Inside Higher Ed

2026 Survey of

College and University Chief Academic Officers

A SURVEY BY *INSIDE HIGHER ED* AND HANOVER RESEARCH

Colleen Flaherty & Sara Custer
Editors, *Inside Higher Ed*

Honorlock watermark

Honorlock

Protect Institutional Integrity

Unmatched exam proctoring for the entire campus.

As AI transforms the learning landscape, senior leaders need a trusted partner. Honorlock online proctoring safeguards academic standards while reducing faculty stress and preserving student trust.



WPCC

"Honorlock stood out immediately. The support was exceptional from day one, and the platform was easy for students and faculty... Once we tried the live proctor pop-in, we didn't want to go back."

Emily Nestor, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Western Piedmont Community College

Why 500+ Institutions Choose Honorlock

Uncompromising Exam Integrity

Accurately detects modern cheating, protecting your institution's academic standards.

Reduce Student Anxiety

Non-invasive AI monitoring plus empathetic proctors, preserving exam integrity without panic.

24/7 Institutional Support

Immediate, 24/7 live support for everyone, ensuring smooth exam delivery.

Scalable Institutional Efficiency

Fits seamlessly into your existing academic ecosystem for simple and easy adoption.

FALL 2026 Leader

Give your campus easy, stress-free testing for everyone.

info.honorlock.com/provosts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Methodology 4
Key Findings 5
Being a Provost 10
Academic Programs and Success 17
Digital Learning 22
Artificial Intelligence 23
Well-Being and Safety 32
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 35
Campus Speech 38
Policy Environment 40
Institutional Effectiveness 50
Tenure and Shared Governance 51
Faculty and Staff Retention 56
Detailed Tables 58
About *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover Research 93

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Inside Higher Ed and Hanover Research sent survey invitations via email to 2,523 college and university provosts with regular reminders sent throughout the July 9 to August 10 field period. Hanover collected 376 fully or partially completed surveys, yielding a 15 percent response rate. The survey is an attempted census of all chief academic officers using the most comprehensive sample information available to target all eligible U.S. colleges and universities from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database. The margin of error is ±4.7 percentage points, given a total N-count of 376. Conclusions drawn from a small sample size (n<20) should be interpreted with caution. In the charts and percentages that follow, some percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

	All Institutions, by Sector				Public			Private Nonprofit		
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	For-profit*	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Associate	Doctoral/ Master's	Bacc.	Associate*
Total sample size	376	196	169	11	52	62	82	88	78	3

Note: An asterisk indicates that data is not reported for this group due to small sample size.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Self-confident but underresourced:** Provosts are confident in their role and their relationship with their president: 87 percent feel adequately trained, for example. But, like last year, resources are a sticking point. In 2026, not quite half of provosts (47 percent) say they have what they need to actually implement initiatives. Most provosts nevertheless trend optimistic about their institution's futures, though 13 percent signal near-term threats to their college's ability to carry out their academic missions and 18 percent signal active financial distress. Regarding the future of higher education broadly, just a quarter of provosts are somewhat (21 percent) or very confident (4 percent) that the U.S. university research enterprise will remain strong over the next decade. This increases to 43 percent among public doctoral university provosts, despite their disproportionate experience with recent federal funding cuts. In write-in comments about underappreciated challenges, provosts flag topics from doing more with less to student readiness levels.
- **Under the academic hood:** Most provosts rate their institution's academic health as good or excellent (82 percent combined), and most also affirm the value of general education and the liberal arts: 87 percent agree that high-quality undergraduate education requires healthy departments in fields such as English, history, political science and other liberal arts. Looking deeper, however, just 49 percent are confident that quality is consistent across their institution's degree programs. As for work-integrated learning, limited staff capacity to manage these opportunities—not employer partner interest or faculty buy-in—is the top reported barrier to expansion, for 69 percent of provosts.
- **Digital learning gaps:** Online learning is virtually universal (92 percent of institutions represented offer it in some way), but not at private nonprofit baccalaureate colleges: Just 69 percent of these provosts say it's available. And while a majority of all provosts are reasonably confident in digital learning—63 percent affirm the quality of their institution's online and hybrid course offerings, for instance—fewer, 35 percent, describe their institution's technology infrastructure around nondegree credentials as robust.

KEY FINDINGS (Cont.)

- **AI's ROI? It's complicated:** AI's return-on-investment so far is more about efficiency than deep change, with more provosts pointing to clear institutional gains in individual employee productivity (39 percent) over those in areas such as teaching and learning (29 percent) or research (7 percent). Only 8 percent describe operational transformation. Provosts themselves report significant AI uptake—seven in 10 (71 percent) say they use it for summarizing documents or reports, for example—but staff capacity and skills (51 percent) and outright faculty or staff resistance (50 percent) are the biggest reported limitations on AI's impact institutionwide. Governance approaches are scattered, and just one in five provosts agrees (17 percent) or strongly agrees (3 percent) that their institution has a coherent vision for how AI will change what it teaches and how to teach it. Still, few provosts (8 percent) indicate that their institutions are taking a primarily defensive approach to AI and assessment. More on AI governance: Public doctoral institution provosts are most likely to report having either a centralized, institutionwide strategy or collaborative governance, at 61 percent, by institution type. Private nonprofit baccalaureate institution provosts are least likely, at 38 percent.
- **Mental health still a central concern:** Mental health remains the top-ranked threat to student well-being by a wide margin (83 percent of all provosts worry about this), and just 24 percent think undergraduate mental health at their own institutions is improving, down from 40 percent in 2025. Other top-cited threats to campus well-being are personal stress (68 percent) and food and housing insecurity (47 percent, rising to 85 percent among community college provosts). Thinking about the degree to which undergraduate education at their institutions helps students explore issues of mattering—such as what kind of person they want to be and what they want to contribute—private nonprofit institution provosts are significantly more likely than their public-sector peers to describe this as a central part of the experience, at 57 percent and 18 percent, respectively.
- **DEI efforts shifting:** Diversity, equity and inclusion haven't disappeared in the last two years, but they have changed shape, with 49 percent of provosts saying their institutions have rebranded these efforts under frameworks such as belonging or inclusive excellence. Just 4 percent report recent expansion of DEI efforts. Clear retrenchment varies by sector: 30 percent of public institution provosts report significant cuts to DEI offices, roles or programs, versus 7 percent at private nonprofits. By region, provosts in the South (26 percent) and Midwest (23 percent) are more likely to report significant reductions to DEI than their peers in the Northeast (9 percent) and West (11 percent). Some 12 percent of all provosts agree that the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision limiting race-conscious admissions has led to a decrease in student racial diversity at their institutions, about the same as last year. In 2026, the rate is 22 percent among public doctoral university provosts.

KEY FINDINGS (Cont.)

- **Lukewarm on campus speech:** Two in three provosts (68 percent) rate their institution's climate for civil discourse as good or excellent, compared with just 20 percent who say the same of higher education in general. But provosts report gaps in how institutions are preparing students for a robust speech environment: They're most likely to rate their institution highly effective at promoting critical thinking (64 percent do), followed by free inquiry (55 percent) and free expression (49 percent). Only 39 percent say their institutions is highly effective at building students' understanding and consensus-building skills.
- **Bracing, not panicking, on federal policy:** Half of all provosts report a decrease in federal funding under the second Trump administration, jumping to 80 percent of public doctoral institutions represented. Among impacted provosts (n=183), the plurality (42 percent) report cuts of 5 to 10 percent. But the share of the subsample reporting cuts of more than 10 percent doubled, to 24 percent (from 12 percent in 2025). Some 49 percent of all provosts are chasing alternative funding sources now; fewer cite more drastic measures, such as freezing hiring (10 percent). Six in 10 (60 percent) indicate academic program adjustments in response to recent federal policy changes and/or actions, and just 4 percent do not expect the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, in particular, to significantly impact their institution. Four in 10 (40 percent) say that compared to two years ago, federal policymakers have more or much more influence on academic decision-making. On accreditation, just 17 percent predict the planned federal overhaul will have a somewhat or strongly positive impact, though this varies by region: Provosts in the South are especially likely to predict a positive impact, at 35 percent (versus 6 percent in the Northeast, for example). Similarly, some see the federal government's growing emphasis on workforce outcomes as an opportunity for higher education, while others see it as a threat to the broader mission of colleges and universities. The slight plurality (31 percent) see it as a mixed bag—roughly equal opportunity and risk.
- **Delivering on basics, doubts about pricing:** Some 99 percent of provosts rate their institution as at least somewhat effective at providing a quality undergraduate education; ratings are similar for metrics such as effectiveness in preparing students for the world of work. Yet, on cost, just 19 percent of private nonprofit institution provosts rate their institution very effective at controlling rising prices for students and families, versus 49 percent of public counterparts.

KEY FINDINGS (Cont.)

- **Split on tenure:** Forty-five percent of provosts consider tenure very or extremely important to their institution's overall health, down from 53 percent last year, and some 53 percent now favor a system of long-term contracts over the existing tenure system. Institution type matters: 72 percent of public doctoral university provosts consider tenure highly important, compared with 29 percent of private nonprofit doctoral/master's institution counterparts. Meanwhile, 60 percent of all provosts say shared governance works well at their institutions. On academic freedom, relatively more provosts than last year report that it's strong and well protected (48 percent versus 36 percent), and just 5 percent report it's under significant strain in 2026.
- **Variation in faculty turnover:** Turnover worries have cooled since the Great Resignation, with 44 percent of provosts reporting elevated staff turnover, down from 64 percent in 2024; 24 percent report elevated faculty turnover, down from 35 percent in 2024. When faculty do leave, according to provosts, top reasons include better offers elsewhere (64 percent), ahead of factors such as burnout or politics. But on that last point, 12 percent of provosts cite the political climate in their state or region. This increases to 18 percent of provosts in the Midwest and 15 percent of those in the South, versus 1 percent of provosts in the Northeast and 7 percent of those in the West. Overall, 30 percent of provosts in the South and 27 percent of those in the Midwest report higher than usual faculty turnover for any reason, compared with 17 percent in the Northeast and 19 percent in the West.

watermark

"Every other leader on campus has a system of record. ***It's time academic leaders had theirs."***



Dear Provosts & Chief Academic Officers,

Every key role across higher education relies on an enterprise system built specifically for their needs. Registrars have the SIS. Admissions and Advancement run on CRMs. CFOs manage ERPs. Yet, Chief Academic Officers have been expected to navigate an increasingly complex landscape using disconnected spreadsheets, manual surveys, and siloed solutions. As I often say, the provost has been forced to eat last.

Today, the pressure on your office has never been higher. You're tasked with demonstrating the value of higher education, navigating changing accreditation landscapes, and managing high-stakes faculty processes, all while driving institutional quality and student success with limited resources. You shouldn't have to focus your energy on manually piecing together answers to your most critical questions.

That's why we built the **Watermark Educational Impact Suite**.

Watermark brings purpose-built AI and connected intelligence to the academic enterprise. By unifying your campus data, workflows, and people into a single narrative, Watermark gives you the clarity to act. Our solutions help you reinforce a quality foundation, align strategy, ensure continuous improvement, and drive student success.

We believe that higher education needs connected intelligence that transforms operational complexity into strategic clarity. As you read through this year's survey, you'll see firsthand how your peers are navigating these exact operational pressures. We hope these insights offer both validation that you aren't alone and a clear path forward.

Sincerely,

Erin Shy
CEO, Watermark

Claim your platform of action. Visit: watermarkinsights.com.

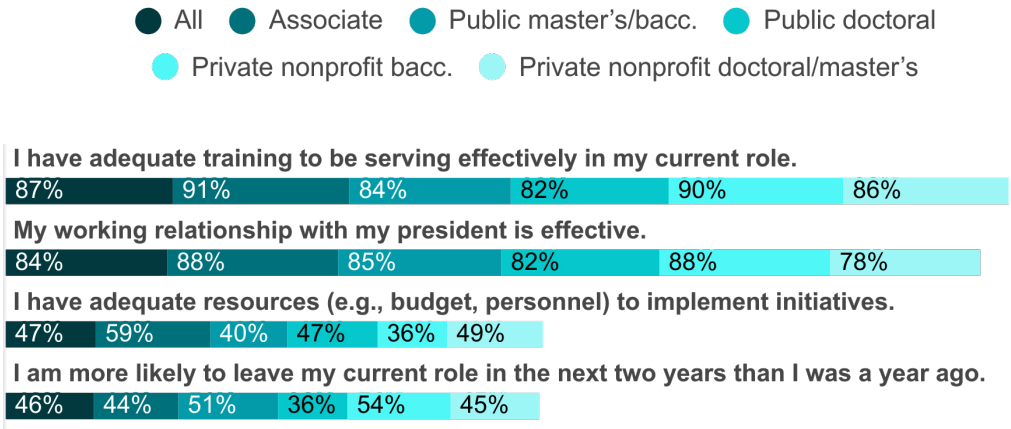
RESOURCES, SUPPORT AND TIMELINE

Most provosts agree (39 percent) or strongly agree (48 percent) that they have adequate training to serve effectively in their current role. Most also agree (27 percent) or strongly agree (58 percent) that they have an effective working relationship with their president.

Fewer provosts agree (32 percent) or strongly agree (15 percent) that they have adequate resources—think budgets and personnel—to implement initiatives, however. By specific institution type, private nonprofit baccalaureate provosts are least likely to agree or strongly agree they have adequate resources, at 36 percent of this group; community college (associate) provosts are most likely to agree or strongly agree, at 59 percent.

Nearly half of provosts agree (26 percent) or strongly agree (20 percent) that they're more likely to leave their current role in the next two years than they were just a year ago; this is relatively consistent across sectors, public and private nonprofit, and U.S. regions. By institution type, private nonprofit baccalaureate provosts are most likely to agree or strongly agree, at 54 percent; public doctoral provosts are least likely, at 36 percent. Age also appears to factor in: 58 percent of provosts 70 and older say they're more likely to leave, versus 46 percent of those 40 to 49, for example.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who agree or strongly agree with the following statements about their role:



ACADEMIC MISSION

Thinking about their institution's academic mission in the context of the current environment for higher education, nearly six in 10 provosts (58 percent) best describe their institution's approach over the next three years as strengthening its mission by adapting successfully to changing student, workforce and societal needs. Another quarter (25 percent) say that their institution's continued fulfillment of its mission will require significant changes to programs, operations or priorities. Some 12 percent believe their institution's ability to fulfill its mission will become increasingly constrained, requiring difficult tradeoffs and reductions. Yet just 1 percent report that their institution's mission will need to be fundamentally redefined for it to remain viable. This is relatively consistent across sectors, institution types and U.S. regions.

