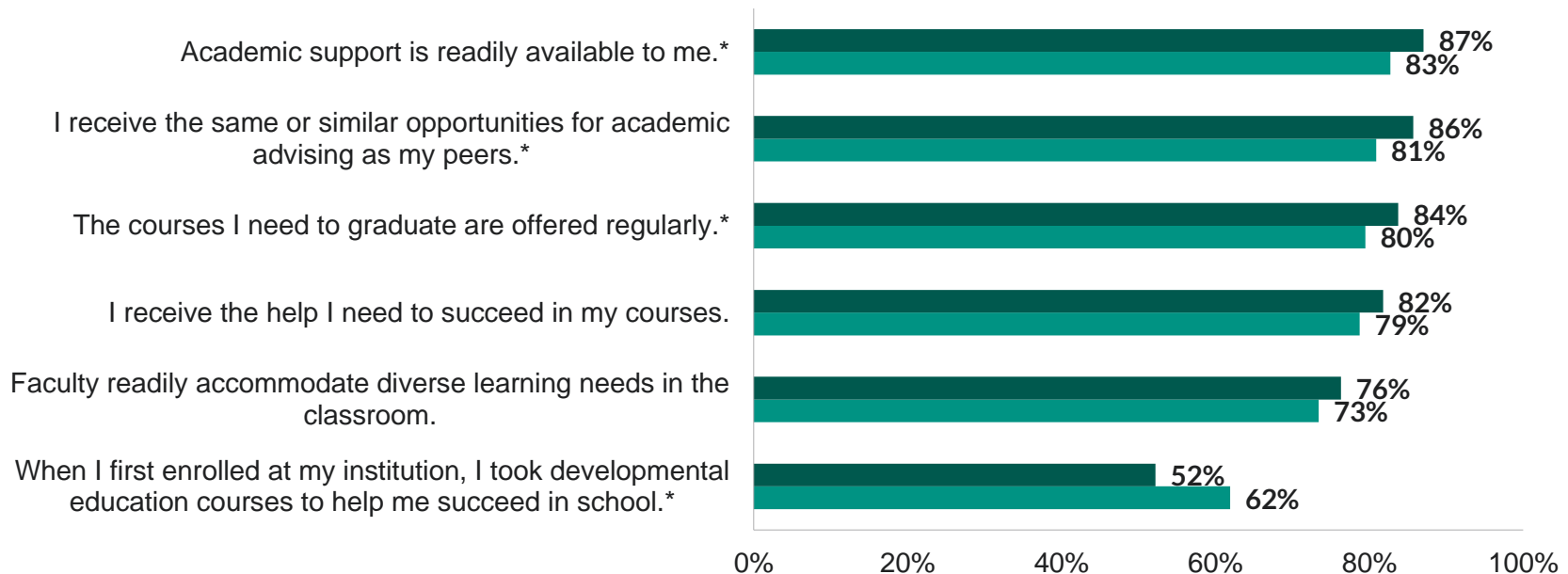
White respondents are more likely to agree that academic support is readily available to them (87% vs 83%), that they receive the same opportunities for academic advising as their peers (86% vs 81%), and that the courses they need to graduate are offered regularly (84% vs 80%). By contrast, non-white respondents are more likely to report that they took developmental education courses (62% vs 52%).

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements about academic support. - By Race/Ethnicity

% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

■ White Only (n=1,143-1,299)

■ Non-White or Multiracial (n=743-810)



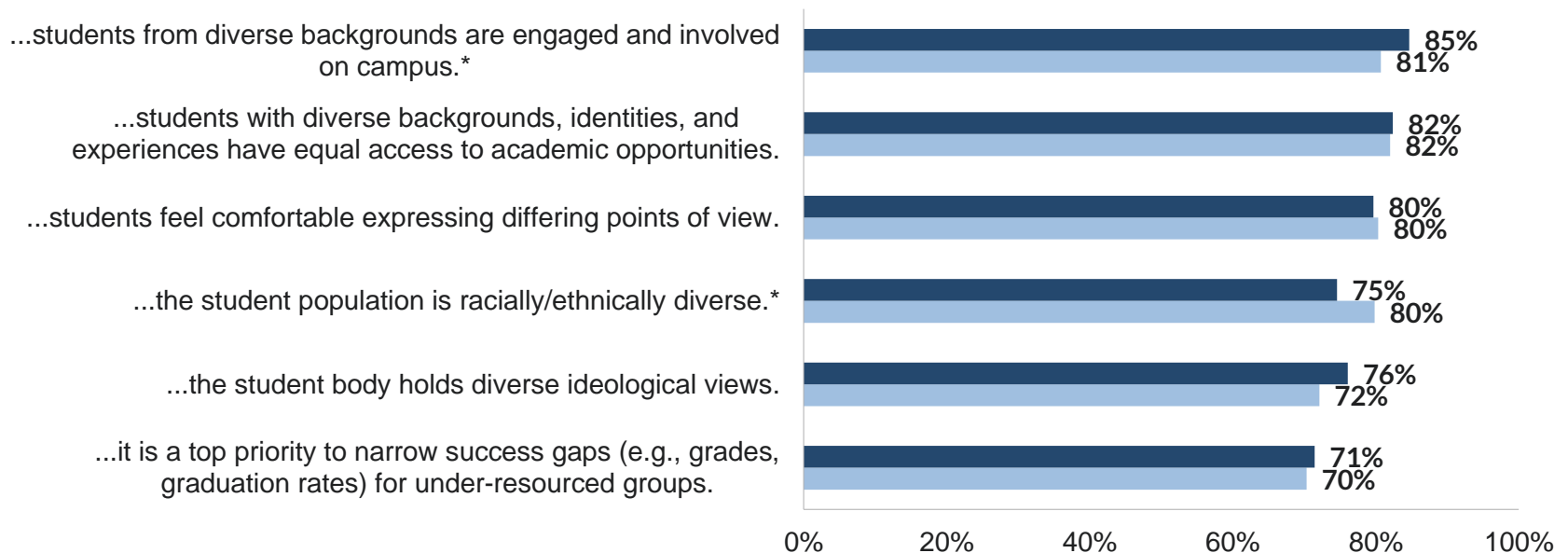
KEY FINDINGS: DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS

Although respondents from 2-year institutions are more likely to agree that the student population at their institution is racially/ethnically diverse (80% vs 75%), those at 4-year institutions are more likely to agree that students from diverse backgrounds are engaged and involved on campus (85% vs 81%). Both groups are least likely to agree that it is a top priority at their institution to narrow success gaps for under-resourced groups.

