



# Examining Higher Ed's Digital Future

From reflections on technology, enrollments and value in higher education, to concerns about cost, stress and support — our 2023-2024 Digital Learning Pulse Survey explores how students, faculty and administrators feel about the most pressing issues in higher education today. Here are the highlights.





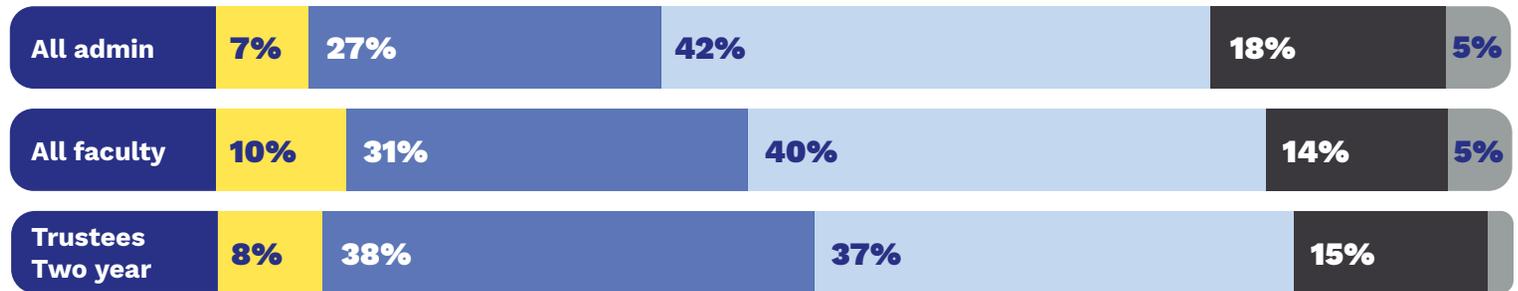
# Artificial Intelligence (AI):

AI is here, but higher education doesn't feel ready.

Education is one of the top five sectors — behind only tech, banking and pharmaceuticals — in which AI is predicted to boost productivity — **to the tune of 4%**.<sup>1</sup> Most faculty and administrators think AI will change their institutions within the next five years. And, most also feel their institutions are unprepared for AI-related changes. More faculty at four-year than at two-year institutions say that their schools are prepared for the changes. Trustees at two-year institutions were the most optimistic about how prepared their institutions were.

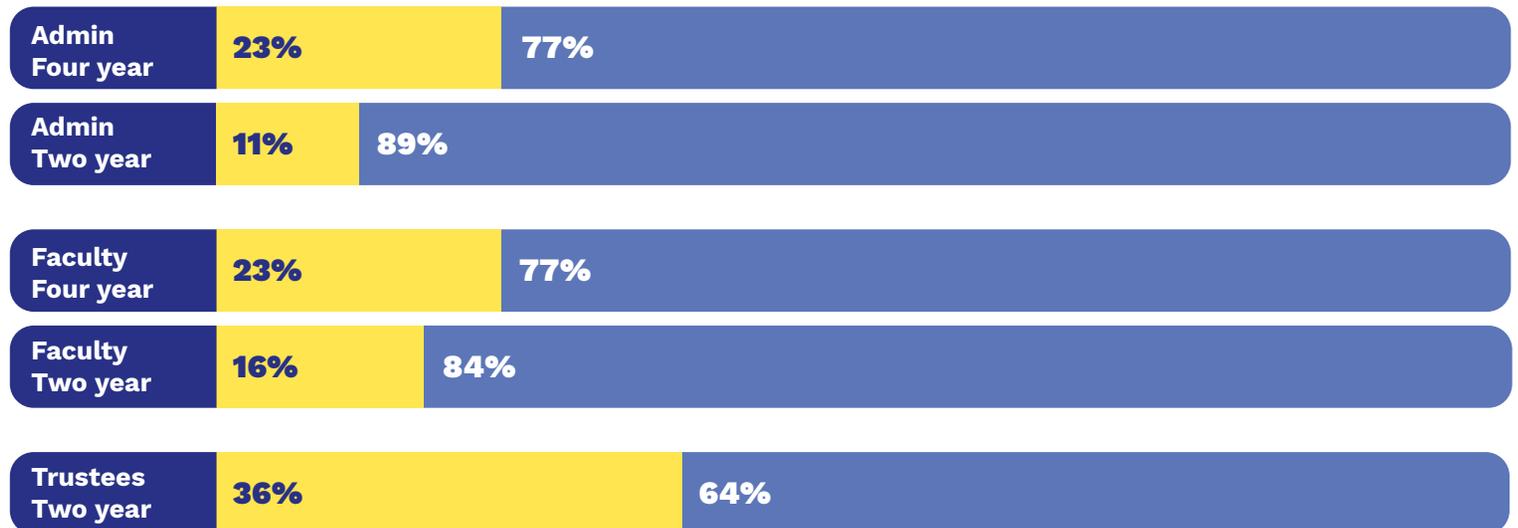
## How much will AI tools change your institution over the next five years?

