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How COVID is Affecting Campus Reopening

College students across the country have ventured back to campus amid a global pandemic. But a new nationwide study finds that nearly a quarter of all students, faculty, and staff do not think their school will be able to reopen and stay open safely.

Many in the campus community believe their colleges lack important contact tracing and symptom-checking tools and say they have considered leaving. And students struggling with remote learning are seriously questioning the value of what they're paying for.

Key Findings

Students say they question the value of this year's education: 39% receiving some online instruction have considered leaving school, and 23% taking mostly online classes say school is a bad value (compared with 4% who are taking classes mostly in-person). Overall, white students are more likely than Black and Latino students to rate their educational value poorly.

Given current actions by administrators, only **58% of students think that school will reopen (or stay open) safely**; 60% of non-academic staff and 72% of faculty agree.
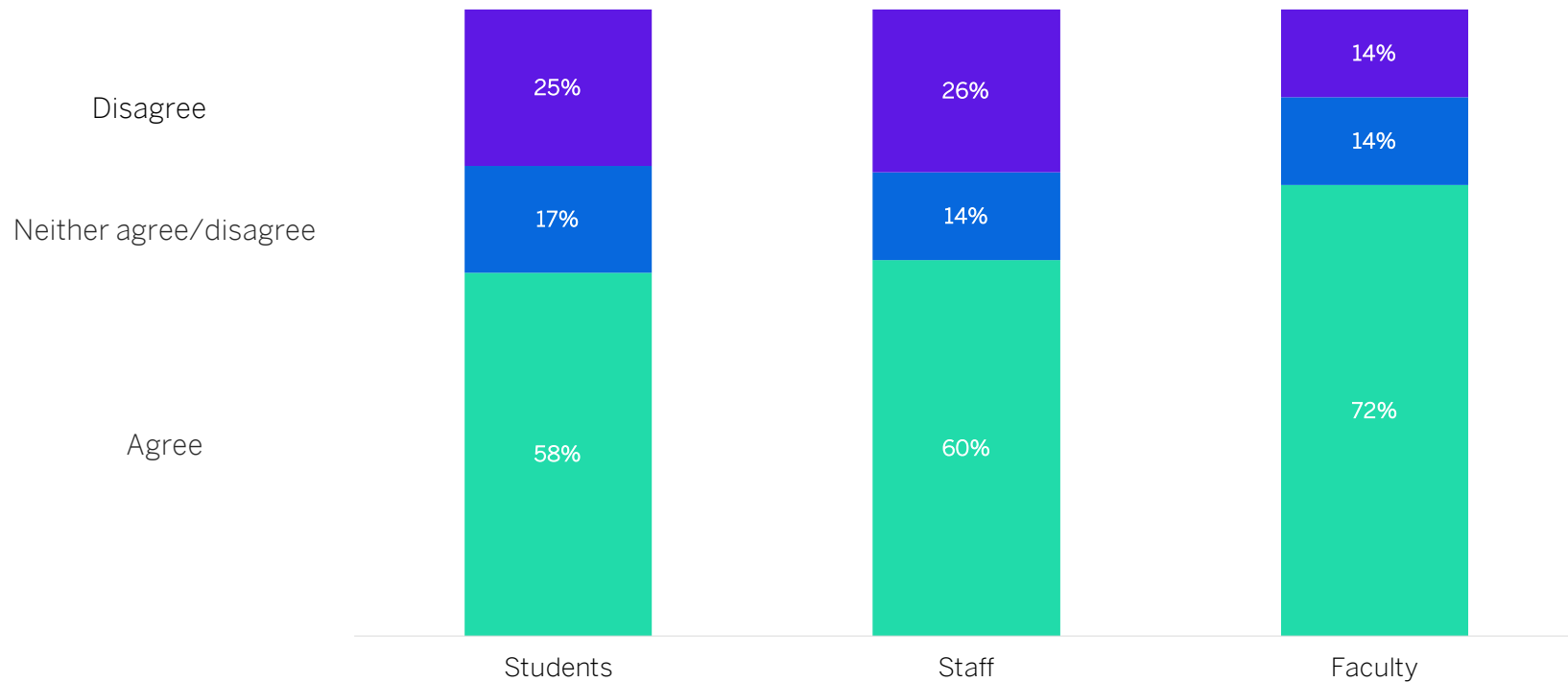
While 80% say their campus requires masks, **next-level safety solutions are hard to find**. Less than half said contact tracing was in place: 25% say their school does contact tracing digitally and 22% in person. Four out of 10 in the campus community say their school has no symptom *checking* tools, and even more (44%) say they have no symptom *reporting* tools.