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements. At my institution... - By 2-Year or 4-Year Institution

% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

■ 4-year college/university (n=1,349-1,456) ■ 2-year community or technical college (n=576-644)

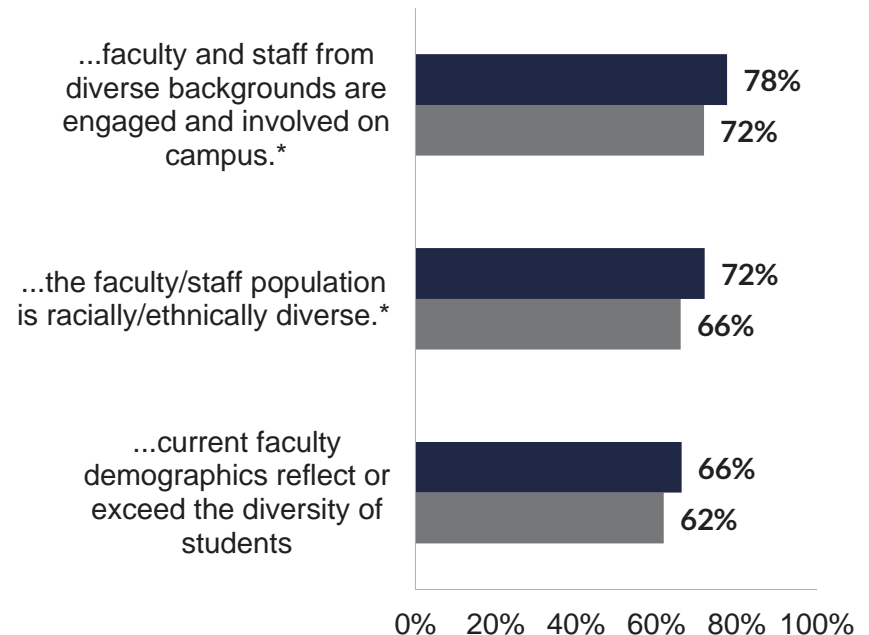


KEY FINDINGS: DIVERSITY OF FACULTY & STAFF

- Respondents at public institutions are more likely than those at private institutions to perceive the faculty/staff population at their institution as diverse, while perspectives on the diversity of faculty/staff populations among those at 2-year and 4-year institutions are roughly equivalent.
 - Respondents at public institutions are more likely than those at private institutions to agree that the faculty/staff population at their institution is racially/ ethnically diverse (72% vs 66%) and that faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds are engaged and involved on campus (78% vs 72%).
 - By contrast, there are no significant differences between respondents from 2-year and 4-year institutions regarding faculty/staff diversity.

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements. At my institution... - By Public or Private Institution
% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

■ Public (n=1,464-1,536) ■ Private (n=404-416)

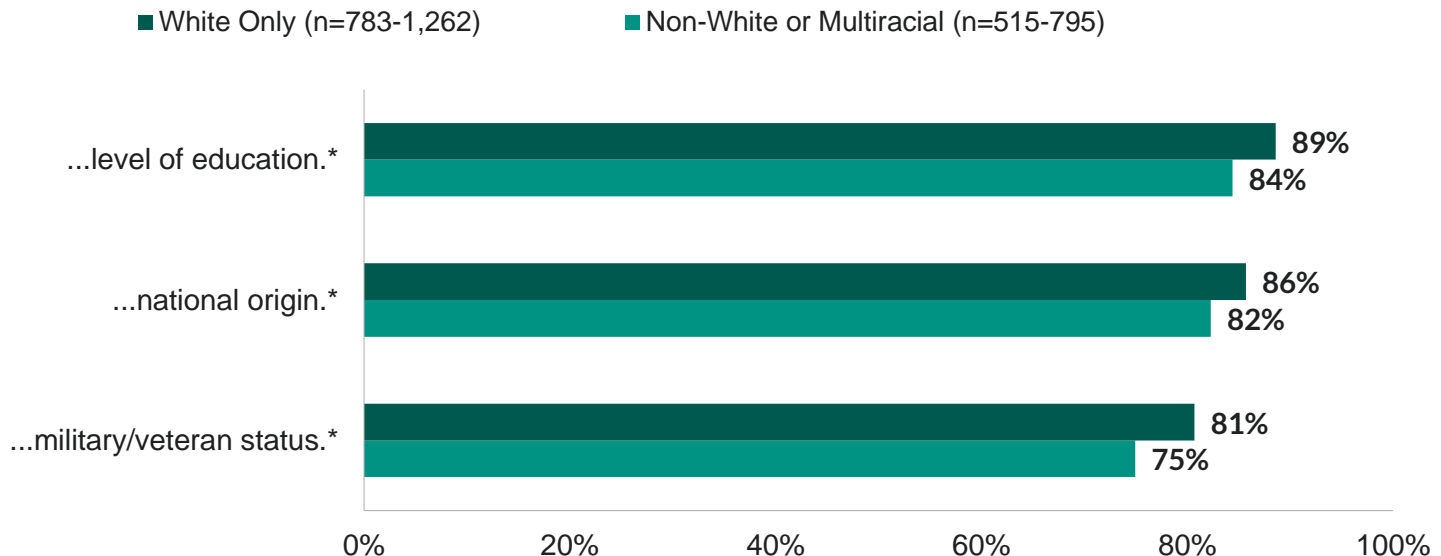


Note: An asterisk (*) indicates a statistically significant difference between respondent groups. Click hyperlink to see additional chart.