- A massive amount of change
- Considerable change
- A moderate amount of change
- Some small changes
- Little or no changes



## Do you think that your institution is prepared for AI-related changes?

- Yes
- No





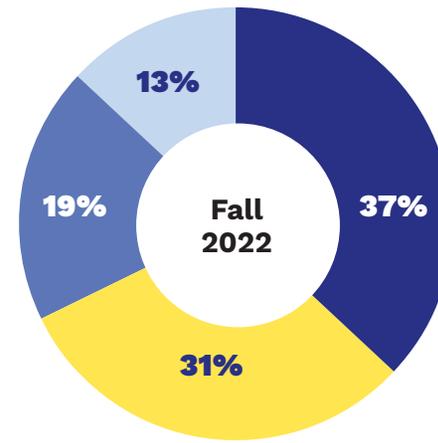
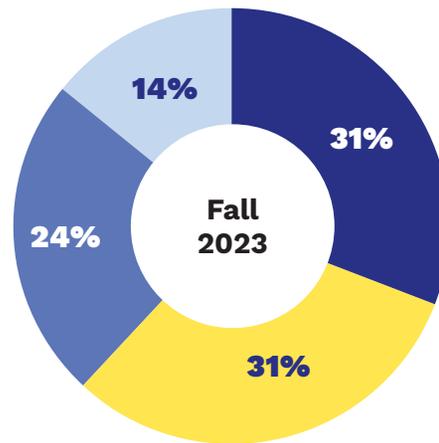
# Future Enrollments and Growth Areas:

Most administrators still concerned about enrollments — some hope to increase and vary modalities and course offerings.

While there are fewer “very concerned” administrators in 2023 than 2022 when it comes to future enrollments, the overall level of concern hasn’t changed much from last year, and enrollment continues to be a major challenge. With many schools looking for creative solutions to the enrollment cliff, **over a third of administrators overall would like to see more online courses offered, and nearly half would like to see more hybrid offerings.** Administrators at two-year schools expressed the desire for different course modality mixes at a greater rate than administrators at four-year schools.

