DRIVING TOWARD A DEGREE:
ESTABLISHING A BASELINE ON INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO PLANNING AND ADVISING



Tyton PARTNERS

BABSON Survey Research Group

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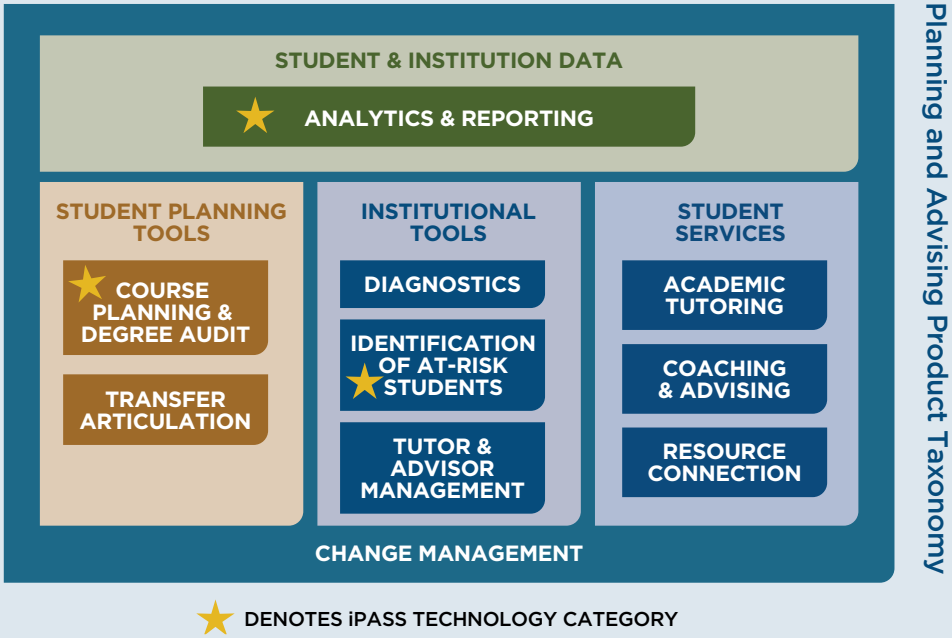
INTRODUCTION: DEFINING iPASS

Defining iPASS (Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success) For the purposes of this analysis, iPASS is defined as the use of technology in the areas of course planning and degree audit, analytics and reporting, and identification of at-risk students to support an effective planning and advising system that is focused on continuous improvement and promotes shared ownership. By integrating these key technology solutions, institutions are able to engage in advising and student support relationships that facilitate meaningful goal setting and connect students to the information and services they need, at the time they need them, to keep them on track for graduation.

In October and November 2015, Tyton Partners, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and in collaboration with the Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), initiated its first annual iPASS survey. Tyton worked with the Babson Survey Research Group to develop and administrator the survey to a national sample of postsecondary administrators, faculty, and advisors. Building on our 2015 two-part series ***Driving Toward a Degree: The Evolution of Planning and Advising in Higher Education****, which focused on the vendor landscape of academic-advising technology and institutional selection of technology in this market, this publication focuses on institutional use of and attitudes toward the advising-technology landscape today.*

iPASS is not an organized market per se. So, with some caution, we are using the term to refer to a specific approach to advising in higher education that requires collaboration by diverse stakeholders, decision makers, and users within institutions. This approach involves the integration of functional processes, technology tools, and diverse perspectives on advising practices across nine separate categories, as diagrammed below.

Today's market is composed of 9 distinct product categories across 4 workflow areas supporting success and retention



We received over 1,400 responses from faculty, administrators, and professional advisors knowledgeable about planning and advising at their institutions. These responses came from a range of institution types and sizes, staff positions, and functional areas. Of the respondents, 58% indicated a functional area of academic advising, tutoring, student services, or student affairs, and 22% were directors of advising or directors of advising administration. In terms of institution type, 38% of respondents were at two-year institutions, 23% were at four-year public institutions, and 39% were at four-year private institutions.

Respondents were asked about the core iPASS solutions as well as six other planning and advising categories. This inaugural publication establishes a baseline for market-wide adoption of the practices and technologies of iPASS and presents actionable steps for all stakeholders interested in improving planning and advising. For institutions, we provide guidance on how best to improve the advising function, based on the current state of planning and advising at the institution. Institutional stakeholders may take our self-assessment survey to identify their institutional profile, and make use of key interventions outlined in this publication for their specific profile. For suppliers, we highlight institutional dissatisfaction with current tools in the marketplace and specific categories where technology may be underutilized in supporting advising.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Degree planning and academic advising are ground zero for the completion agenda in higher education. The United States system of higher education is a gateway of opportunity for students from all over the world. Yet the lackluster performance on degree completion is well documented: only 59% of students complete a bachelor's degree in 6 years, and only 29% of students complete an associate degree within 3 years. There is not much debate about the severity of the problem; 82% of institutions that we surveyed have made student retention and success a strategic priority. There is, however, considerable variation in how institutions are tackling the problem, and at the center of this debate is the planning and advising function. The practice of academic planning and advising is facing mounting pressure to change in order to better serve students, especially post-traditional students. Academic planning and advising departments have limited resources and high expectations for improvement. They are expected to be the primary channel for the application of predictive analytics – a technology with much promise but limited implementation. With all of the attention, many planning and advising teams face initiative fatigue, and administrations face unreasonably high expectations about how quickly change can be produced.

In parts 1 and 2 of ***Driving Toward a Degree: The Evolution of Planning and Advising in Higher Education***, we highlighted the challenges associated with the fragmented state of planning and advising from the supplier side and provided institutions with a guide for selecting and implementing a student success and retention strategy. In this publication, we introduce the concept of an ***integrated*** approach to planning and advising to improve degree completion outcomes, and we both establish a baseline for future study and provide recommendations on how institutions can get started. There is no one clear entity, group, or function that is uniquely responsible for student success at an institution. Maintaining a system with students in the center necessitates distributed responsibility and tight collaboration. This is a tall order for even the most resourced institutions.

Institutions are currently at various points along the road toward improving student outcomes. While a select few that have achieved considerable success have gained national attention as exemplars, we observe that these exemplars don't capture the full picture of what it takes. Copying the playbook of the best belies the unique context of each institution, especially as it relates to establishing an institutional culture that is conducive to this integrated and continuous-improvement approach. Higher Education's penchant for "exemplars" and "best practices" creates challenging comparisons: how can a two-year public institution follow the same playbook as a four-year institution, even if they're serving similar student populations? They can't. We need a more nuanced and segmented understanding of the approaches that institutions are taking if we hope to see improved outcomes across the system. Therefore, the objectives of this publication are to:

1. Provide a baseline for the rate of iPASS adoption
2. Provide an Advising Reform Roadmap for identifying and assessing the most likely roadblocks that prevent an institution from achieving an integrated system for tracking student success
3. Propose an institutional segmentation framework that allows institutions to contextualize their approach to advising reform

MEASURING iPASS ADOPTION

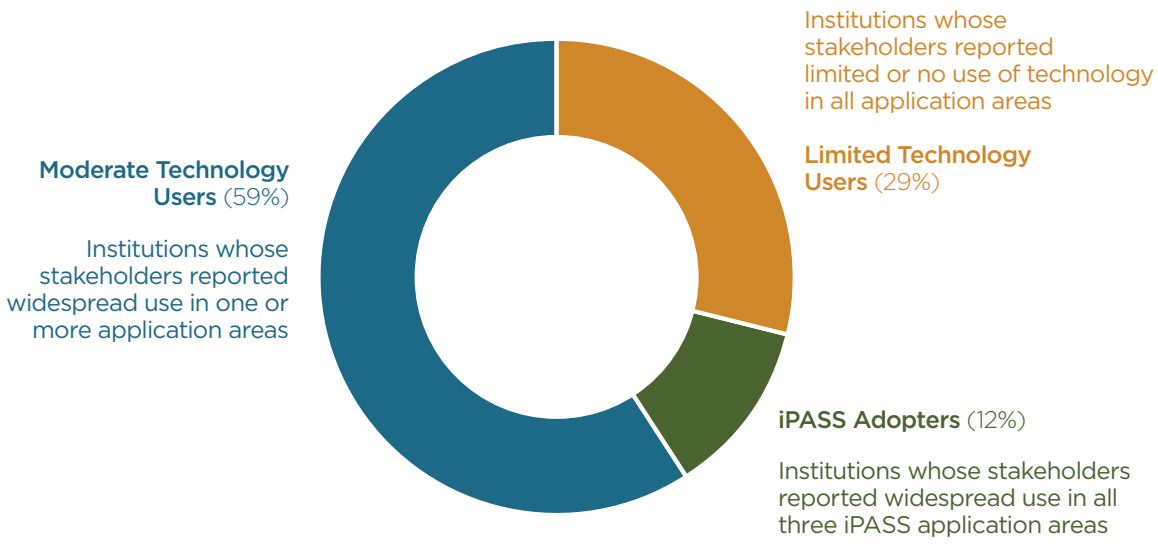
Our research shows that when technology in the three core categories of iPASS are adopted and used in a widespread manner, institutions also report stronger institutional alignment, accountability, and collaboration. While technology adoption alone is by no means sufficient, it can be a key lever in designing and implementing a planning and advising structure and process that best serves students and supports student persistence and on-time graduation. Independently, solutions around goal setting, course planning and degree audit, analytics and reporting, and identification of at-risk students are seen as important. But working in concert, they allow an institution to reduce the transactional activities that take up so much time in meetings with advisees, and they improve the sharing of information among key staff members and departments. The productivity gains offered by this integrated approach can create an environment in which student-advising teams target their expertise to the students who need them most.

Today, 12% of institutions are iPASS Adopters, or exhibit widespread use of technology in all three areas. Mid-size and large private universities are most likely to be iPASS Adopters, followed by public universities of the same size. These institutions report the highest effectiveness levels for technology used today to support academic planning and advising. Community colleges and small public institutions are least likely to be iPASS Adopters.

TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENTATION: DEFINITIONS

Advising Technology Use Categories: Respondent Breakdown (%)

n = 1,096



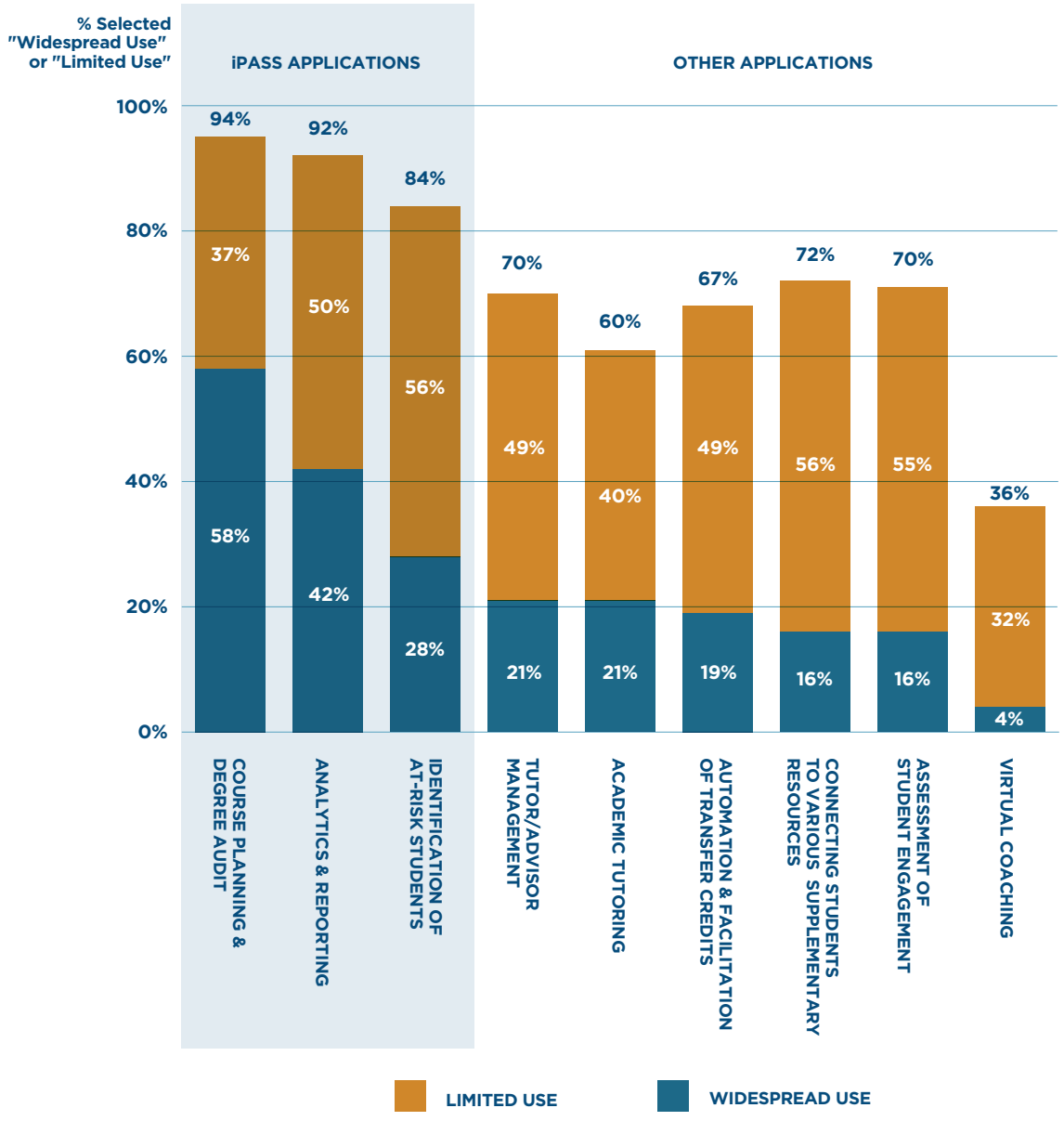
SIGNS OF PROGRESS IN PLANNING AND ADVISING

iPASS as a documented theory of change is just beginning to emerge. Although there is limited market-wide adoption of technology in the core categories of iPASS, there are a large number of institutions that report widespread use of at least one planning and advising solution.

ADOPTION OF PLANNING AND ADVISING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Which of the following planning and advising categories does your institution utilize technology to support?

n = 1,096



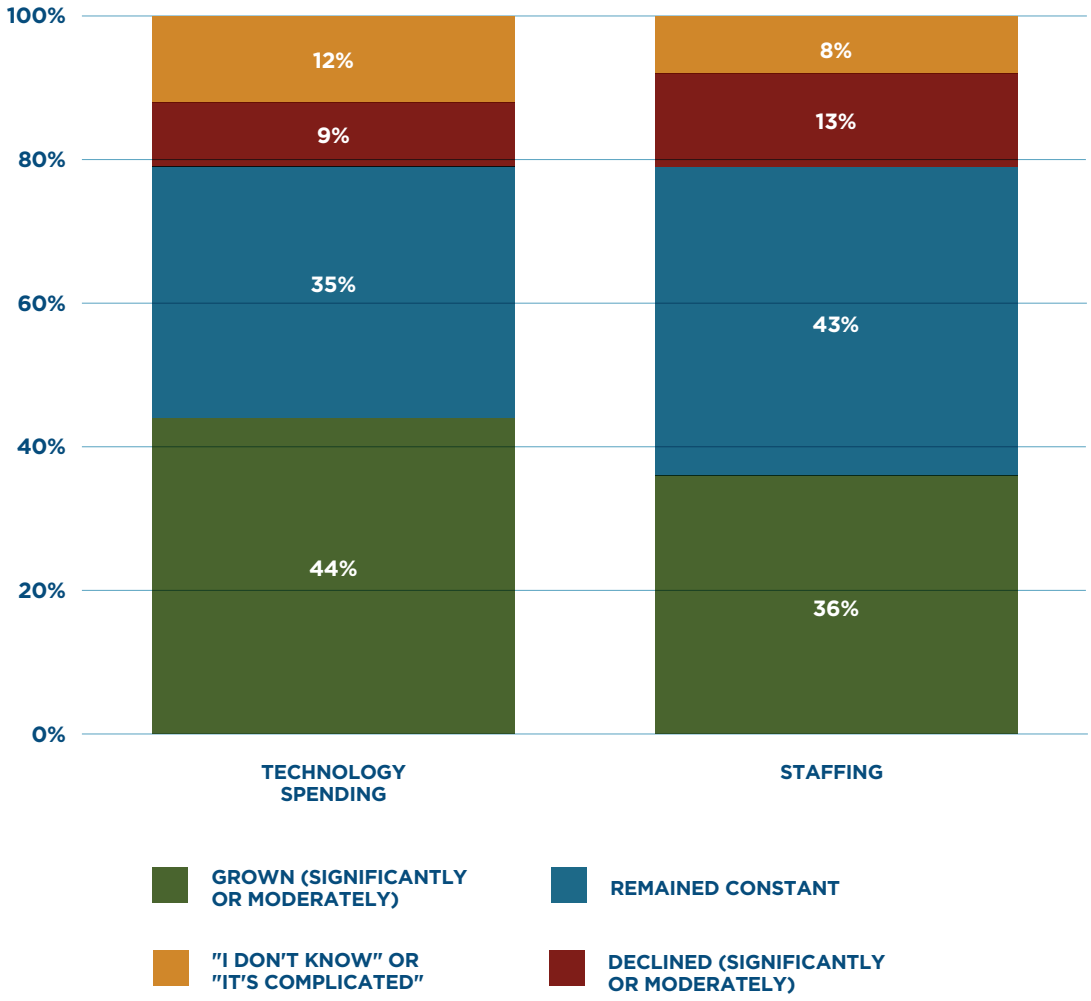
There are additional indicators that institutions are looking to improve planning and advising. Comments highlight strong leadership support, and the number of staff dedicated to planning and advising and the amount of spending on advising technology are both showing growth. Though the majority of institutions exhibit this trend, growth in staffing and advising-technology spending is particularly high at institutions with widespread use of each of the three core iPASS technologies.

GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY SPENDING AND ADVISING STAFFING

Over the past 3 years at your institution, (a) how has the level of staff dedicated to undergraduate academic planning and advising changed and (b) how has spending on technology dedicated to undergraduate academic planning and advising changed?

(*Only respondents who have knowledge of "Institution-level advising"*)

n = 937



- *"The institutional commitment is strong. Determining the best methods for reaching a high number of students effectively is a complicated process. There is also a need to balance human resource solutions and the use of technology solutions, to assist in finding the best use of financial resources."* Executive Director, Academic Support, Public 2-Year
- *"Our new president is working to get everyone on the same page in regard to advisement philosophy and definition. This will be part of the college's strategic plan over the next year. Many of the answers that describe the college's current situation are expected to change in a positive direction."* Vice President, Student Development, Public 2-Year

CHALLENGES TO IMPROVEMENT

While these indicators are favorable, survey responses highlight the work that still needs to be done to improve the advising and planning function. While the vast majority (82%) of institutions agree that "student retention is a primary objective in my institution's strategic plan," only 19% of respondents agree with the statement "Overall, my institution successfully achieves an ideal advising situation." Respondents point to challenges across multiple dimensions.

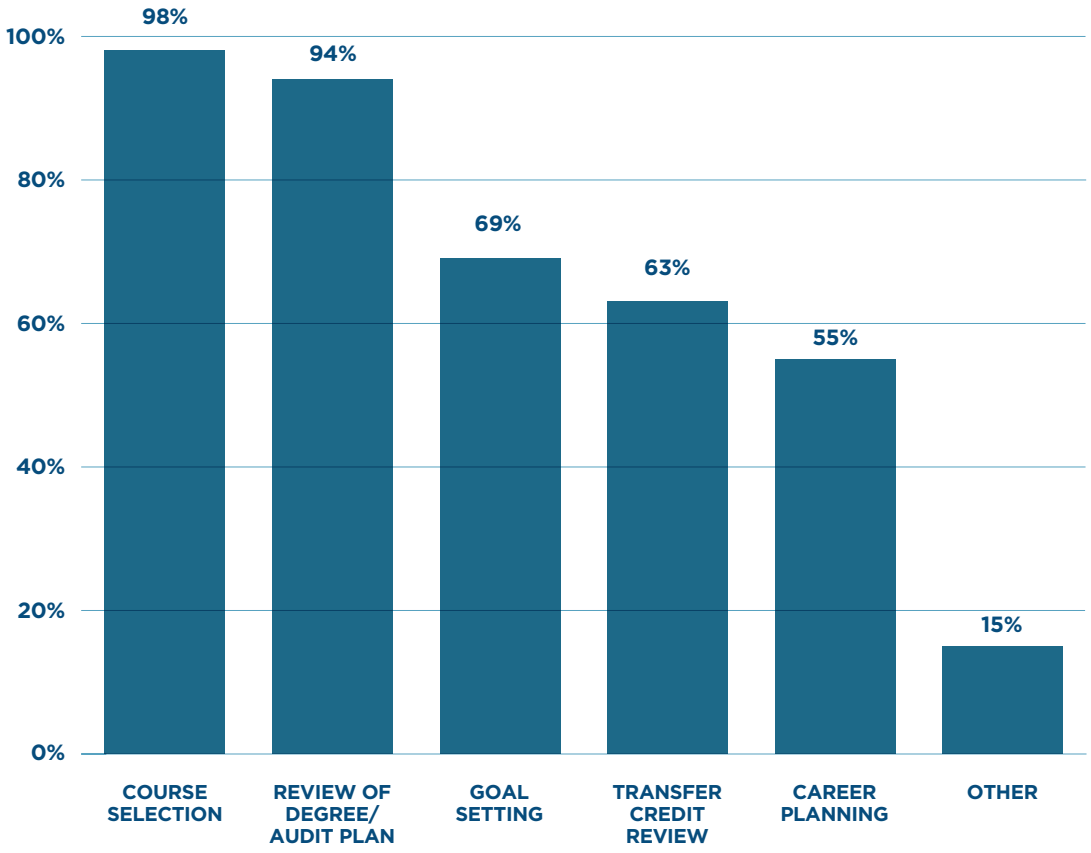
CHALLENGE	RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS
Leadership	• *"Clear, concise, correct communication of information. This can only come with accountability, and nobody 'owns' student success at this institution. This means many students receive incorrect information, or are directed to inappropriate resources, or fall through the cracks entirely – if we could teach them all the 'how to find out what you need to know' the first semester, they'd at least know where to find accurate information. Currently, however, it's like trying to keep frogs in a wheelbarrow."* Assistant Director, Academic Advising, Public 4-Year • *"Everyone having 'the solution' to a problem and not working and supporting each other toward comprehensive solutions."* Director, Career Services, Private 4-Year
Technology	• *"Technology systems are not integrated, and capabilities are limited."* Advisor, Advisor, Public 2-Year, Public 2-Year • *"Keeping up with the implementation of so many different software applications at the same time is taking a lot of our advisors' time. Hopefully, a year from now, this will not be an issue!"* Associate Vice President, Academic Services, Public 4-Year
Advising Coordination	• *"At our institution we haven't been able to coordinate technology well; this forces advisors to spend a lot of time doing things by hand that could be done more efficiently electronically. Once we are able to adjust, buy, and/or incorporate technology, my hope is to focus more on the high-touch aspects of retention activities."* Director, Student Affairs, Public 2-Year
Advising Capacity	• *"I feel we have what we need in place, but human resources is a big issue. Most of our advisors have 600+ advisees. That is way too many!"* Assistant Dean, Advising, Private 4-Year

Additionally, most advising sessions appear to continue to focus on transactional activities like course selection, with only 69% of respondents indicating that goal setting is involved in a typical advising session, and even fewer respondents (55%) noting career planning.

CONTENTS OF TYPICAL ADVISING SESSION

What is involved in a typical academic advising session? (*Select all that apply*)

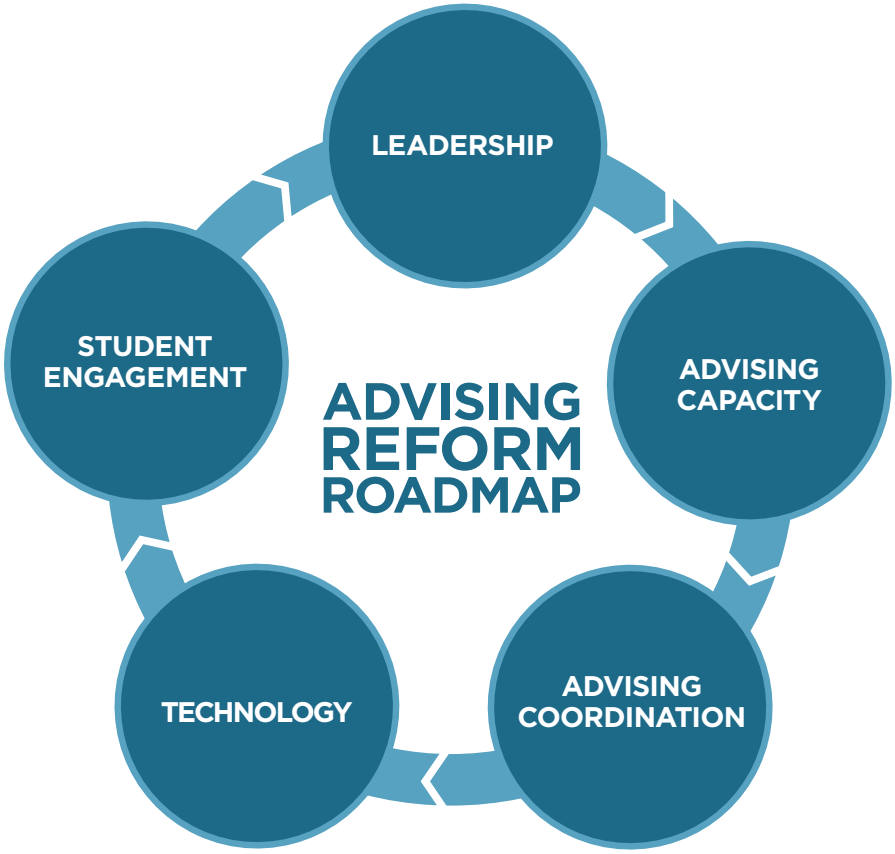
n = 1,096



Each of these challenges impacts an institution differently. While technology use is an important variable in understanding how institutions approach planning and advising, it does not fully address the variations in outcomes and advising approaches, or the varied impact of the challenges that institutions face.