KEY FINDINGS: RESPECT FOR IDENTITY

Looking at differences by race, white respondents are more likely than non-white respondents to agree that their institution respects their level of education (89% vs 84%), national origin (86% vs 82%), and military/veteran status (81% vs 75%). Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, **female respondents** are more likely than male respondents to agree that their institution respects their gender (89% vs 84%). Female respondents are also more likely than their male counterparts to agree that their institution respects their level of education (88% vs 85%).

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements. My institution respects my... - By Race/Ethnicity
% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

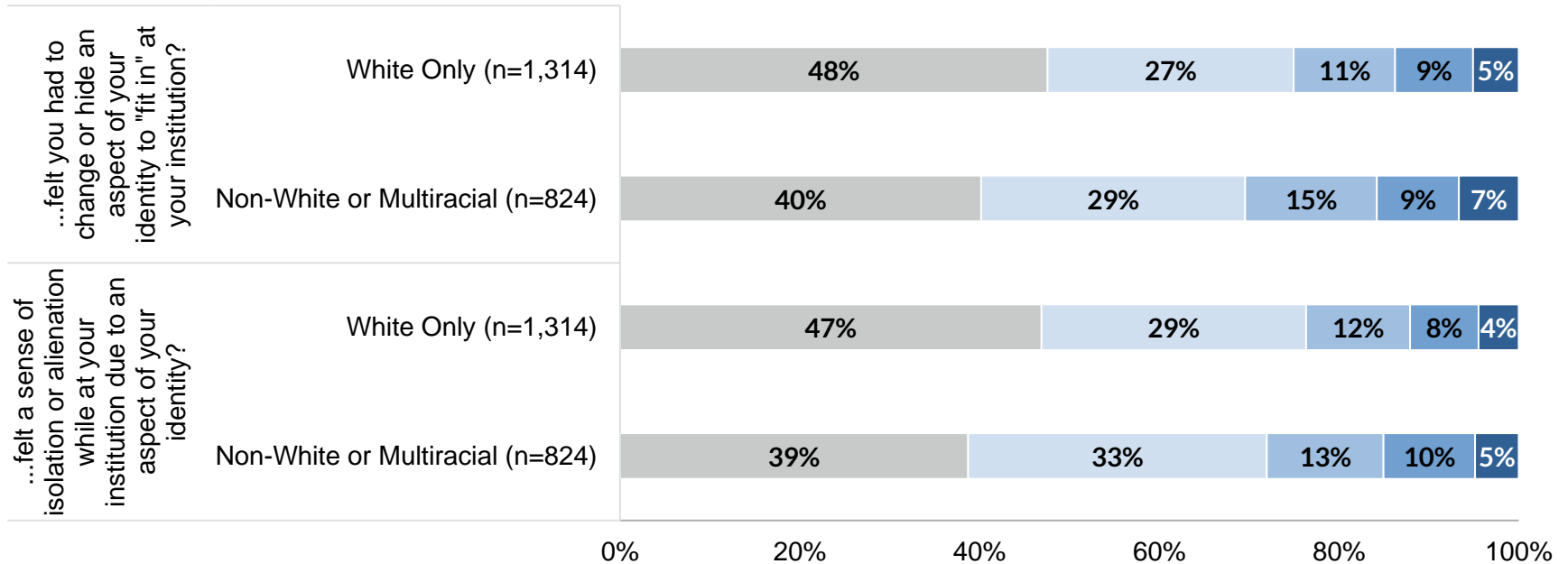


KEY FINDINGS: SENSE OF BELONGING

Non-white respondents are less likely to feel that they fit in at their institution. Non-white respondents are more likely than white respondents to indicate that they have felt the need to change an aspect of their identity to “fit in” at their institution at least once over the last 12 months (60% vs 52%). In addition, non-white respondents are more likely to report having felt a sense of isolation or alienation at their institution due to an aspect of their identity (61% vs 53%).

Within the last 12 months, how often have you... - By Race/Ethnicity

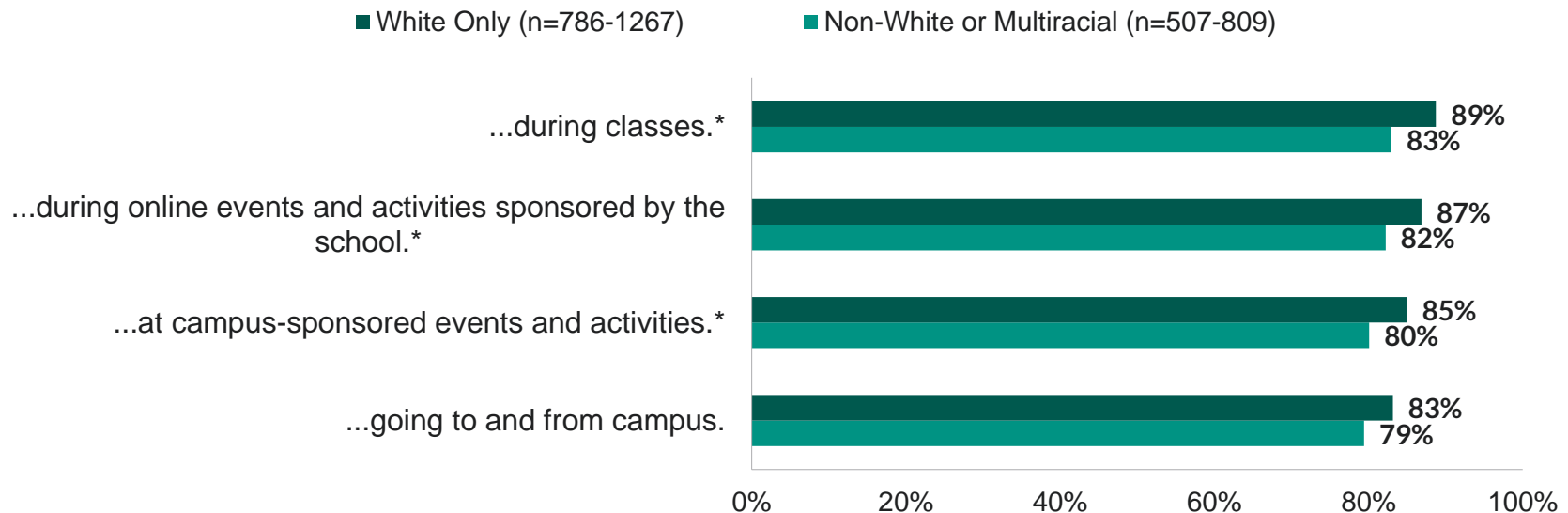
■ Never* ■ Rarely* ■ Monthly* ■ Weekly* ■ Daily