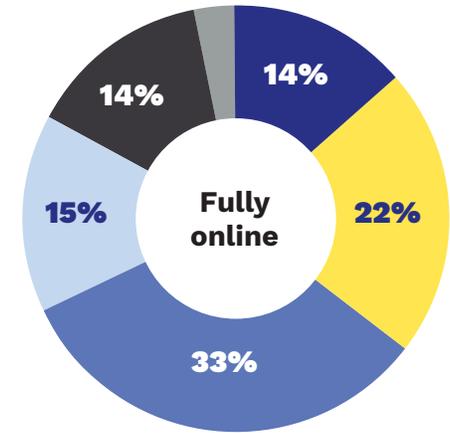
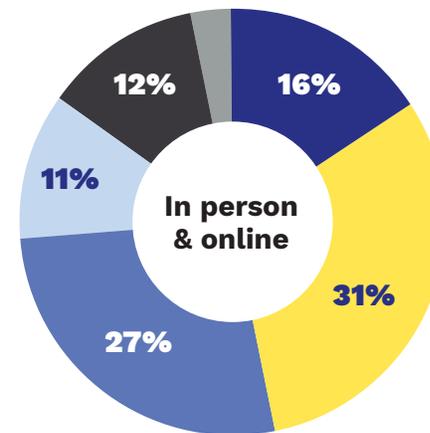
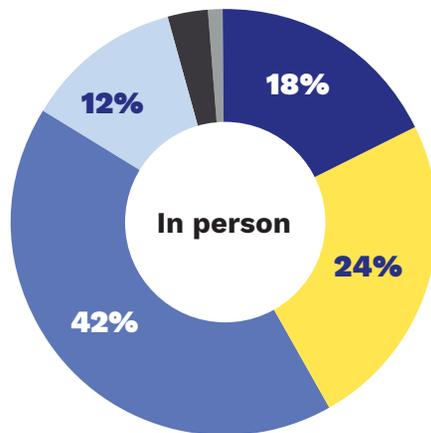
## How concerned are you about the level of future enrollments at your institution?

- Very concerned
- Concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not concerned



## What are your preferences for the future mix of course modes at your institution?

- More than current
- Somewhat more
- Same as current
- Somewhat less
- Less than current
- Don't know/does not apply