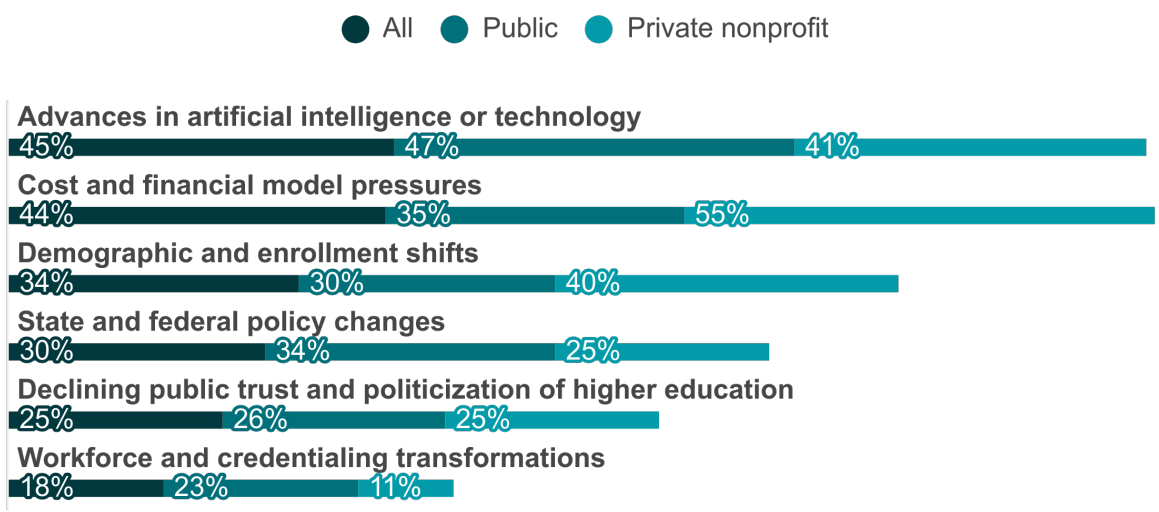
Provosts (all and by sector) who describe the three-year outlook for their institution's academic mission as follows, thinking about the current environment for higher education:

Outlook	All	Public	Private nonprofit
We will strengthen our mission by adapting successfully to changing student, workforce and societal needs.	58%	59%	57%
We will fulfill our mission, but doing so will require significant changes to programs, operations or priorities.	25%	27%	24%
Our ability to fulfill our mission will become increasingly constrained, requiring difficult tradeoffs and reductions.	12%	11%	12%
Our mission will need to be fundamentally redefined to remain viable.	1%	1%	1%
It's too early to tell how current changes will affect our ability to fulfill our mission.	5%	3%	5%

GREATEST IMPACT ON HIGHER ED

Looking ahead to 2030, provosts are most likely to say that advances in artificial intelligence (45 percent) and cost and financial model pressures (44 percent) will have the greatest impact on higher education. Relatively fewer provosts cite demographic and enrollment shifts (34 percent) and state and federal policy changes (30 percent), among other options.

Provosts (all and by sector) who expect the following to have the greatest impact on higher education by 2030, selecting up to two options:



Note: Less than 2% of each group chose climate and sustainability challenges or "other."

In their own leadership surveys by *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover this year, college and university chief business officers (CBOs) were most likely to cite cost and financial pressures (46 percent) and demographic and enrollment shifts (46 percent) as most transformative by 2030, from the same list of options; presidents were most likely to cite artificial intelligence (at 48 percent), slightly ahead of cost and financial model pressures (45 percent)—more in line with provosts.

CONCERN ABOUT FINANCIAL POSITION

A plurality of provosts (36 percent) are mildly concerned about their institution's financial position over the next three years, given the combined effects of demographic trends, changes to federal student aid and shifts in research funding: They're monitoring the situation but not in crisis mode. Another 27 percent are moderately concerned, having identified real vulnerabilities that require action. Some 18 percent are very concerned, actively managing financial distress. Just 13 percent are not at all concerned.

By region, provosts in the South—which has been predicted to be relatively insulated from the demographic cliff of traditional-age learners—are most likely to be only mildly or not at all concerned, at 61 percent (versus 44 percent of those in the Northeast, for example). By sector, 60 percent of private nonprofit institution provosts are at least moderately concerned, compared to 45 percent of public institution peers.

Provosts (all and by sector) on their level of concern about their institution's financial position over the next three years, given the combined effects of demographic trends, changes to federal student aid and shifts in research funding:

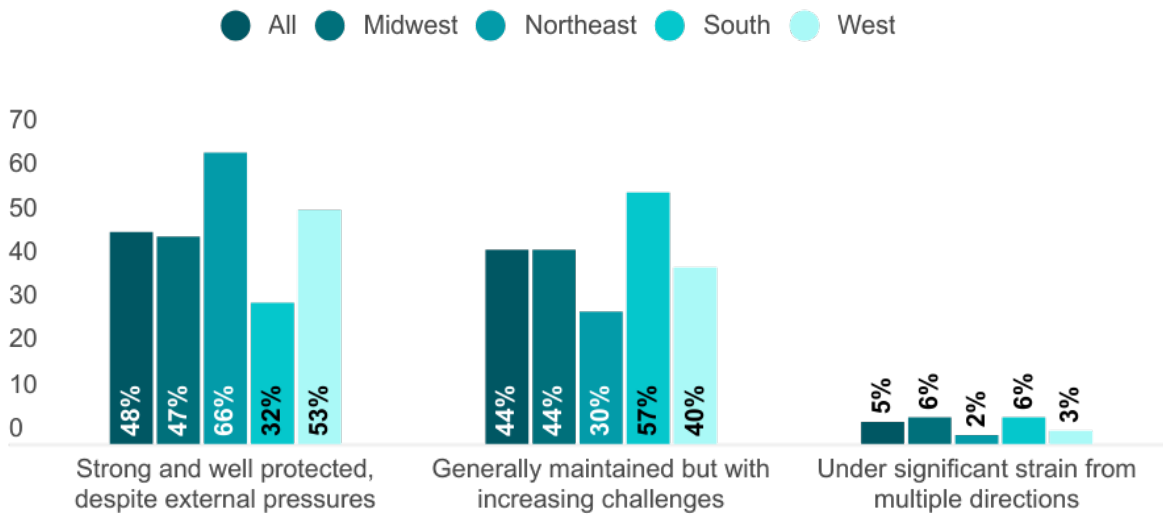


ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Asked to characterize the state of academic freedom at their institution, most provosts say it is strong and well protected, despite external pressures (48 percent), or that it's generally maintained, but with increasing challenges (44 percent). Just 5 percent say it's under significant strain, though no provost reports academic freedom is growing or expanding at their institution. These numbers are similar to last year's survey, though in 2025, relatively fewer (36 percent) described academic freedom as strong and well protected.

By sector in 2026, private nonprofit provosts are still more likely to say academic freedom is strong and well protected (56 percent) than are public institution leaders (41 percent). Just 27 percent of public doctoral provosts, in particular, say that academic freedom at their institution is strong and well protected (compared to 24 percent in 2025). Region also matters: In the South, which has seen numerous (though not exclusively) external stakeholder efforts to steer campus discourse and curriculum, just 32 percent of provosts say academic freedom is strong and well protected, versus 66 percent in the Northeast, 53 percent in the West and 47 percent in the Midwest.

Provosts (all and by U.S. region) characterize the current state of academic freedom at their institution:



Note: Chart excludes up to 3% of respondents from each institution type who say academic freedom is actively being redefined or restricted; that academic freedom is increasing/expanding; or who chose "other."

UNDERAPPRECIATED CHALLENGES

What's the single most significant challenge their institution faces in 2026 that higher education media and policy conversations don't adequately cover? In write-in comments, 327 provosts offer their takes, from "how to be adaptable and responsive to a changing society with increasingly constrained resources" to "student preparation is low and getting worse," to economic and political disparities between institution types. Wrote one provost: "Public regional institutions are suffering from the backlash the industry receives because of the actions of large, R-1, flagship institutions with deep pockets and massive operational expenses. While we rub nickels together for heat, they spend millions on upgrading office space or for food purchases for people that are out of touch with taxpayers."

Numerous provosts also express doubts about higher education's financial model—including increasing tuition discounting rates and athletics costs—and worry about new state and federal policy changes. Wrote yet another provost: "Federal and state regulations meant to curb bad actors are extra burdensome to smaller colleges where everyone in administration already wears multiple hats. The extra steps toward compliance decrease efficiency and increase cost—with no real added benefit to our students, who were already well served and very satisfied."

An analysis of all comments revealed at least nine often overlapping themes, starting with financial sustainability and funding (representing about one in every five comments), as described on the next page:

UNDERAPPRECIATED CHALLENGES (Cont.)

Provosts on the most significant challenge their institution faces that is not adequately addressed in higher education media and policy conversations:

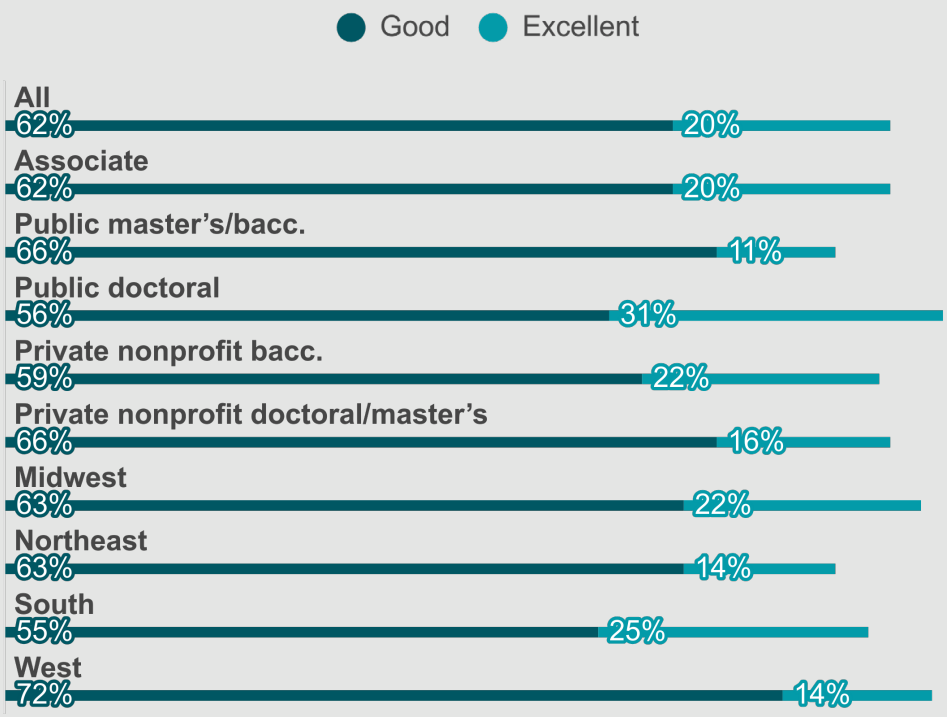
Theme (in order of prevalence)	Example write-in comment
1. Financial sustainability and funding	"Doing more with less."
2. Faculty and staff workforce, morale and burnout	"The burnout and potential turnover of student affairs staff coupled with senior faculty deciding that they cannot afford to retire."
3. Policy, politics and regulation	"The loss of the public's confidence in the value of higher education is one. Another is that unexpected changes to state and federal legislation also have, out of necessity, shifted us from a productive strategic planning mode to a reactive mode to ensure compliance."
4. Curriculum and credential alignment	"Misalignment between liberal arts degrees and workforce changes/pressures that can make curriculum seem irrelevant."
5. Technology and digital transformation (specifically artificial intelligence)	"The transformational impact of AI on all segments of higher education."
6. Governance, leadership and institutional capacity for change	"Challenges in adaptability. Faculty and many administrators are used to working slowly and cogitating endlessly before making changes; this is an environment where institutions must adapt more quickly to the external environment."
7. Enrollment, student demographics and competition	"The financial race to the bottom in private higher education with increasing competitiveness, over-discounting, etc. It is increasingly challenging to develop a sustainable financial model."
8. Value, public trust and mission	"I serve at a small (4,000 headcount) public school. Institutions like ours cannot continue to be all things to all people. How do schools adapt to focus on a specific—not generic—mission and still appeal to students?
9. Student readiness, success and basic needs	"The increased basic needs of our students given the myriad issues they experience. Limited state and federal funding, as well as the reduction of federal grants for minority-serving institutions."

ACADEMIC HEALTH

A majority of provosts rate their institution's overall academic health as good (62 percent). Another 20 percent rate it as excellent, versus fair (17 percent) or poor (2 percent). This is virtually unchanged from 2025, despite another challenging year for higher education. In *Inside Higher Ed*'s most recent annual Student Voice survey of undergraduates, most rated the quality of their college education thus far as good (50 percent) or excellent (30 percent), with private nonprofit institutions having a slight edge over publics.

Among provosts in 2026, public and private nonprofit institution leaders are about as likely to rate their institution's academic health positively. Same for provosts across regions, despite Southern institution provosts' lower rating on academic freedom above. And despite their own relative concerns about academic freedom, public doctoral university provosts are most likely to rate their institution's academic health as excellent, by college type (31 percent do); public master's/baccalaureate institution provosts are least likely (11 percent).

Provosts (all and by institution type and U.S. region) who rate their college or university's overall academic health as good or excellent:



ACADEMIC HEALTH (Cont.)