KEY FINDINGS: SENSE OF SAFETY

Non-white respondents are less likely to feel safe at their institution. Specifically, non-white respondents are less likely than white respondents to agree that they feel safe during classes (83% vs 89%), during online events and activities sponsored by the school (82% vs 87%), and at campus-sponsored events and activities (80% vs 85%).

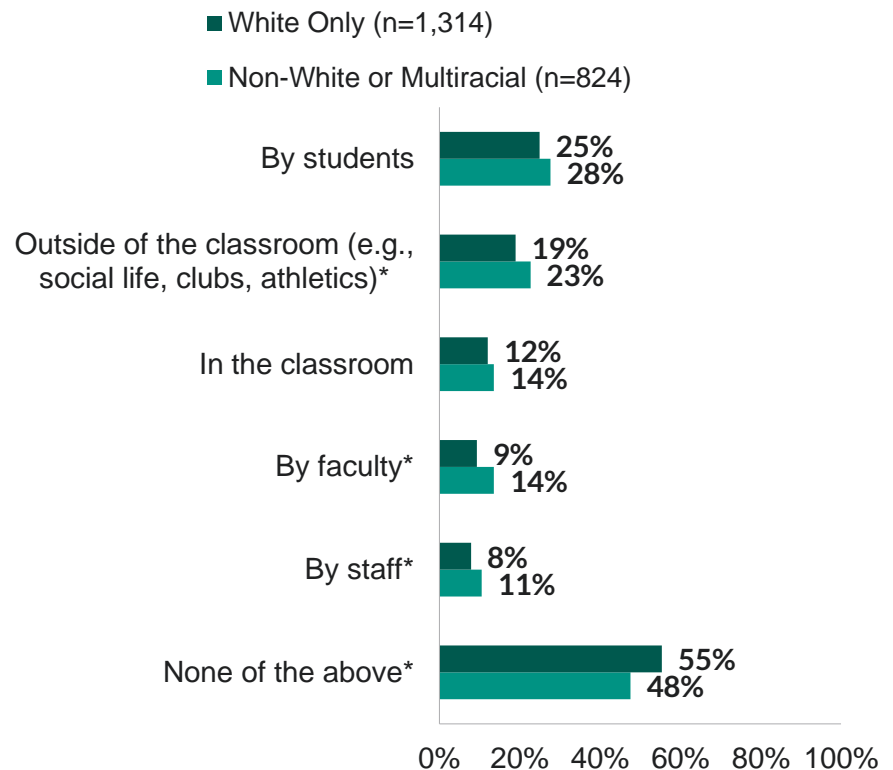
Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements about your institution. At my institution I feel safe... - By Race/Ethnicity
% Somewhat or Strongly Agree



KEY FINDINGS: INSTANCES OF DISCRIMINATION

- Non-white respondents are more likely than white respondents to have experienced instances of discrimination.
 - Non-white respondents are more likely than white respondents to report having felt singled out in a negative context at their institution on the basis of their identity in several settings, including outside the classroom (23% vs 19%), by faculty (14% vs 9%), and by staff (11% vs 8%).
 - Non-white respondents are most likely to report having felt singled out on the basis of their race/ethnicity (21%) while white respondents are most likely to report having felt singled out on the basis of their political affiliation (11%).

In which situations have you felt singled out in a negative context at your institution on the basis of your identity (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity)? Please select all that apply. - By Race/Ethnicity