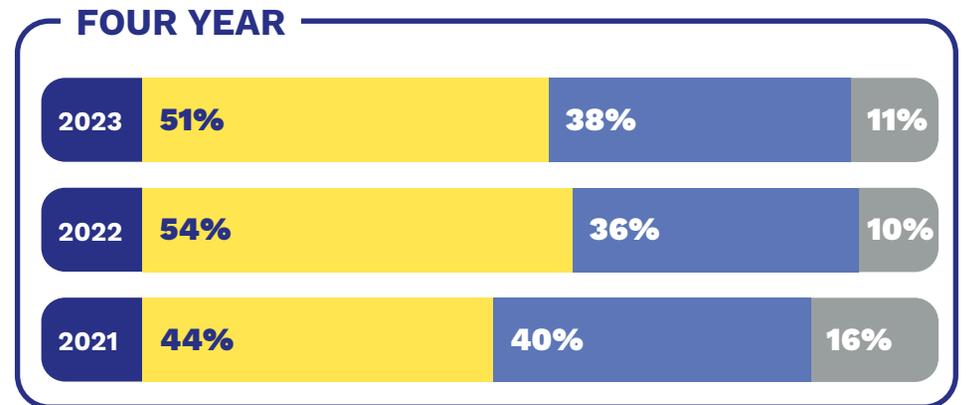
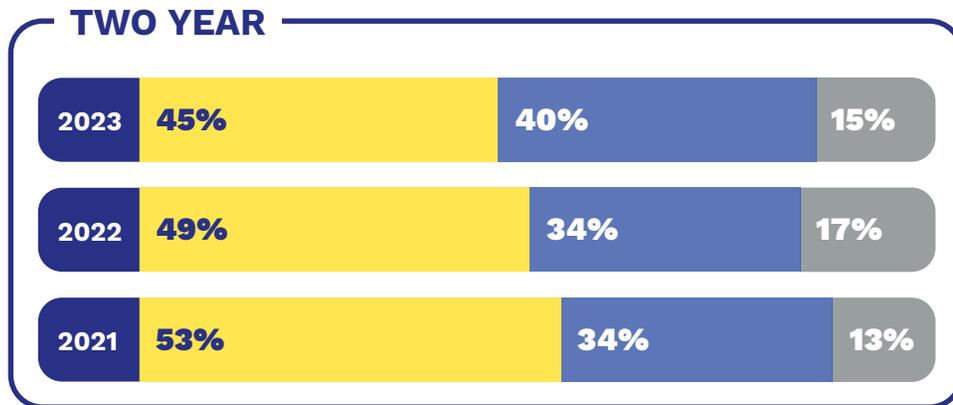
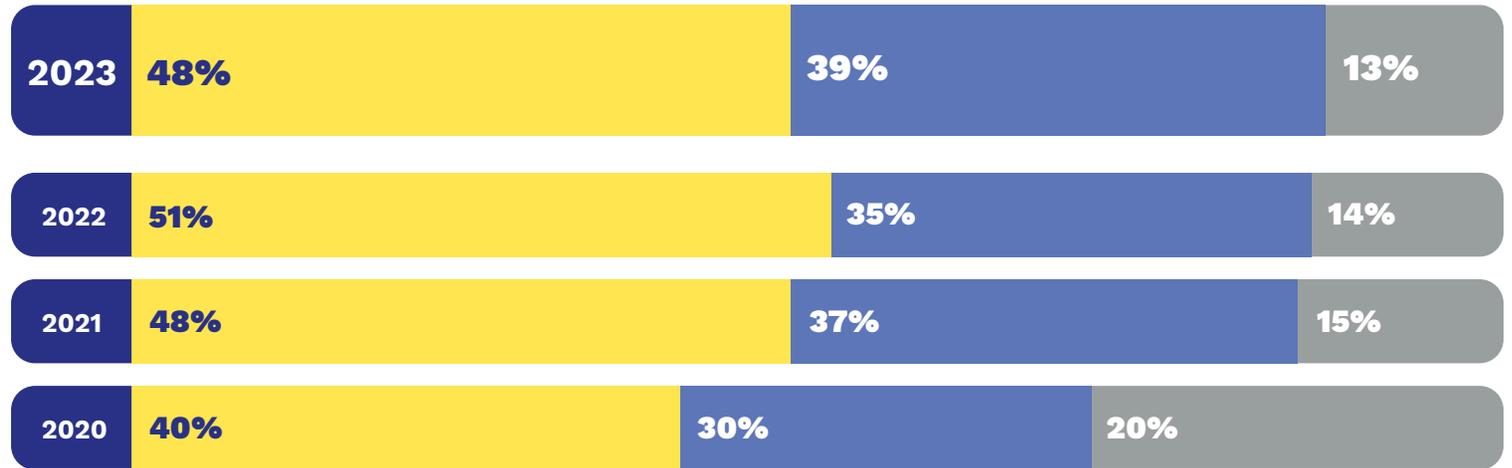
## Value:

Institutions are getting higher grades on the educational value of courses, but there is still progress to be made.

Since 2020, the overall number of students in the survey giving their courses an A grade has trended generally upwards. Nearly one-half of students gave their courses an A grade in 2023. However, a closer look reveals that the number of **students at two-year schools who give their courses an A grade has trended consistently downwards from 2021 to 2023.**

What letter grade would you give for how well your courses meet your educational needs?