Campus stakeholders need more venues to offer input. One third of of students and one fifth of faculty/staff say they haven't been asked even once to give input on campus reopening. And overall, an additional 17% say they've only been asked for input once. Faculty/staff who are satisfied with how the administration listens are 63% more likely to say they intend to stay than those who are dissatisfied.
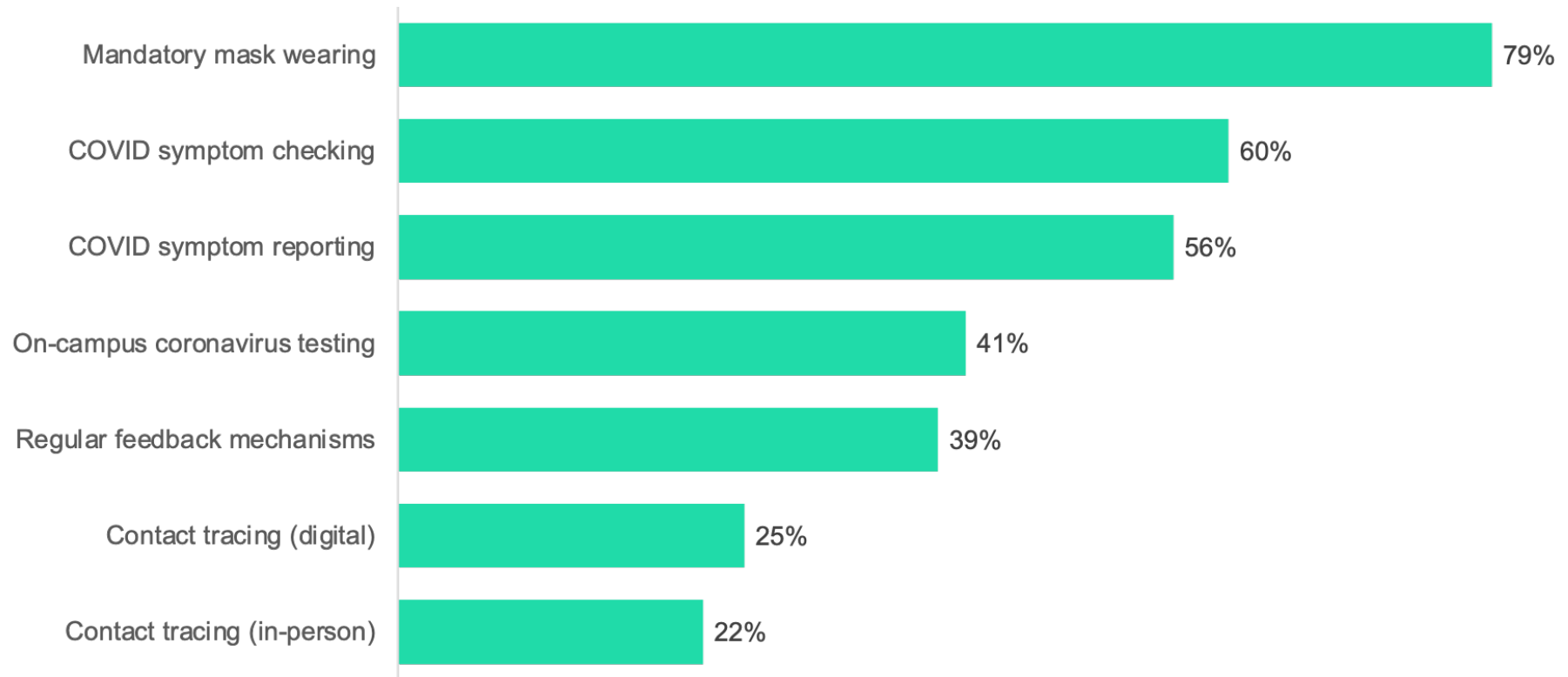
Safe Reopening?