On general education and other metrics of academic health, the following shares of provosts agree or strongly agree with the following statements. These numbers are virtually unchanged since last year, except where the question is new in 2026:

- High-quality undergraduate education requires healthy departments in fields such as English, history, political science and other liberal arts: **87%**
- Their institution has a strong general education program that provides students knowledge and skills from a variety of disciplines: **82%**
- Their institution is fundamentally student-ready: **79%**
- Their institution has adequate resources to support students with disabilities: **59%**
- Open educational resources (OER), freely available online materials, are of sufficiently high quality that they should be used in most general education courses: **52%**
- They are confident that academic quality is consistent across all their institution's degree programs: **49%** (new in 2026)
- Their institution is facing external political pressure to change their general education program: **21%** (new in 2026)

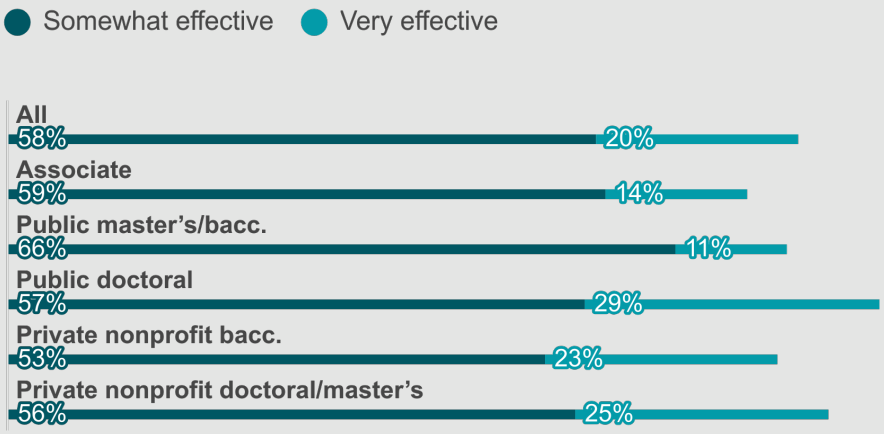
Most of these numbers are similar across sectors and U.S. regions. But public institution provosts at least somewhat agree there's external pressure to change the general education curriculum at three times the rate of their private nonprofit peers (31 percent versus 9 percent). It's 29 percent and 26 percent in the South and Midwest, respectively, and 4 percent and 17 percent in the Northeast and West, by region.

Public institution provosts are also more enthusiastic about OER than are private nonprofit peers, at 61 percent versus 42 percent.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

A majority of provosts (58 percent) rate their institution as somewhat effective at providing students meaningful work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, co-ops and employer-sponsored projects. Another 20 percent rate it as very effective. Public master's/baccalaureate institution provosts (11 percent) and their community college peers (14 percent) are least likely to say their institution is very effective at providing these experiences, which many students value.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who rate their college or university as somewhat or very effective at providing students meaningful work-integrated learning experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, co-ops and employer-sponsored projects:



As for what's hindering expansion of their institution's WIL opportunities, nearly seven in 10 provosts cite limited staff capacity to coordinate and manage these programs. That's ahead of students' need to work for pay and, separately, insufficient employer partnerships.

Here is the full list of what provosts say is most limiting their institution's expansion of WIL, selecting up to three options:

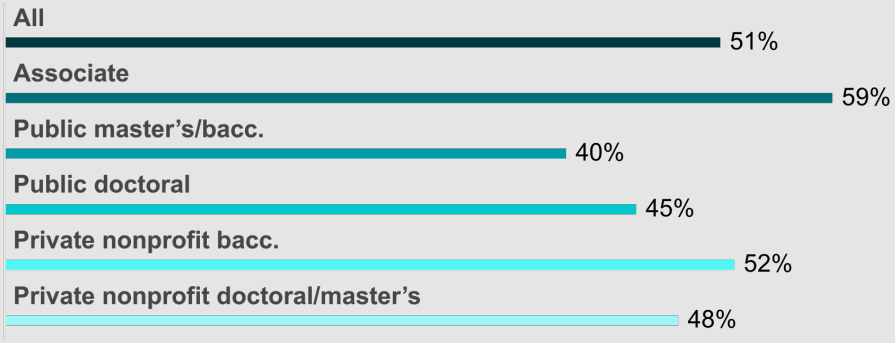
- Limited staff capacity to coordinate and manage these programs: **69%**
- Students' financial need to work for pay rather than pursue unpaid or lower-pay experiences: **60%**
- Insufficient employer partnerships in their region or field: **40%**
- Difficulty ensuring equitable access for all student populations: **28%**
- Faculty skepticism about the academic value of WIL: **17%**
- Accreditation or curricular constraints: **6%**
- Other: **5%**

Just 6 percent of provosts say they don't face any significant barriers in this area.

EVALUATING TRANSFER CREDIT

How easy or difficult is it for institutions to evaluate and award transfer credit—a perennially thorny issue—in a timely and consistent manner? A plurality of provosts say it's somewhat easy (36 percent); another 14 percent report it's very easy. Most of the remainder say it's neither difficult nor easy (23 percent) or that it's somewhat difficult (23 percent), versus very difficult (3 percent). This is relatively consistent across sectors.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who say it's at least somewhat easy for their college or university to evaluate transfer credit in a timely and consistent manner:



Asked which factor creates the greatest challenge for transfer-credit decisions at their institution, about one in five provosts cites staffing capacity and, separately, faculty review requirements.

This is what provosts say most impedes transfer-credit decisions at their institution:

- Staffing capacity: **22%**
- Faculty review requirements: **21%**
- Technology and records systems: **15%**
- Variations in course content: **12%**
- State or federal policies: **1%**
- Accreditation differences: **1%**

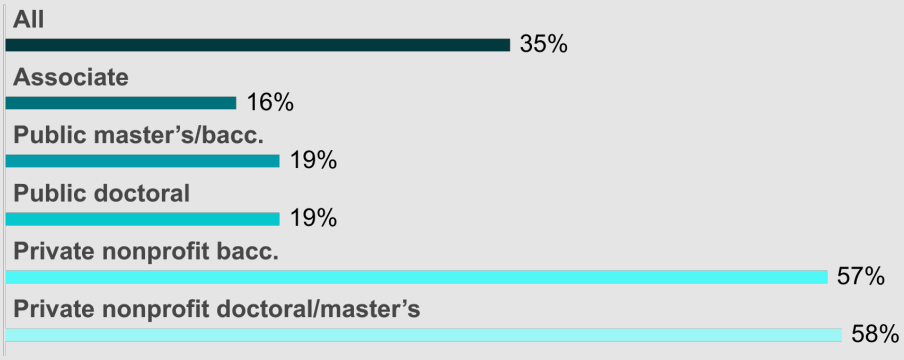
However, the largest share of respondents, 28 percent, answer the above by saying that transfer credit is not a significant challenge.

STUDENT MATTERING

Thinking about the degree to which undergraduate education at their institution helps students explore deeper questions—such as what kind of person they want to be, what gives their life meaning and what they want to contribute to the world—the plurality (48 percent) say somewhat: that these issues come up, but they're not what the institution focuses on. Another 35 percent say a great deal: that these issues are a central part of the undergraduate experience. Private nonprofit institution provosts are significantly more likely to indicate this is a central part of the undergraduate experience than are their public peers, at 57 percent versus 18 percent. These rates are consistent across institution types within sectors.

Among provosts who consider their college or university to be a liberal arts institution (n=188), 54 percent say undergraduate education centers on these ideas a great deal (versus 16 percent of provosts who don't identify their institution this way).

Provosts (all and by institution type) who say that helping students explore questions such as what kind of person they want to be, what gives their life meaning or how they want to contribute to the world is a central part of the undergraduate experience:



For reference, in a Student Voice flash survey earlier this year, 32 percent of respondents said that these issues felt like a central part of their college experience, while just 4 percent said these questions weren't relevant to their college experience.

SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL LEARNING

Some 92 percent of all provosts indicate their institution offers online courses of some kind—that's 98 percent of public and 85 percent of private nonprofit institutions represented. This difference is driven almost entirely by private nonprofit baccalaureate institutions, just 69 percent of which offer online learning.

Among those provosts reporting online offerings (n=343), the following shares somewhat or strongly agree with these statements about digital learning:

- Their institution has a technology infrastructure that can meet evolving academic needs: **66%**
- They're confident in the quality of their institution's online and hybrid course offerings: **63%**
- Student demand for online and/or hybrid course options has increased substantially since last year: **51%**
- Their institution has added a substantial number of new online and/or hybrid course options in the last year: **44%**
- Their institution has a robust technology infrastructure for nondegree credentials: **35%**

Most of these numbers parallel last year's. The last metric on technology infrastructure for nondegree programs is new for provosts in 2026. But in their own survey by *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover this year, chief technology and information officers (CTOs) also suggested that infrastructure for nondegree credentials was underdeveloped: Just 15 percent described it as robust. That's even as 70 percent agreed that their institution invests in technology to support online learning.

AI AND ROI

Amid increased investment in artificial intelligence, where has it delivered the most tangible value to respondents' institutions thus far? A slight plurality, 39 percent, say it's in individual productivity gains, while 36 percent say it's in administrative efficiency and 29 percent say it's in teaching and learning. Options such as research (7 percent) or student advising and support (10 percent) rank lower in terms of demonstrated value. Just 8 percent of provosts report ROI in the form of institutionwide operational transformation.

This is where provosts say AI investment has delivered the most value so far, selecting up to three options:

- Individual employee productivity gains: **39%**
- Administrative efficiency: **36%**
- Teaching and learning: **29%**
- IT operations/service management : **17%**
- Departmental workflow optimization: **12%**
- Student advising or support: **10%**
- Institutionwide operational transformation: **8%**
- Research: **7%**
- Compliance/risk management: **4%**
- None of these: AI has not delivered value in any of these areas: **8%**

Some 15 percent also indicate their institution hasn't invested in AI at all; this increases to 28 percent among private nonprofit baccalaureate institution provosts.

In their own survey, CTOs also ranked individual productivity gains as the top area for demonstrated AI value (55 percent). Among CBOs, more than half (57 percent) said that AI was helping them make more informed decisions in their own job, but closer to a quarter (28 percent) said it was helping their institution better support students. Just 10 percent of CBOs said their institution could demonstrate measurable returns on AI investment to date.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

WHAT'S LIMITING AI'S IMPACT

As for what's limiting AI's impact at their institution, skills and staff capacity (51 percent) and faculty or staff resistance (50 percent) top the list of options. Next is concerns about how AI affects students (39 percent), followed by cost (29 percent).

Here is the full list of what provosts say most limits AI's impact at their institution, selecting up to three options:

- Skills and staff capacity: **51%**
- Faculty or staff resistance: **50%**
- Concerns about how AI affects students: **39%**
- Cost: **29%**
- Governance and policy uncertainty: **24%**
- Data quality or integration: **19%**
- Legal or ethical concerns not related to students: **18%**
- Vendor maturity: **9%**
- None of the above: **4%**

CTOs also cited skills and staff capacity as the top limitation on AI's impact, at 55 percent—just one area of that survey in which technology leaders expressed concern about staff bandwidth.

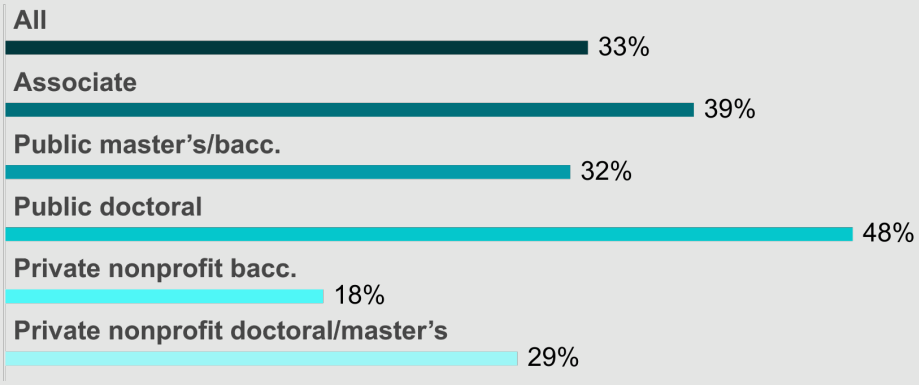
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

RATING AI'S EFFECT ON HIGHER ED

Based on their experience so far, nearly half of provosts (48 percent) rate AI's overall impact on higher education as neither positive nor negative. About a quarter (28 percent) say it's been positive and most of the remainder say it's been negative (17 percent), versus very positive or very negative.

Some 48 percent of public doctoral institution provosts rate AI's impact as positive or very positive, compared to 39 percent of community college provosts and 32 percent of public master's/baccalaureate provosts. Sentiment is lower among private institution provosts—especially at baccalaureate institutions: Just 18 percent of these provosts rate AI's impact as at all positive.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who rate AI's overall impact on higher education thus far as positive or very positive:



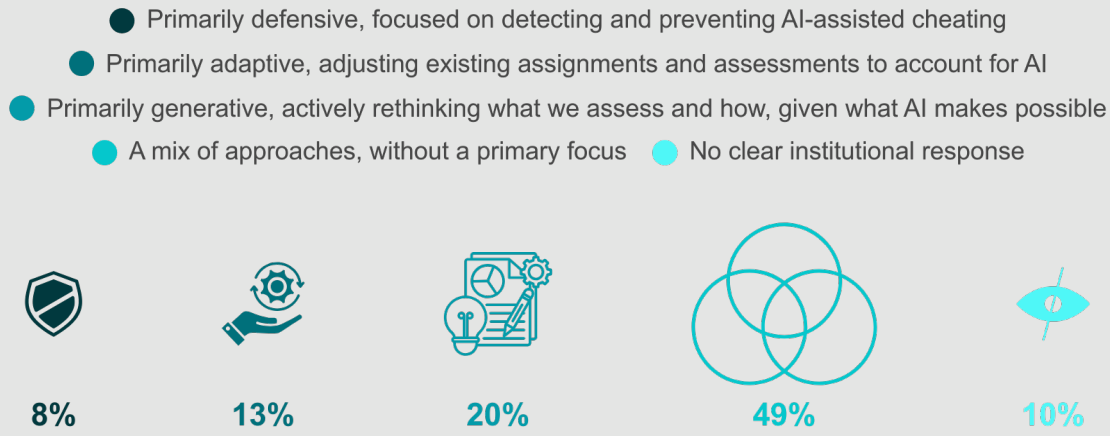
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

RESPONDING TO AI'S IMPACT ON ASSESSMENT

With AI disrupting pedagogy and heightening academic integrity concerns, just 8 percent of provosts indicate that their institution is taking a primarily defensive approach on assessment of student learning, with a focus on detecting and preventing AI-assisted cheating. Another 13 percent report a primarily adaptive approach, adjusting existing assignments and assessments to account for AI. And 20 percent describe a primarily generative approach, actively rethinking what is assessed and how, given what AI makes possible. The largest share (49 percent) indicate that their institution is taking a mix of all these approaches. The remainder haven't developed a clear response.