- A
- B
- C and below



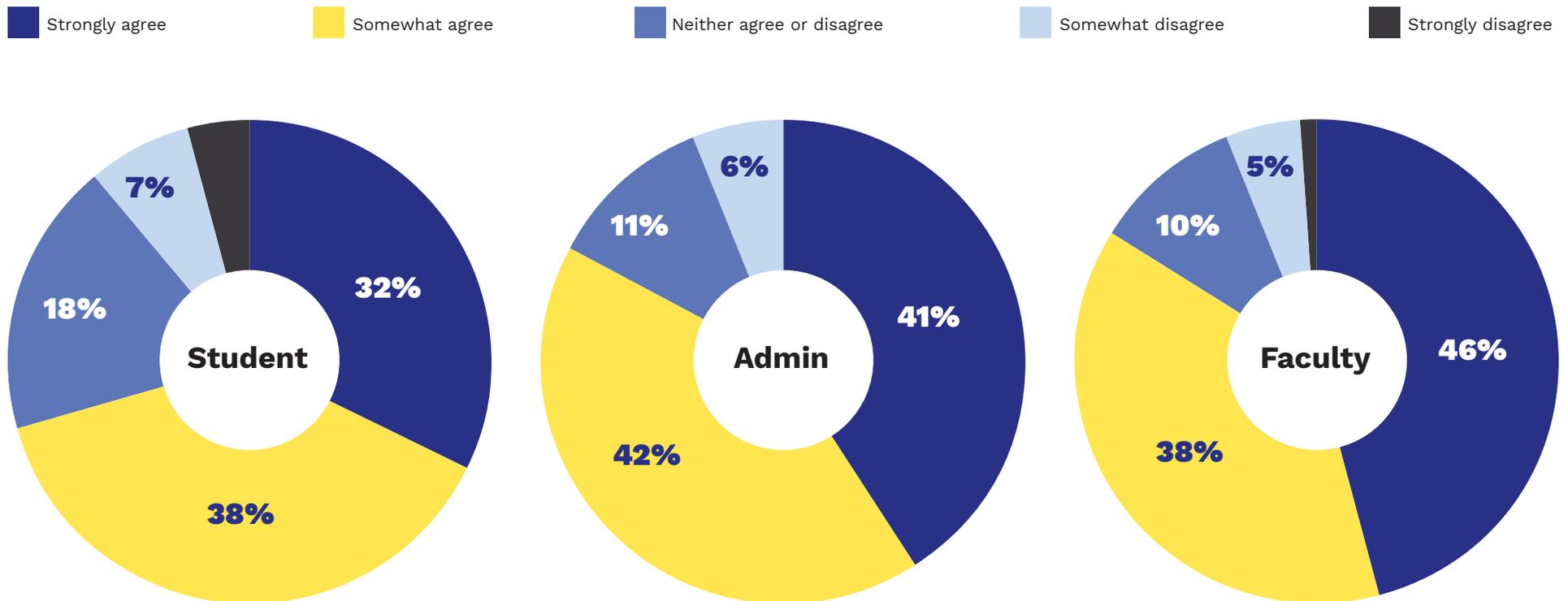


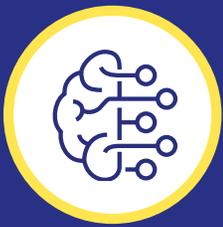
## Cost of Education:

The cost of higher education is (still) out of hand and becoming out of reach for students.

As with previous surveys, nearly everyone surveyed agrees that the cost of higher education is an issue. This year, faculty and administrators are even more emphatic than students about the magnitude of higher education's financial problem. **Faculty at all schools "strongly agree" that cost is a problem at a greater rate than any other respondents.**

The cost of education is becoming financially out of reach for students.





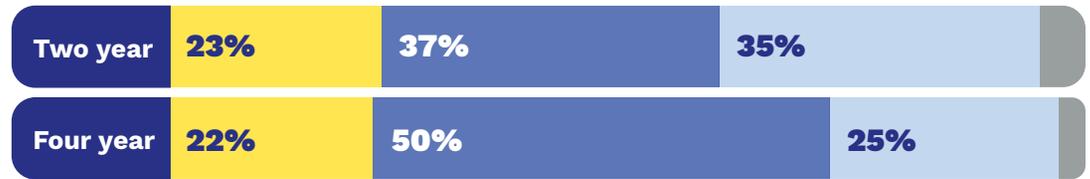
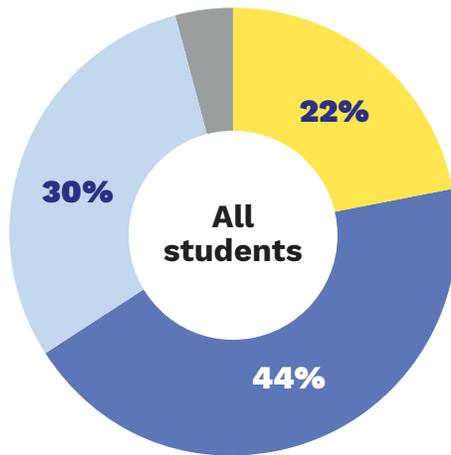
# Stress:

Most people in higher education feel it, but many students aren't sure what to do about it.