AN ADVISING REFORM ROADMAP

In our analysis of the survey results, five intervention priorities—leadership, advising capacity, advising coordination, technology, and student engagement—emerged for institutions, depending on where they are on the road toward an ideal advising situation.



The segmentation analysis below provides guidance to institutions on the important contextual elements that frame the Advising Reform Roadmap. The individual segments reflect the different points at which institutions may find themselves on the path toward ideal advising and planning situations, and therefore define which of the five types of interventions should be prioritized.

A SNAPSHOT OF ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTATION

The segmentation analysis presented in this section provides a deeper look at institutional attitudes and preferences toward advising.

Multiple variables were considered for the segmentation analysis, including budget, centralization, coordination and collaboration, faculty resistance, leadership and ownership, outcomes, and technology adoption. Ultimately, five key variables defined the institutional segments:

- **Coordination:** Level of cross-departmental collaboration in support of student success
- **Ownership:** Clarity of ownership over student success and retention
- **Technology vs. People:** Degree to which technology or people have the greatest potential to improve academic planning and advising
- **Technology Effectiveness:** Extent to which technology used today enhances the advising function
- **Outcomes:** Degree to which the institution achieves an ideal advising situation

SEGMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Four institutional segments emerged based on respondents' perspectives and attitudes toward advising and technology use. Institutions that fall in the **Limited Technology Users** segment are currently not making much use of technology in advising. Those in the **Low Fuel** segment use some technology in advising but focus instead on people-based solutions, even as they struggle with people resources (the "fuel") and with coordination and ownership of student success. The **Check Engine** segment contains institutions that view technology as a good approach to improving advising but that are struggling with technology integration issues (eliciting a metaphorical "check engine" light). Finally, the **Equipped Navigators** segment is for institutions that have both the people factors and the technology factors in place, to form an integrated planning and advising function. While Limited Technology Users are at one end of the spectrum and Equipped Navigators are at the other, the two categories in the middle represent divergent paths rather than a linear progression toward Equipped Navigators. These segments form the basic contextual categories for consideration of the Advising Reform Roadmap.

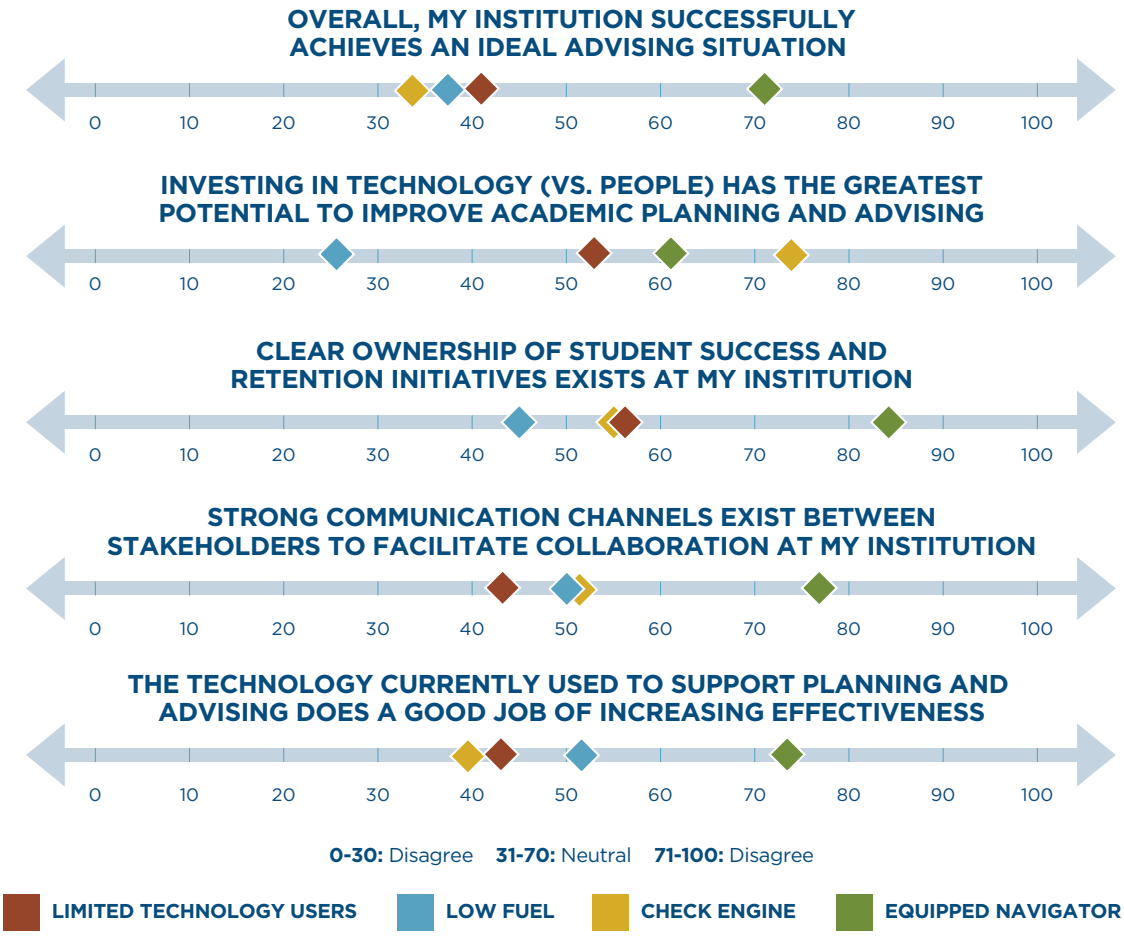
LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS	LOW FUEL	CHECK ENGINE	EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS
			
Very little use of technology. Across the board, less clear on ownership, communication, and funding.	Do not yet view themselves as having achieved advising success. Favor people over technology as a solution for planning and advising and struggle specifically with lack of ownership and accountability, as well as with coordination across departments and effective technology use.	Do not yet view themselves as having achieved advising success. Favorable toward technology adoption to improve advising but struggle with technology integration. Lack strong ownership and coordination across departments.	Positive view of having achieved advising success. Have strong ownership, alignment, and coordination on student success initiatives, and greater use of planning and advising solutions.
29% of stakeholder respondents	23% of stakeholder respondents	19% of stakeholder respondents	29% of stakeholder respondents
0% iPASS adopters	9% iPASS adopters	7% iPASS adopters	29% iPASS adopters
41% 2-year 16% 4-year public 43% 4-year private	39% 2-year 27% 4-year public 34% 4-year private	43% 2-year 25% 4-year public 32% 4-year private	33% 2-year 22% 4-year public 45% 4-year private
52% report institutional centralization 37% report one individual with overall responsibility for advising	49% report institutional centralization 35% report one individual with overall responsibility for advising	52% report institutional centralization 38% report one individual with overall responsibility for advising	62% report institutional centralization 51% report one individual with overall responsibility for advising

For the most part, the four institutional segments cut across different sizes and types of institutions. In terms of centralization, advising at institutions in the Equipped Navigators segment is more likely to originate centrally, and 48% of Equipped Navigators respondents believe their institution's approach to advising is becoming more centralized.

ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTS: STAKEHOLDER TENDENCIES

In order to help us understand your institution, please use the sliders below to indicate where your institution's tendencies and preferences fall on these dimensions.

n = 839



SEGMENT-BY-SEGMENT BARRIERS

The main barriers that institutions face in improving planning and advising vary by institutional segment.

TOP 5 BARRIERS TO IMPROVING THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC AND PLANNING FUNCTION

LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS	LOW FUEL	CHECK ENGINE	EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS
Limited budget – 54%	Limited budget – 44%	Limited budget – 56%	Limited budget – 33%
Lack of coordination across departments – 40%	Limited advisor resources – 42%	Limited faculty time – 44%	Limited faculty time – 30%
Technical integration challenges – 37%	Faculty resistance to change - 40%	Limited advisor resources – 43%	Students are not taking advantage of resources – 29%
Faculty resistance to change – 36%	Limited faculty time – 40%	Technical integration challenges – 41%	Limited advisor resources – 24%
Limited advisor resources – 36%	Lack of coordination across departments – 38%	Lack of coordination across departments – 41%	Faculty resistance to change – 21%

Budget and resources are concerns across all segments, but some nuances also emerge between segments.

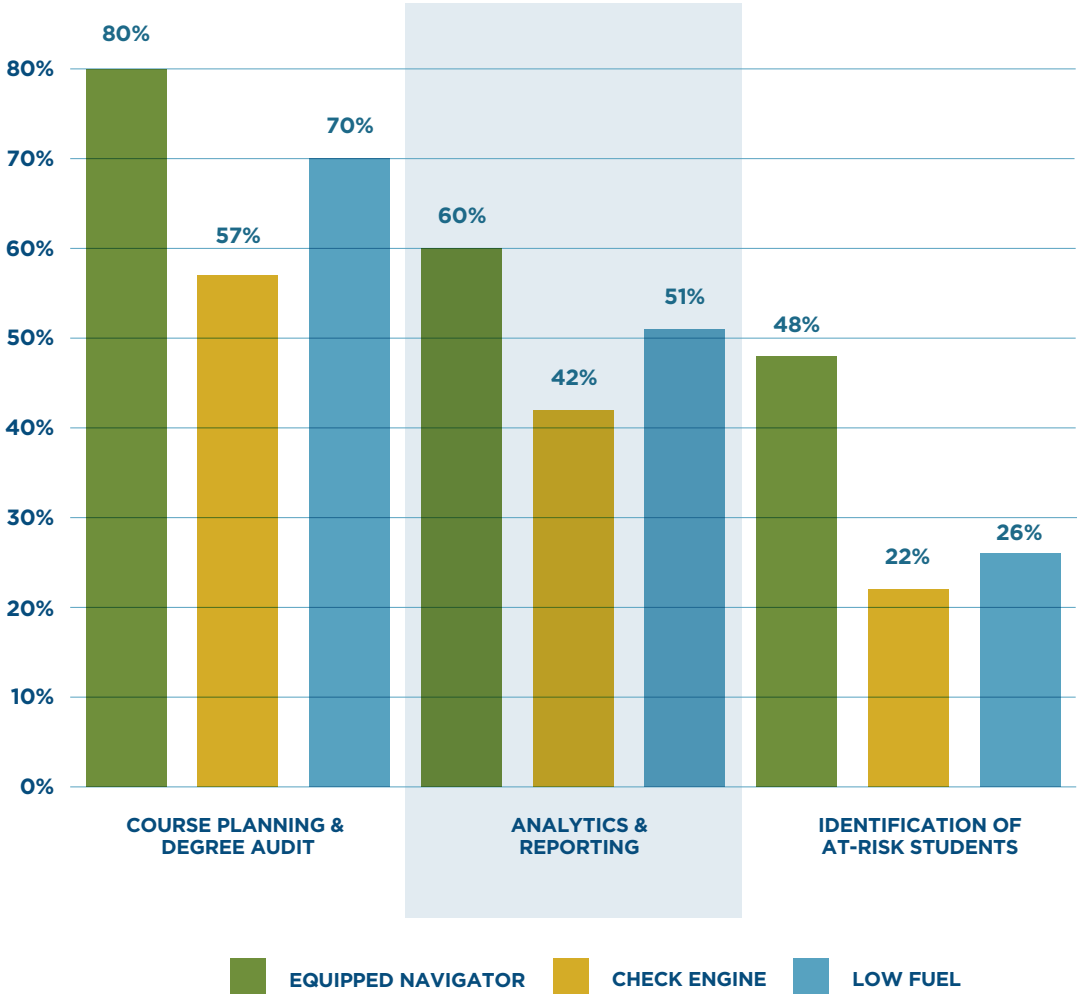
- While budget is the top barrier for all segments, it is cited by only 33% of Equipped Navigator respondents, compared to 56% of Check Engines, 54% of Limited Technology Users, and 44% of Low Fuels
- Equipped Navigators are the only group to highlight "students are not taking advantage of resources" in their top five
- All segments except Equipped Navigators cite "lack of coordination across departments" as a top barrier
- 41% of Check Engines and 37% of Limited Technology Users indicate "technical integration challenges," which does not appear in the top five barriers for other segments
- "Faculty resistance to change" is in the top three only for the Low Fuel segment, which reflects this segment's people-related challenges

These barriers corroborate our findings throughout the survey. The fact that Check Engines are worried about technology integration is echoed in the technology adoption responses. Although Check Engines view technology as a solution to improve planning and advising, they actually adopt technology at a lower rate than Low Fuels. The resulting hypothesis is that while Check Engines are favorable toward technology, they struggle to implement and integrate technology solutions, creating more significant barriers to improving student planning and advising.

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION OF CORE APPLICATIONS BY ATTITUDINAL SEGMENT

Which of the following planning and advising categories does your institution utilize technology to support?

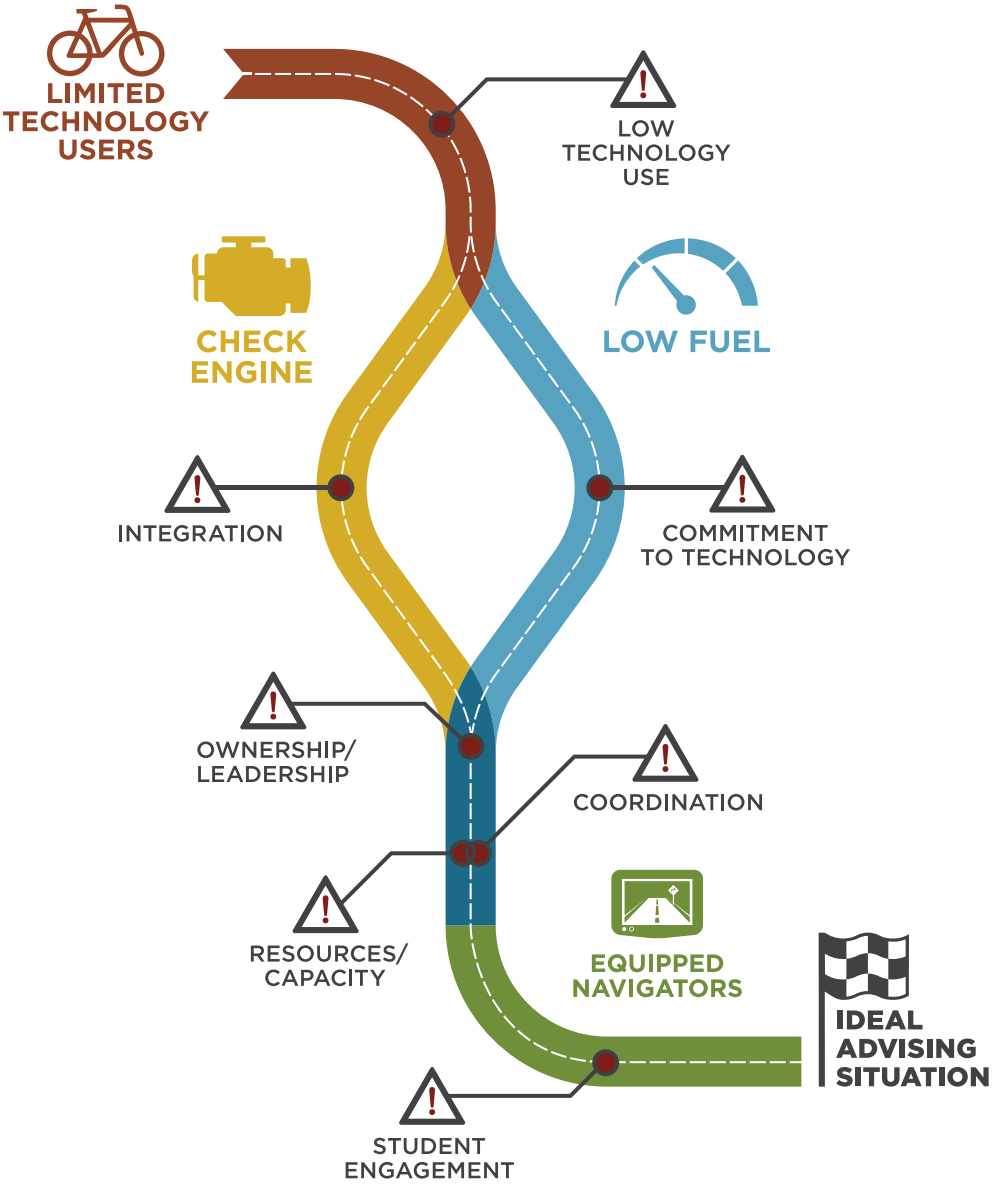
n = 594



ADVISING REFORM ROADMAP IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS

Each segment represents a point on the road toward an ideal advising situation. In some cases, an institution may have encountered a detour, such as integration challenges, and needs to get back on a path to success. Other institutions have barely begun the journey and are not yet prioritizing planning and advising as a path toward improving student retention and success. Even Equipped Navigators, who may feel that they are out ahead of the roadblocks, may encounter hazards going forward.

ROAD TO IDEAL ADVISING SITUATION



The relevance of each intervention, as well as broad actions in each area, are described below. While the specific priorities will be different for each segment's institutions, these focus areas have emerged as critical for transforming the planning and advising function.

LEADERSHIP

While 82% of stakeholders say student retention is a primary objective in their strategic plan, only 46% of stakeholders believe clear ownership of retention initiatives exists at their institution.

Current State

Clear leadership of retention and student success initiatives provides clarity on the initiative's goals and objectives and establishes ownership for driving any necessary change. Of the Equipped Navigators, 83% agree that "clear ownership for student success and retention initiatives exists at my institution," and 51% indicate that there is one individual with overall responsibility for undergraduate advising. Comparatively, only 18% of Low Fuels and 34% of Check Engines agree that clear ownership exists at their institution, and 35% and 38%, respectively, indicate one individual with overall responsibility.

The Road Ahead

The structure of academic planning and advising can be quite different at each institution and still achieve this goal of clear ownership. Based on our survey, it is evident that there is a wide range of models. For example, 55% of respondents indicate that their student success initiatives are institutionally centralized, and a third report growing more centralized. However, strong ownership does not require centralization.

Going forward, institutions must be clear about how decisions will be made and must create an organizational structure with unambiguous ownership. A strategic vision and related plans for changing the management of planning and advising should be created, communicated, and supported by leadership at multiple levels of the institution.

ADVISING CAPACITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Despite growing institutional spending on advising technology, only 26% of stakeholders believe that retention initiatives are well funded at their institution.

Current State

Limited faculty time, limited budget, and limited advisor resources were listed as top barriers to improving planning and advising, and they are the clearest indicators of the resource challenges facing institutions. Work still needs to be done to fully understand comparable advisor-to-advisee ratios based on the different models for planning and advising, but the reality is that many institutions feel capacity constraints impact their ability to adopt technology solutions and to improve the planning and advising function. At the same time, institutions that have invested in technology report growth in human resources and advising capacity. However, institutions struggle to smoothly navigate the transition to a virtuous cycle. This transition seems to be especially difficult for Check Engines. These institutions have invested in technology but have not yet been able to build a business case for additional advising capacity.

The Road Ahead

Institutions must assess their current use of resources toward planning and advising to understand the trade-offs created by resource constraints. By conducting a return-on-investment analysis for technology investments versus people investments, institutions will be able to make educated decisions about the impact of technology adoption on future costs and resources. Hiring decisions in advising are often driven by ratios and enrollment numbers. Institutions need to develop ways to invest in human resources that consider the time needed to achieve impact and that emphasize process improvement.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

85% of stakeholders agree that coordinated efforts on academic advising yield better solutions, but just 35% agree that strong communication channels exist at their institution.

Current State

In part 2 of ***Driving Toward a Degree: The Evolution of Planning and Advising in Higher Education***, institutions were encouraged to look through the workflow lens to evaluate the student success environment. "Vendor solutions can and should help to standardize and streamline processes, but the technology should not define the process. When adopting a technology that enables a particular workflow or process, institutions should seek to strike a balance between replicating well-established processes in the technology and adopting new processes as a result of the technology." Based on the results of the survey conducted for the present publication, it is clear that institutions continue to struggle with communication and coordination across the institution, regardless of technology adoption.

Although Equipped Navigators fair better, less than 20% of Check Engines and Low Fuels agree that "strong communication channels exist between stakeholders to facilitate collaboration at my institution."

The Road Ahead

Every institution should assess the current advising structure to improve communication and coordination. Where are opportunities for greater communication? Who should be responsible? How can technology support communication? Are the challenges linked to a lack of leadership, conflicting roles, information asymmetry, or process breakdowns?

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS AND INTEGRATION

Just 12% of stakeholders report widespread use of technology in all three core iPASS areas at their institution, and only a third agree that technology used today does a good job of increasing effectiveness.

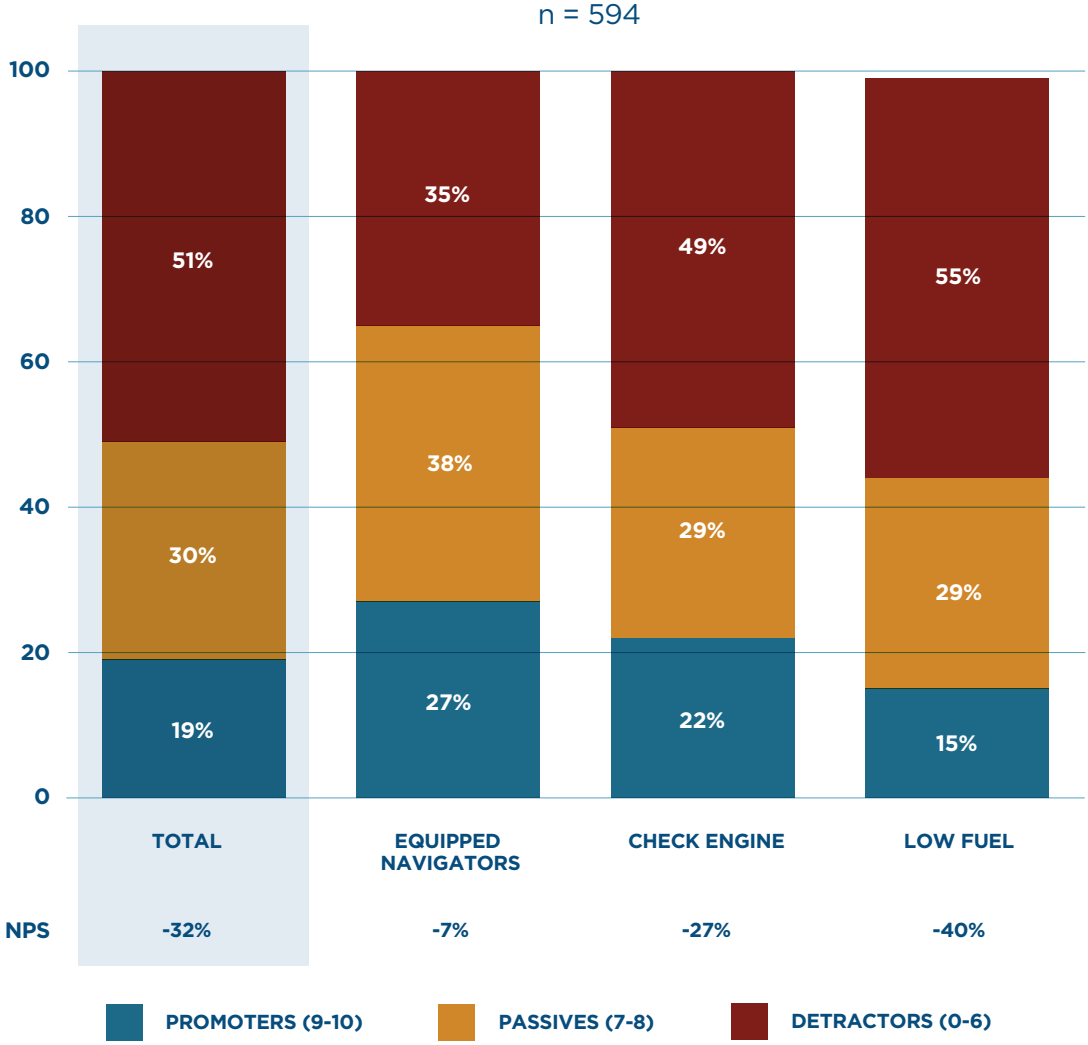
Current State

Survey responses indicate a low satisfaction with current suppliers in the market. Overall and by segment, respondents are unlikely to recommend their primary planning and advising tool to a friend or colleague.

NO SEGMENT IS A NET PROMOTER OF ADVISING TECHNOLOGY, BUT EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS MORE LIKELY TO RECOMMEND TOOLS

How likely are you to recommend the primary tool you use for planning and advising to a friend or colleague in your institution or others? (*Scale of 0-10*)

n = 594



At the same time, solutions are not turnkey, and they require investment to align with needs. As noted above, Check Engines struggle particularly with integration, resulting in frustration, wasted resources, and reluctance to adopt additional technologies.

The Road Ahead

Institutions and suppliers alike must focus on the development of integrated solutions and must make a clear assessment of the resources required to get new products and services fully functional. Additionally, cross-functional training will support implementation, greater usage, and communication.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Reported as a barrier by 88% of stakeholders, Student Engagement is the highest priority for institutions with high technology adoption that have tackled issues around capabilities and process.