Though reactions are generally positive, many students, staff, and faculty think that current actions taken by administrators are not enough to allow the school to reopen (or stay open) safely. Faculty are the most likely to agree that their administration's actions will allow for a safe reopening.

Disagree

Neither agree/disagree

Agree

	Students	Staff	Faculty
Disagree	25%	26%	14%
Neither agree/disagree	17%	14%	14%
Agree	58%	60%	72%

Q: Given the current actions by administrators, I am confident the school will physically reopen safely.

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Safety and Well-being Measures

Mask wearing is by far the most consistently reported safety measure, followed by symptom checking, symptom reporting, and on-campus coronavirus testing.

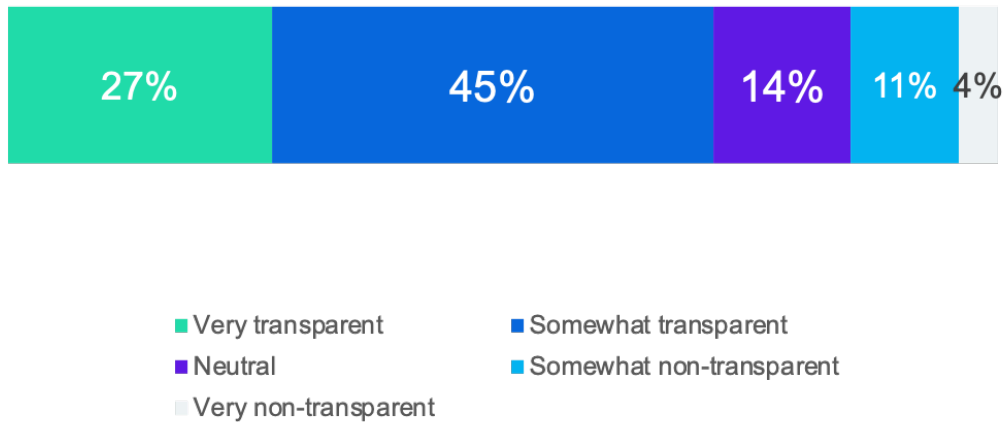|	
Mandatory mask wearing	79%
COVID symptom checking	60%
COVID symptom reporting	56%
On-campus coronavirus testing	41%
Regular feedback mechanisms	39%
Contact tracing (digital)	25%
Contact tracing (in-person)	22%

Q: Which of the following are in place at your school? (select all that apply)
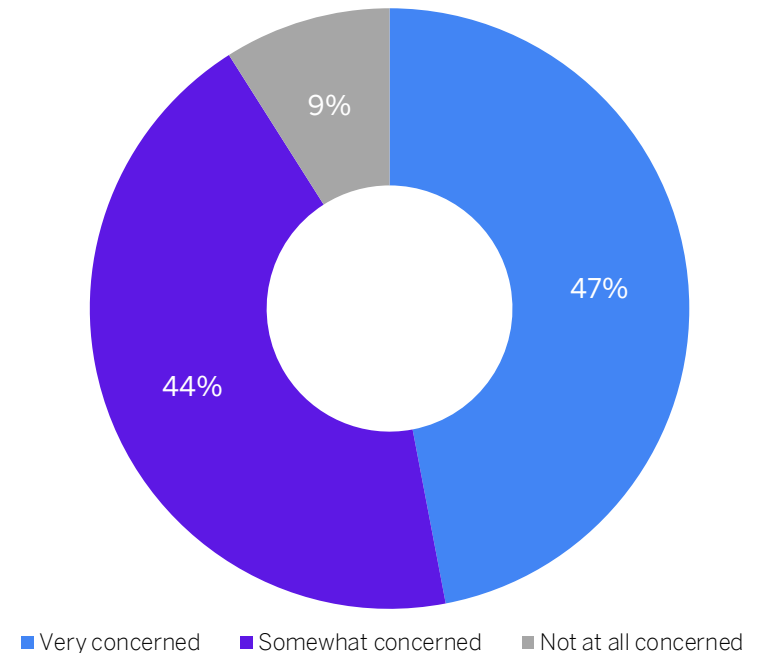
Safety and Transparency

A majority of campus employees feel administrators are being transparent about decision making. Yet almost all campus staff and faculty are concerned about their safety returning to campus, with about half saying they're very concerned (47%).