Stress continues to be cited as the top barrier for students, faculty and administrators. **A third of students say they are unaware of institutional support services to help them deal with stress**, and less than a quarter say they have actually used any such service. Of students not using services to help them deal with stress, many — at both two-and four-year schools — say they don't think the service would be helpful for their personal situation. Others say they are unsure how to connect with the service. Significantly more students at two-year institutions say their school's services in this area are “very effective” than at four-year institutions.

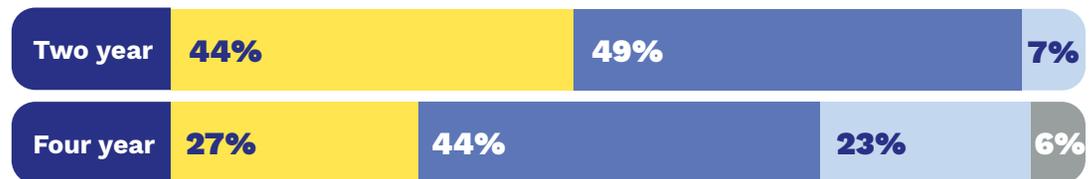
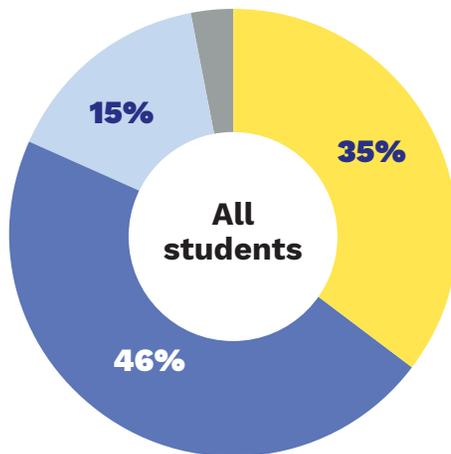
**Does your institution provide support services for students to help them deal with stress?**

- Yes, and I have used them
- Yes, I have not used them
- Not sure
- No



**How effective are your institution's support services for students to help them deal with stress?**

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not too effective
- Not at all effective





# Institutional Support:

Academic advising makes the grade; other support areas need work.

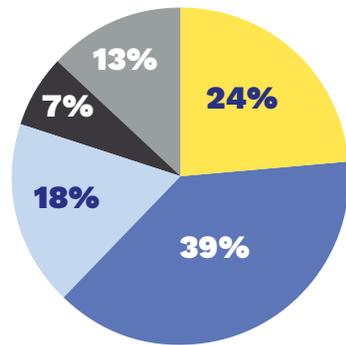
Most students are satisfied with the academic advising services their school provides. **More students at two-year than four-year schools say their academic advising support is “excellent.”** However, fewer students at both school types feel positive about the financial services, and health and wellbeing services offered.

## ALL STUDENTS

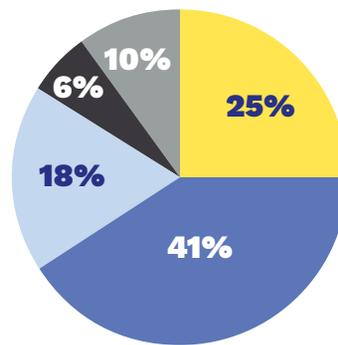
How well my institution provides...