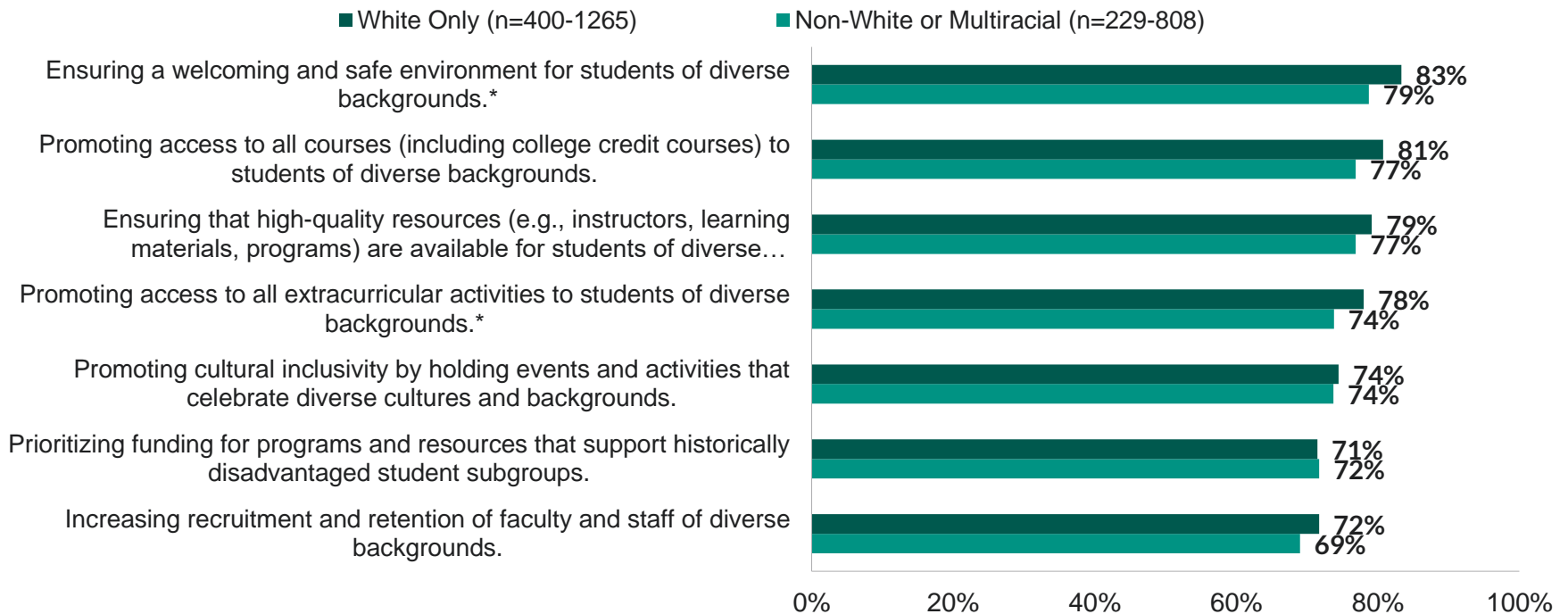


Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select multiple options. An asterisk (*) indicates a statistically significant difference between respondent groups.

KEY FINDINGS: IMPORTANCE OF DEI EFFORTS

Frequently, white respondents rate the importance of supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion higher than non-white respondents do. White respondents are more likely to believe it is very or extremely important to ensure a welcome and safe environment for students of diverse backgrounds (83% vs 79%) and to promote access to all extracurricular activities to students of diverse backgrounds (78% vs 74%).

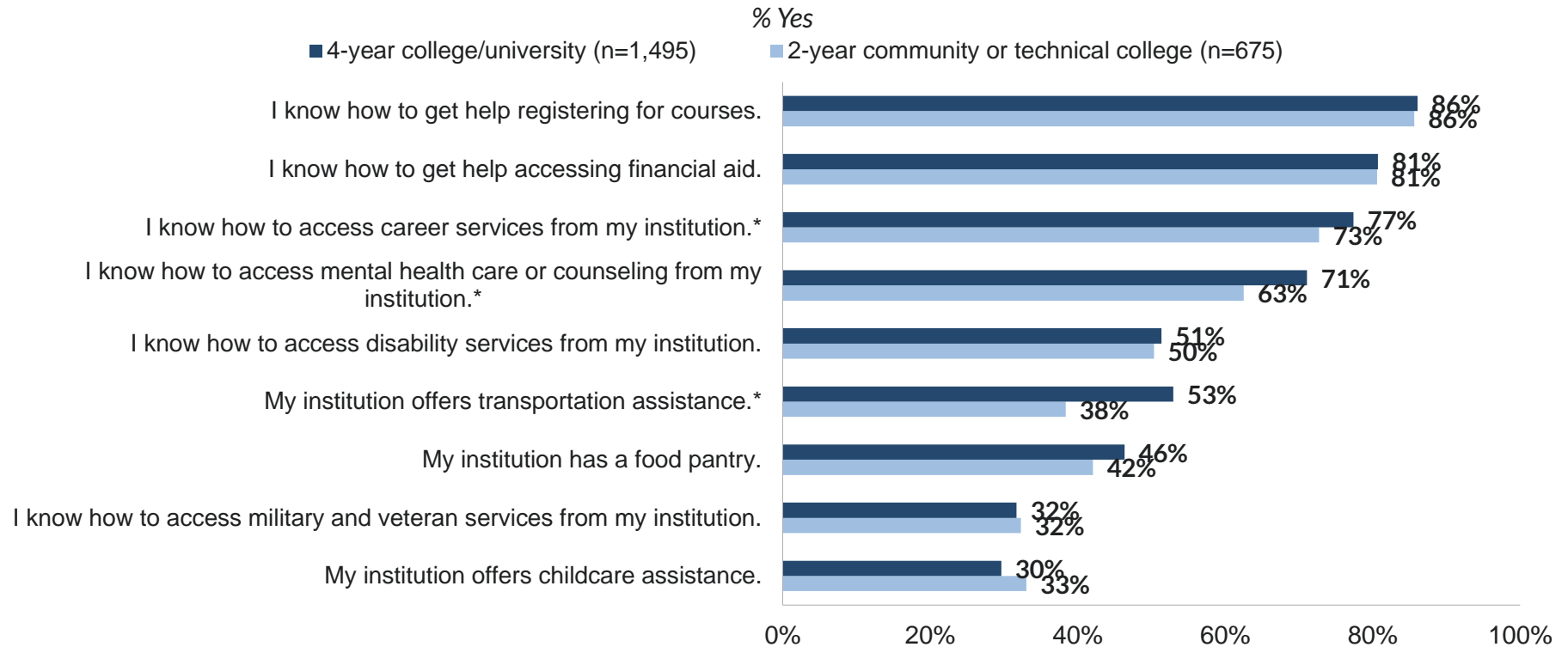
How important is it for your institution to prioritize efforts to improve each of the following to support diversity and equity in education for students of diverse backgrounds? - By Race/Ethnicity
% Very or Extremely Important



KEY FINDINGS: INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE

Respondents at 4-year institutions are more likely to report that they know how to access certain types of institutional assistance. They are more likely to know how to access career services (77% vs 73%) and mental health care or counseling (71% vs 63%) at their institution. Both groups are least likely to report knowing how to access veteran services (32%) or that their institution offers childcare assistance (31%).