Current State

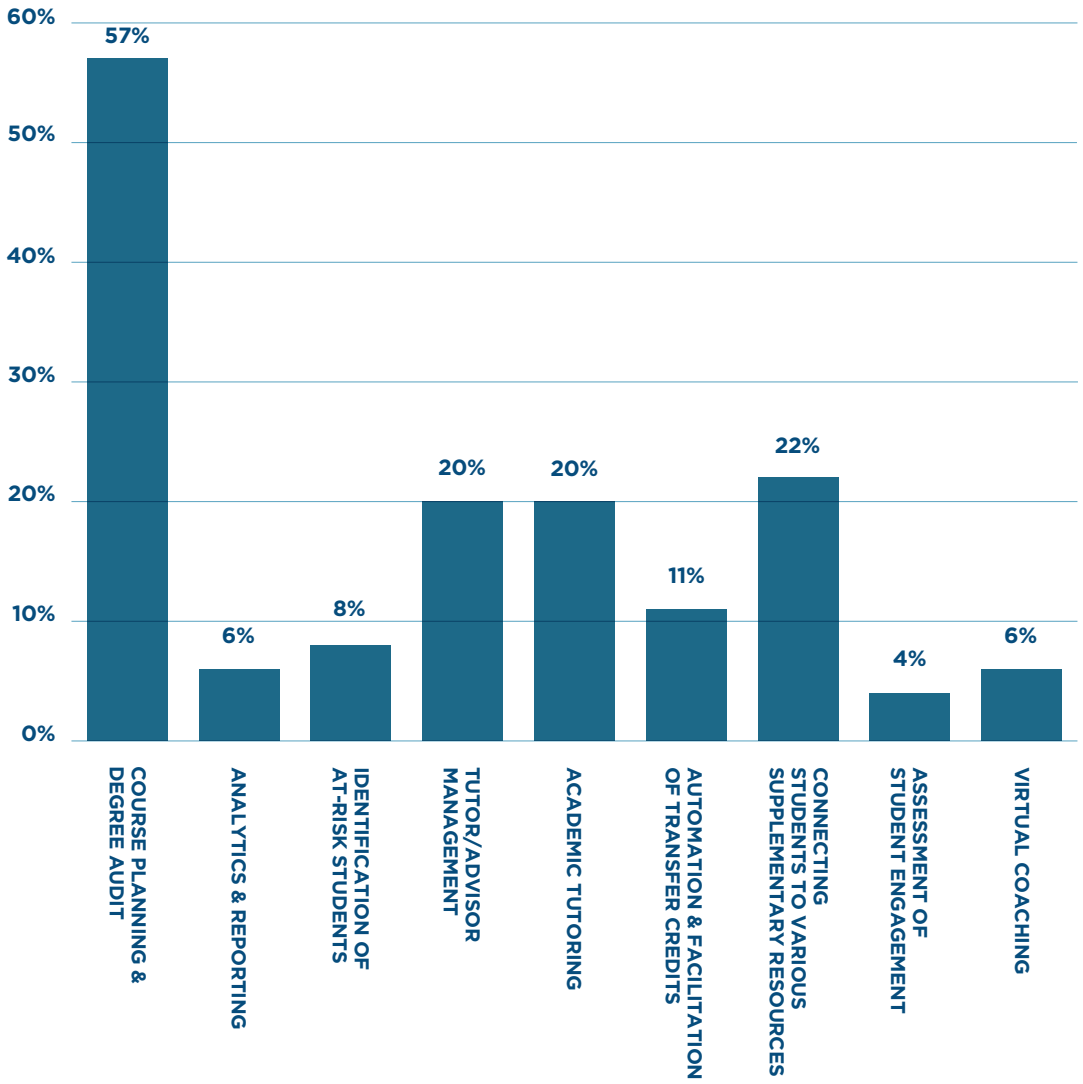
Equipped Navigators highlight students not taking advantage of resources as a top barrier to improving planning and advising. While it is critical to have the right capacity, internal processes, leadership, and integration, all these factors are moot if students are not engaging in the planning and advising system. As noted earlier, most institutions continue to report heavy focus on course selection and review of degree plan during academic advising sessions, which may fall short of addressing student needs – particularly in regard to goal setting and career planning.

In addition, only 46% of respondents agree with the statement "Our institution effectively provides access to tools and resources that students can use to serve themselves in the area of academic planning and advising," and most do not enable access through a mobile device.

MOBILE SELF SERVICE SOLUTIONS

In which categories can students access self-service planning and advising (e.g., on a smartphone or tablet)? *(Select all that apply)*

n = 1,096



The Road Ahead

Institutions must focus first on aligning processes, technology, and advisors and on training advisors about their changing role so that advising content can adapt to align with student needs. This may require opening up paths for self-service around transactional activities in order to ensure the best use of direct advisor time. Personalizing the advising experience is a relational process, not a transactional one. The Advising Reform Roadmap is designed to help institutions focus on the key elements of advising reform in order to allow front-line advisors to continuously adapt to the changing needs of students as they work toward their degree.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE SEGMENT PROFILE

In higher education, there is a focus on best practices and identifying exemplar institutions. Unfortunately, these exemplar institutions and the best practices they advocate don't take into account the particular context and maturity level of a given institution. The best practice for a high-performing institution may not be that effective for an institution that is just beginning the process of rebuilding or transforming its advising function. Instead, we would advocate for an approach that identifies best practices for a given step along the way.

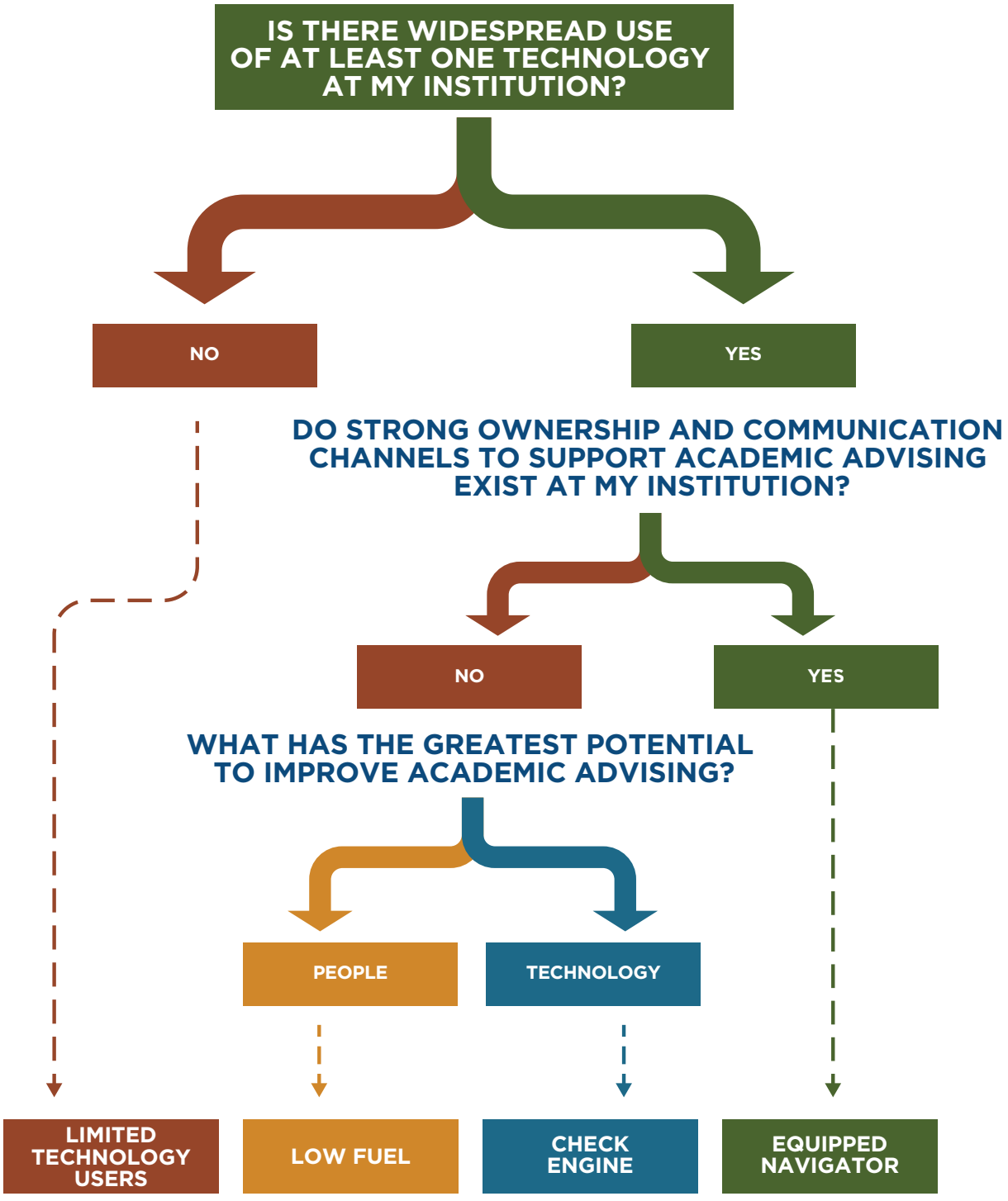
In this study – the first annual "state of the field" assessment – we have established a baseline for outcomes data, but we do not have the trends data to determine what inputs drive performance. Indeed, within each of these segments, there is a wide range of retention and graduation performance outcomes. These segments simply represent where an institution is with regard to key indicators for planning and advising. It is helpful for institutions to complete a self-assessment in order to align recommended actions with the realities of the institution.

Note that while the self assessment activity below refers to institutional advising, the tool can be applied at the unit level as well depending on the purview of the stakeholder.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

- To what extent do you believe that your institution successfully achieves an ideal advising situation today?
  - Great Extent to Not at All
- To what extent do you feel that there is clear ownership of student success and retention initiatives at your institution?
  - Great Extent to Not at All
- Which of the following statements best characterizes your perspective on communication at your institution?
  - There is no cross-departmental collaboration in support of student success
  - Communication channels exist to facilitate collaboration but are not used effectively
  - Strong communication channels exist between stakeholders to facilitate collaboration at my institution
- Which of the following statements best characterizes your perspective on the role of technology?
  - Investing in people will have a greater positive impact on academic planning and advising than investing in technology
  - Investing in technology and investing in people will have an equal impact on improving academic planning and advising
  - Investing in technology will have a greater positive impact on academic planning and advising than investing in people
- How effective do you think your institution's use of technology is?
  - Highly Effective to Not Effective

SELF-ASSESSMENT



ACTIONS TO IMPROVE PLANNING AND ADVISING FUNCTIONS

Based on this self-assessment, your institution will be more aligned with one of the four segments. In addition to the recommendations above for moving forward in each area, below are specific priorities that you should consider implementing to address the key intervention categories that align with your segment profile.

	LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS	LOW FUEL	CHECK ENGINE	EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS
Leading Roadblocks	iPASS technology adoption	Perception of technology as a solution; Ownership	Integration of technology; Advising coordination	Student adoption
Key Intervention Areas	Technology tools and integration	Technology tools and integration; Leadership	Technology tools and integration; Process improvement	Student engagement; Leadership
Near-Term Institutional Priorities	• Identify the biggest pain points in academic advising for both staff and students, and determine where new tools or increased training on current ones can help • Reform data collection processes to gather more reliable data and increase the impact from reporting tools	• Identify clear owners for planning and advising and communicate these leadership positions across the institution • Identify champions of standout technology use cases to communicate technology benefits to the campus community • Assess ROI for new technologies to understand trade-offs	• Review current tools to assess integration across systems, and prioritize integration when adopting new tools • Use training and provider support services to ensure adoption and integration of new tools • Define new processes and build consensus before adopting technology • Establish clear communication channels with access to shared information	• Engage students in long-term program and career planning in conjunction with advisors • Align messages throughout the system, regardless of owner, level of centralization, etc.

CONCLUSION

Supporting students to earn a college degree in a timely and cost-effective way should be the goal of every postsecondary institution. Too often, that goal is out of reach for millions of students. In addition to academic hurdles, students struggle with personal or institutional barriers such as balancing work and school, financial troubles, lack of engagement, and an unclear path to the workforce. For those institutions looking to improve completion rates, designing an effective and efficient planning and advising function is a high priority. These institutions are on the drive to degree completion for underserved and at-risk learners.

While few institutions believe they have achieved an ideal advising situation, we are starting to see a roadmap emerge. Technology should not be seen as a panacea, but we believe it is a critical component of a planning and advising function that is integrated and oriented toward continuous improvement. The adoption of iPASS technologies can provide transparency for all stakeholders and improve efficiency within the function. In turn, the appropriate use and integration of technology will facilitate strong coordination across departments.

This report is part of a larger initiative called "Driving Toward a Degree" to recognize institutions, their advising teams, and other student-facing staff who are working hard to help learners succeed. Building on the results of this first annual survey, future publications will continue to identify and define models of technology use and planning and advising structures, as well as their impact on student outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of this paper owes much to the support and engagement of a diverse group of individuals and organizations.

Fundamental to our research was the data collected from over 1,400 postsecondary faculty, administrators, and professional advisors through our surveys. We greatly appreciate the input of all our survey respondents, and their contribution to advancing the field's knowledge of student success and retention is postsecondary education.

We would also like to thank our initiative partners who assisted us in accessing their member bases and provided input and feedback throughout our research and analysis process. Our initiative partners are:

- **Global Community for Academic Advising**
  NACADA promotes and supports quality academic advising to enhance the educational development of students at higher education institutions. NACADA provides a forum for discussion, debate, and exchange of ideas pertaining to academic advising through events and publications. NACADA has over 13,000 members including professional advisors/ counselors, faculty, administrators, graduate and undergraduate students.

- **National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)**
  NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.

- **National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)**
  The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), founded in 1937, is an organization of more than 15,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. NACAC is committed to maintaining high standards that foster ethical and social responsibility among those involved in the transition process, as outlined in the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice (SPGP).

Thanks also to the Postsecondary Success team at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for their support of this work. We also thank our research partner, Babson Survey Research Group, for its expertise in the development and administration of our surveys and the analysis of data collected through those instruments. In addition, the teams at Communications Strategy Group and Can of Creative were incredibly patient and understanding as we moved from ideas to drafts to professional execution of these two white papers.

Finally, any errors, omissions, or inconsistencies across these two publications are the responsibility of Tyton Partners alone.

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Gates Bryant, *Partner*

Gates Bryant is a general manager and strategy consultant with a successful 15-year track record of bridging the gap between innovative strategy and practical execution, while serving in various strategy, product management, and operational roles in the education market. He joined Tyton Partners as a partner in 2011.

Abigail Callahan, *Senior Principal*

Abigail Callahan brings more than 12 years of strategic consulting experience to her work with education organizations. Her areas of expertise include new program and product development, project management, and strategic planning. Throughout her career in education, Abigail has helped dozens of higher education institutions understand enrollment trends, develop and implement marketing plans, assess financial aid strategy, explore the opportunity for online and adult learner education, evaluate third-party providers, and develop long-term growth plans.

Dr. Jeff Seaman, *Director, Babson Survey Research Group*

Dr. Seaman has been conducting research in the impact of technology on higher education and K-12 for over a decade. His most recent work includes annual survey reports on the state of online learning among US higher education, reports on open educational resource awareness and adoption, and international survey on entrepreneurship.

Jon Hornstein, *Associate*

Jon is a strategy consultant with four years of experience working with institutions, companies, foundations, and non-profit organizations within the Education Sector. He joined Tyton Partners as an associate in 2015 through the Education Pioneers Analyst Fellowship program.

ABOUT TYTON PARTNERS

Tyton Partners, formerly Education Growth Advisors, is the leading provider of investment banking and strategy consulting services to the global knowledge sector. Built on the tenets of insight, connectivity, and tenacity, Tyton Partners leverages in-depth market knowledge and perspective to help organizations pursue solutions that have lasting impact.

As an evolved advisory services firm, Tyton Partners offers a unique spectrum of services that supports companies, organizations, and investors as they navigate the complexities of the education, media, and information markets. Unlike most firms, Tyton Partners understands the intricacies and nuances of these markets and plays an integral role in shaping the efforts that drive change within them. The firm's expertise is predicated on its principals' years of experience working across market segments – including the preK–12, postsecondary, corporate training, and lifelong learning sectors – and with a diverse array of organizations, from emergent and established private and publicly traded companies, to non-profit organizations, institutions, and foundations, to private equity and venture capital firms and other investors.

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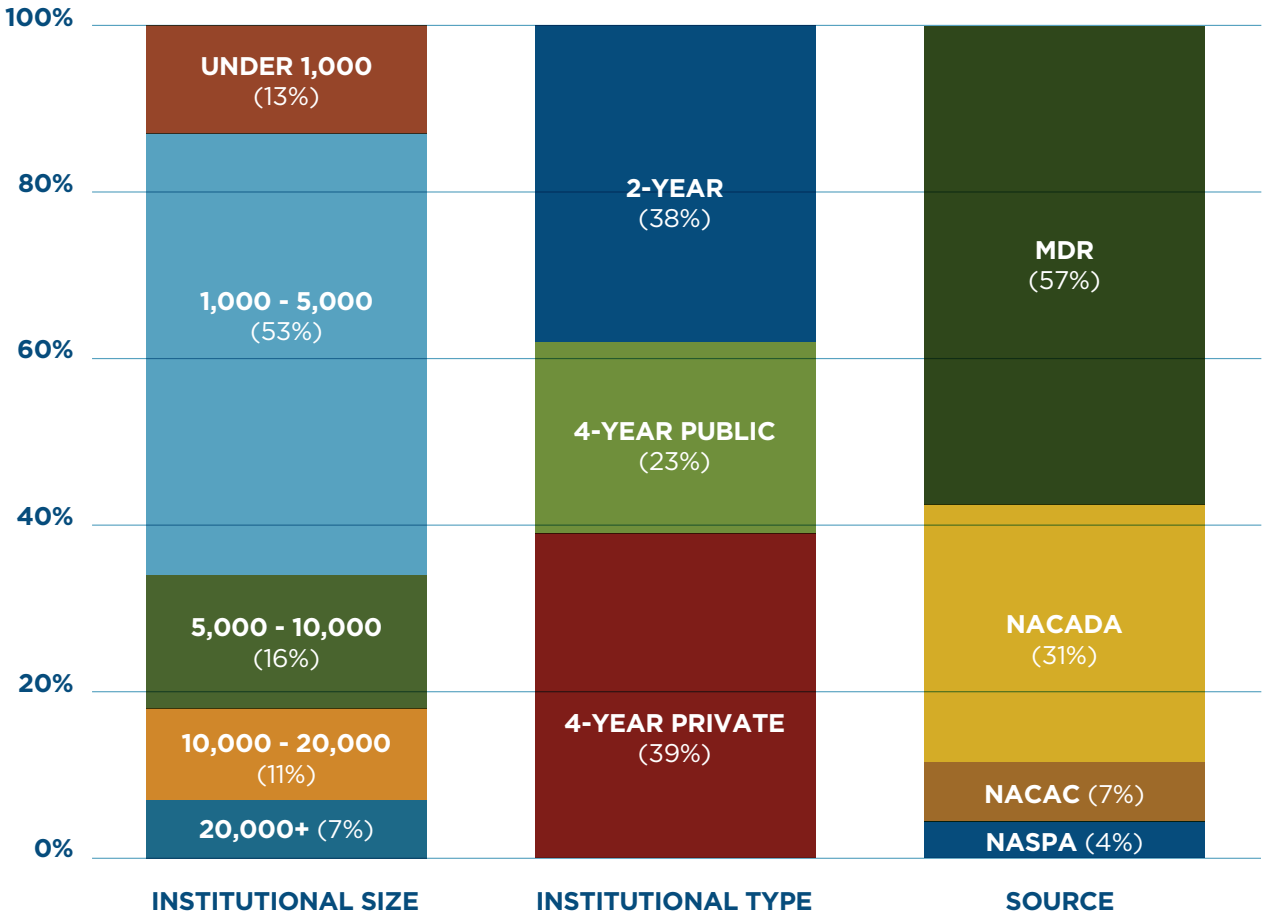
Note: Totals on charts may not add to 100% due to rounding.

A1:

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

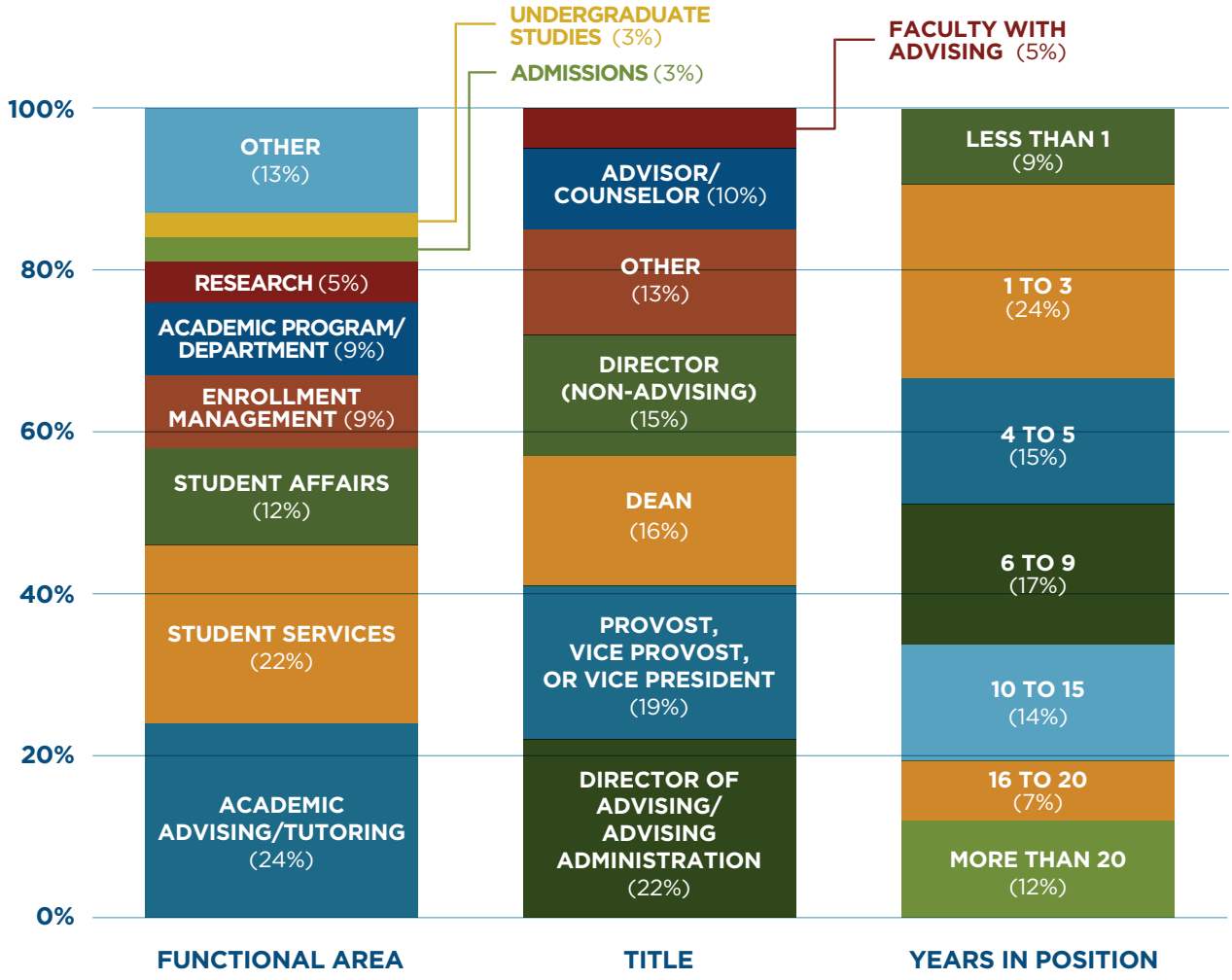
INSTITUTIONAL SIZE, INSTITUTIONAL TYPE, AND SOURCE OF RESPONDENT

n = 1,096



FUNCTIONAL AREA, TITLE, AND YEARS IN POSITION

n = 1,096





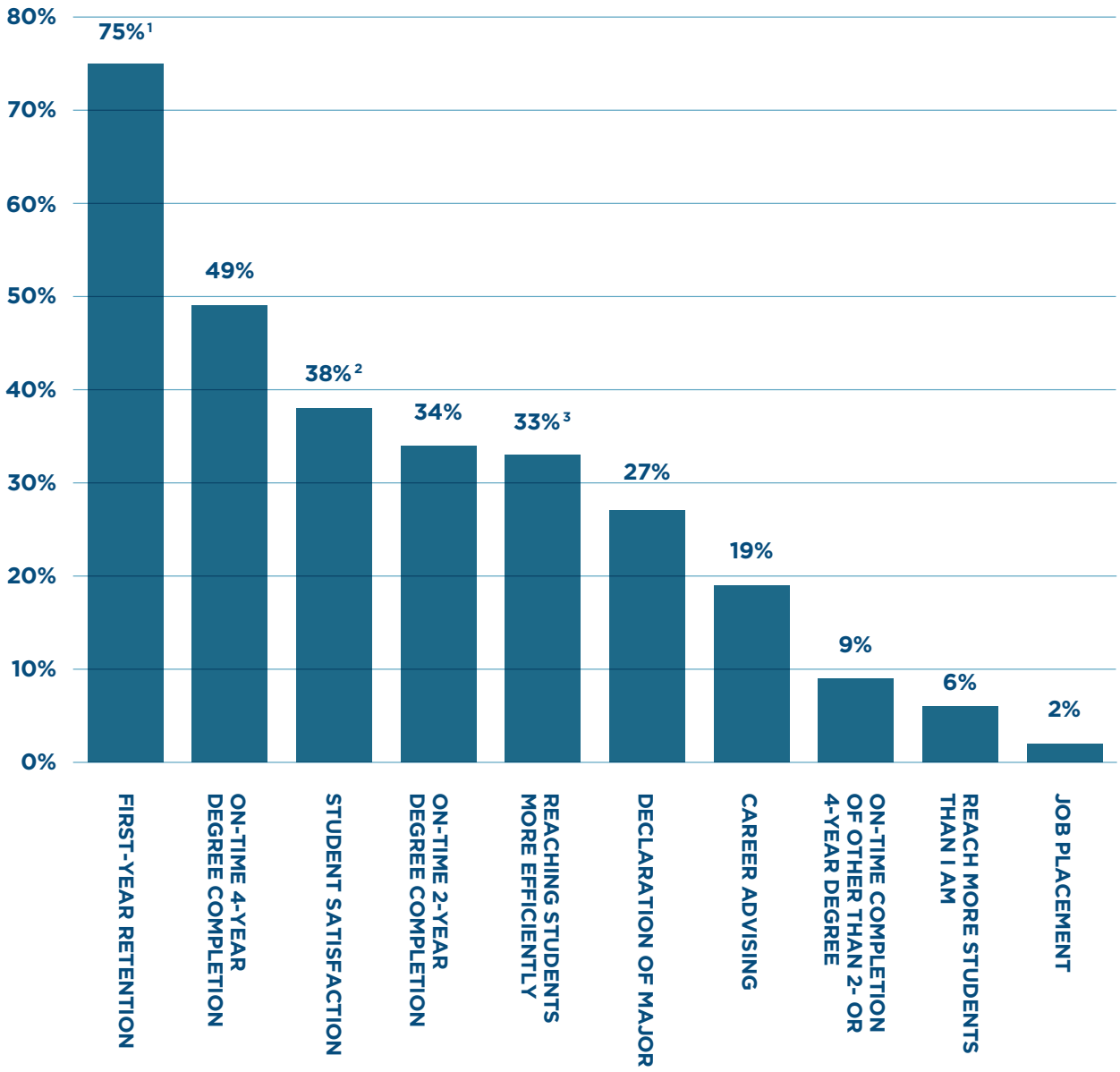
A2:

PRIMARY GOALS AND TARGET AUDIENCES OF UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING

PRIMARY GOALS OF UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING

What are the primary goals of your undergraduate academic planning and advising efforts? *(Select up to three)*

n = 1,096



NOTES:

[1] Stakeholders from 2-year institutions and 4-year publics prioritize first-year retention over on-time completion, while 4-year privates are the opposite.