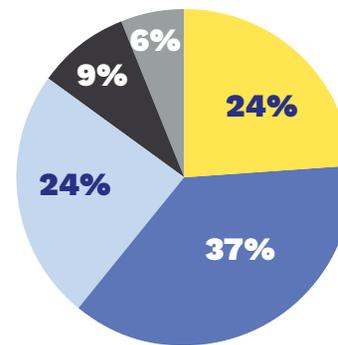
**Health and wellness support and services**



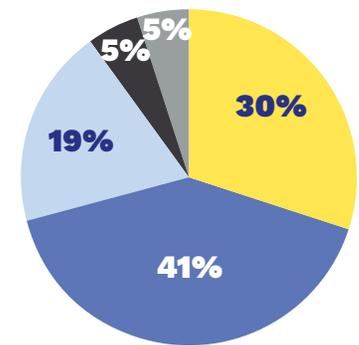
**Career services and guidance**



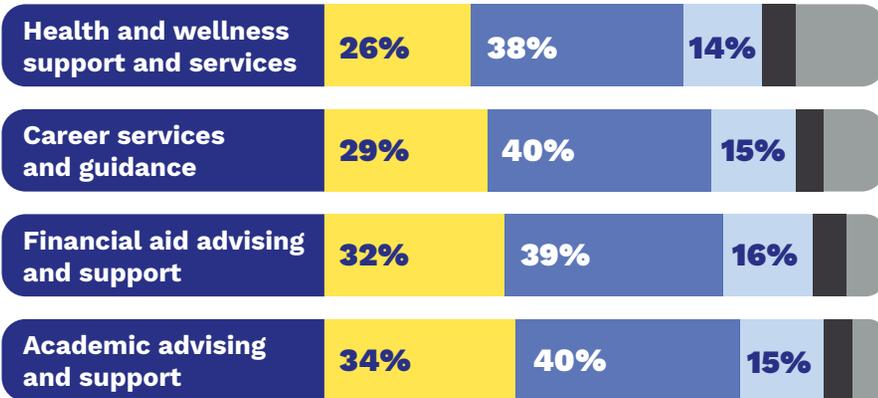
**Financial aid advising and support**



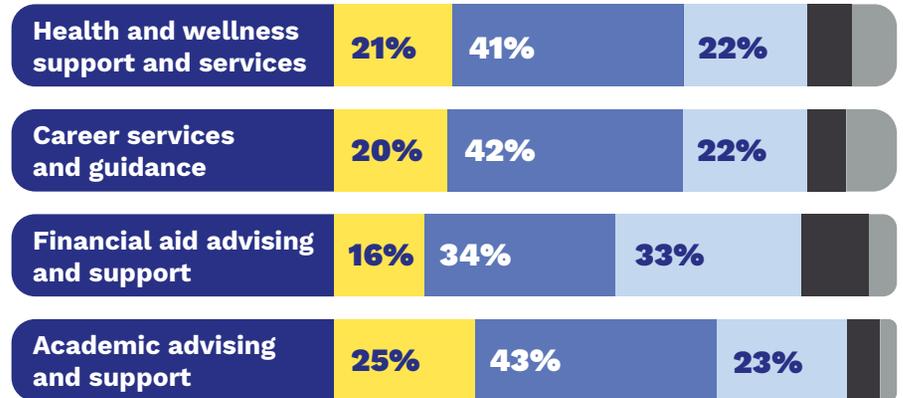
**Academic advising and support**



## TWO YEAR



## FOUR YEAR



## About the Digital Learning Pulse Survey:

Data for this infographic come from the Fall 2023 round of data collection of the Digital Learning Pulse Survey. Responses were received from 201 trustees at two-year schools, and 1,126 faculty and administrators and 2,229 students from two-year and four-year schools, representing over 1,200 institutions from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

[cengage.com/dlps-results](https://cengage.com/dlps-results)



Source:

1. The Economic Potential of Generative AI: The Next Productivity Frontier, McKinsey Digital:  
<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/the-economic-potential-of-generative-ai-the-next-productivity-frontier#industry-impacts>