How Employees Perceive Administrators' Transparency

| 27% | 45% | 14% | 11% | 4% |

- ■ Very transparent
- ■ Somewhat transparent
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Somewhat non-transparent
- ■ Very non-transparent

Q: Do you believe school administrators are transparent about how they are making decisions?

Staff/Faculty Concerns about Campus Safety

47%

44%

9%

- ■ Very concerned
- ■ Somewhat concerned
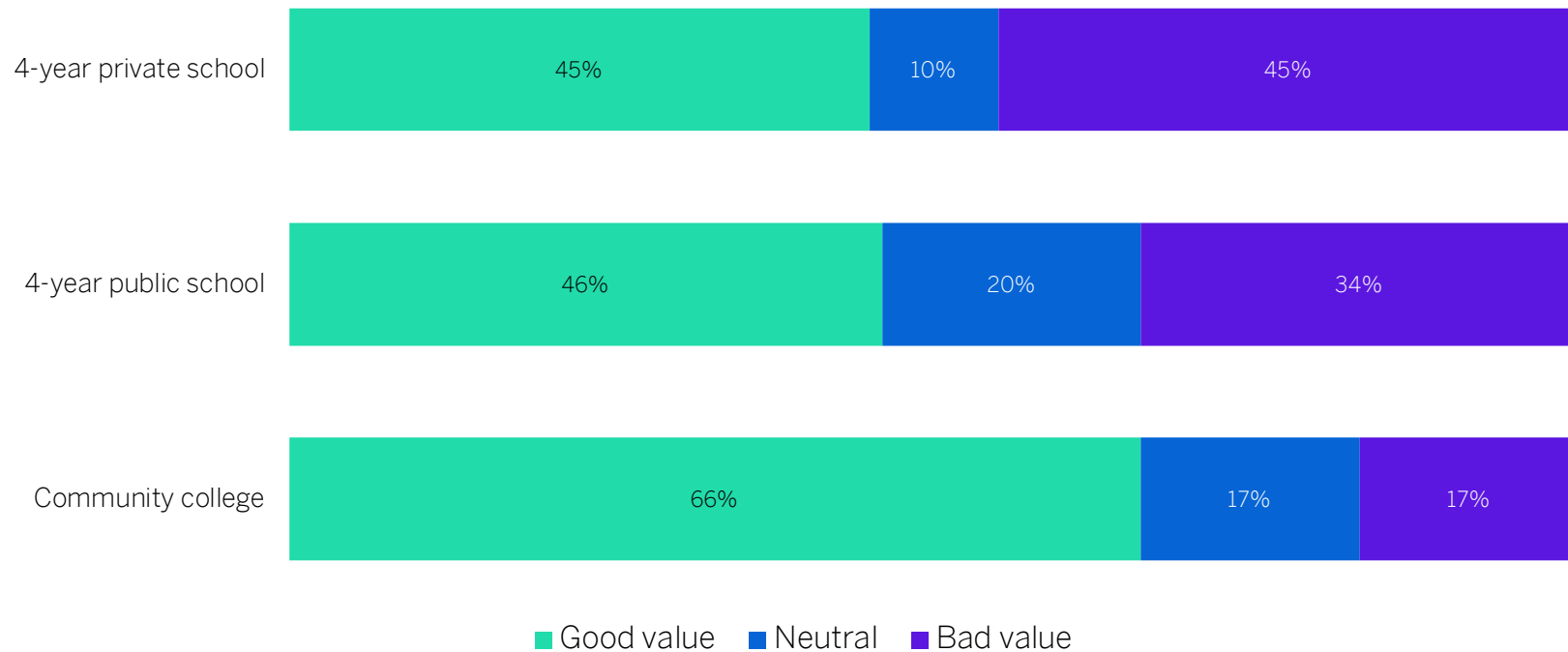- ■ Not at all concerned