Private doctoral/master's institution provosts (33 percent) and their public doctoral university counterparts (27 percent) are most likely to report a primarily generative approach.

Provosts (all) characterize their institution's response to AI's impact on assessment of student learning:



AI GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

As for how institutions make decisions and strategize about AI, 37 percent of provosts indicate that theirs has collaborative governance with multiple stakeholders involved. Another 10 percent say theirs has a centralized, institutionwide AI strategy with coordinated governance. Beyond cross-campus approaches, 12 percent indicate that AI decisions at their institution are made autonomously by individual departments or units, while 26 percent report fragmented approaches with no formal governance structure. The remainder mostly report having no formal governance processes at all (13 percent).

Public doctoral institution provosts are most likely to report having either a centralized, institutionwide strategy or collaborative governance with multiple stakeholders, at 61 percent. Private nonprofit baccalaureate institution provosts are least likely to say this, at 38 percent.

Provosts (all) describe their institution's current approach to AI governance and decision-making:



Note: Chart excludes the 2% of respondents who chose "unsure."

The overall findings recall the recent CTO survey, in which the plurality of respondents, 33 percent, reported having collaborative governance with multiple stakeholders involved in AI decisions.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

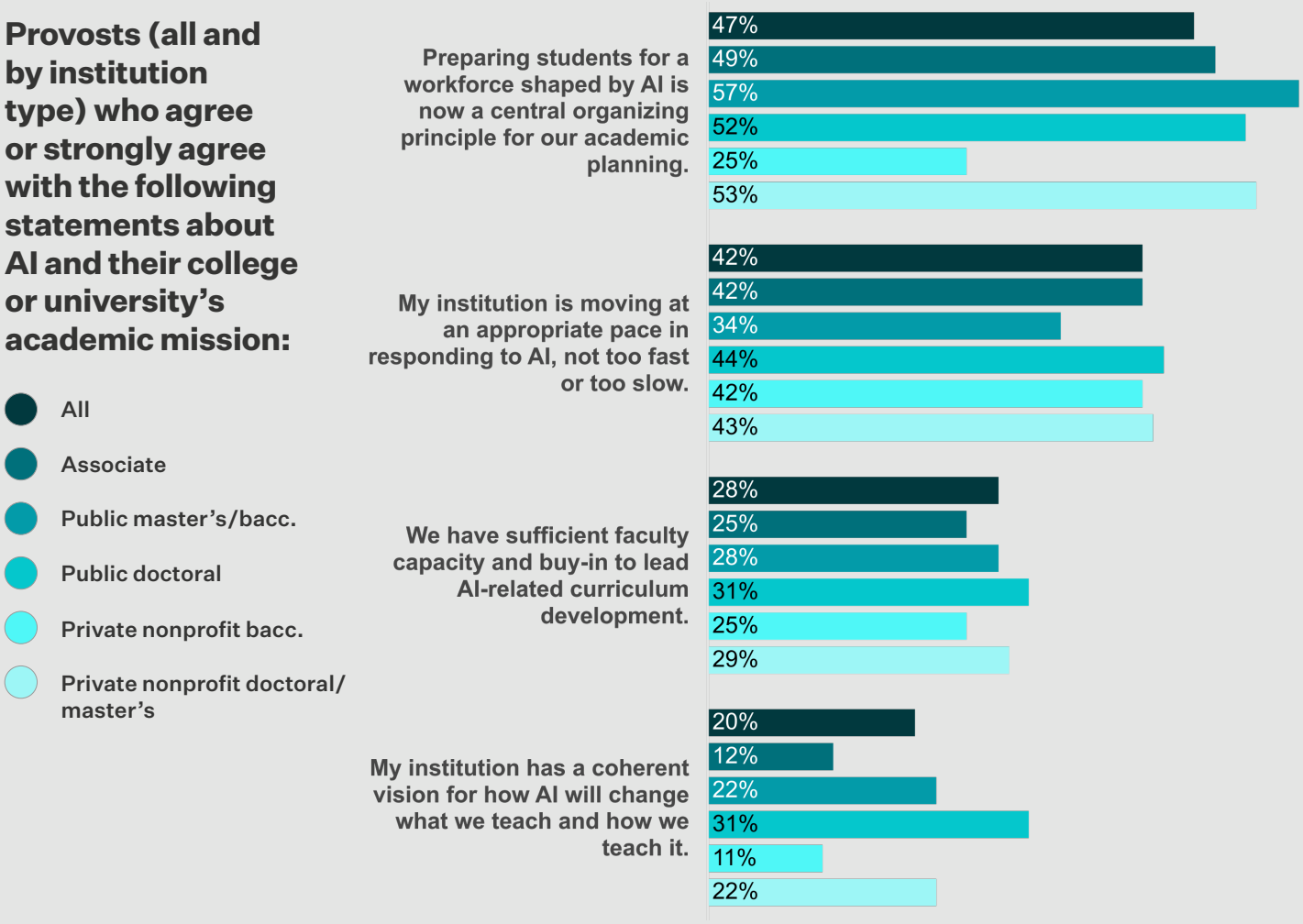
AI AND ACADEMIC MISSION

One in five provosts agrees (17 percent) or strongly agrees (3 percent) that their institution has a coherent vision for how AI will change what it teaches and how to teach it. In another area of the survey where public doctoral provosts seem to express more comfort with AI, 31 percent agree or strongly agree here. Their peers at private nonprofit baccalaureate institutions (11 percent) and community colleges (12 percent) are least likely to agree.

Just over a quarter of all provosts agree (24 percent) or strongly agree (4 percent) that their institution has sufficient faculty capacity and buy-in to lead AI-related curriculum development, recalling the earlier finding that skills and staff capacity and, separately, resistance, are the top limits on AI. Some four in 10 provosts agree (38 percent) or strongly agree (3 percent) that their institution is moving at an appropriate pace in responding to AI—not too fast and not too slow. Both findings are relatively consistent across institution type.

Provosts are more divided on whether preparing students for a workforce shaped by AI has become a central organizing principle for academic planning at their college or university. Overall, nearly half agree (39 percent) or strongly agree (8 percent). But just a quarter of private nonprofit baccalaureate institution provosts agree (22 percent) or strongly agree (3 percent).

Provosts (all and by institution type) who agree or strongly agree with the following statements about AI and their college or university's academic mission:

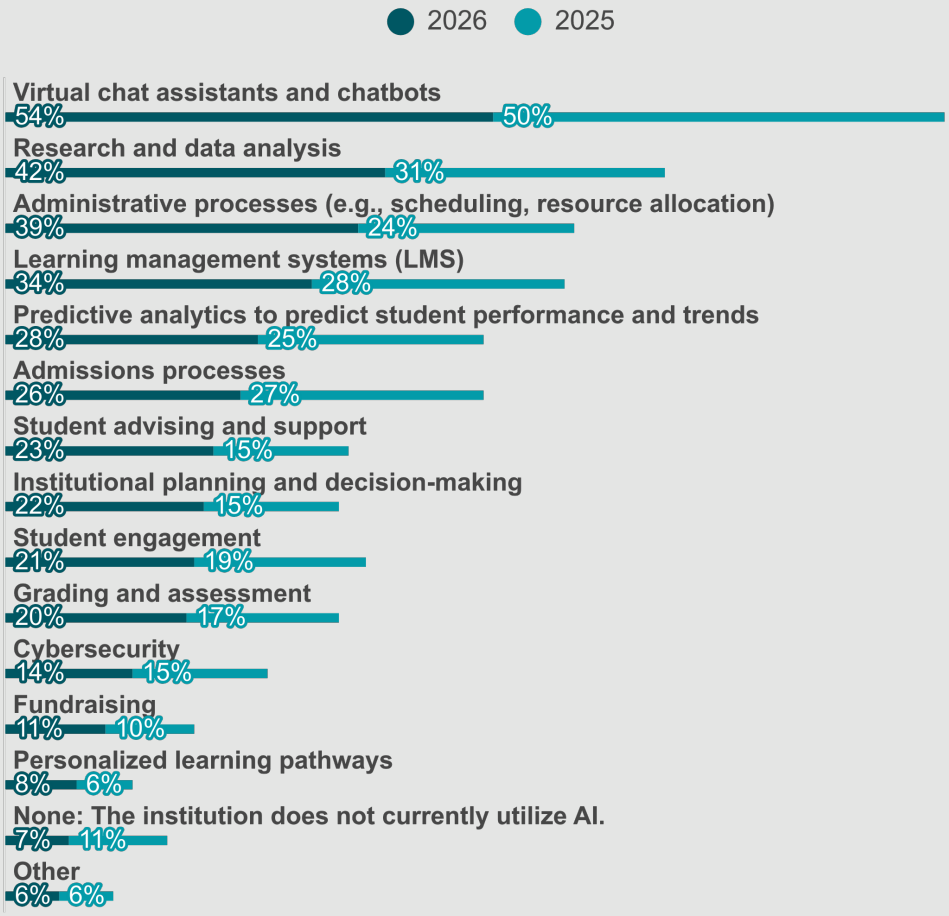


ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI DEPLOYMENT BY AREA

Virtual assistants and chatbots are again the top reported institutional use of AI in 2026, at 54 percent of institutions represented. Research and data analysis is again No. 2, at 42 percent (up from last year's 31 percent). Administrative processes shot up to No. 3, at 39 percent (versus 24 percent in 2025). Use in student advising and support increased by 8 percentage points in 2026, to 23 percent. AI use in admissions (26 percent) and grading and assessment (20 percent), among other uses, saw less change. Personalized learning pathways remain uncommon, at 8 percent. Just 7 percent of all provosts report that their institution doesn't use AI.

Provosts (all) say how their institution is currently using AI, by survey year:



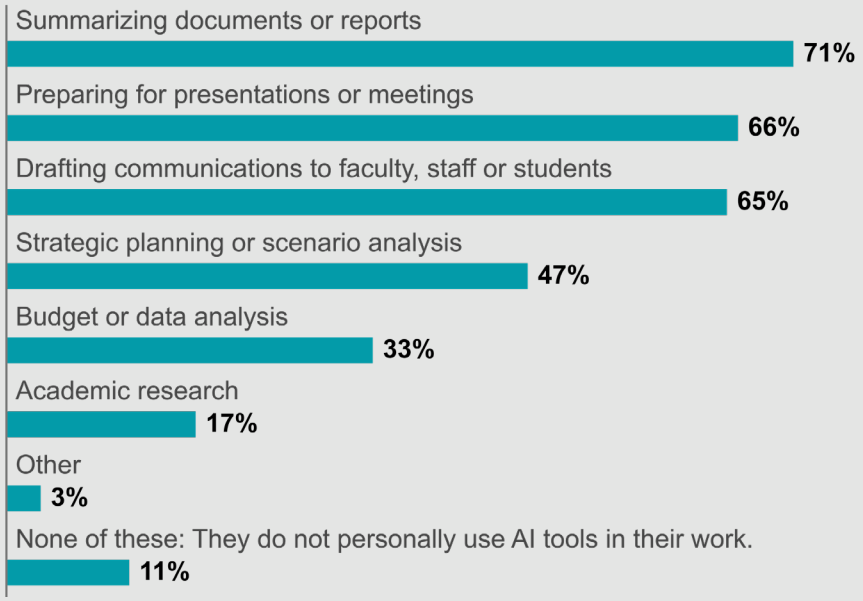
Note: Chart excludes the 4% of respondents who cited AI use for facilities management in both 2026 and 2025.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

PROVOSTS' AI USE

Most provosts are using AI in their own work; just 11 percent indicate they're not. Seven in 10 (71 percent) say they use it for summarizing documents or reports and nearly the same share uses it for presentation or meeting prep (66 percent) and drafting communications to faculty, staff and students (65 percent). Some 47 percent use it for strategic planning or scenario analysis and 33 percent use it to analyze budgets. Fewer use it for academic research.

Provosts (all) who say they use AI tools for the following in their own day-to-day work, selecting all that apply:



On frequency of use, some seven in 10 say they look to AI weekly (34 percent) or daily or almost daily (37 percent). Even 29 percent of private nonprofit baccalaureate provosts use it daily or almost daily. Rates of daily or almost daily use decline with age, from half of provosts 40 to 49 (54 percent) to a quarter of those 70 or older (25 percent). (For provosts 50 to 59, the rate is 39 percent; for those 60 to 69, it's 26 percent.)

PROVOSTS' AI USE (Cont.)

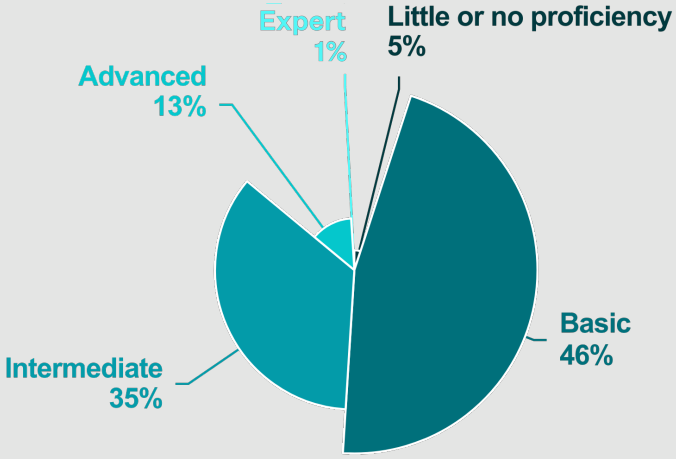
Provosts (all and by institution type) who say they use AI tools at least weekly in their own work:



Most provosts rate their own AI proficiency level as basic (46 percent) or intermediate (35 percent), versus little or no proficiency (5 percent) or advanced (13 percent). Just 1 percent of provosts say they're experts. By age, 25 percent of provosts 40 to 49 rate themselves as advanced or expert, compared to 8 percent of those 70 or older.