Please indicate whether or not the following statements about student support apply to you. – By 2-Year or 4-Year Institution



APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION & SURVEY SAMPLE

- The survey was administered online in November and December of 2020 using the Qualtrics platform.
- The analysis includes a total of 2,170 respondents following data cleaning.
- Respondents were recruited through a panel company.

RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Must live in the United States.
- Must be a current student at a college or university.

METHODOLOGY

- The results presented in this report include aggregate results as well as results segmented by race/ethnicity, 2-year or 4-year institution, private or public institution, and gender.
- Sample sizes vary across questions as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents.
- Conclusions drawn from a small sample size ($n < 20$) should be interpreted with caution.
- Statistically significant difference (95% confidence level) between groups are noted with an asterisk (*).
- After data collection, Hanover identified and removed low-quality respondents.
- “Don’t Know or Not Applicable” responses, and equivalent, are often excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS



Race/Ethnicity (n=2,170)

American Indian or Alaskan Native	3%
Asian	12%
Black or African American	14%
Hispanic or Latin(o/a/x)	17%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%
White	61%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe (specify, if desired):	1%
Prefer not to respond	1%



Minority-Serving Institution (n=2,170)

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)	9%
Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)	5%
Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)	5%
Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPISIs)	3%
Not a minority-serving institution	60%
Not sure	23%



Gender (n=2,170)

Female	71%
Male	28%
Non-binary/Gender non-conforming	1%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe (specify, if desired):	0.1%
Prefer not to respond	0.2%



Public or Private Institution (n=2,170)

Public	75%
Private, for-profit	13%
Private, not-for-profit	7%
I'm not sure	5%



Sexual Orientation (n=2,170)

Straight or heterosexual	72%
Asexual	4%
Bisexual or pansexual	14%
Gay or lesbian	4%
Queer	1%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe (specify, if desired):	1%
Unsure	2%
Prefer not to respond	2%



Academic Level (n=2,170)

Undergraduate student	69%
Graduate student	26%
I'm enrolled in a non-degree seeking program	5%
Other	1%



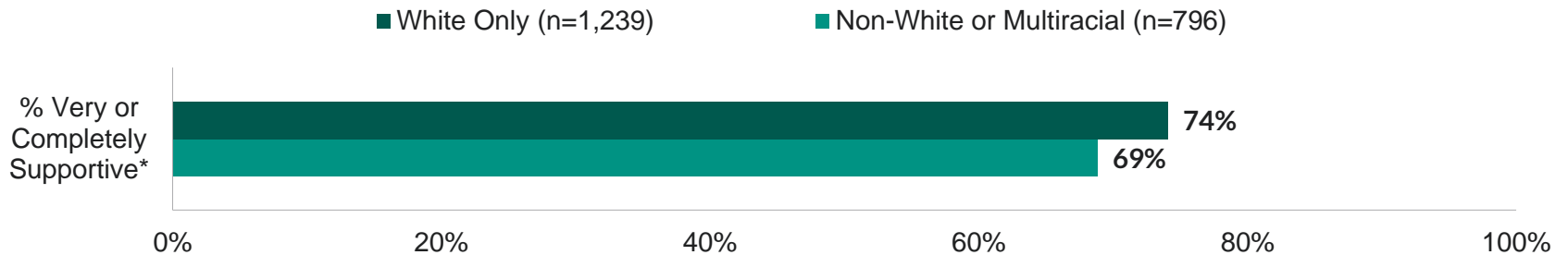
2-Year or 4-Year Institution (n=2,170)

2-year community or technical college	31%
4-year college/university	69%

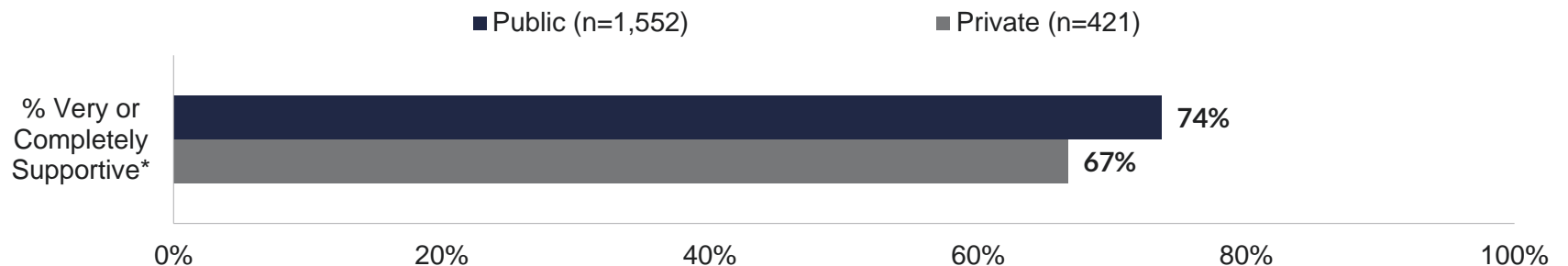
APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTAL CHARTS

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR DEI

How supportive is your institution of fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the school? - By Race/Ethnicity



How supportive is your institution of fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the school? - By Public or Private Institution