Q: How concerned are you for your personal safety coming back to work on campus?
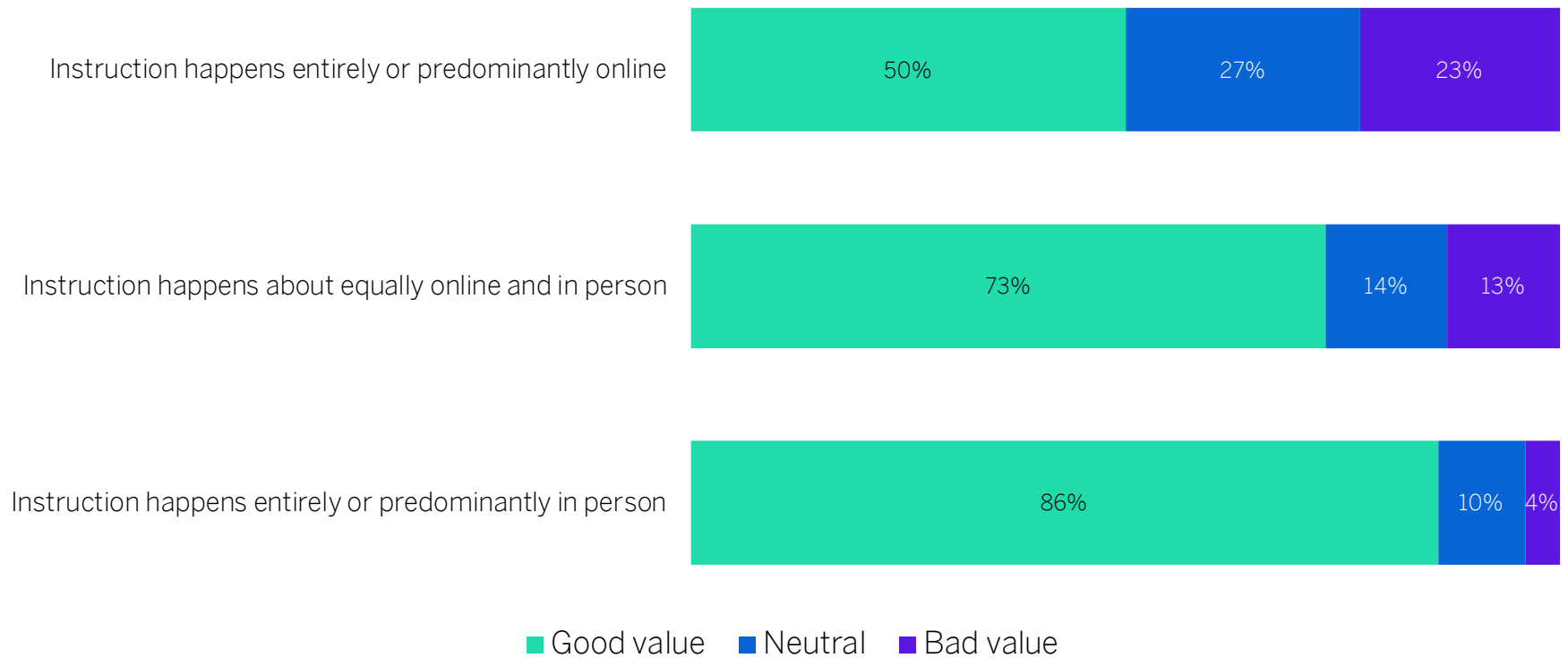
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4-Year Private Schools Score Lowest on Value

Students who attended school last year were asked to compare the educational value they're receiving this year with the previous year. Private school students rated their value the worst, followed by 4-year public school students.

	Good value	Neutral	Bad value
4-year private school	45%	10%	45%
4-year public school	46%	20%	34%
Community college	66%	17%	17%