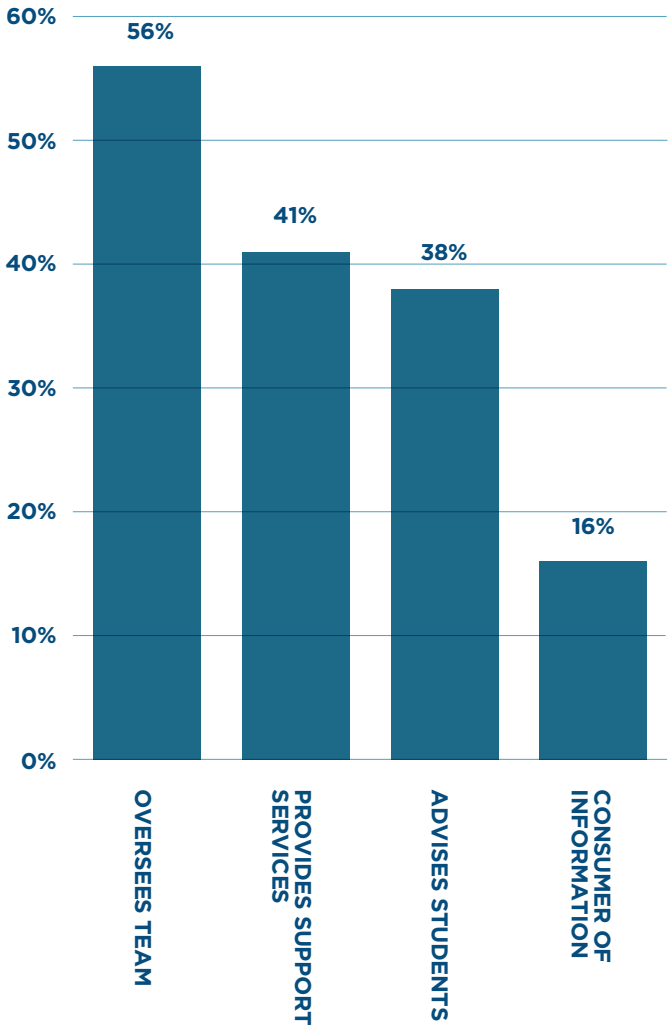
[2] Stakeholders from smaller institutions and 4-year privates rate student satisfaction as a primary goal more than other stakeholders.

[3] Stakeholders from 2-year institutions prioritize reaching students more than stakeholders from other institutions.

ROLES WITHIN PLANNING AND ADVISING

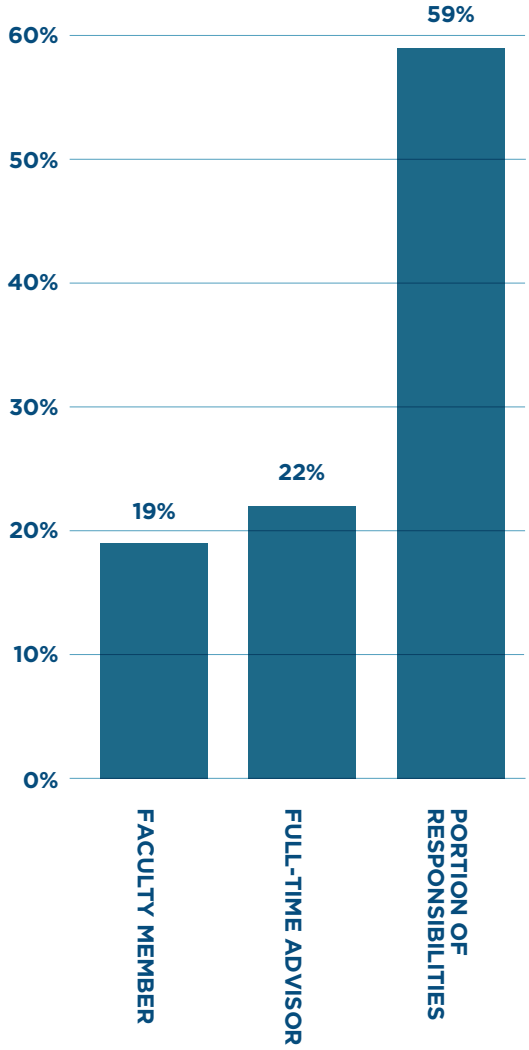
What is your level of involvement with undergraduate academic planning and advising at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

n=1,096



Which of the following best describes your advising role at your institution? (*Only respondents who are "responsible for advising students"*)

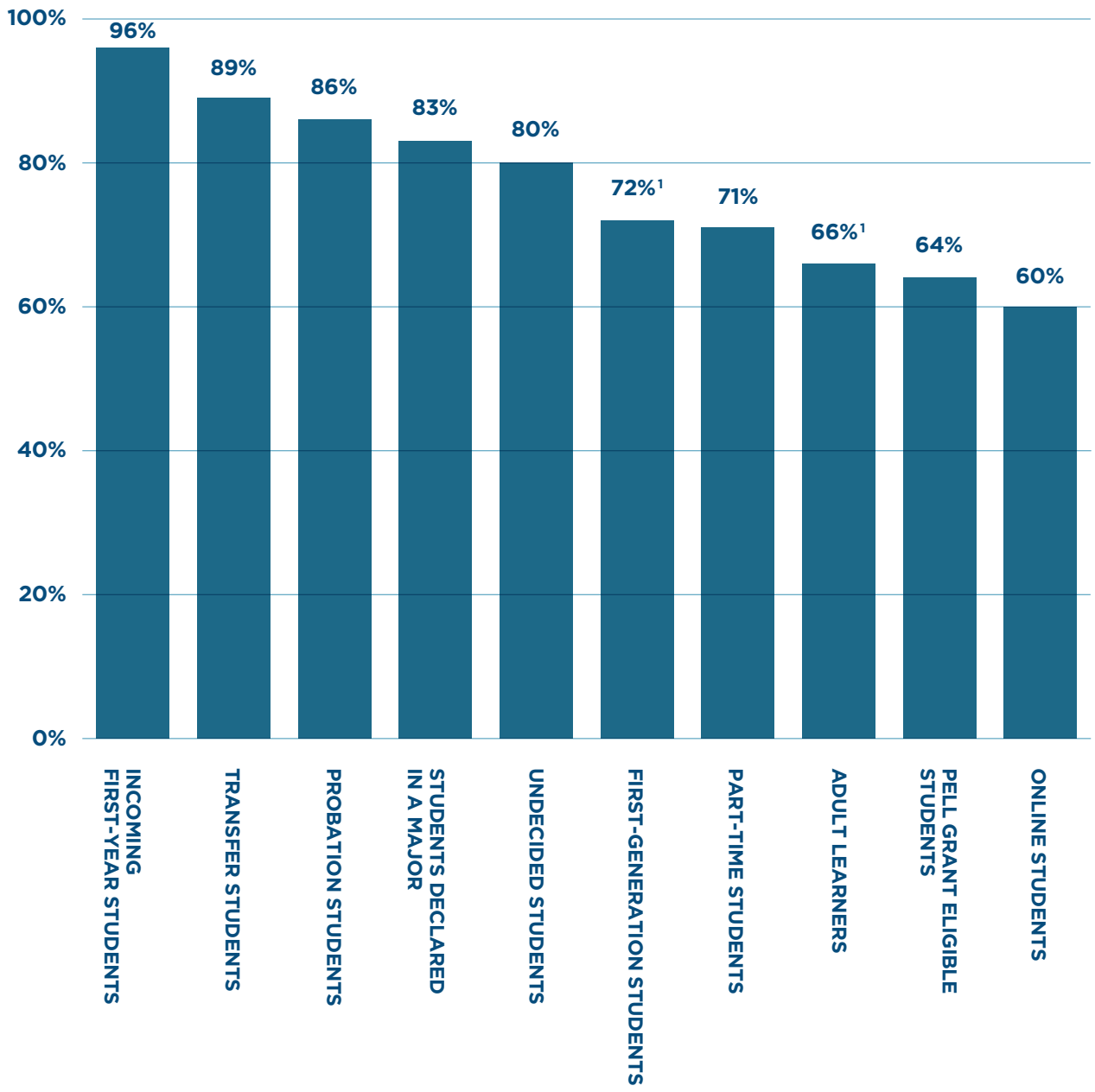
n = 421



STUDENT POPULATIONS RECEIVING UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING

Which student populations receive academic advising? *(Select all that apply)*

n = 1,096



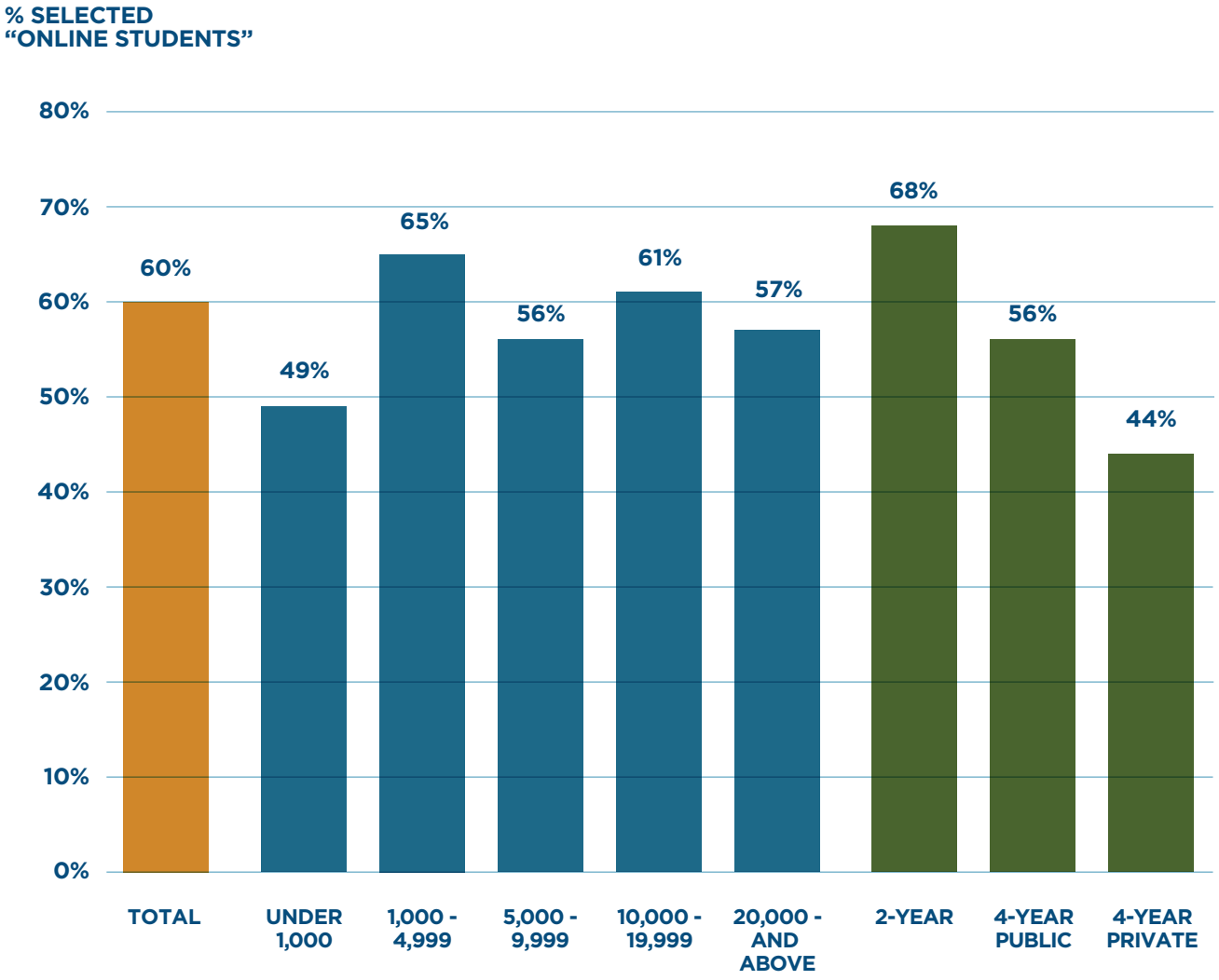
NOTE:

[1] Stakeholders from small 4-year institutions (under 2,500 enrollment) were significantly more likely to report that adult learners and first-generation learners receive advising at their institutions.

ONLINE STUDENTS RECEIVING UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE AND TYPE

Which student populations receive academic advising? *(Select all that apply)*

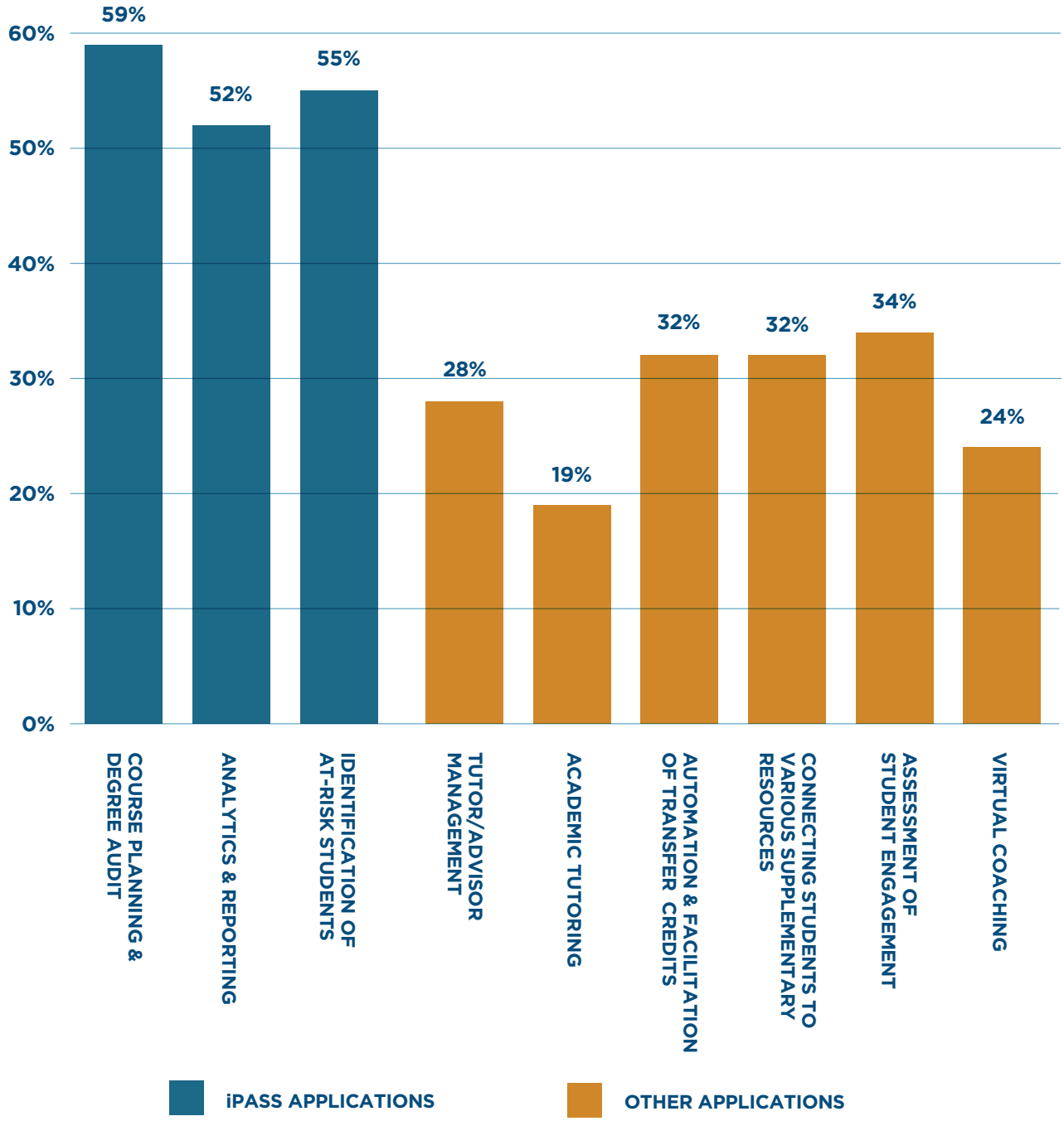
n = 993



PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PLANNING AND ADVISING TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

For which of the following categories will the introduction of technology have the greatest positive impact on planning and advising effectiveness at your institution? *(Select all that apply)*

n = 1,096



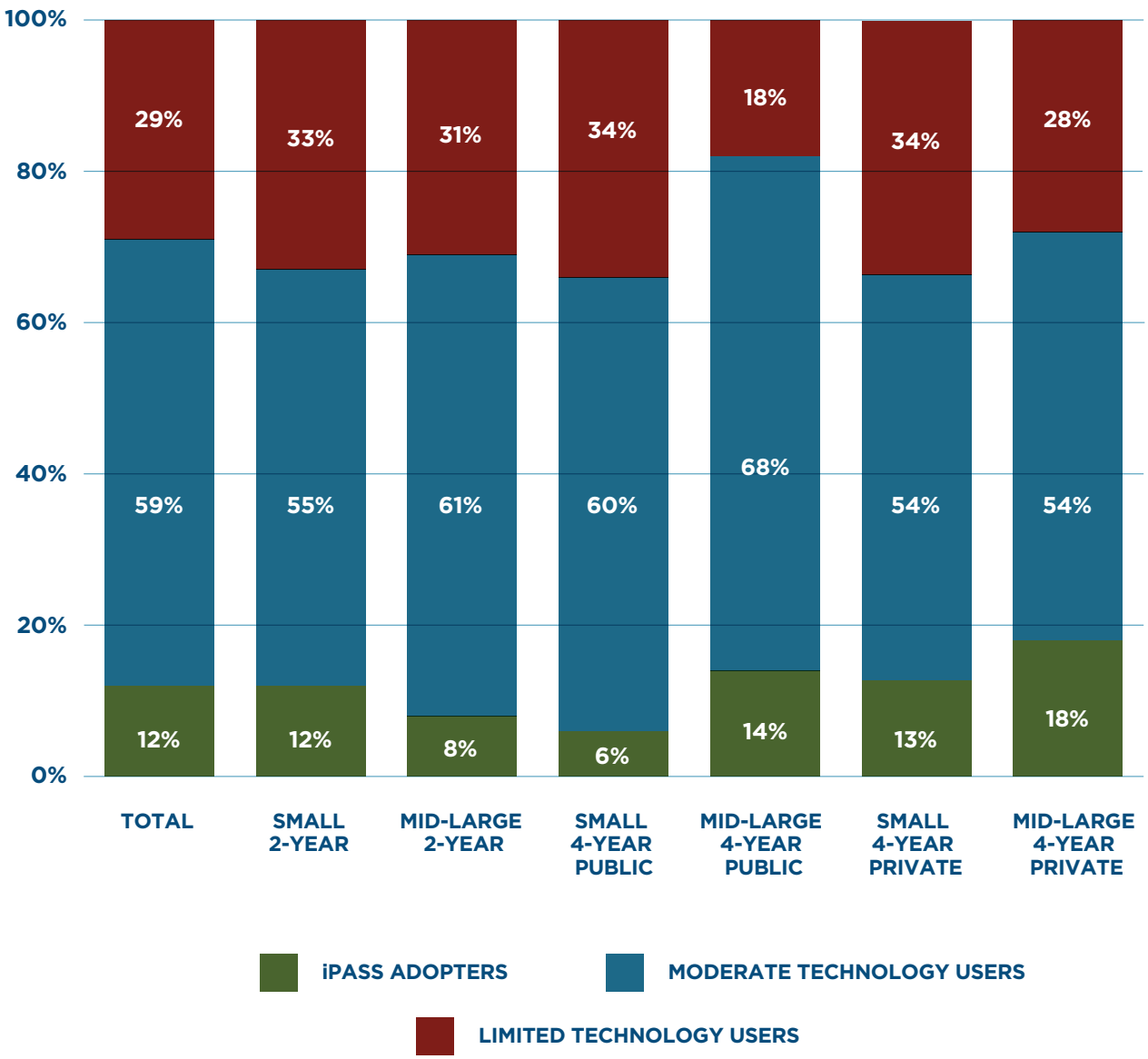


A3:

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION AND SATISFACTION

TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENTATION: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

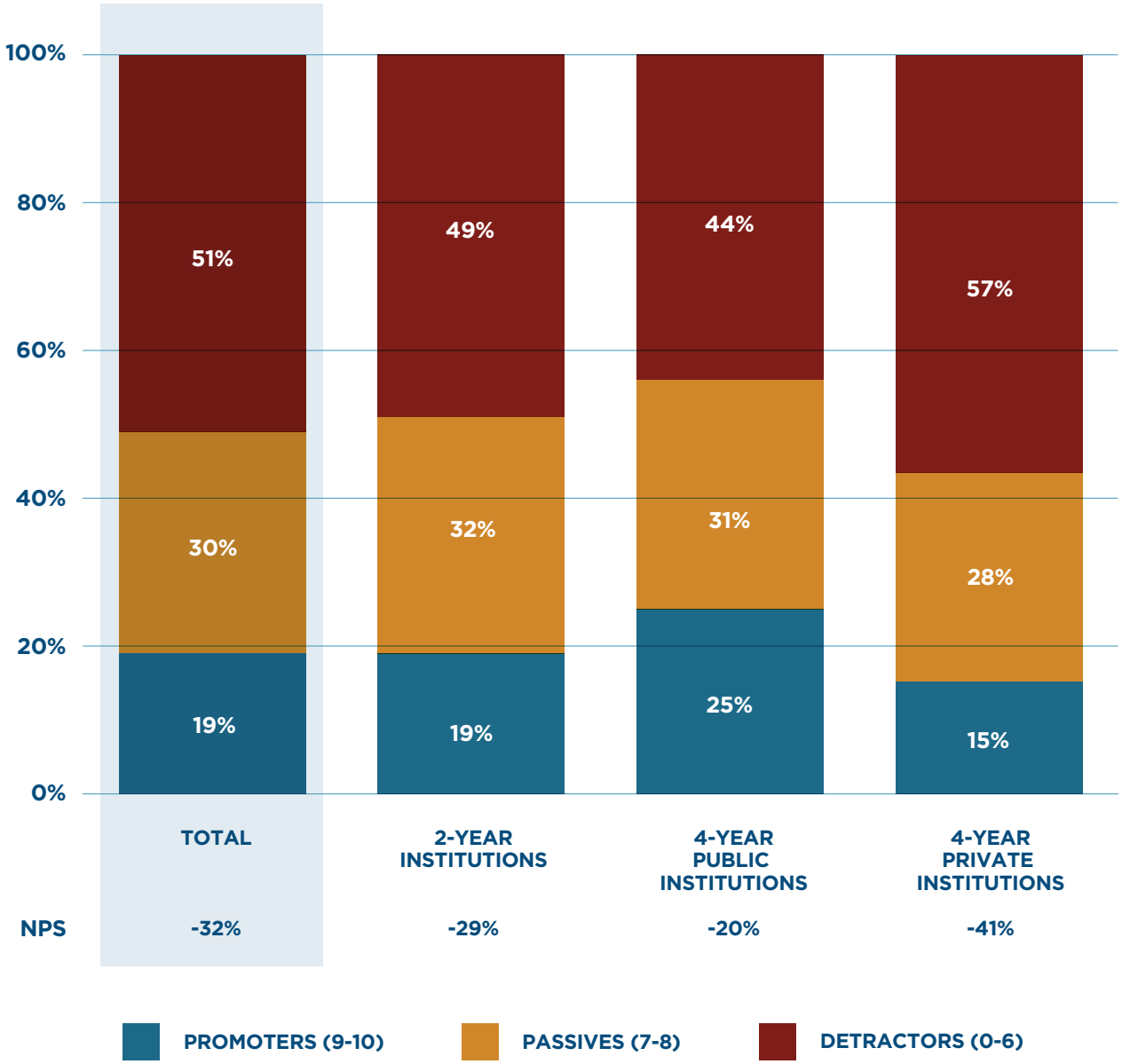
n = 1,096



NET PROMOTER SCORE: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

How likely are you to recommend the primary tool you use for planning and advising to a friend or colleague in your institution or others? (*Scale of 0-10*)