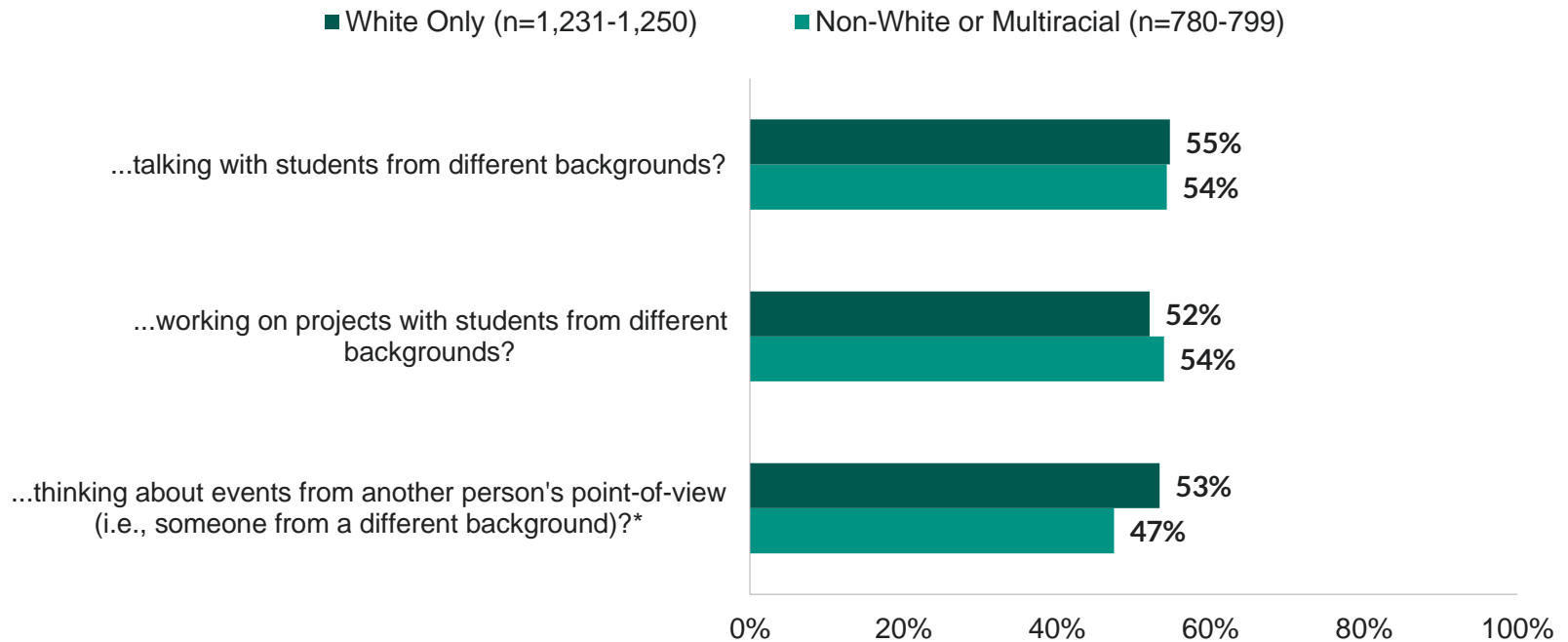


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DIVERSITY IN COURSES

In the past term, how many of your courses included: - By Race/Ethnicity
% Most or All

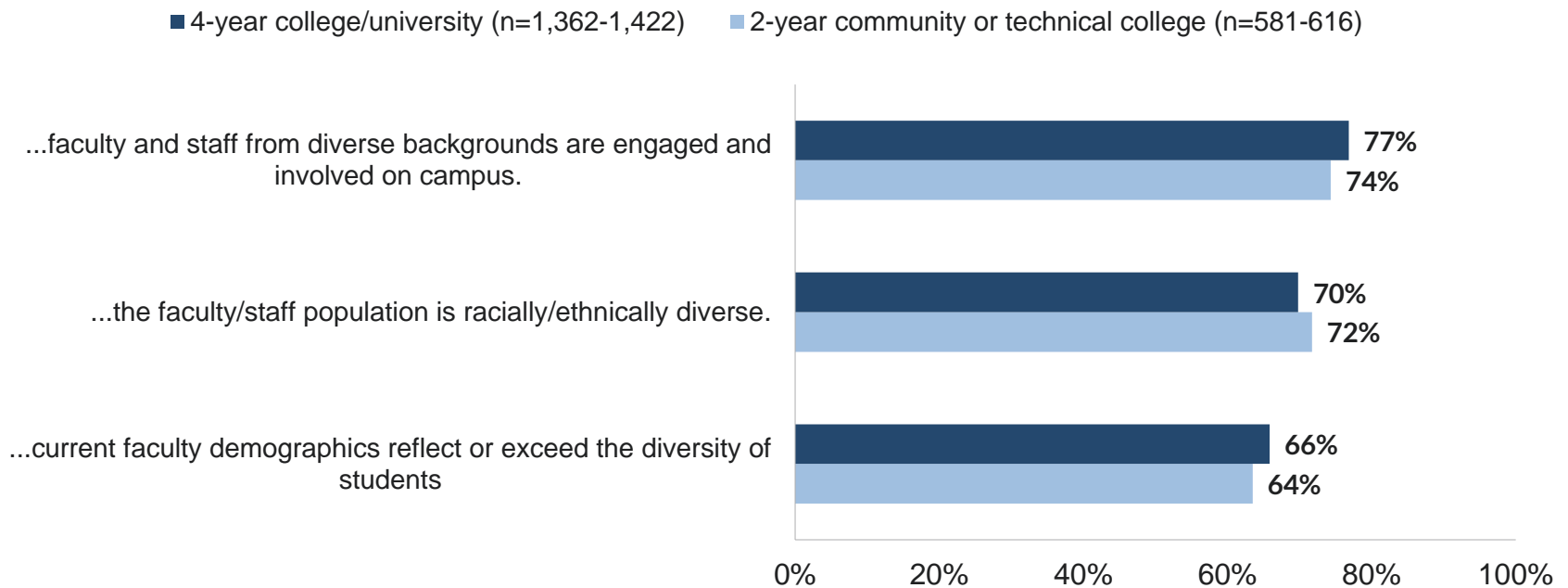


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DIVERSITY OF FACULTY & STAFF

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements. At my institution... - By 2-Year or 4-Year Institution
% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