■ Good value ■ Neutral ■ Bad value

Q: How would you rate the educational value you're receiving compared with your overall costs to attend?
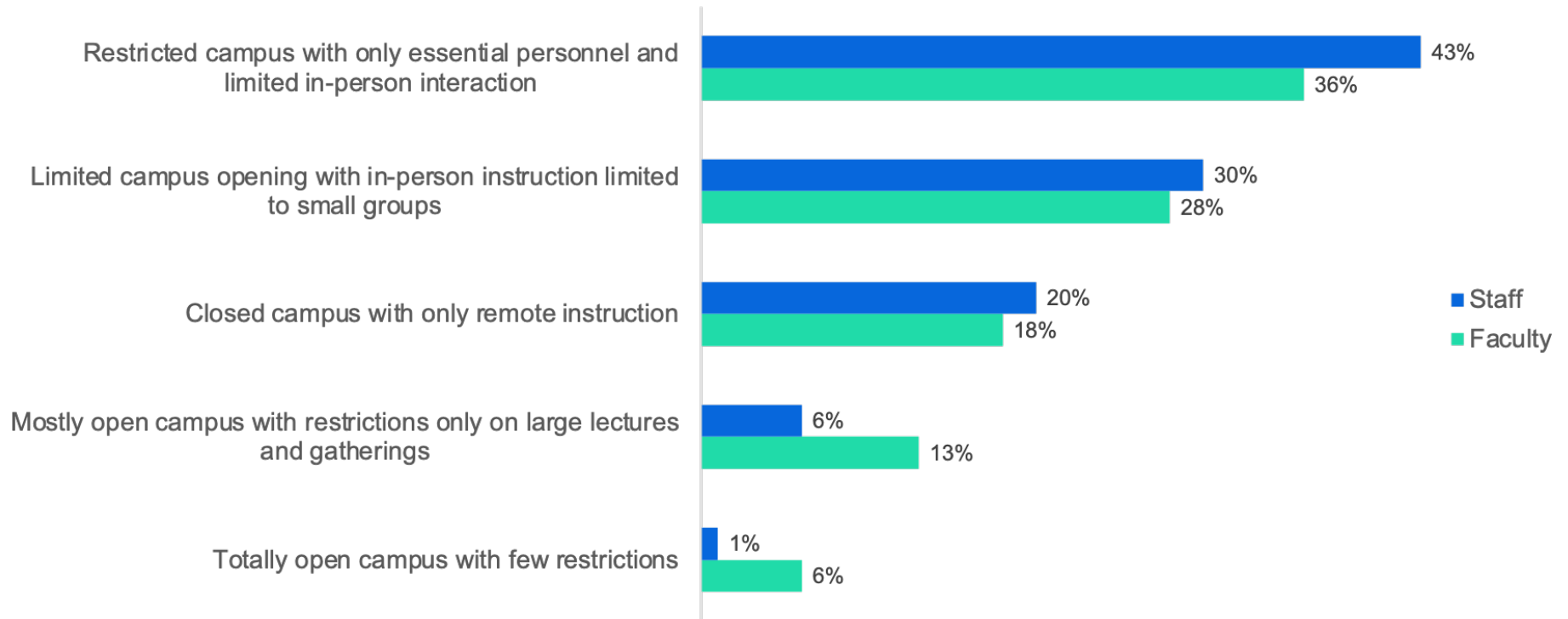
Online Instruction Gap

Students receiving their instruction mostly online say they are getting far less value compared with their peers. Most students say they find more value in their education the more they're able to be on campus.

	Good value	Neutral	Bad value
Instruction happens entirely or predominantly online	50%	27%	23%
Instruction happens about equally online and in person	73%	14%	13%
Instruction happens entirely or predominantly in person	86%	10%	4%