Those provosts who rate themselves as advanced or expert (n=50) are more likely than the group as a whole to report that AI is having a positive or very positive impact on higher education, at 58 percent versus 33 percent.

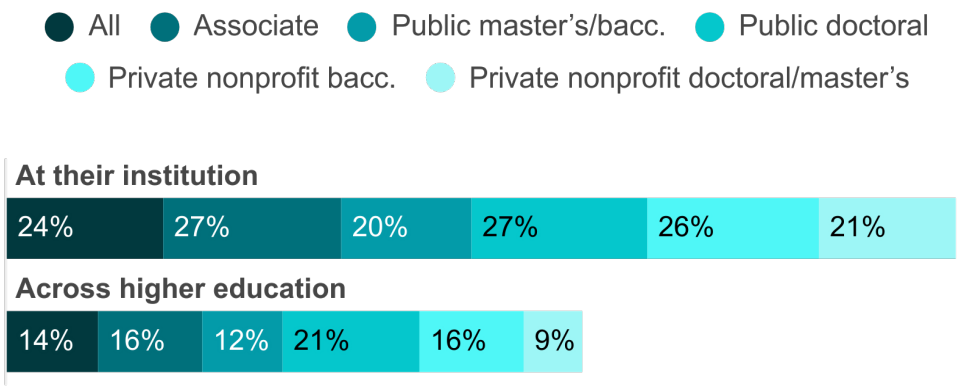
Provosts (all) rate their own level of proficiency with generative and/or agentic AI tools:



UNDERGRADUATE MENTAL HEALTH

With student mental health a continued focus across higher education, just 24 percent of provosts somewhat or strongly agree that undergraduate mental health at their institution seems to be improving. In 2025, 40 percent of provosts agreed with this statement. Additionally, just 14 percent of provosts this year agree that undergraduate mental health across higher education seems to be improving, compared to the 29 percent of provosts who agreed last year. This is relatively consistent across institution types.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who somewhat or strongly agree that undergraduate mental health seems to be improving in the following contexts:



In the most recent annual Student Voice survey, 27 percent of undergraduates described their mental health as above average or excellent. Another 44 percent rated their mental health as average on a five-point scale.

THREATS TO STUDENT WELL-BEING

Like last year, provosts rate mental health concerns the most significant threat to student well-being and/or safety at their institution: Some 83 percent cite this as a major risk (compared to 80 percent in 2025). Personal stress (68 percent), food and housing insecurity (47 percent) and academic stress (40 percent, down from 51 percent in 2025) come next. Like last year, other more traditional campus safety threats, such as alcohol and substance use issues, fall further down the list of possibilities.

This is the full list of what provosts say pose the biggest threats to student well-being and/or safety at their institution, selecting up to three options:

- Mental health concerns: **83%**
- Personal stress: **68%**
- Food and housing insecurity: **47%**
- Academic stress: **40%**
- Alcohol and substance use issues: **10%**
- Digital safety and cybersecurity risks: **9%**
- Transportation safety: **5%**
- Sexual assault and relationship violence: **2%**
- Physical health issues: **2%**
- Physical security threats: **1%**
- Hazing and/or dangerous group behaviors: **0%**
- Other: **8%**
- None of these: **1%**

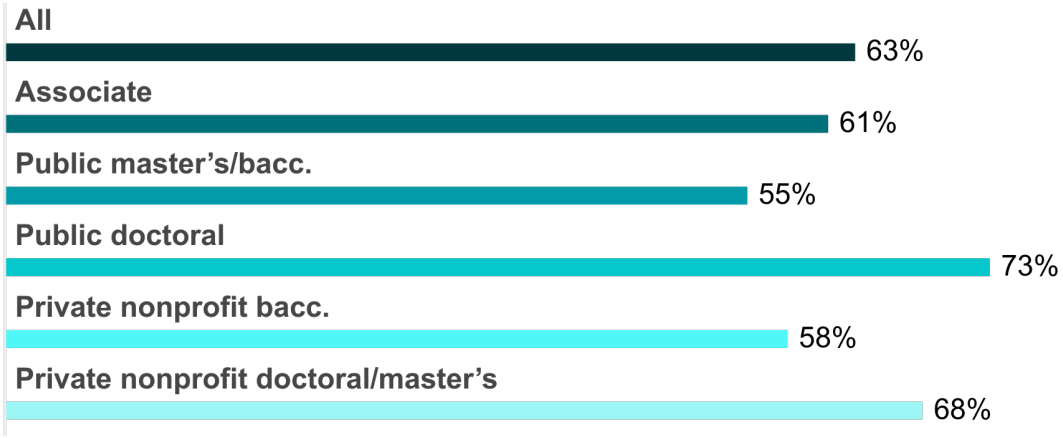
By institution type, community college provosts disproportionately worry about food and housing insecurity, with 85 percent rating it a top safety issue (also like last year).

In write-in comments, some of the 8 percent of provosts who chose “other” specified the following as top risks: financial stress, needing to work while enrolled full-time, financial well-being, and online gambling.

PROVOSTS' WELL-BEING

Asked about their own well-being—including their mental health, factoring in their level of job stress—a plurality of provosts rate it as good (44 percent); an additional 20 percent rate it as excellent. These numbers are similar to last year's.

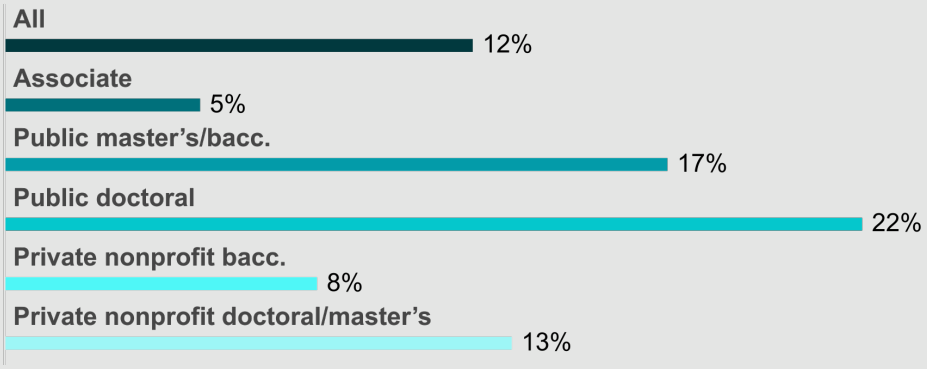
Provosts (all and by institution type) who rate their own well-being—including mental health, factoring in their level of job stress—as good or excellent:



POST-AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Provosts (all and by institution type) who somewhat or strongly agree that the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision on affirmative action has led to a decrease in student racial diversity at their college or university:

Provosts (all and by institution type) who somewhat or strongly agree that the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision on affirmative action has led to a decrease in student racial diversity at their college or university:

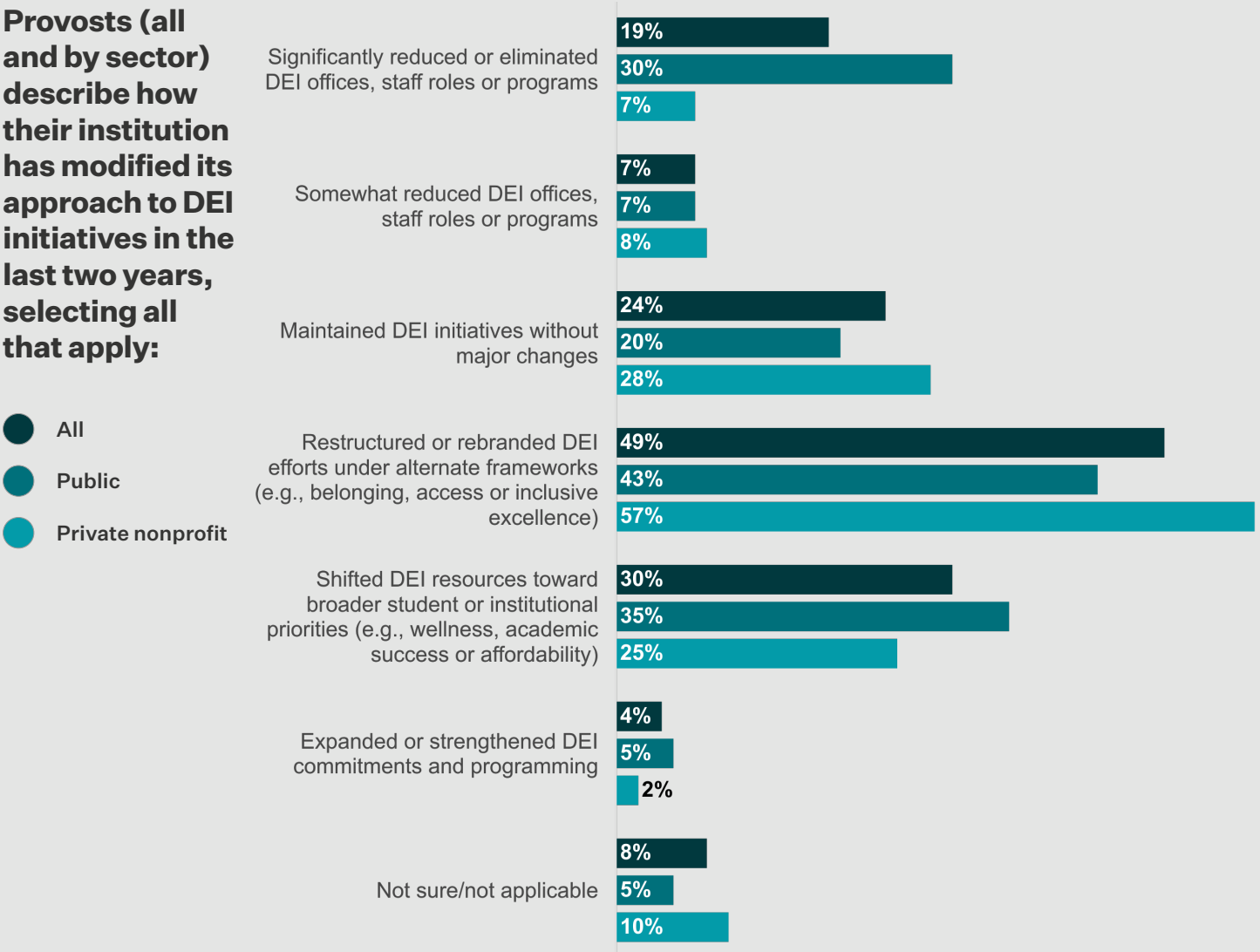


MODIFICATION OF DEI INITIATIVES

Amid national rollbacks of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, some 19 percent of all provosts say their institution has significantly reduced or limited DEI offices, roles and programs in the last two years; the rate is 30 percent among public institution leaders and 7 percent among private nonprofit peers. About a quarter (24 percent) of all provosts indicate their institution has maintained its DEI initiatives without major changes. Some 49 percent indicate their institution has restructured or rebranded DEI efforts under alternative frameworks such as "belonging," "access" or "inclusive excellence." And some 30 percent have shifted DEI resources toward broader student or institutional priorities (think wellness, academic success and affordability). Just 4 percent report recent expansion of DEI commitments.

By region, provosts in the South (26 percent) and Midwest (23 percent) are more likely to report significant reductions or elimination of DEI offices, staff roles or programs than their peers in the Northeast (9 percent) and West (11 percent).

Provosts (all and by sector) describe how their institution has modified its approach to DEI initiatives in the last two years, selecting all that apply:



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

CUTS TO DEI

For those institutions reporting clear cuts to DEI efforts in the last two years (n=97), this is where cuts have been made, beyond admissions, selecting all that apply:

- Marketing/websites: **47%**
- Student support services: **38%**
- Scholarships and financial aid: **37%**
- Training programs: **35%**
- Faculty or staff hiring: **31%**
- Outreach and community engagement: **27%**
- Leadership positions: **27%**
- Mentorship programs: **26%**
- Curriculum/curriculum development: **25%**
- Campus climate surveys: **19%**
- Retention efforts: **16%**
- Research initiatives: **13%**
- Campus facilities and accessibility: **9%**
- Alumni engagement: **4%**
- Other: **6%**

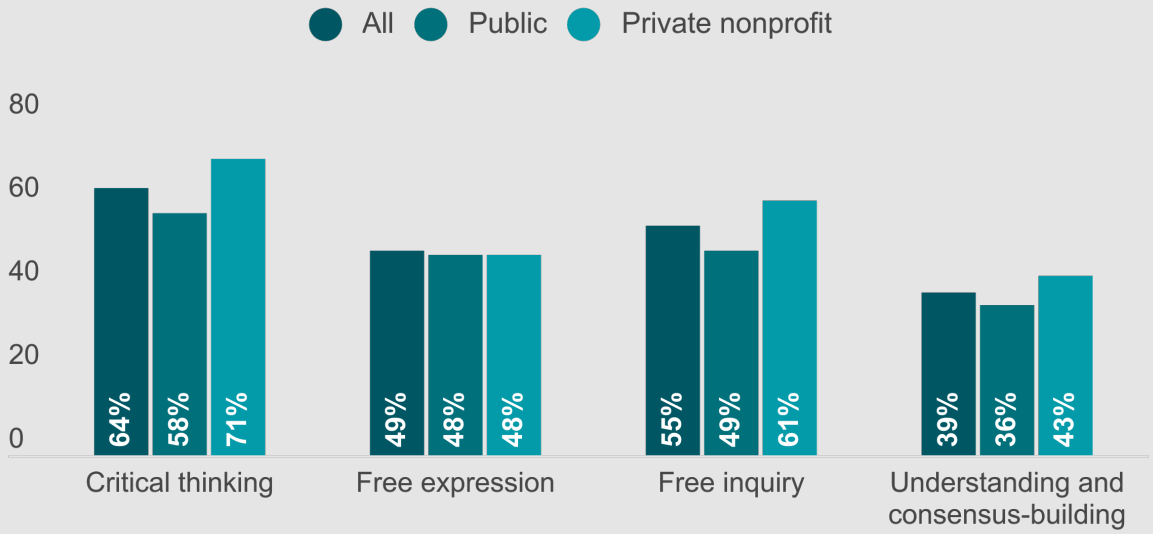
RATING THE SPEECH CLIMATE

Some 68 percent of all provosts rate their institution's climate for civil discourse good or excellent; just 20 percent say the same of higher education in general. The numbers are similar to last year's survey, and again relatively consistent across sectors.