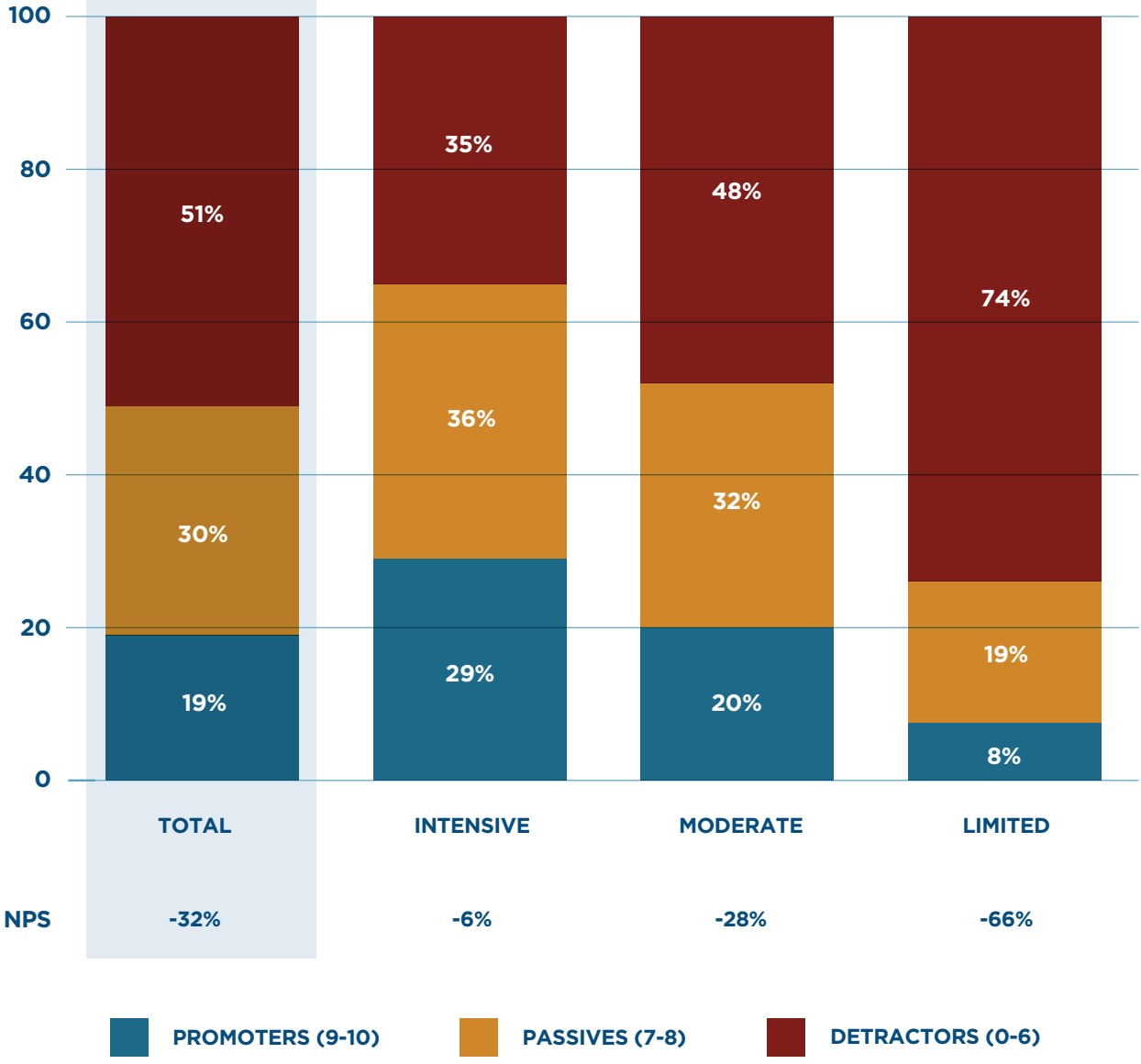
n = 1,096



NET PROMOTER SCORE: BREAKDOWN BY TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENT

How likely are you to recommend the primary tool you use for planning and advising to a friend or colleague in your institution or others? (*Scale of 0-10*)

n = 1,096



Tyton PARTNERS

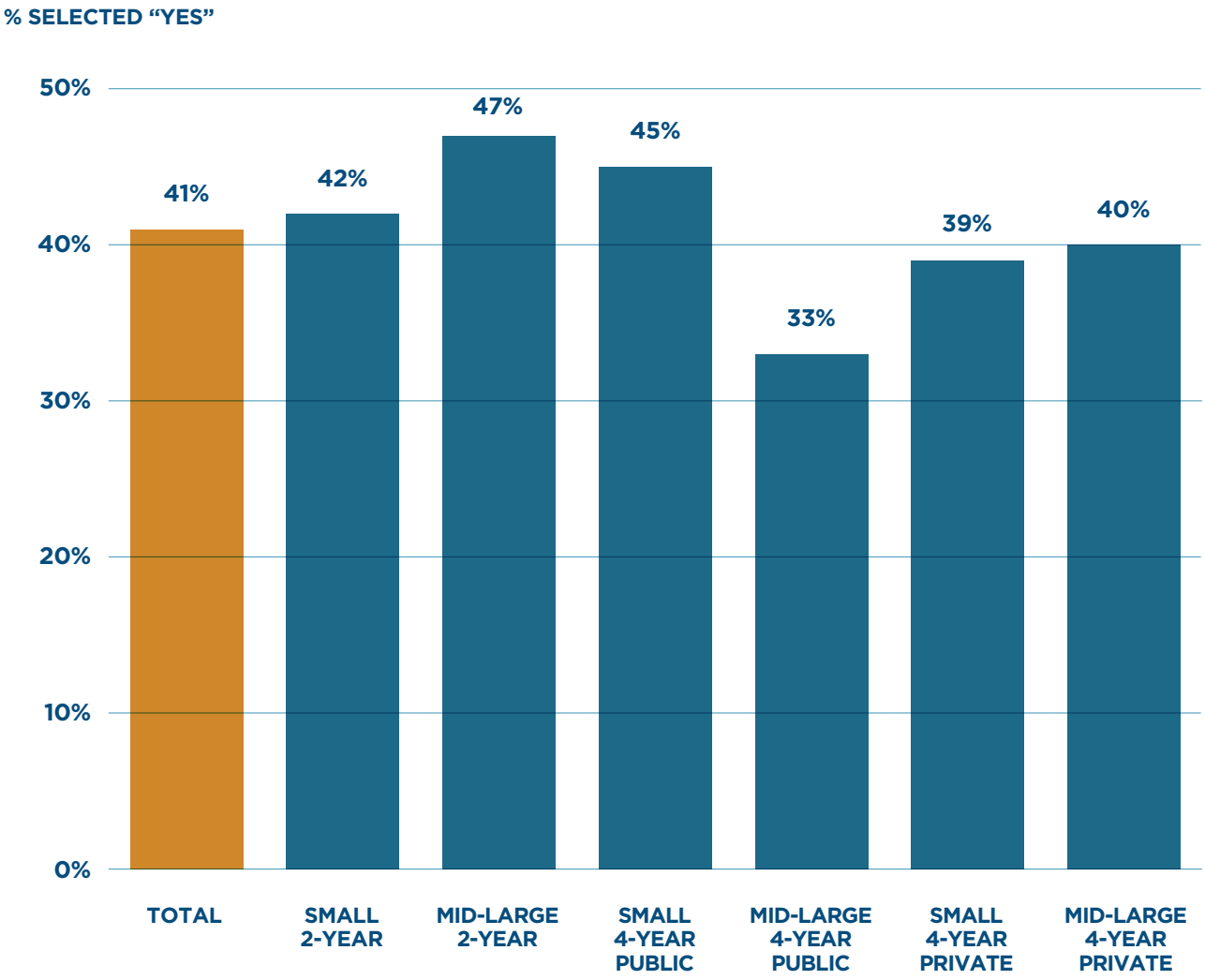
A4:

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING STRUCTURE

INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP OF ADVISING: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE/TYPE BRACKET

Is there one individual with overall responsibility for undergraduate advising at your institution?

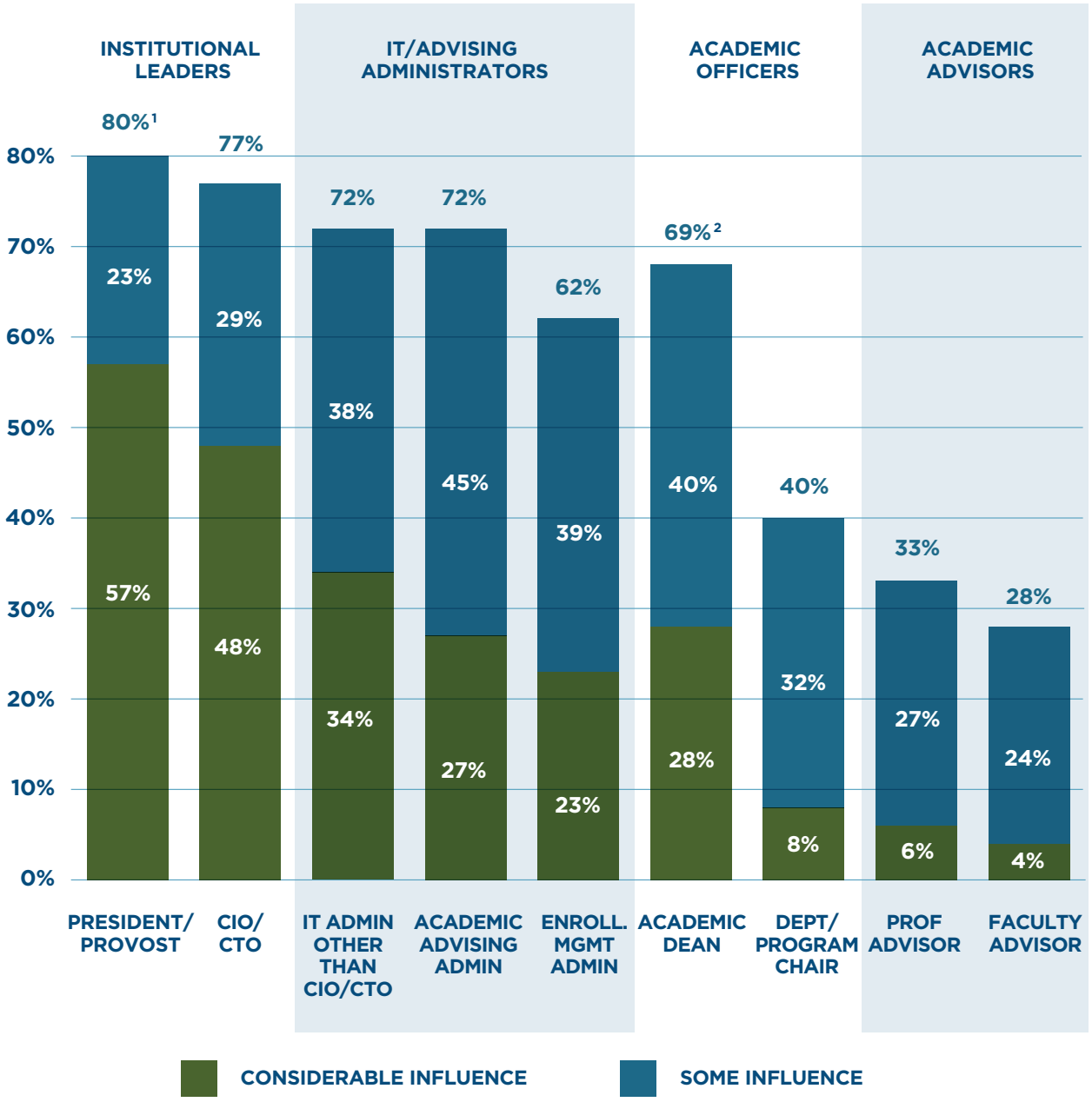
n = 993



PURCHASING INFLUENCE OF SELECT ADVISING STAKEHOLDERS

Who influences decisions on academic planning and advising purchasing for your institution?

n = 1,096



NOTES:

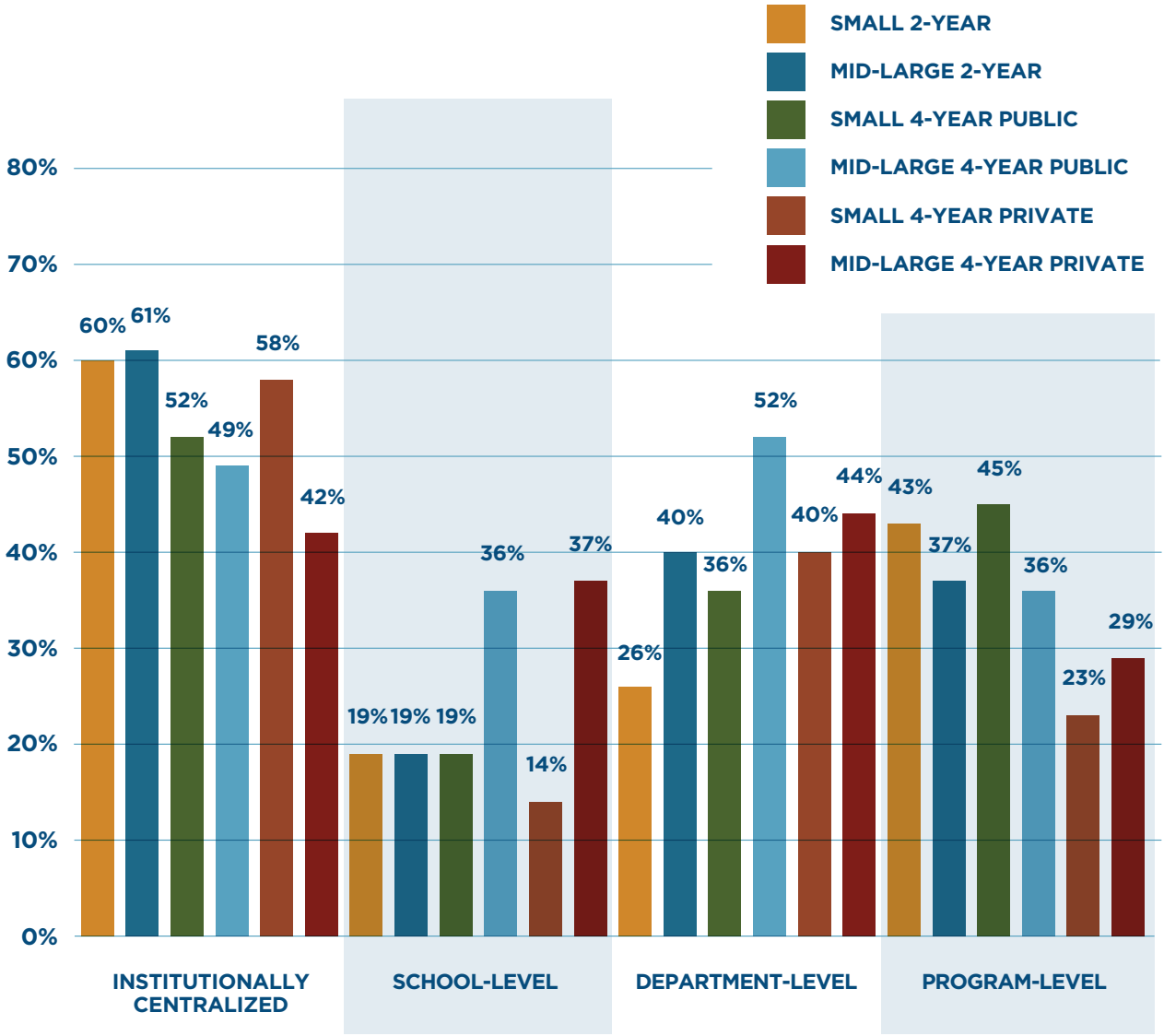
[1] Presidents/provosts have more influence at small 2-years and mid-large 4-year publics

[2] Academic deans have significantly more influence at small 2-years, less influence at 4-year publics and mid-large 2-years

ORIGINATION OF UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

Regardless of the mode of delivery of advising, where does the undergraduate academic planning and advising originate at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

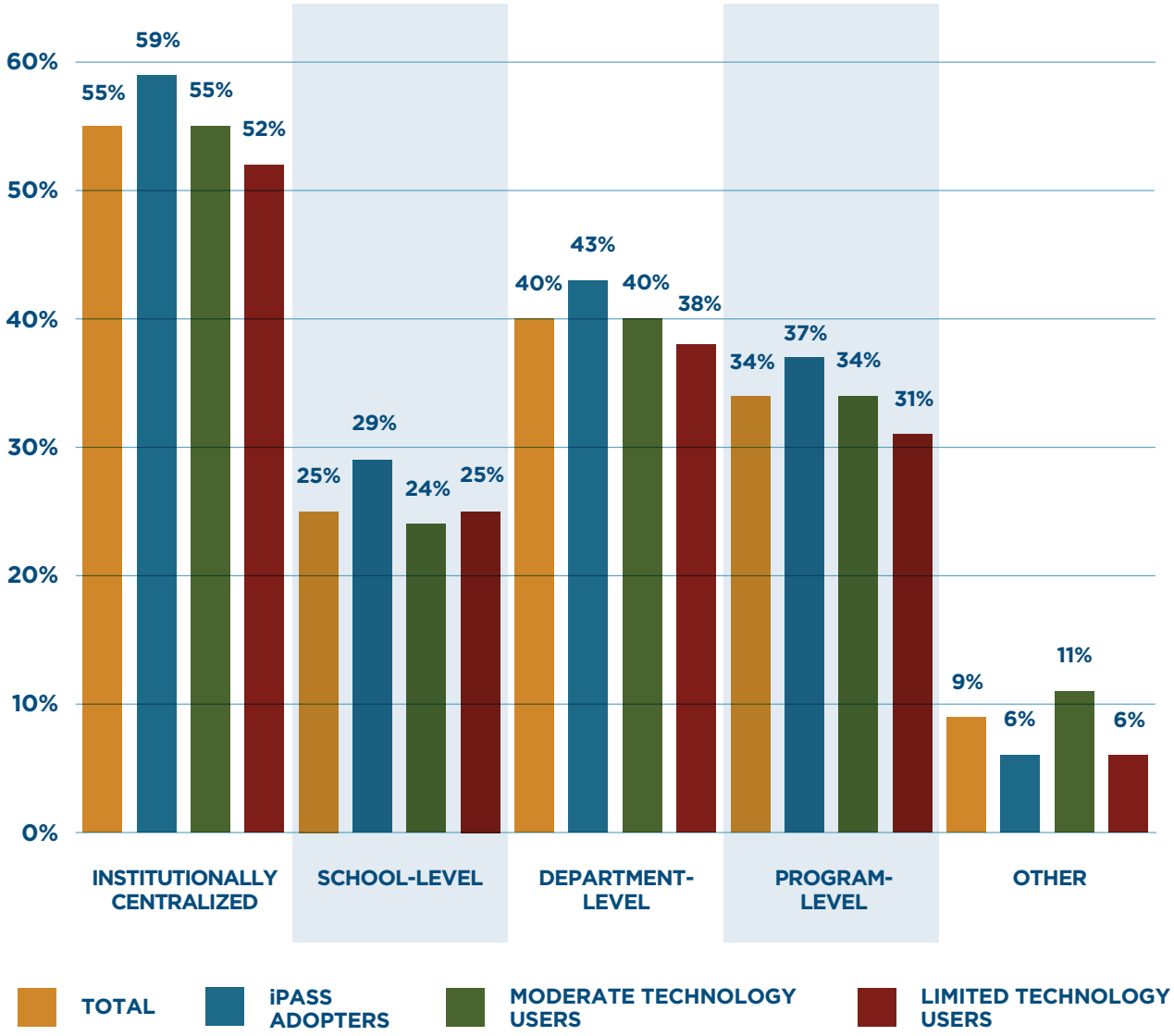
n = 993



ORIGINATION OF UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING: BREAKDOWN BY TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENT

Regardless of the mode of delivery of advising, where does the undergraduate academic planning and advising originate at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

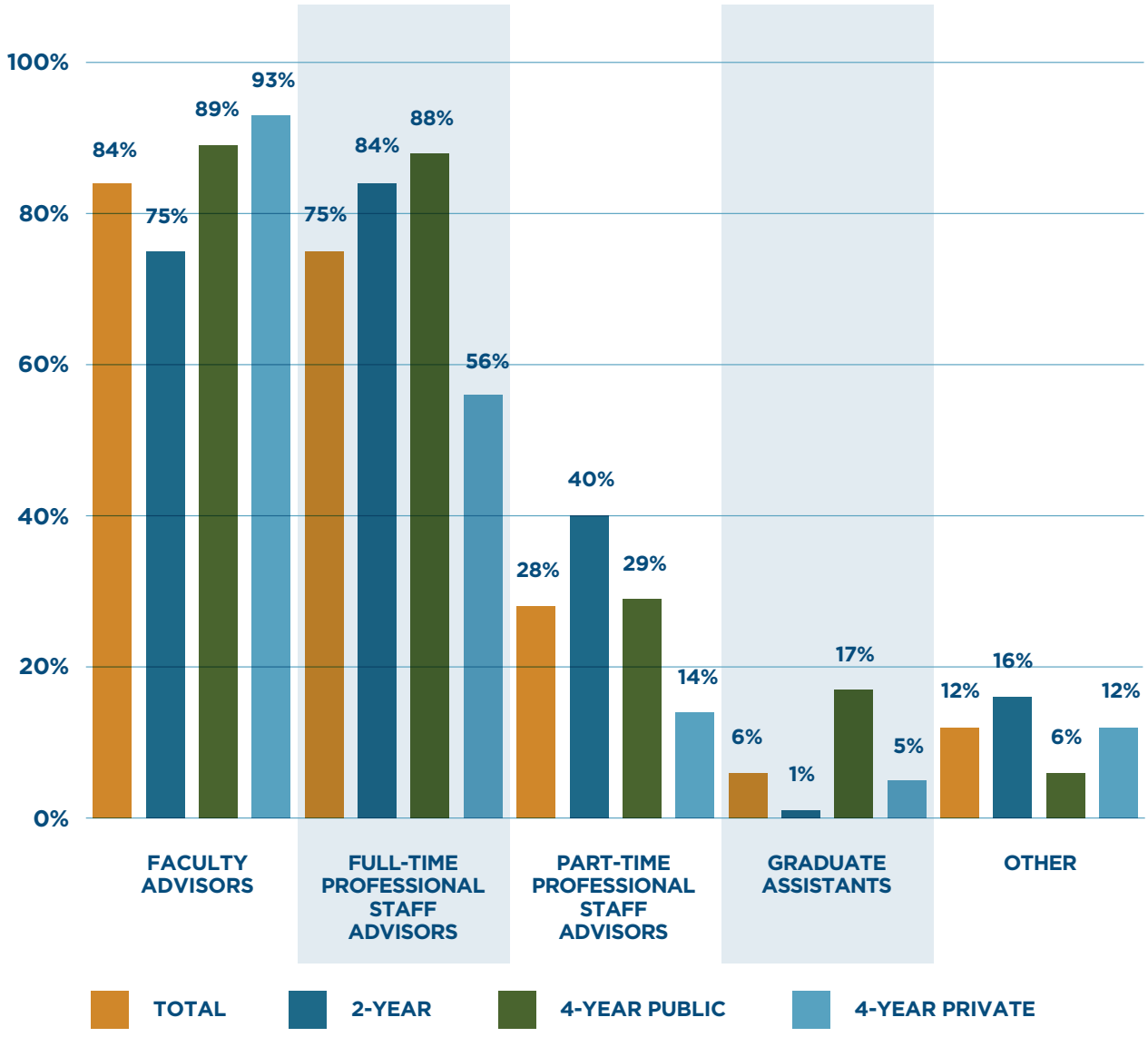
n = 1,096



TYPES OF ADVISORS IN UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

Who provides academic advising to undergraduate students at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

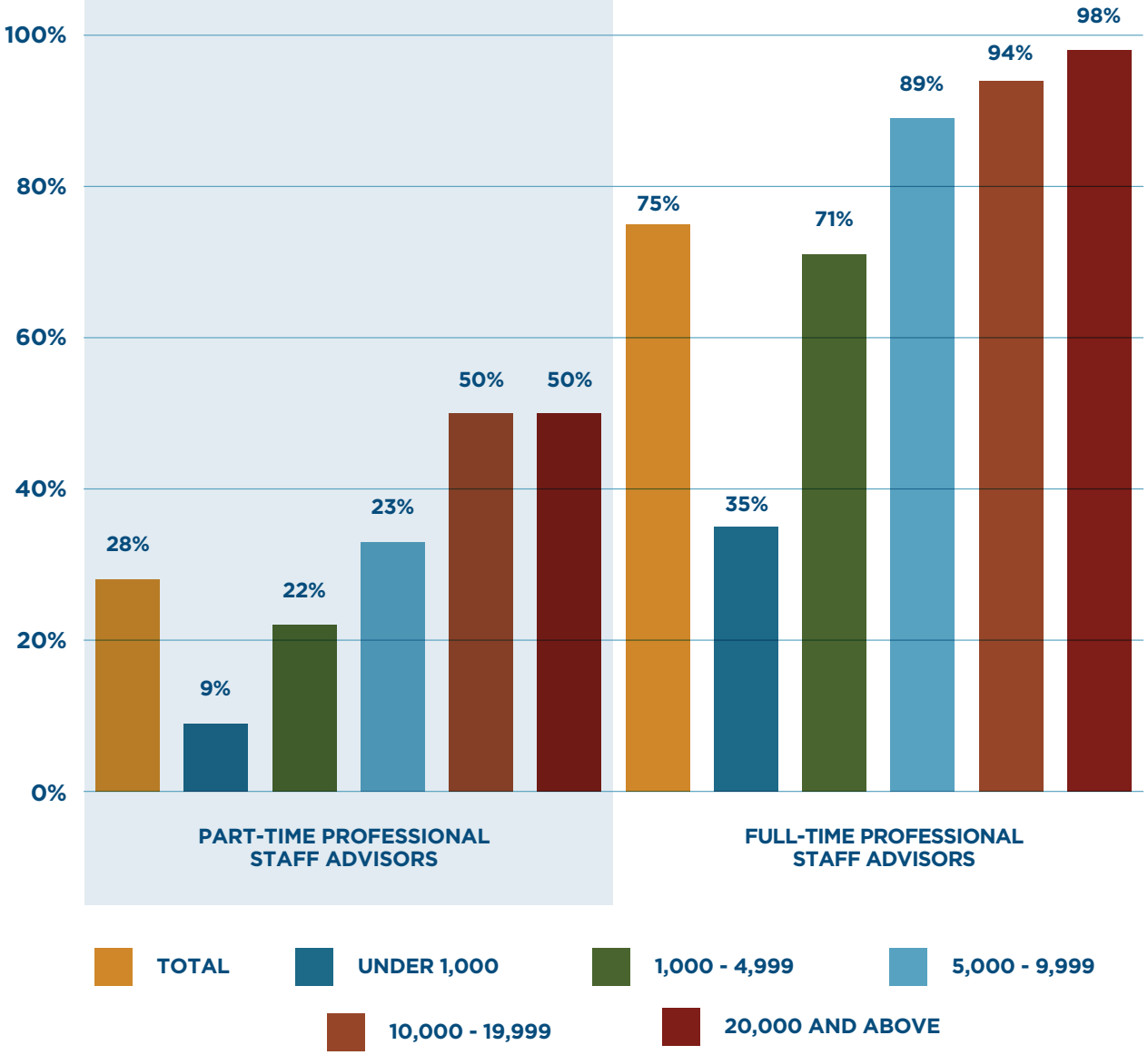
n = 1,096



TYPES OF ADVISORS IN UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING: PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS, BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE

Who provides academic advising to undergraduate students at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

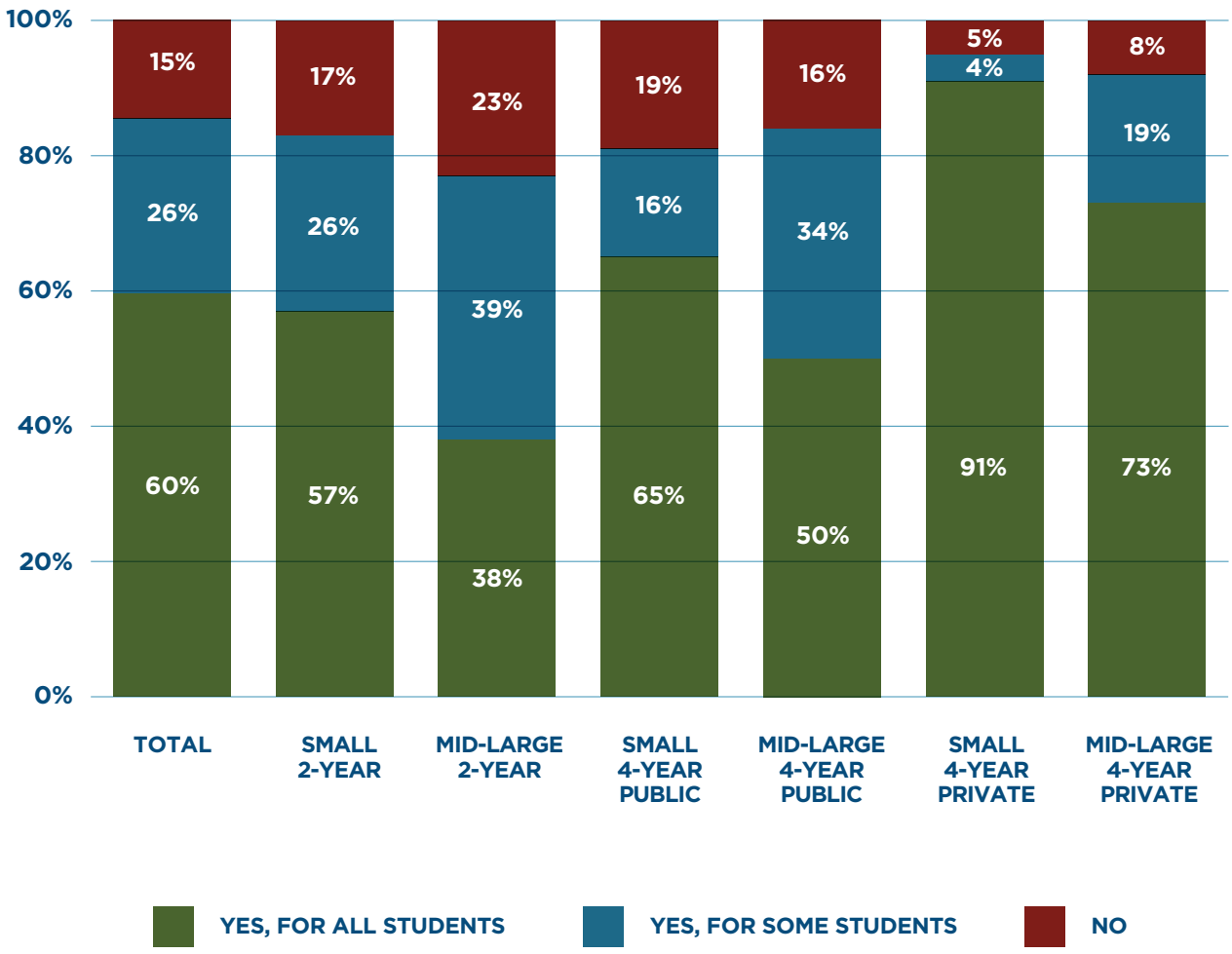
n = 1,096



MANDATORY ADVISING FOR STUDENTS: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

Is advising mandatory for undergraduate students?

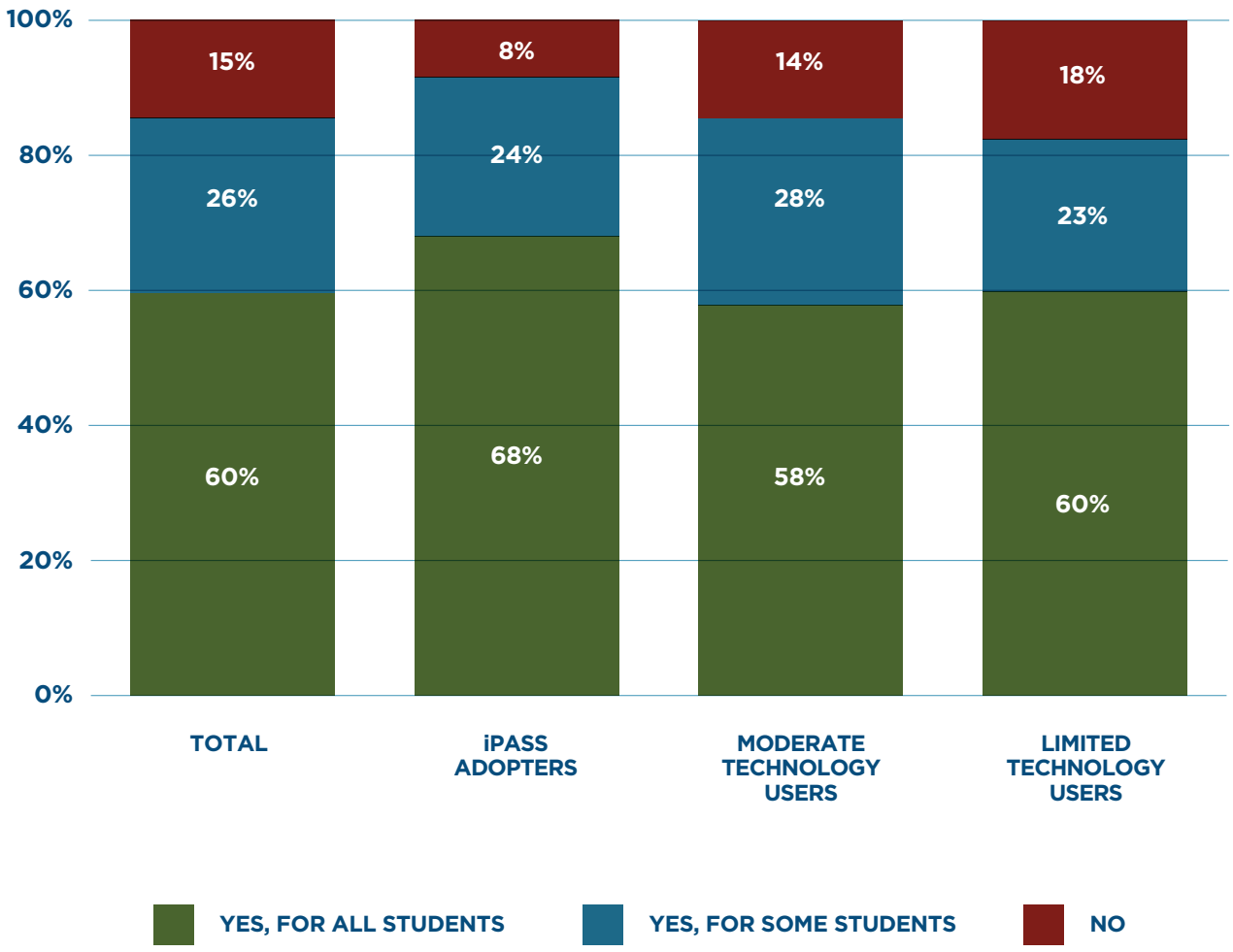
n = 1,096



MANDATORY ADVISING FOR STUDENTS: BREAKDOWN BY TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENT

Is advising mandatory for undergraduate students?

n = 1,096



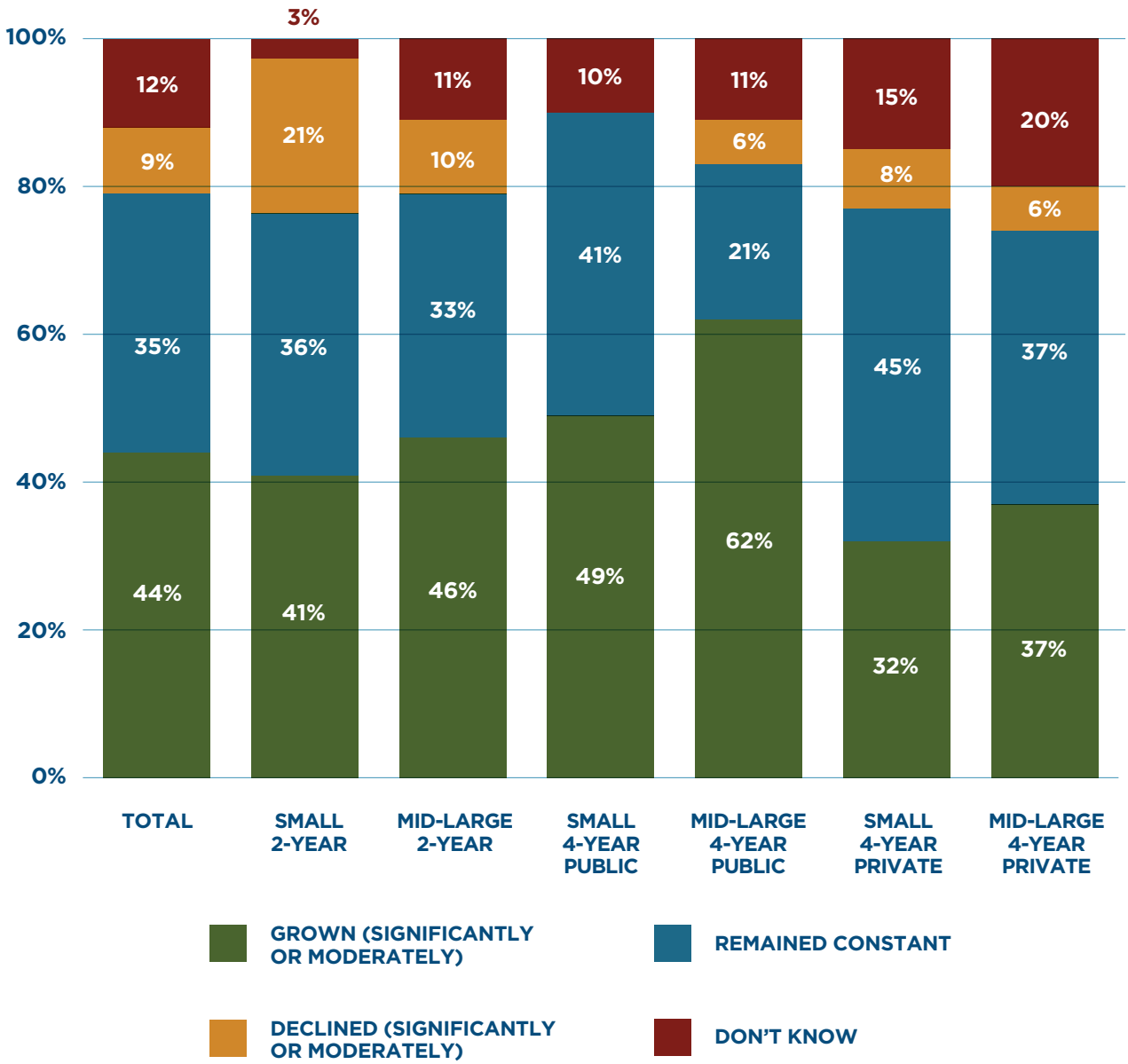
A5:

ACADEMIC ADVISING RESOURCES

GROWTH OF ADVISING TECHNOLOGY SPENDING: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

Over the past 3 years, how has the spending on technology allocated to academic planning and advising changed at your institution?

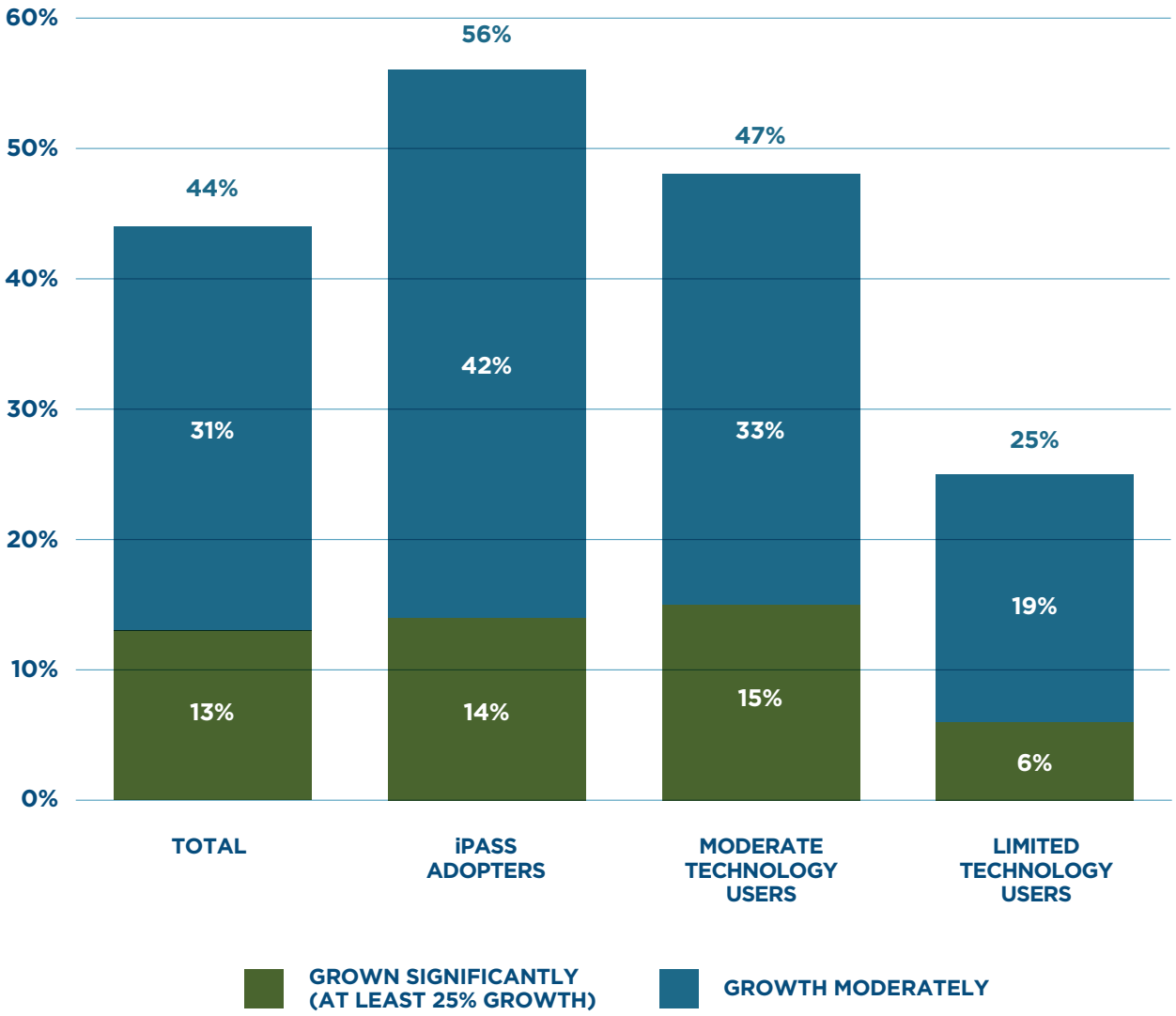
n = 937



GROWTH OF ADVISING TECHNOLOGY SPENDING: BREAKDOWN BY TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENT

Over the past 3 years, how has the spending on technology allocated to student planning and advising changed at your institution?

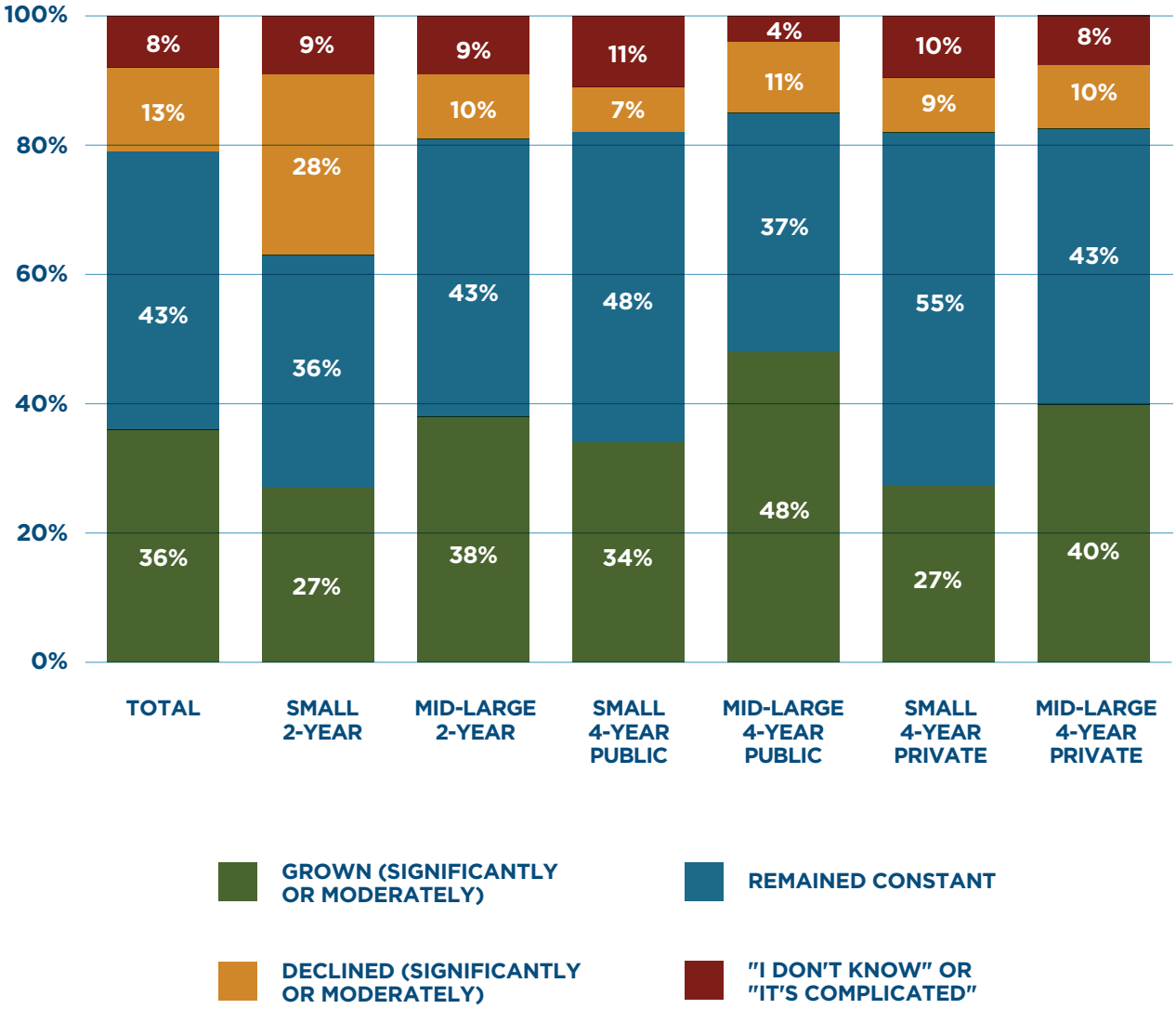
n = 937



GROWTH OF ADVISING STAFFING: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

Over the past 3 years, how has the level of staff dedicated to undergraduate academic planning and advising changed across the institution?

n = 937





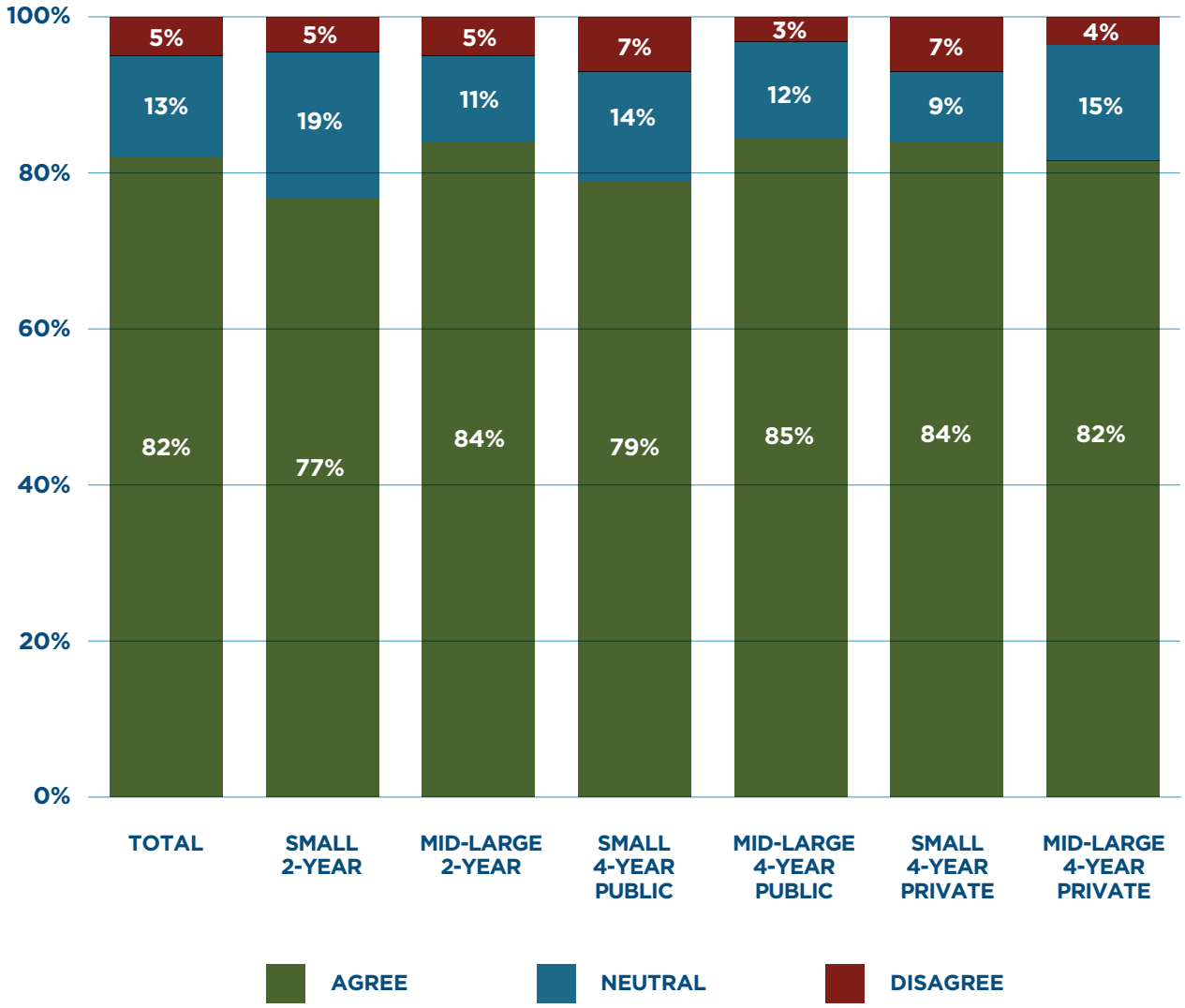
A6:

INSTITUTIONAL AND STAKEHOLDER ATTITUDES TOWARD ACADEMIC ADVISING

STUDENT RETENTION AS A PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN STRATEGIC PLANS: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

Indicate where your institution's tendencies and preferences fall regarding the following statement: *"Student retention is a primary objective of my institution's strategic plan."*