■ Good value ■ Neutral ■ Bad value

Q: Which of the following best describes the way you are learning right now?
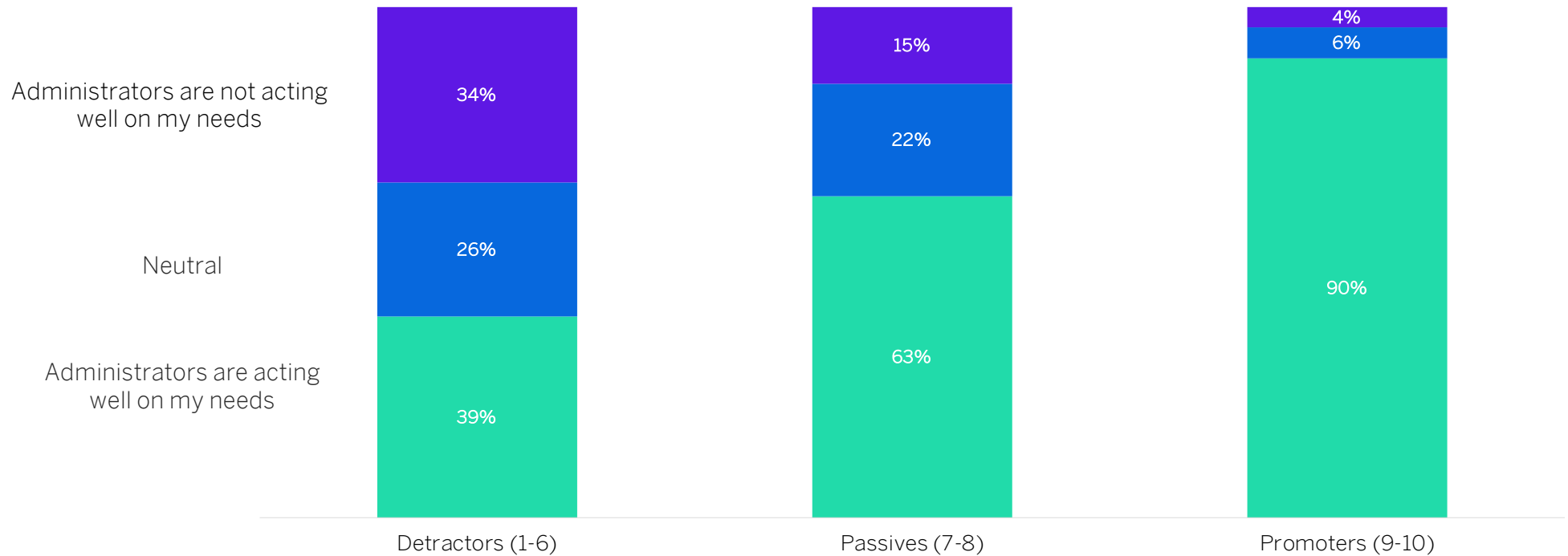
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Faculty and Staff Preferences

The majority of campus employees still prefer a very limited opening, with 43% of staff and 36% of faculty preferring essential-only personnel on campus.

Restricted campus with only essential personnel and limited in-person interaction — Staff 43%, Faculty 36%

Limited campus opening with in-person instruction limited to small groups — Staff 30%, Faculty 28%

Closed campus with only remote instruction — Staff 20%, Faculty 18%

Mostly open campus with restrictions only on large lectures and gatherings — Staff 6%, Faculty 13%

Totally open campus with few restrictions — Staff 1%, Faculty 6%

■ Staff
■ Faculty

Q: Given the overall situation in your school community, what do you believe is the best scenario right now?

Acting on Students' Needs

There's a strong correlation between how well administrators are acting on student needs and students' likelihood to recommend the school to their peers.

Administrators are not acting well on my needs

Neutral

Administrators are acting well on my needs

	Detractors (1-6)	Passives (7-8)	Promoters (9-10)
Administrators are not acting well on my needs	34%	15%	4%
Neutral	26%	22%	6%
Administrators are acting well on my needs	39%	63%	90%

Q: On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend your school to a friend right now?

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Feeling Heard Drives Employee Loyalty

Faculty and staff who feel they aren't being heard by their university's administration are much more likely to say they've considered leaving for another job than those who say they feel heard.

2X

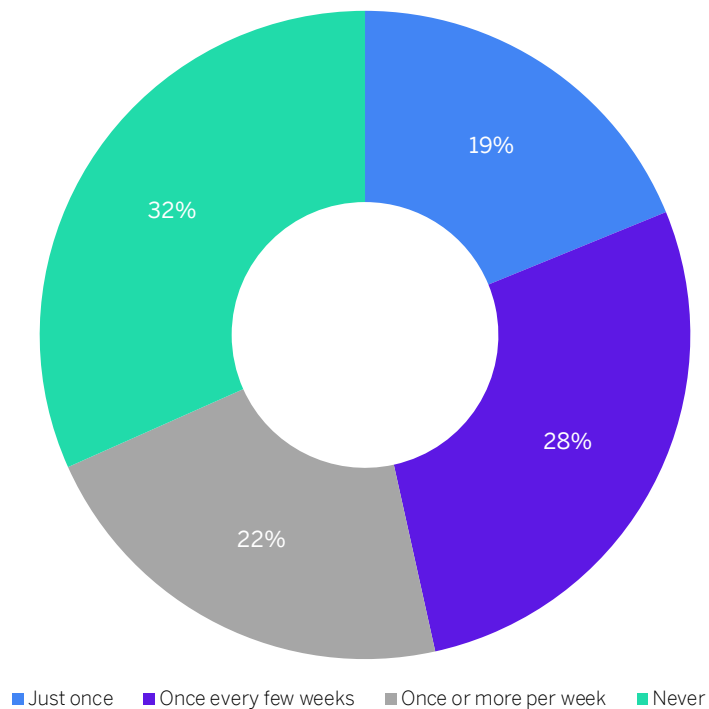**Staff who don't feel heard are twice as likely to leave**