DEVELOPING STUDENT SPEECH

How effective are institutions at developing student skills that contribute to a robust campus speech environment? Some 64 percent of provosts say their institution is highly (very or extremely) effective at promoting—including giving students a chance to practice—their critical thinking skills. On supporting and giving students opportunities to practice free inquiry, 55 percent of provosts rate their campus as highly effective. On free expression, it's 49 percent. Like last year, provosts are less approving of their institution's efforts to build student understanding and consensus-building, with 39 percent rating it highly effective (versus 42 percent in 2025).

Provosts (all and by sector) who rate their institution as very or extremely effective at promoting—including giving students the chance to practice—the following related to campus speech:



CAMPUS SPEECH

INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY

Some 27 percent of provosts indicate that their college or university has an institutional neutrality policy, though nearly the same share (26 percent) aren't sure if it does or not. This is virtually unchanged from last year.

In 2026, 33 percent of public institution provosts report such a policy, versus 20 percent of private nonprofit provosts. Provosts in the South also report having an institutional neutrality policy at an elevated rate, by region, at 34 percent (versus 20 percent of those in the Northeast, for example).

Provosts (all) who indicate their college or university has an institutional neutrality policy:



27%

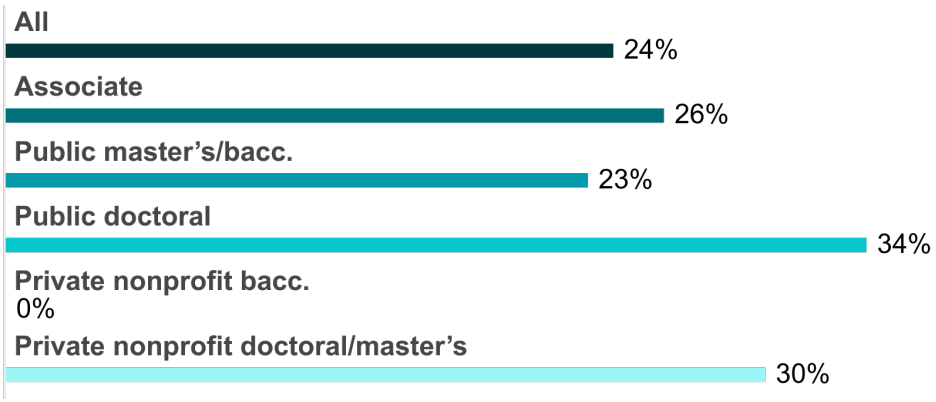
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

FEDERAL FUNDING UNDER TRUMP 2.0

Some 50 percent of provosts indicate that federal funding to their institution has decreased under the second Trump administration; this jumps to 60 percent among public institution provosts (versus 39 percent of private nonprofit peers)—and to 80 percent of public doctoral institution provosts, in particular. That's compared to 43 percent of private nonprofit doctoral/master's institutions. Most of the remainder of the sample indicate there has been no change (39 percent), versus an increase in funding (3 percent). The overall numbers are consistent with last year's responses to the same question.

For those provosts reporting federal funding cuts (n=183), the plurality (42 percent) report cuts of 5 to 10 percent. Year over year, the share of these provosts reporting cuts of more than 10 percent doubled, to 24 percent (from 12 percent).

Impacted provosts (all and by institution type, n=183) who report that federal funding to their college or university has fallen more than 10% under the second Trump administration:



POLICY ENVIRONMENT

RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN FUNDING LEVELS

How have institutions responded to changes in federal funding for higher education under Trump 2.0? Nearly half of those represented (49 percent) report pursuing alternative funding sources, such as private donors and industry partnerships; that's up somewhat from last year's 40 percent.

Here is the full list of how represented institutions have responded to federal funding cuts, selecting all that apply:

- Pursued alternative funding sources (e.g., private donors, industry partnerships): **49%**
- Restructured or scaled back specific programs dependent on federal grants: **29%**
- Reduced staff positions: **25%**
- Reduced operational expenses: **24%**
- Reallocated internal resources to protect vulnerable programs/research: **22%**
- Limited professional development and/or travel funds: **13%**
- Postponed planned facility projects/improvements: **11%**
- Implemented hiring freeze(s): **10%**
- Partnered with other institutions to share resources: **7%**
- Paused or reduced graduate student admissions: **4%**
- Other: **1%**
- None of these: **13%**

All these numbers parallel last year's for the same question. And like last year, some 31 percent of institutions respond to the above by saying that federal funding to their institution has not been significantly impacted.

POLICY ENVIRONMENT

FOCUS ON RESEARCH FUNDING

As for how institutions are responding to changes in federal funding for research, specifically, some 31 percent are diversifying funding sources beyond traditional government agencies while 24 percent are developing more industry partnerships.

Here is the full list of how institutions are responding, selecting all that apply:

- Diversifying funding sources beyond traditional government agencies: **31%**
- Developing more industry partnerships: **24%**
- Expanding grant-writing support services: **17%**
- Increasing institutional research support funds: **11%**
- Creating more opportunities for collaborative/shared funding: **11%**
- Adjusting tenure and promotion criteria to reflect funding realities: **4%**
- Reducing research expectations: **4%**
- Other: **1%**

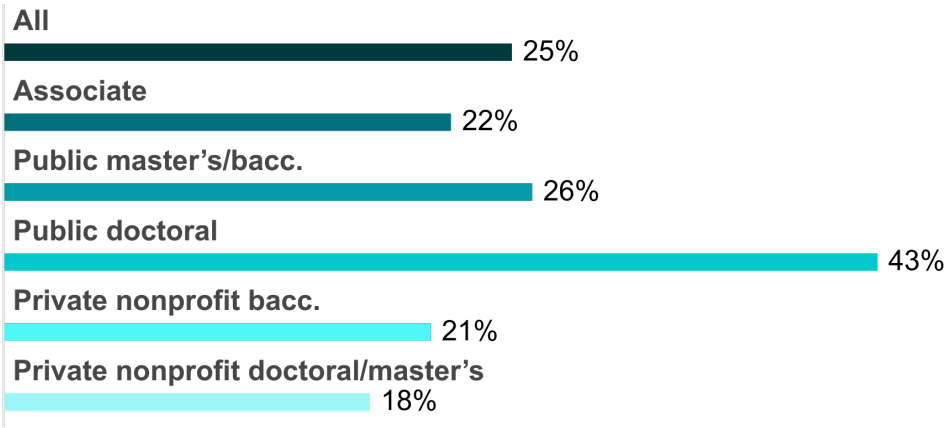
All of the above numbers again parallel last year's. And similar to last year, some 54 percent of provosts indicate their institution does not receive significant federal research funding.



FUTURE OF RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Amid significant changes to how research works in the United States, just a quarter of provosts are somewhat (21 percent) or very confident (4 percent) that the U.S. university research enterprise will remain strong over the next decade. The plurality, 37 percent, are not very confident; another 14 percent are not at all confident. By institution type—and despite their experience with federal funding cuts highlighted elsewhere in the survey—public doctoral university provosts are most likely to be at least somewhat confident in the future of the U.S. university research enterprise, at 43 percent.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who are somewhat or very confident that U.S. university research enterprise will remain strong over the next decade:



POLICY ENVIRONMENT

ACADEMIC PROGRAM RESPONSES

Most provosts (60 percent) indicate that their institution has made academic program adjustments in response to recent federal policy changes and/or actions. About a quarter each have modified language in course descriptions or program materials (24 percent) and reviewed and modified international student/scholar programs (24 percent). Some 11 percent have revised curriculum content in politically sensitive areas. Four in 10 provosts report no academic program changes at all.

Here is the full list of actions taken, selecting all that apply:

- Modified language in course descriptions or program materials: **24%**
- Reviewed and modified international student/scholar programs: **24%**
- Changed terminology in departmental names or descriptions: **21%**
- Altered data collection/analytics processes linked to student demographics/identities: **17%**
- Adjusted research priorities to align with current federal funding opportunities: **14%**
- Created contingency plans for programs that may face increased scrutiny: **14%**
- Revised curriculum content in politically sensitive areas: **11%**
- Implemented new oversight processes for research with international components: **9%**
- Consolidated academic departments or programs: **8%**
- Scaled back climate change research or sustainability initiatives: **3%**
- Other: **2%**
- None of these: **40%**

Most of these numbers parallel last year's, though the share of institutions reviewing and modifying international student/scholar programs grew from 16 percent in 2025. The share of institutions creating contingency plans for programs that may face scrutiny fell from 24 percent, suggesting provosts may have more clarity around Trump's agenda for higher education.

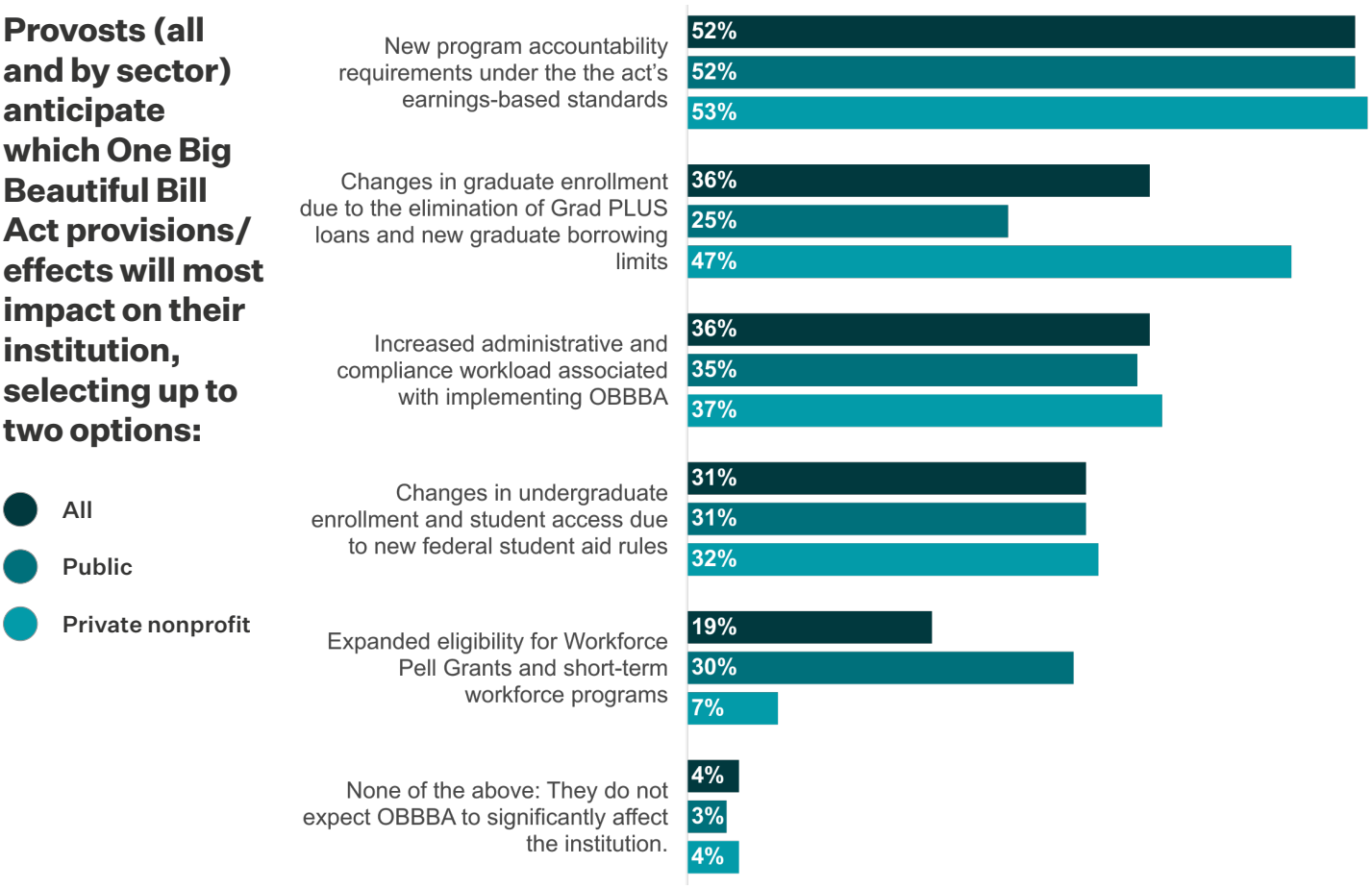
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Asked which changes under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act will have the greatest impact on their institution, 52 percent of provosts cite new program-level accountability requirements under the law's earnings-based standard. Next are changes in graduate enrollment due to the elimination of Grad PLUS loans and new graduate borrowing limits (36 percent) and the increased administrative and compliance workload associated with OBBBA (36 percent). Some 19 percent cite Workforce Pell Grants, with this jumping to 48 percent for community college provosts, in particular. Provosts may see opportunity in Pell's expansion to short-term, workforce-aligned programs, whereas the elimination of Grad PLUS loans may be perceived as a risk: 67 percent of public doctoral university provosts expect changes in graduate enrollment associated with the elimination of Grad PLUS to be most impactful.

Just 4 percent of provosts do not expect OBBBA to have any significant impact.

Provosts (all and by sector) anticipate which One Big Beautiful Bill Act provisions/ effects will most impact on their institution, selecting up to two options:



Among CBOs in their survey this year, just 4 percent reported that no OBBBA provision poses a significant financial risk to their institution, though 23 percent hadn't fully modeled the bill's effects.