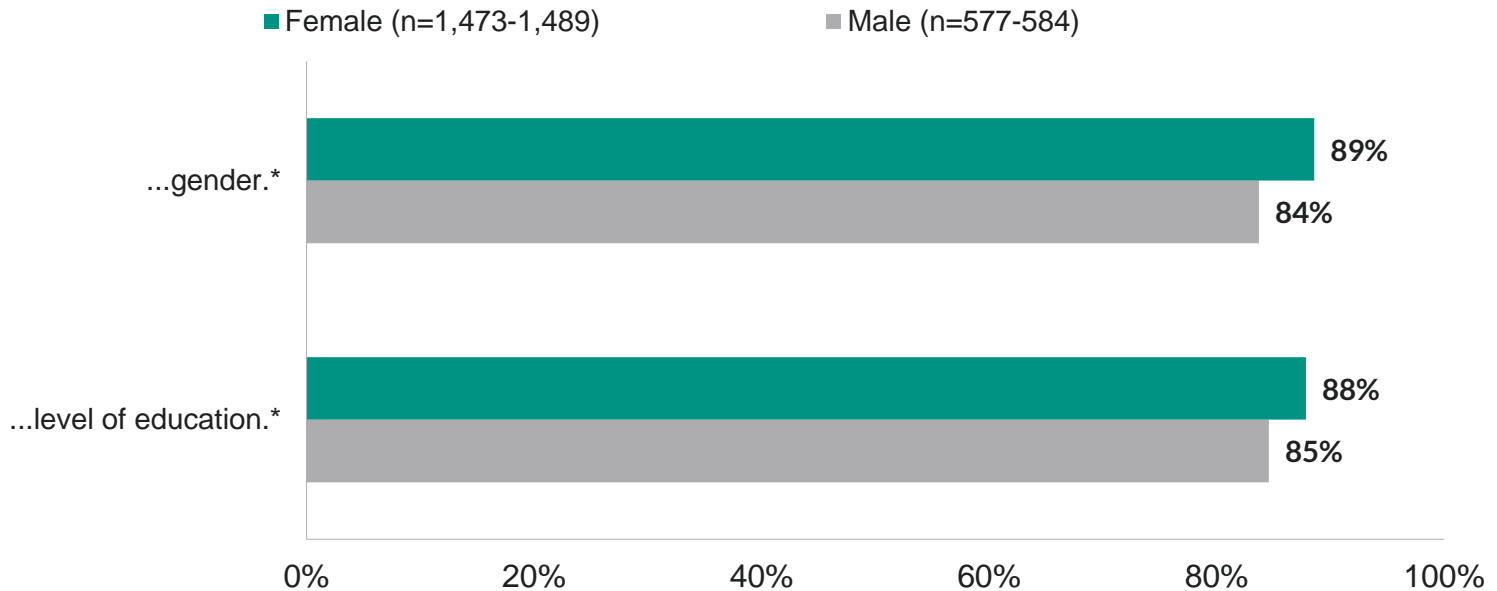


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RESPECT FOR IDENTITY

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements. My institution respects my... - By Gender
% Somewhat or Strongly Agree

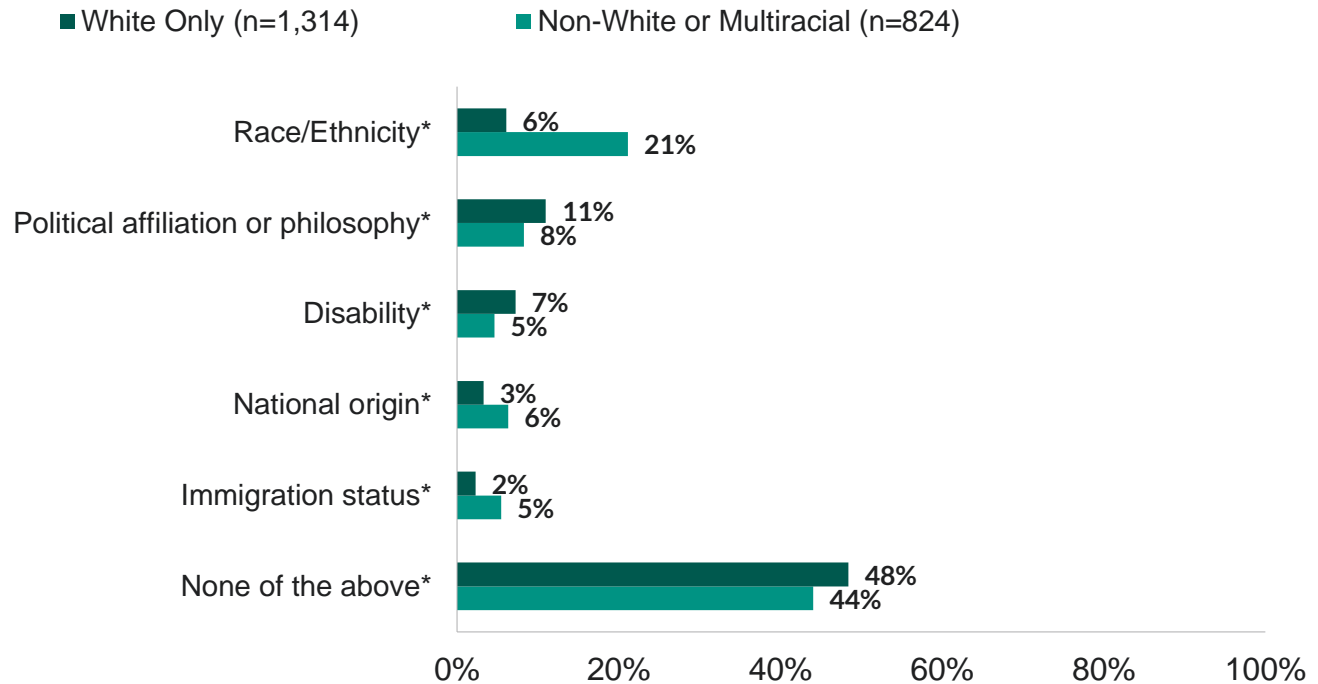


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INSTANCES OF DISCRIMINATION

On the basis of which aspects of your identity have you felt singled out in a negative context at your institution? Please select all that apply. - By Race/Ethnicity



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