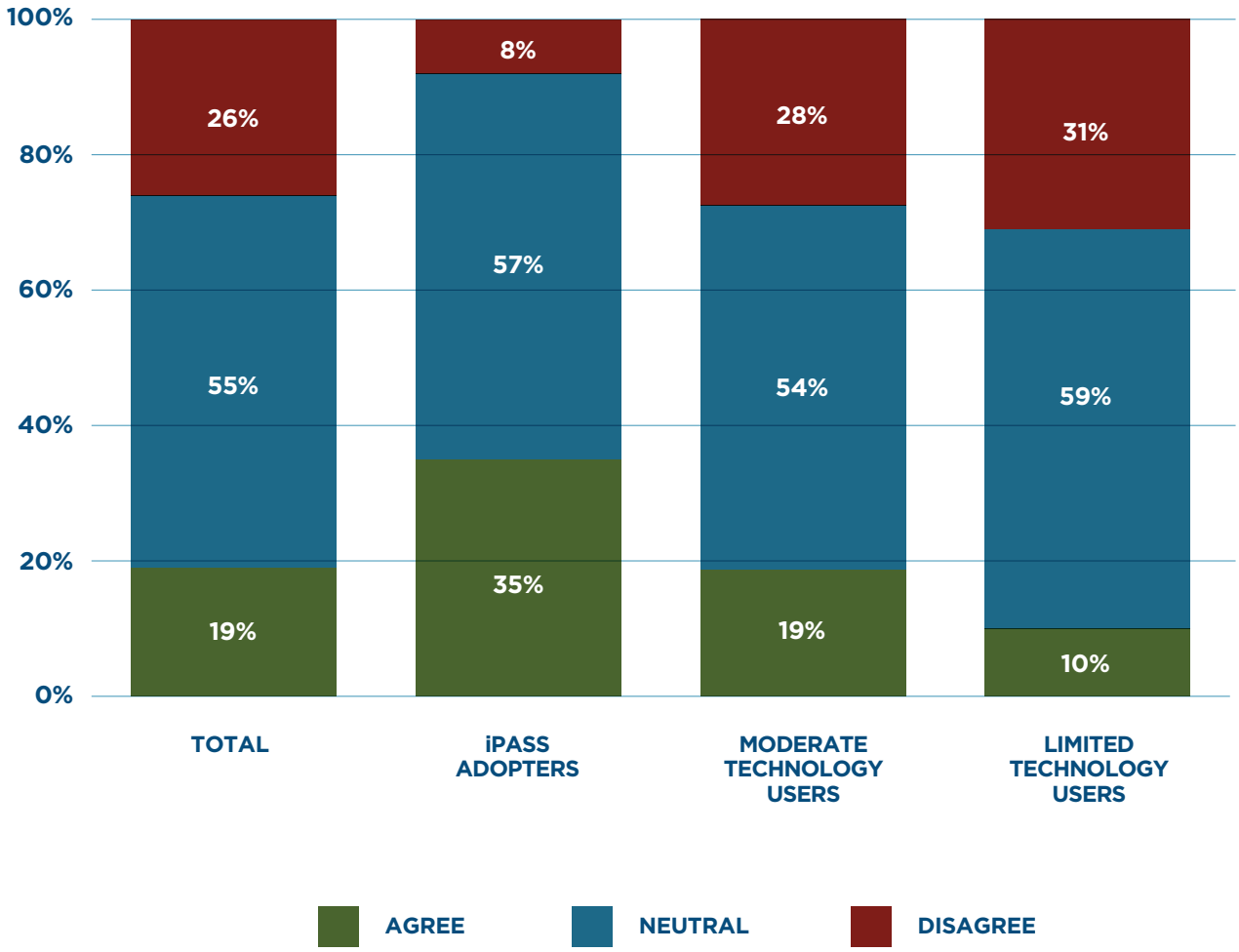
n = 993



ACHIEVING AN IDEAL ADVISING SITUATION: BREAKDOWN BY TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENT

Indicate where your personal tendencies and preferences fall regarding the following statement: *"Overall, my institution successfully achieves an ideal advising situation."*

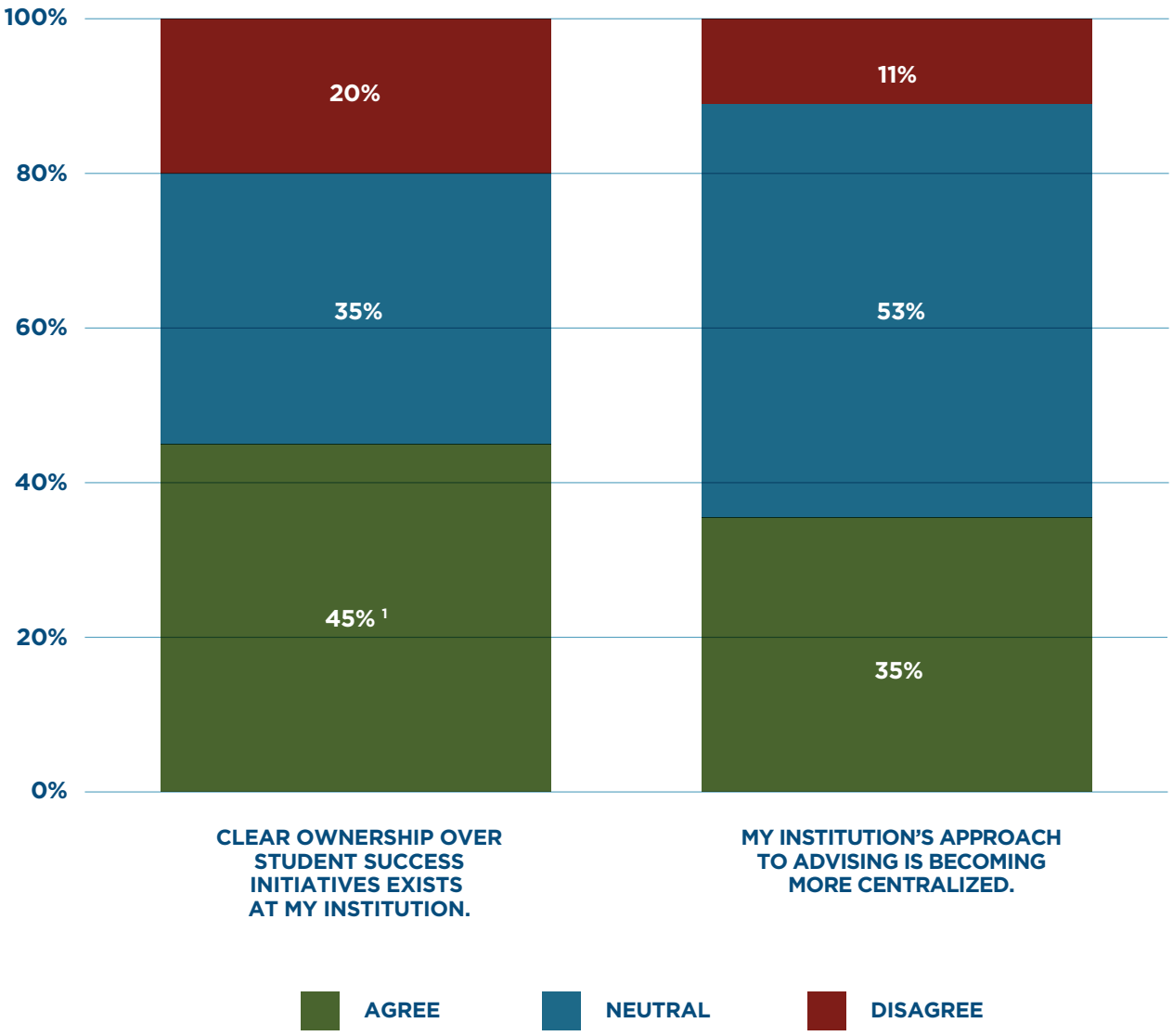
n = 1,096



CLEAR OWNERSHIP AND CENTRALIZATION

Indicate where your institution's tendencies and preferences fall on these dimensions.

n = 1,096



NOTE:

[1] Stakeholders from 4-year privates were more likely to report clear ownership over student success.

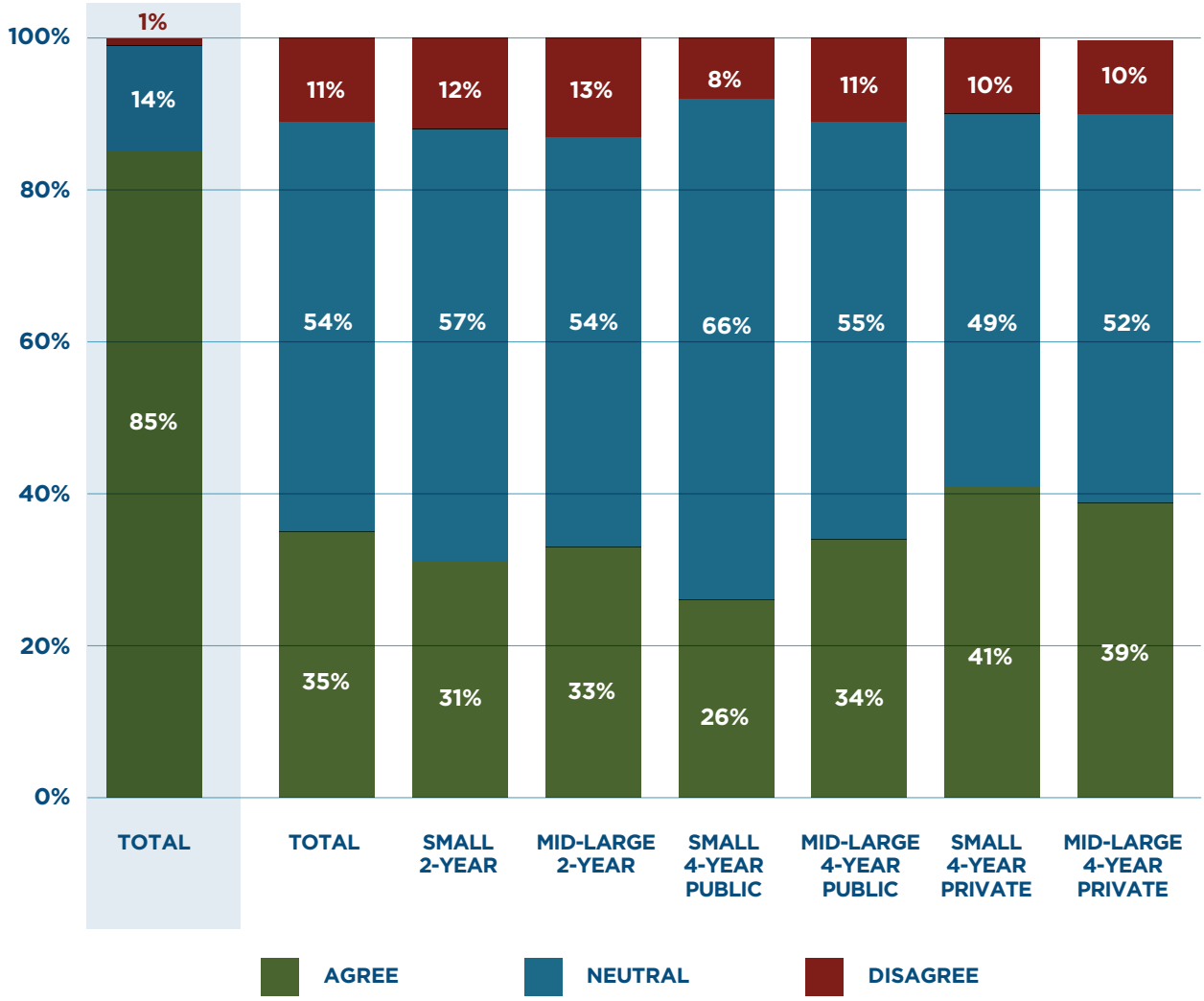
COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION: BREAKDOWN BY INSTITUTIONAL SIZE-TYPE BRACKET

Indicate where your institution's tendencies and preferences fall on these dimensions.

n = 993

Coordinated efforts across internal departments for planning and advising yield better solutions

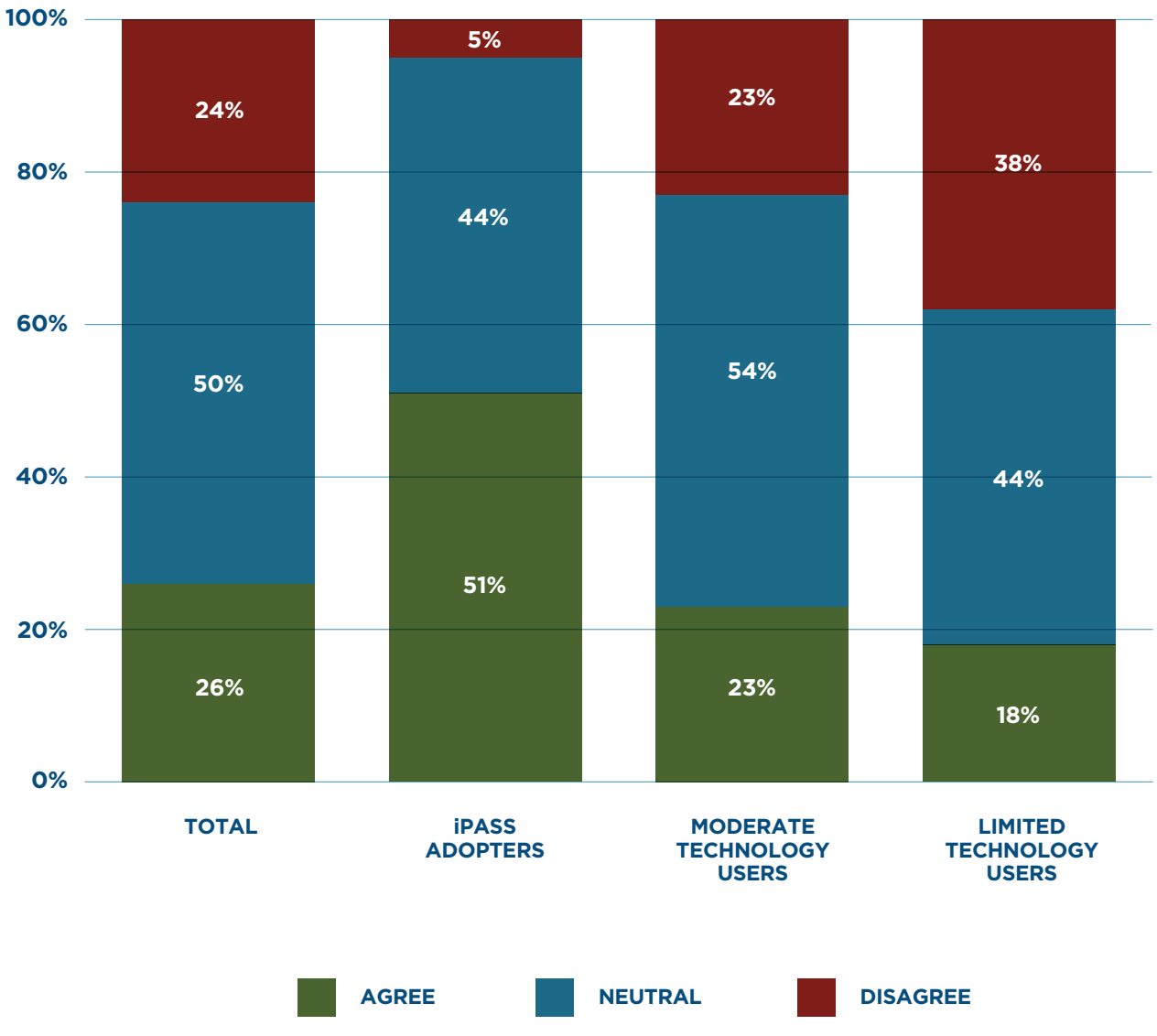
Strong communication channels exist at your institution between stakeholders to facilitate collaboration



FUNDING FOR STUDENT RETENTION INITIATIVES: BREAKDOWN BY TECHNOLOGY-USE SEGMENT

Indicate where your institution's tendencies and preferences fall regarding the following statement: *"Student retention initiatives are well funded in the institution-wide budget."*

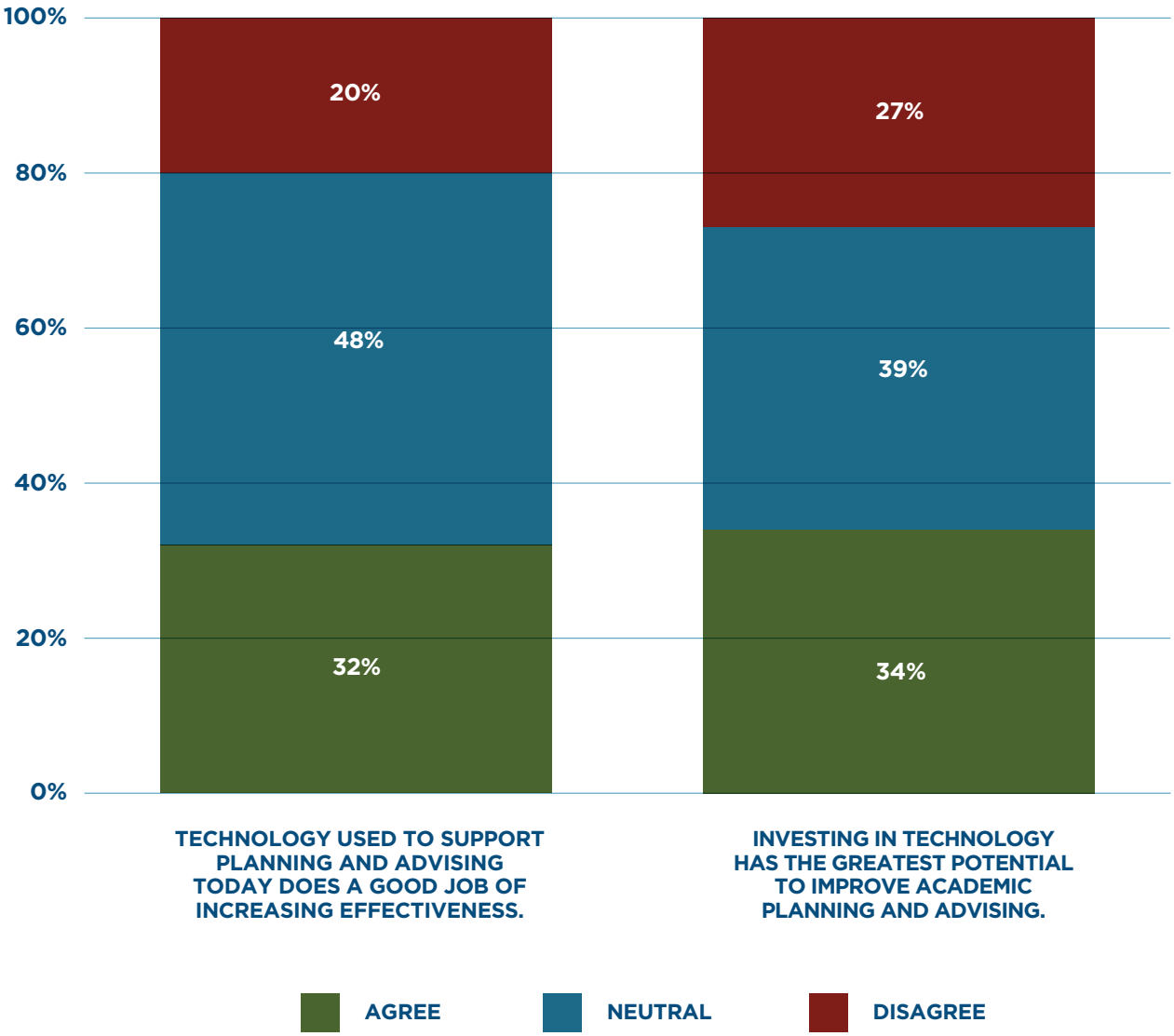
n = 1,096



TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

Indicate where your institution's tendencies and preferences fall on these dimensions.

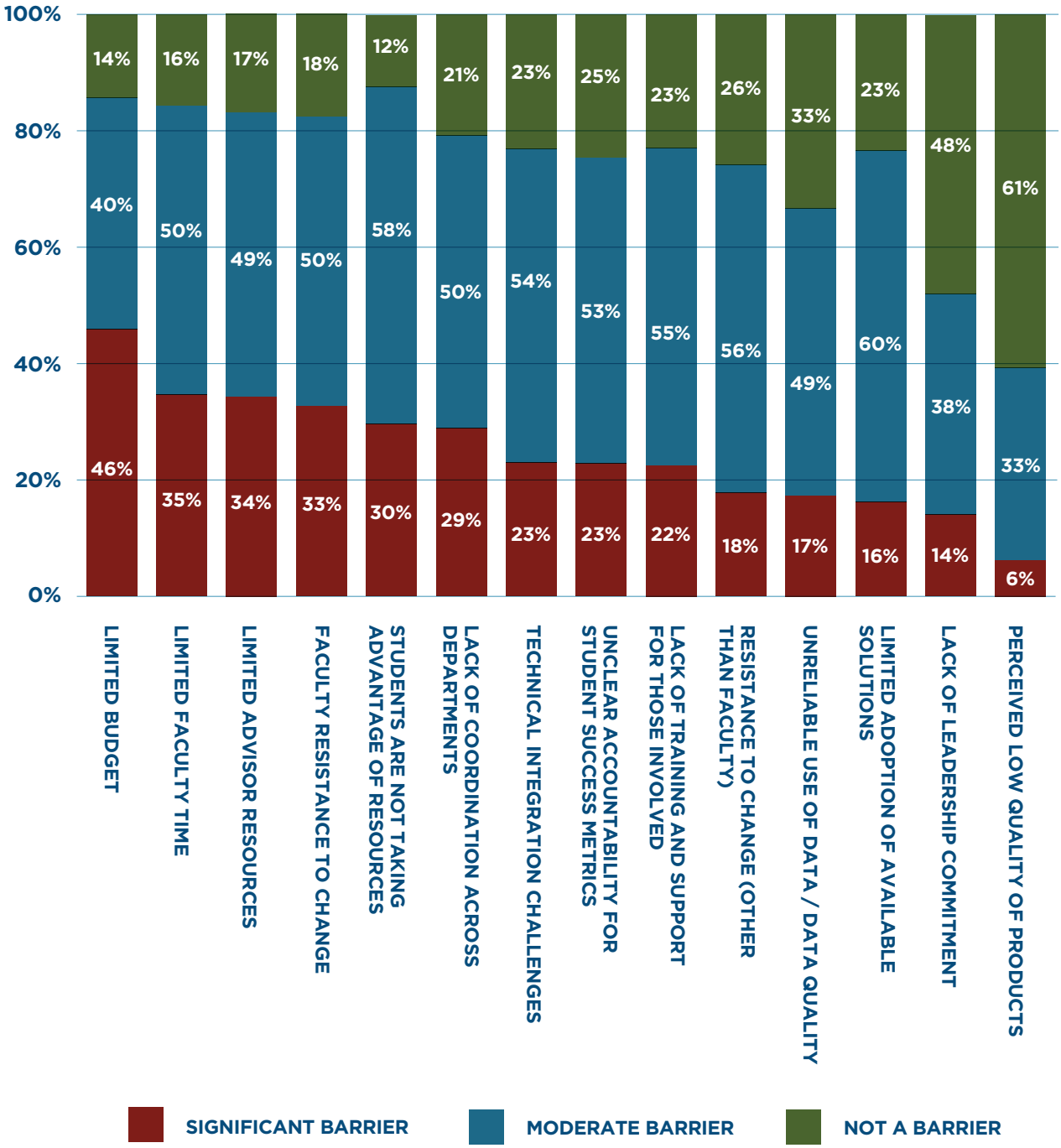
n = 1,096



BARRIERS TO IMPROVING PLANNING AND ADVISING

What are the barriers to improving the undergraduate academic planning and advising function and processes at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

n = 1,096



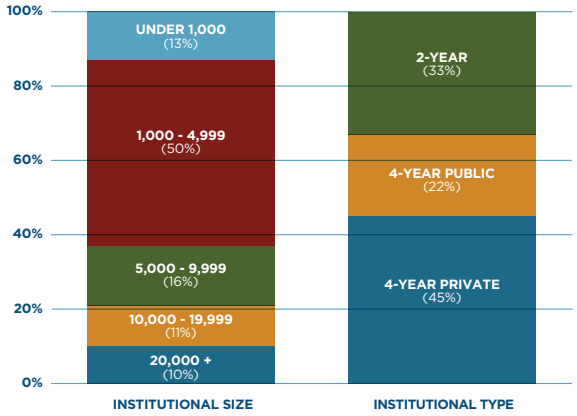
A7:

ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTATION PROFILES

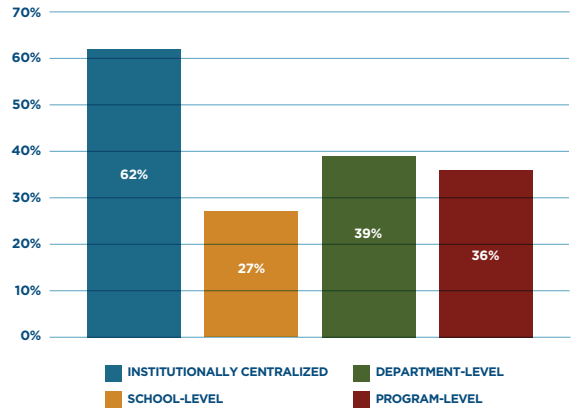
SEGMENT PROFILES: EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS

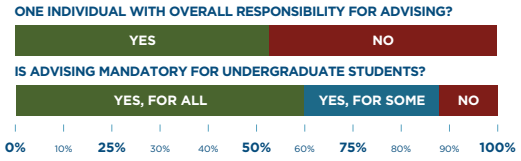
n = 245 (29% of Sample)

DEMOGRAPHICS AND ADVISING STRUCTURE

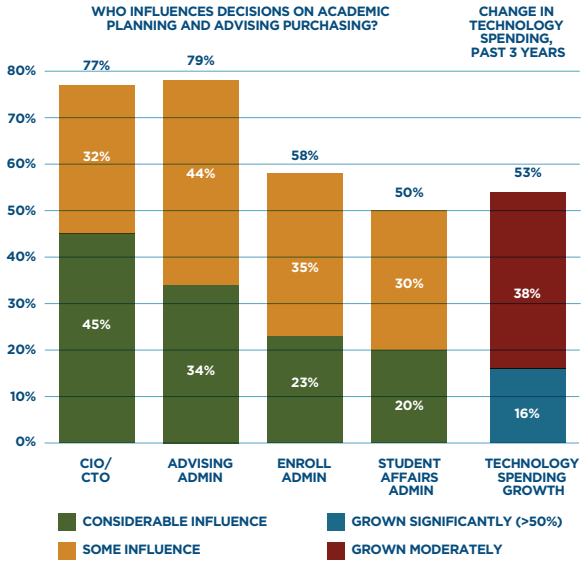


WHO INFLUENCES DECISIONS ON ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ADVISING PURCHASING?