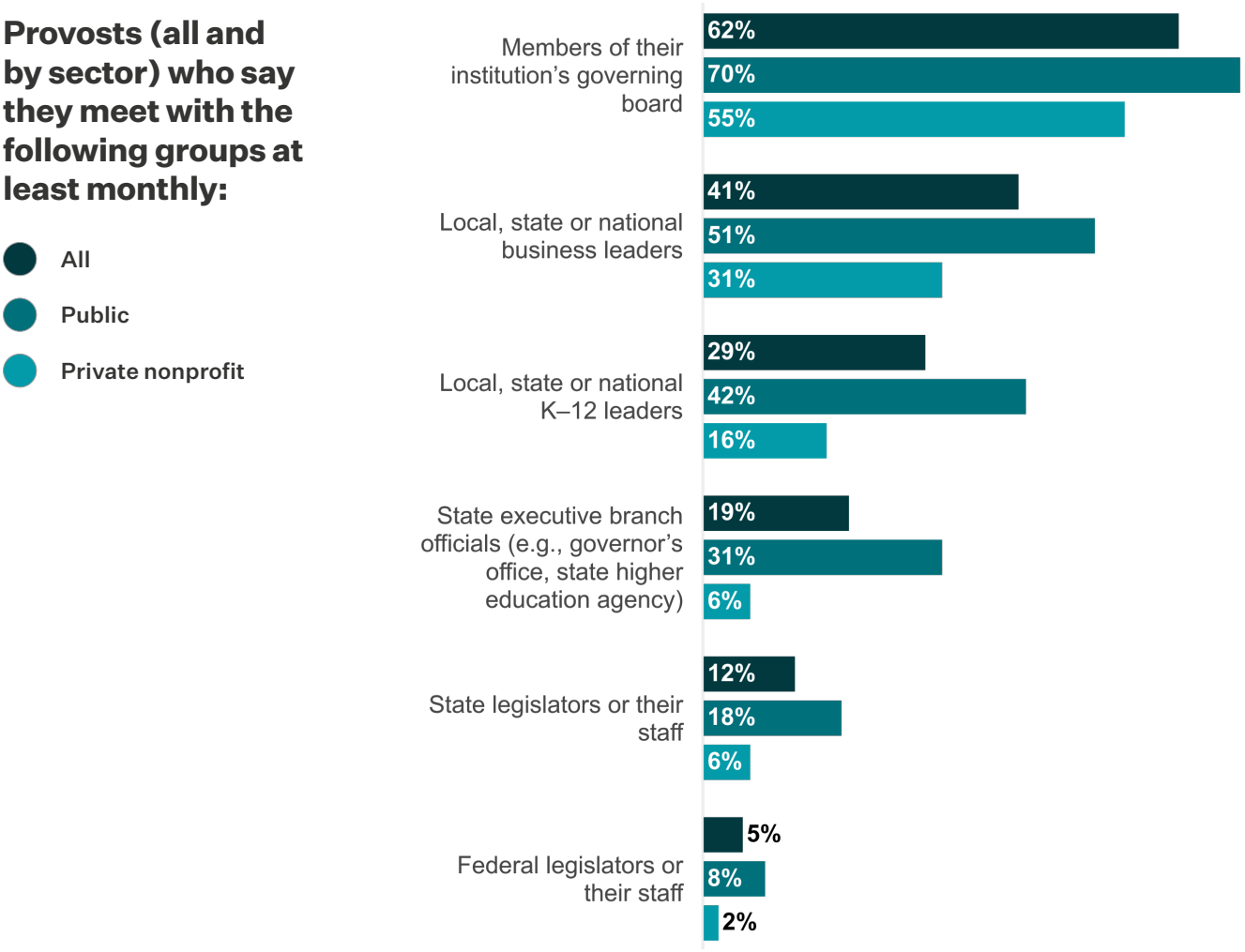
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

CONTACT WITH CIVIC LEADERS AND POLICYMAKERS

Presidents are expected to have regular contact with key leaders outside their institution, but what about provosts? Just 5 percent report that they meet at least monthly with federal legislators or their staff; another 37 percent meet with them a few times per year, but most (57 percent) say rarely or never. This is consistent across sectors. As for state legislators or their staff, 12 percent of provosts meet with them at least monthly; 60 percent say a few times per year, and the remainder (28 percent) say rarely or never—which jumps to 42 percent among private nonprofit institution provosts. The pattern is similar for engagements with state executive branch officials, such as the governor's office or state higher education agency. Some 29 percent of all provosts meet with local, state or national K–12 leaders at least monthly; about as many (24 percent) say rarely or never.

Engagement rates increase for meetings with local, state or national business leaders (41 percent of provosts say they meet with such groups monthly or weekly) and for members of their institution's governing board (62 percent monthly or weekly). Just 3 percent of provosts say they rarely or never meet with board members.

Provosts (all and by sector) who say they meet with the following groups at least monthly:



POLICY ENVIRONMENT

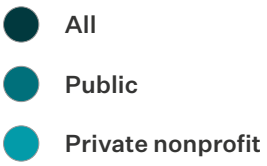
OUTSIDE INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC DECISION-MAKING

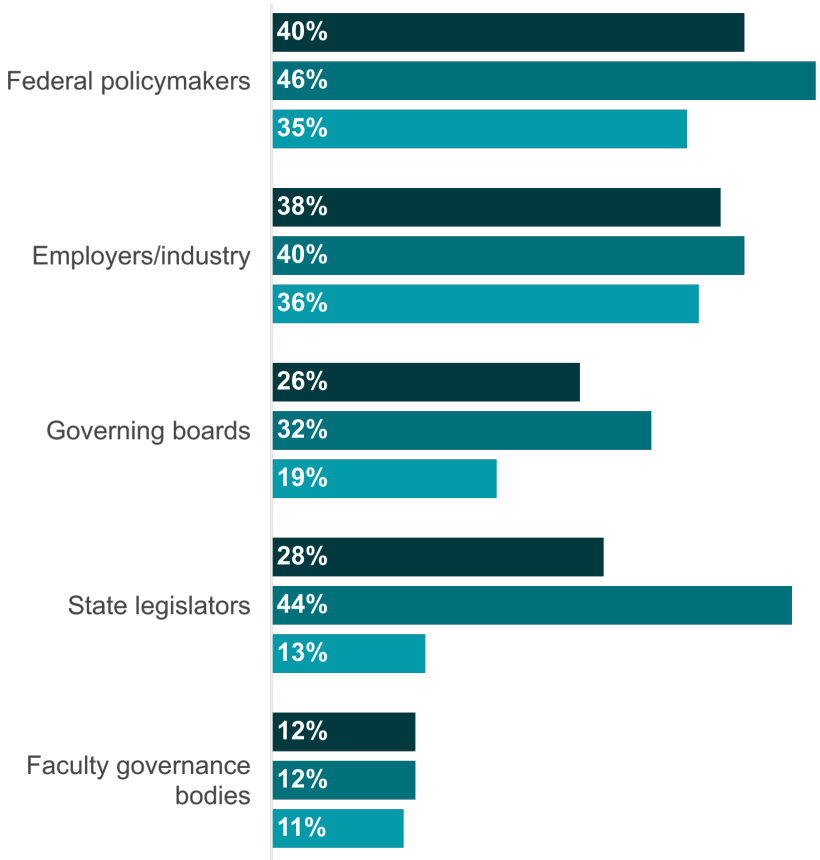
While not all provosts have direct contact with outside influential figures, many report that outside figures have an increasing influence on academic decision-making inside their institution: Four in 10 (40 percent) say that, compared to two years ago, federal policymakers have more or much more influence on academic decision-making. Nearly the same share (38 percent) report increased influence from employers and industry. Some 28 percent of all provosts say this of state legislators, increasing to 40 percent in the Midwest and 36 percent in the South.

Provosts in the Midwest (44 percent) and South (48 percent) are also more likely than their peers in the Northeast (30 percent) and West (32 percent) to report increased influence by federal policymakers. By institution type, 56 percent of public doctoral university provosts report more or much more influence by federal policymakers; 56 percent report more or much more influence by state legislators; and 44 percent report increased influence by governing boards.

Some 26 percent of all provosts report increased influence by governing boards on academic decision-making over the last two years. Twelve percent say this is true of faculty governance bodies.

Provosts (all and by sector) who say the following groups have more to much more influence on academic decision-making at their institution now, compared with two years ago:





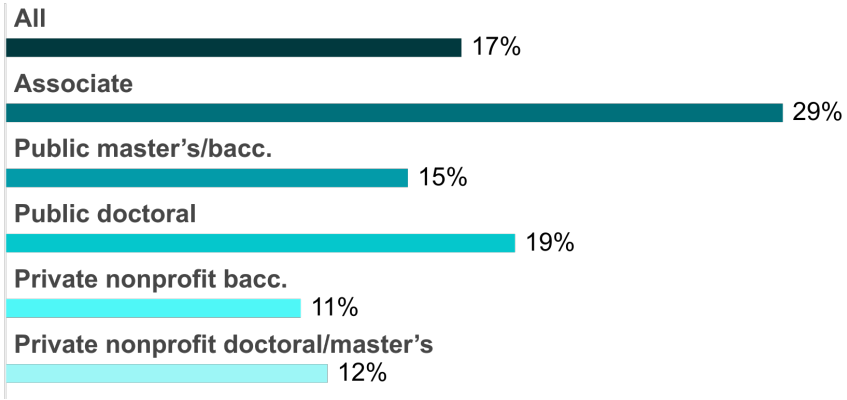
POLICY ENVIRONMENT

ACCREDITATION REFORMS

If enacted largely as proposed—to include emphasizing student outcomes; eliminating DEI standards; assessing intellectual diversity; deregulating recognition processes for new accreditors; evaluating academic research integrity; and easing transfer of student credit between institutions—most provosts say the impact of planned federal accreditation reforms will be somewhat negative (36 percent) or strongly negative (19 percent). Just 17 percent say it will have a somewhat or strongly positive impact.

Public institution provosts predict an at least somewhat positive impact at twice the rate of their private nonprofit peers (22 percent versus 11 percent). By region, provosts in the South are especially likely to predict a positive impact, at 35 percent (versus 6 percent in the Northeast, for example).

Provosts (all and by institution type) who anticipate that current accreditation reforms, if enacted largely as proposed, would have a somewhat or strongly positive impact on higher education:

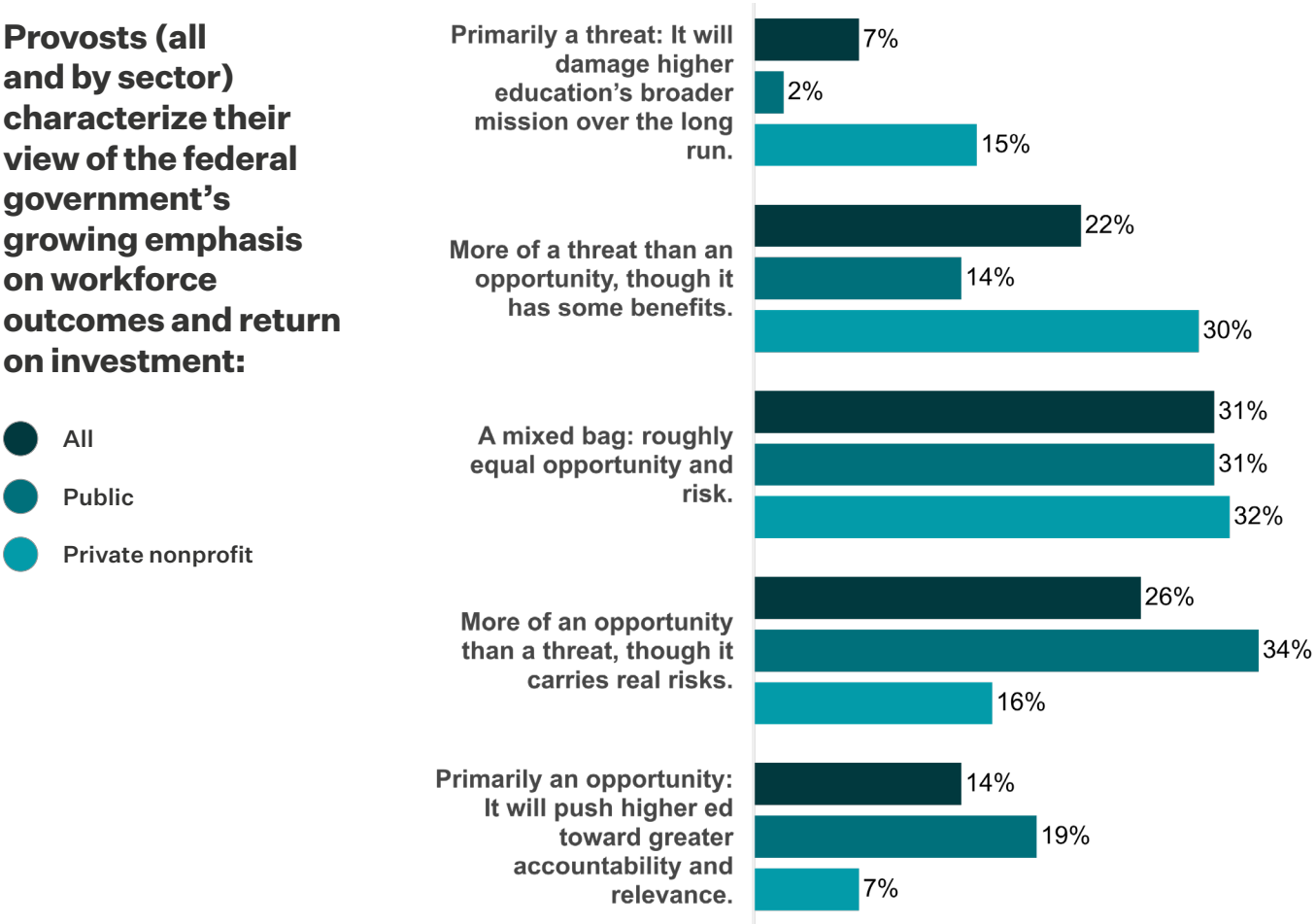


EMPHASIS ON WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

Similarly, some see the federal government's growing emphasis on workforce outcomes and return on investment as an opportunity for higher education, while others see it as a threat to the broader mission of colleges and universities. Asked for their view, four in 10 provosts describe this growing federal workforce emphasis as more of an opportunity for higher education than a threat (26 percent) or primarily an opportunity that will push higher education toward greater accountability and relevance (14 percent). The slight plurality see it as a mixed bag—roughly equal opportunity and risk.