55%

Faculty and staff who are dissatisfied with how the administration listens intend to leave their university

Analysis of response to:
I am considering leaving my college or university for another job within the next 12 months.
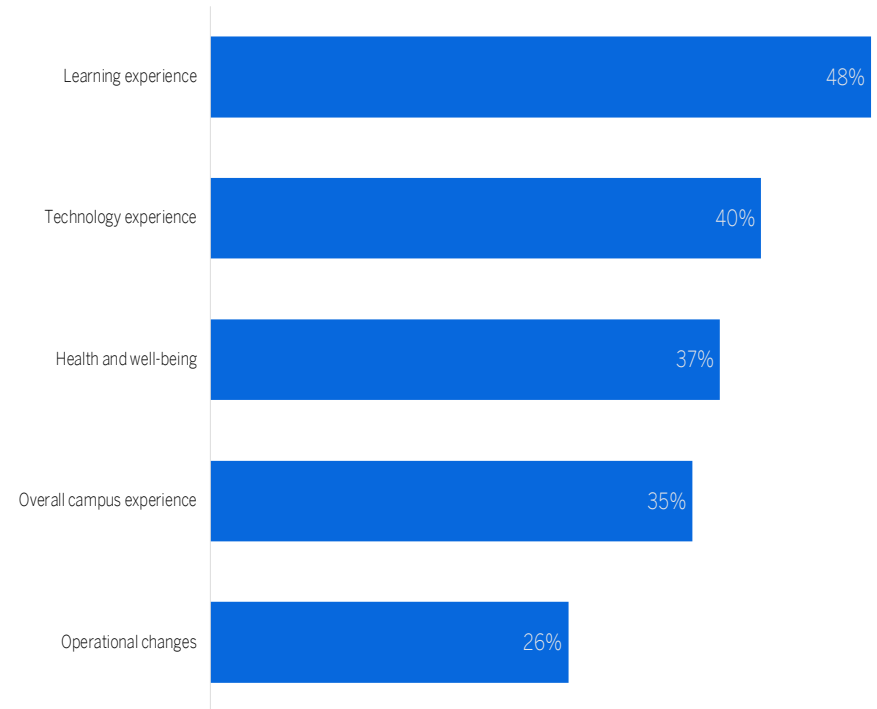
Student Input Gap

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More than half of students say their administrators either haven't gathered any student feedback or have asked for feedback only once. Administrators are most likely to ask students about their learning experience.

How Often Students Are Asked for Campus Input

- 19%
- 28%
- 22%
- 32%

■ Just once ■ Once every few weeks ■ Once or more per week ■ Never

The most common things administrators are collecting student feedback about

Learning experience	48%
Technology experience	40%
Health and well-being	37%
Overall campus experience	35%
Operational changes	26%

Q: How often are you asked by administrators to give input on campus issues?

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Background & Methodology

This study was conducted to gather data on how students, staff, and faculty at universities feel about their jobs and education during the pandemic as they return to campuses across the country.

Total n=800

- 18 years old or older
- US resident
- Employee or full-time student at US 2-year or 4-year college/university

The study fielded from 9/11 – 9/15/20

We implemented quotas on demographics to achieve the following distribution:

- Respondent Type
    - Full-time student (graduate or undergraduate) (n=300)
    - Non-academic staff (IT, legal, facilities, etc.). (n=250)
    - Academic staff (professors, adjunct, instructors) (n=250)
- Gender
    - Male (n=304)
    - Female (n=490)
    - Other (n=6)