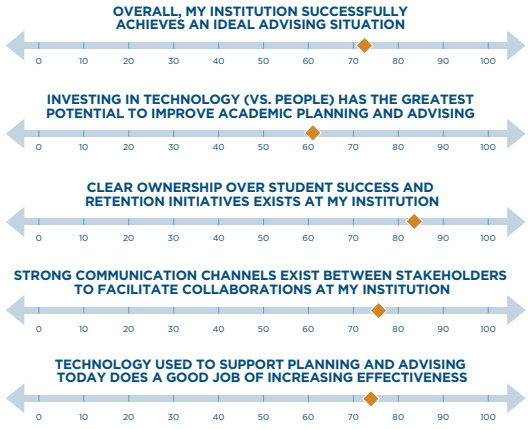




TECHNOLOGY SPENDING



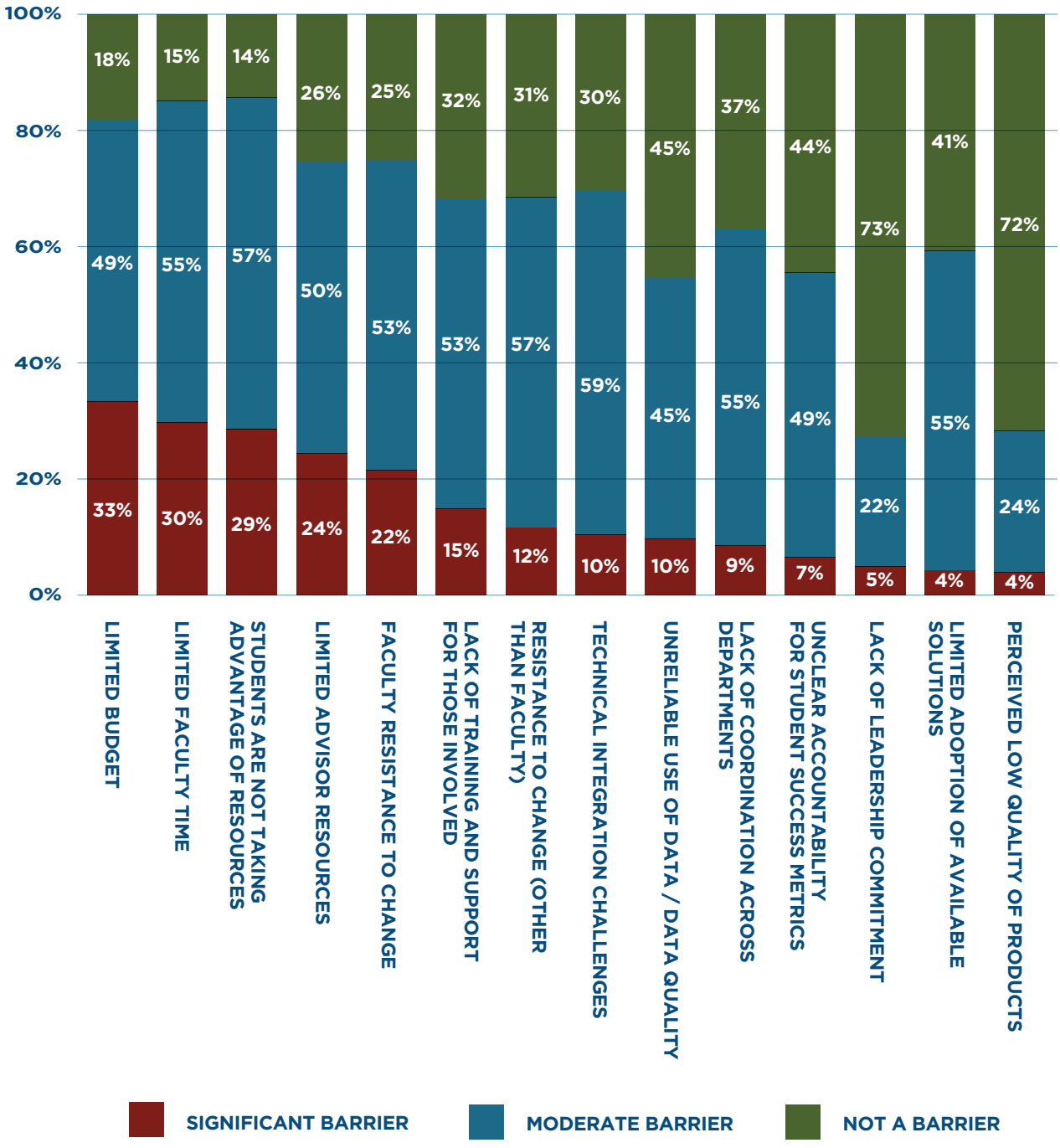
STAKEHOLDER TENDENCIES



BARRIERS TO IMPROVING PLANNING AND ADVISING: EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS

What are the barriers to improving the undergraduate academic planning and advising function and processes at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

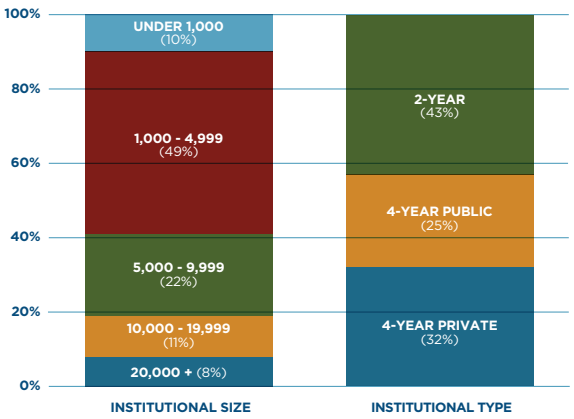
n = 245



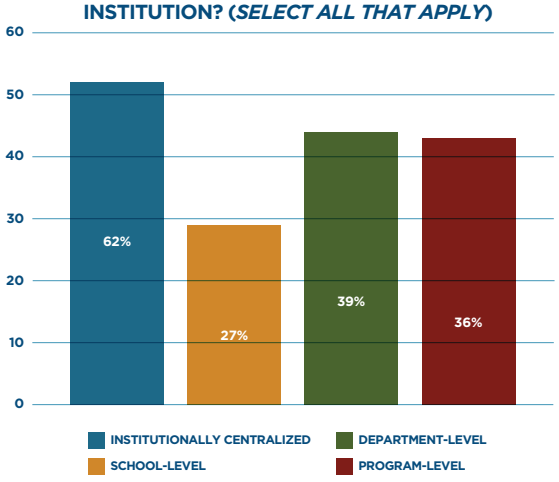
SEGMENT PROFILES: CHECK ENGINES

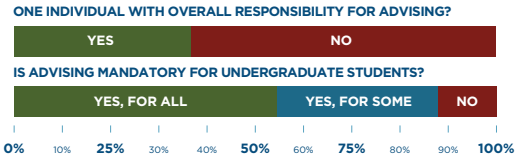
n = 161 (19% of Sample)

DEMOGRAPHICS AND ADVISING STRUCTURE

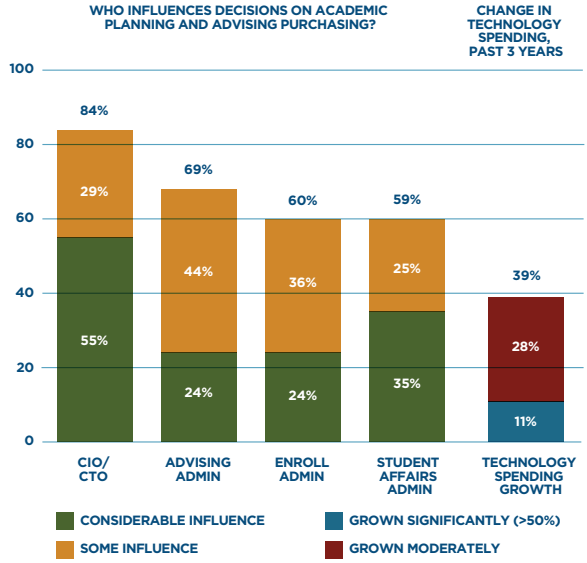


WHERE DOES UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ADVISING ORIGINATE AT YOUR INSTITUTION? (*SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*)

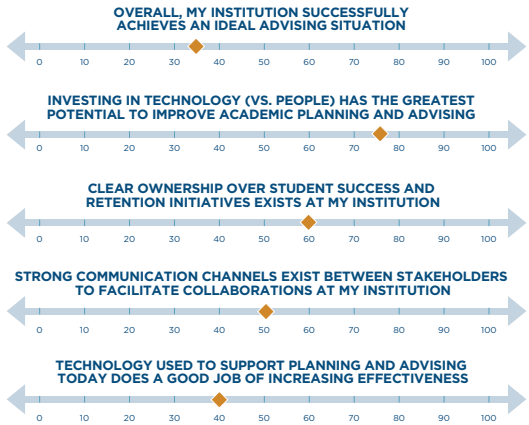




TECHNOLOGY SPENDING



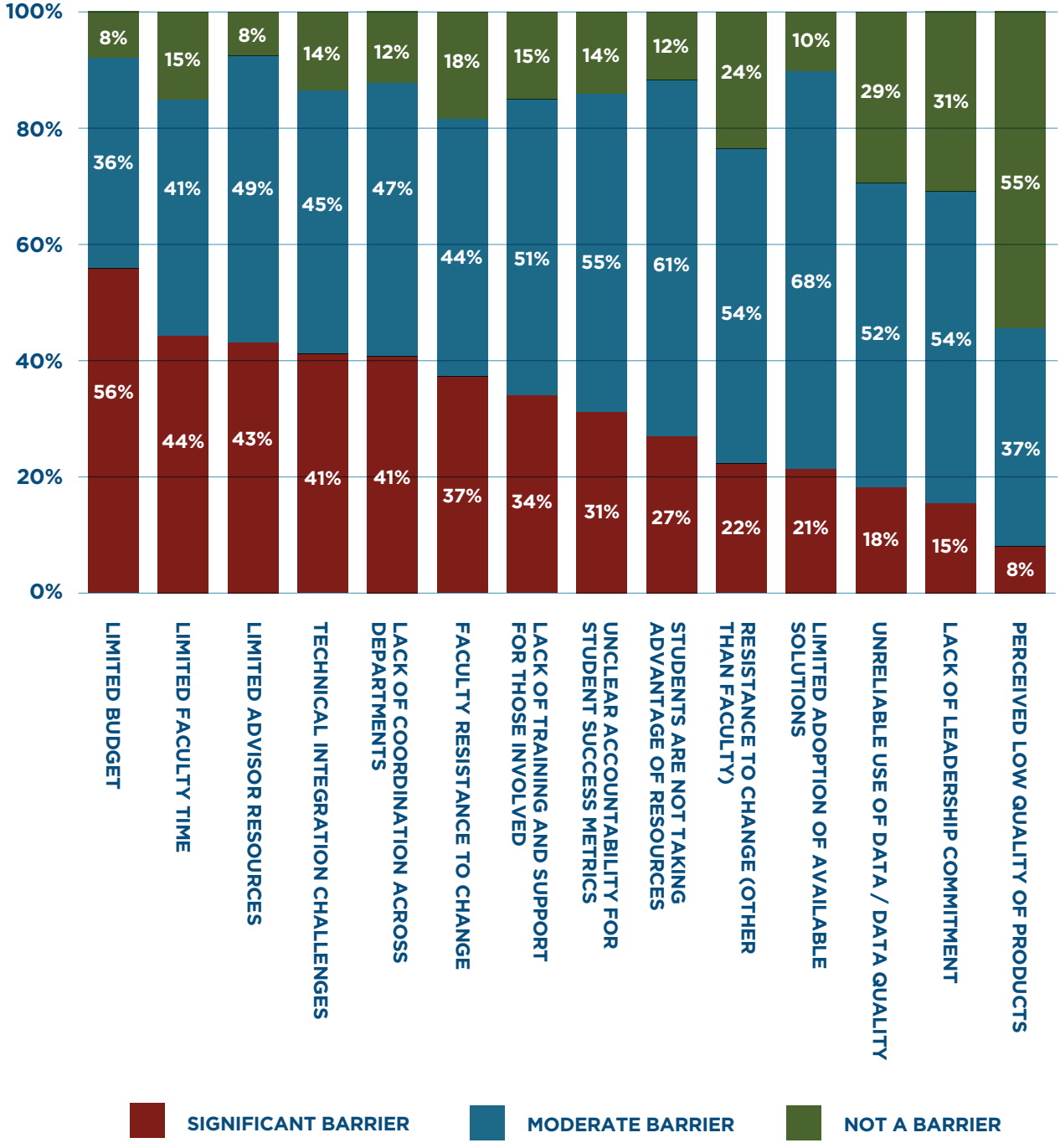
STAKEHOLDER TENDENCIES



BARRIERS TO IMPROVING PLANNING AND ADVISING: CHECK ENGINES

What are the barriers to improving the undergraduate academic planning and advising function and processes at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

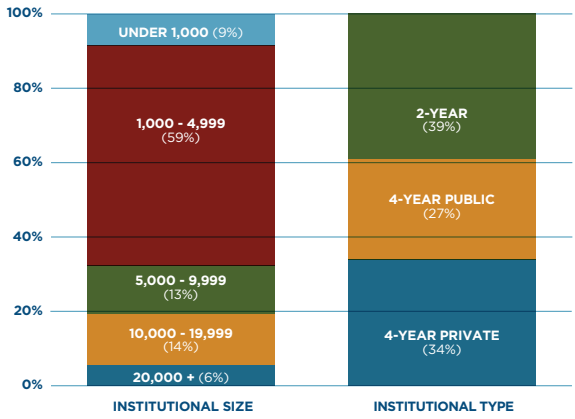
n = 161



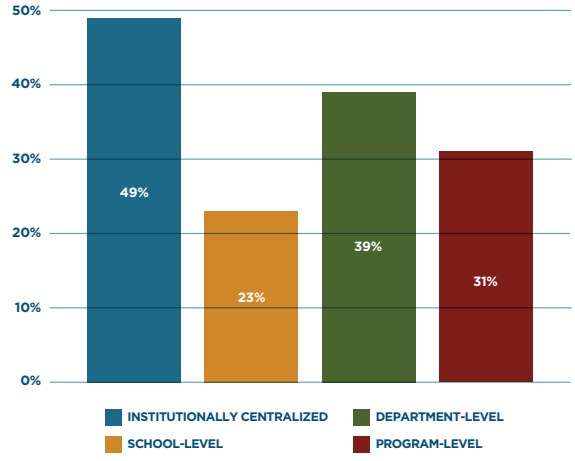
SEGMENT PROFILES: LOW FUELS

n = 188 (23% of Sample)

DEMOGRAPHICS AND ADVISING STRUCTURE



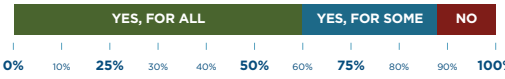
WHERE DOES UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ADVISING ORIGINATE AT YOUR INSTITUTION? (*SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*)



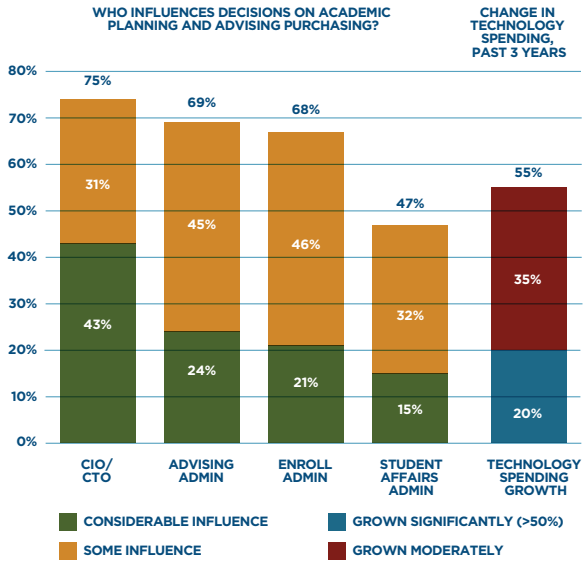
ONE INDIVIDUAL WITH OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADVISING?



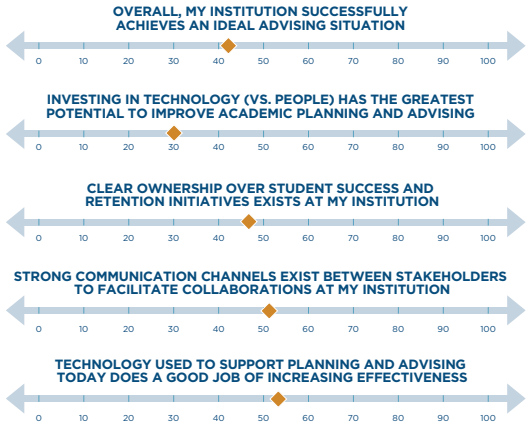
IS ADVISING MANDATORY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS?



TECHNOLOGY SPENDING



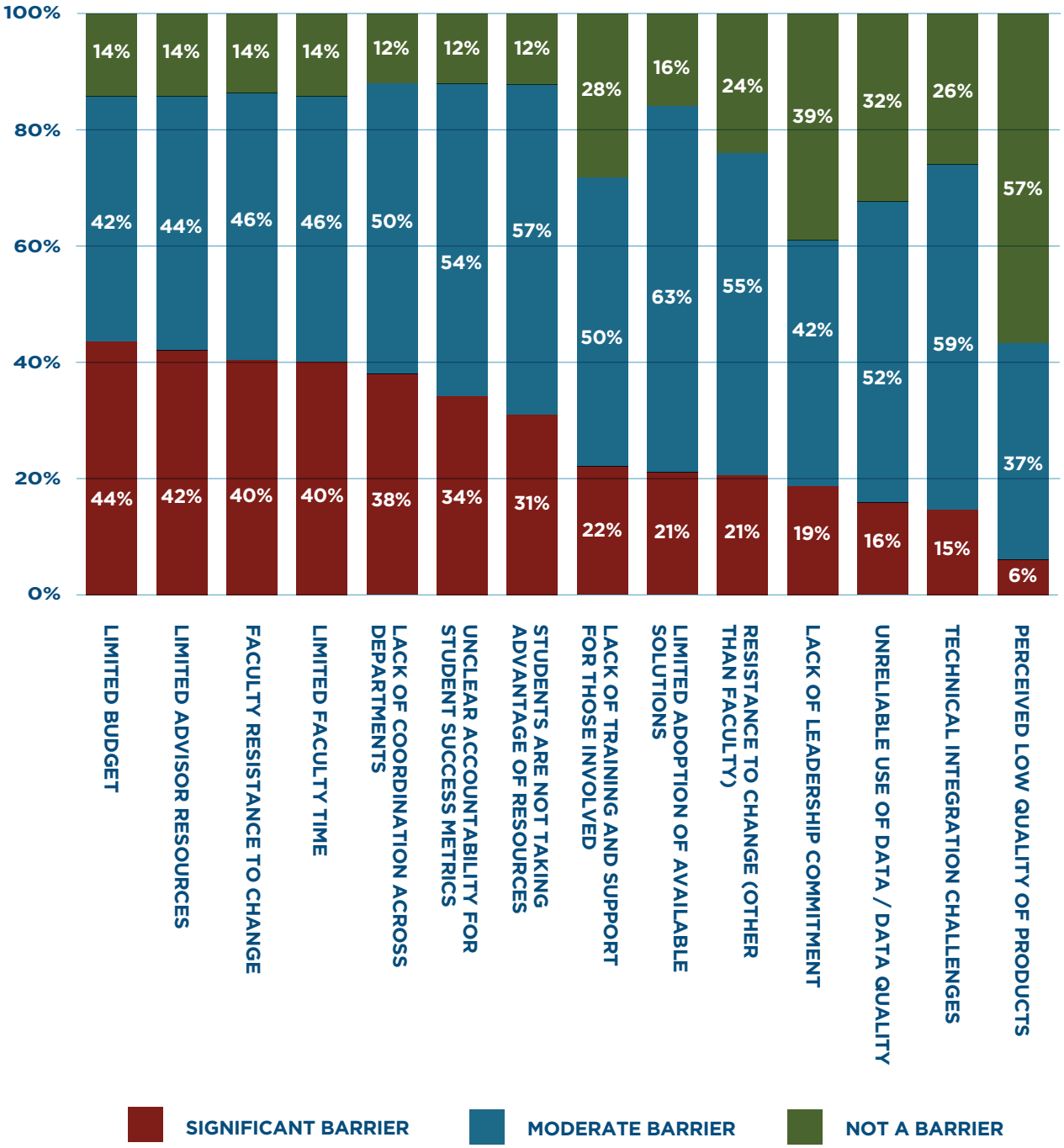
STAKEHOLDER TENDENCIES



BARRIERS TO IMPROVING PLANNING AND ADVISING: LOW FUELS

What are the barriers to improving the undergraduate academic planning and advising function and processes at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

n = 188

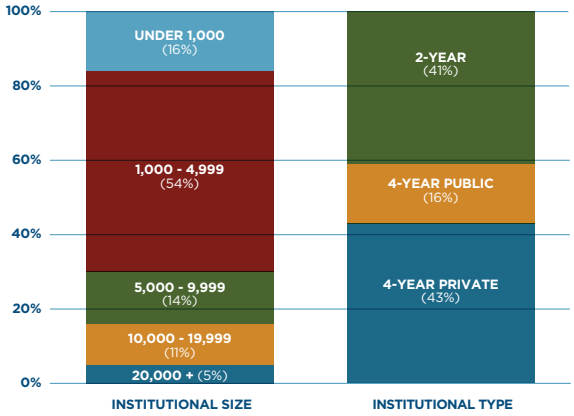


SEGMENT PROFILES: LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS

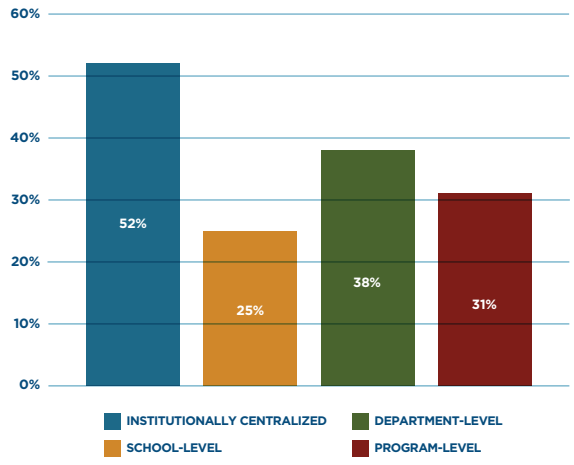
n = 245* (29% of Sample)

*Weighted to match attitudinal segmentation sample

DEMOGRAPHICS AND ADVISING STRUCTURE



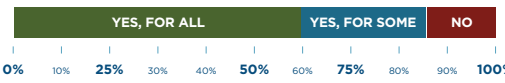
WHERE DOES UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ADVISING ORIGINATE AT YOUR INSTITUTION? (*SELECT ALL THAT APPLY*)



ONE INDIVIDUAL WITH OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADVISING?



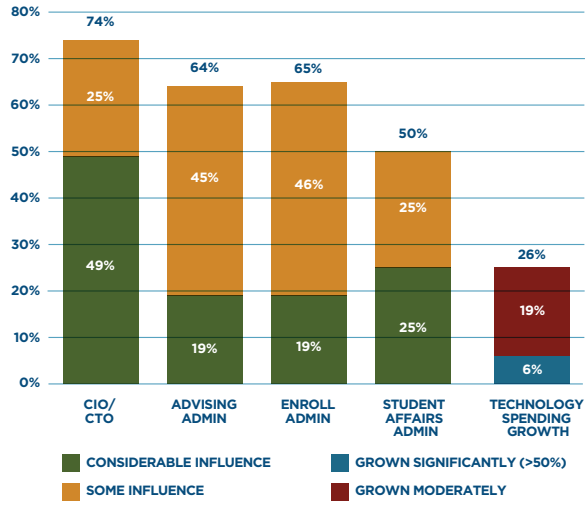
IS ADVISING MANDATORY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS?



TECHNOLOGY SPENDING

WHO INFLUENCES DECISIONS ON ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ADVISING PURCHASING?

CHANGE IN TECHNOLOGY SPENDING, PAST 3 YEARS



STAKEHOLDER TENDENCIES

OVERALL, MY INSTITUTION SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVES AN IDEAL ADVISING SITUATION



INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY (VS. PEOPLE) HAS THE GREATEST POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC PLANNING AND ADVISING



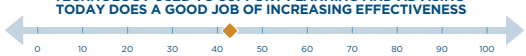
CLEAR OWNERSHIP OVER STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION INITIATIVES EXISTS AT MY INSTITUTION



STRONG COMMUNICATION CHANNELS EXIST BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS TO FACILITATE COLLABORATIONS AT MY INSTITUTION



TECHNOLOGY USED TO SUPPORT PLANNING AND ADVISING TODAY DOES A GOOD JOB OF INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS



BARRIERS TO IMPROVING PLANNING AND ADVISING: LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS

What are the barriers to improving the undergraduate academic planning and advising function and processes at your institution? (*Select all that apply*)

n = 243