Public institution provosts described it positively (primarily an opportunity or more of an opportunity than a threat) at double the rate of private nonprofit peers (53 percent versus 23 percent).

Provosts (all and by sector) characterize their view of the federal government's growing emphasis on workforce outcomes and return on investment:



BREAKING DOWN INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Some 99 percent of all provosts rate their institution as somewhat or very effective at providing a quality undergraduate education. The following shares of provosts also say their institution is somewhat or very effective at:

- Offering undergraduate support services beyond academic advising: **94%**
- Preparing students for the world of work: **96%**
- Providing academic advising: **92%**
- Using data to aid and inform campus decision-making: **90%**
- Meaningfully measuring student outcomes: **89%**
- Recruiting and retaining talented faculty: **88%**
- Creating a data-driven campus culture around student success: **83%**
- Controlling rising prices for students and their families: **80%**

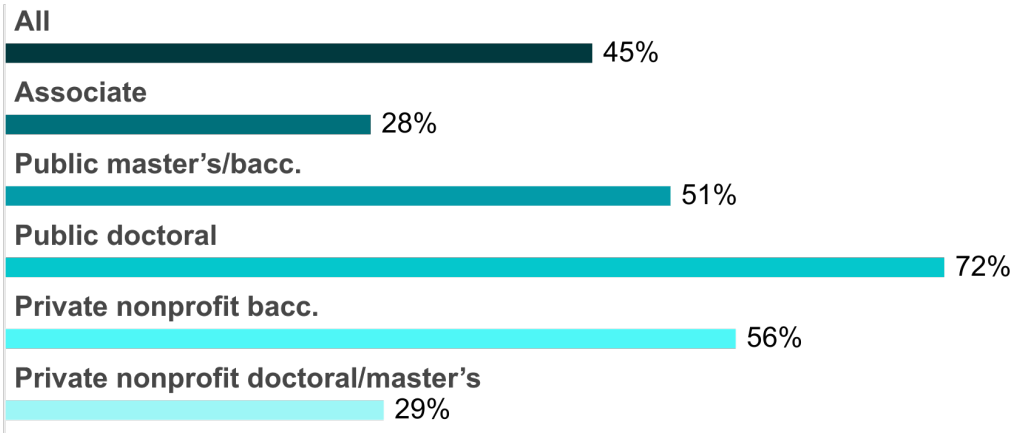
All these numbers parallel last year's, though the share of provosts who say their institution is very effective (versus just somewhat effective) at preparing students for the world of work fell to 50 percent from 59 percent. The share of provosts saying their institution is very effective in controlling rising prices grew to 36 percent from 28 percent. Still, in 2026, just 19 percent of private nonprofit provosts rate their institution very effective at controlling rising prices, compared to 49 percent of public peers.

IMPORTANCE OF TENURE

Not quite half of provosts—45 percent—say that tenure is very or extremely important to the overall health of their institution, down somewhat from last year's 53 percent. Just 14 percent say it's not at all important. By region, some 49 percent of provosts in the Midwest rate it as very or extremely important, as do 46 percent of those in the South; in the Northeast, it's 39 percent, and 42 percent in the West.

Rates vary more significantly by institution type: Just 28 percent of community college provosts say tenure is highly important versus 51 percent of public master's/baccalaureate provosts and 72 percent of public doctoral provosts (all similar to last year's numbers for these groups). By contrast, just 29 percent of private nonprofit doctoral/master's institution provosts say this is the case—compared to 48 percent in 2025, a notable decline in the perception of tenure's value for this group. The 2026 rate jumps back up to 56 percent among private nonprofit baccalaureate institution peers.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who say that faculty tenure is very or extremely important to the overall health of their institution:

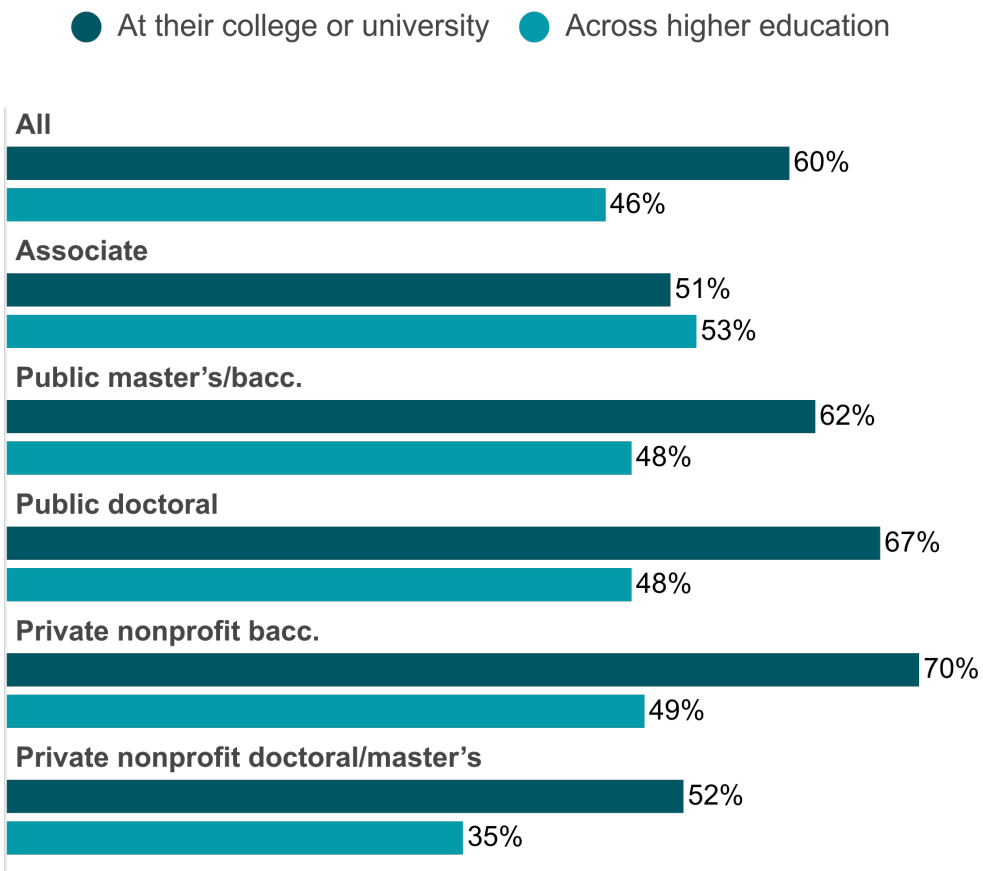


SHARED GOVERNANCE

Six in 10 (60 percent) provosts somewhat or strongly agree that shared governance works well at their institution; fewer—46 percent—say it works well across higher education as a whole. These numbers are close to last year's.

Are private nonprofit doctoral/master's institution provosts' shifting views on faculty tenure related to shared governance? Maybe, maybe not: Some 52 percent of these provosts agree that shared governance works well at their institution—more than half, but relatively fewer than their private nonprofit baccalaureate peers (70 percent of whom say their institution's shared governance works well) and their public doctoral university peers (67 percent of whom say this). Then again, many community colleges do not have tenure, and just 51 percent of these provosts agree that their institution's shared governance works well.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who somewhat or strongly agree that shared governance works well in the following contexts:

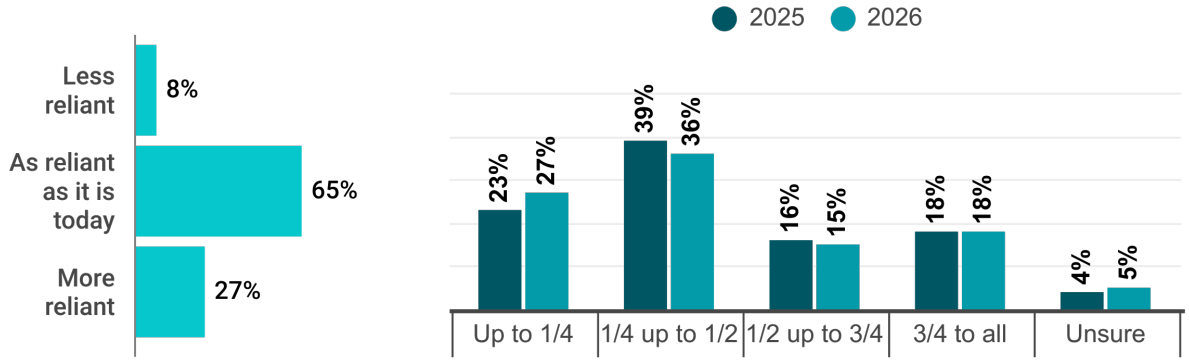


INSTRUCTION BY NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

Like last year, a plurality of provosts (36 percent) report that between a quarter and a half of course sections at their institution are delivered by non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty. This still varies significantly by institution type: Community college provosts are the most likely group to report that between three-quarters to all of their institution's course sections are delivered by NTT faculty (36 percent of this group, versus 34 percent in 2025) and private nonprofit baccalaureate institution provosts are the most likely to say that less than a quarter of course sections are delivered by NTT faculty (at 66 percent, up from last year's 51 percent).

Still paralleling last year's responses, 65 percent of all provosts anticipate that in the next two years, their institution will be as reliant as it is today on NTT faculty members; some 27 percent say it will be more reliant. Just 8 percent say it will be less reliant.

Left: Provosts (all) on whether their institution will be more, less or equally reliant on non-tenure-track faculty members a year from now. Right: Provosts (all) on the share of course sections delivered by non-tenure-track instructors, by survey year:

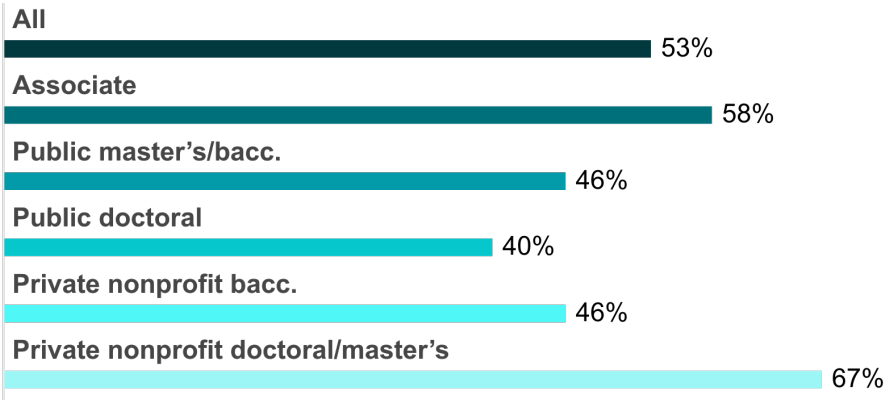


TENURE AND SHARED GOVERNANCE

LONG-TERM FACULTY CONTRACTS AND NTT FACULTY SUPPORT

Roughly half of provosts (53 percent) favor a system of long-term contracts for tenured and tenure-track faculty over the existing tenure system in higher education. Here again, private nonprofit doctoral/master's institution provosts tend to disfavor tenure, with 67 percent preferring long-term contracts over the current tenure system. That's compared to just 40 percent of their public doctoral institution peers and 46 percent of private nonprofit baccalaureate peers.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who'd prefer a system of long-term faculty contracts over higher education's current tenure system:



As for what colleges have done to explore and promote new faculty models beyond the tenure-track/NTT binary, the most common action taken already is adding regular evaluation and feedback processes, at 82 percent of institutions represented. Providing benefits of some kind is the second most common step, at 71 percent. Still relatively uncommon, at 37 percent, is giving NTT faculty new job titles.

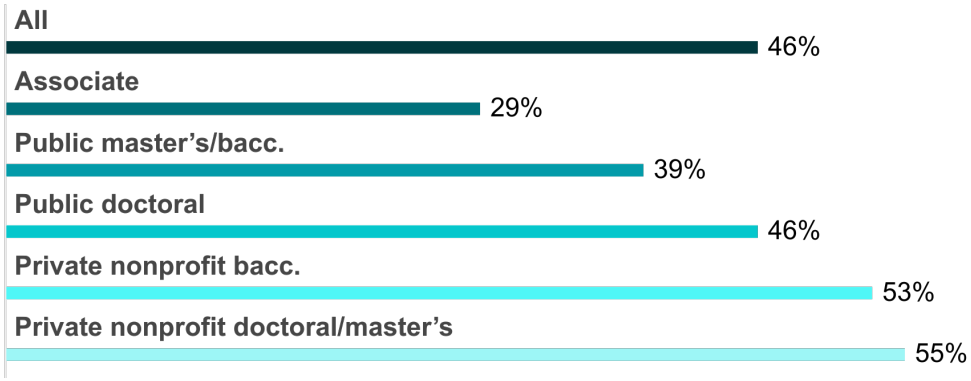
Here is the full list of what colleges have done/added to date for NTT faculty, with all numbers similar to last year's:

- Regular evaluation and feedback processes: **82%**
- Provide benefits: **71%**
- Formally extend academic freedom policies to non-tenure-track faculty: **64%**
- Opportunities for advancement or promotion: **62%**
- Comprehensive onboarding and mentoring programs: **61%**
- Professional development opportunities specifically for contingent faculty: **59%**
- Voting rights as a faculty member/involvement in governance: **57%**
- Better recognition of the roles of those who are teachers only: **48%**
- Multiple-year contracts: **48%**

GRADUATE ENROLLMENTS

Even amid the ongoing disruption to higher education, less than half of provosts agree (37 percent) or strongly agree (9 percent) that U.S. graduate programs admit too many Ph.D. students, given the current academic job market. By institution type, community college provosts are least likely to at all agree there are too many Ph.D. admissions, at 29 percent; private nonprofit doctoral/master's provosts are most likely, at 55 percent.

Provosts (all and by institution type) who agree or strongly agree that graduate programs at U.S. universities are admitting more Ph.D. students than they should, given the current job market:



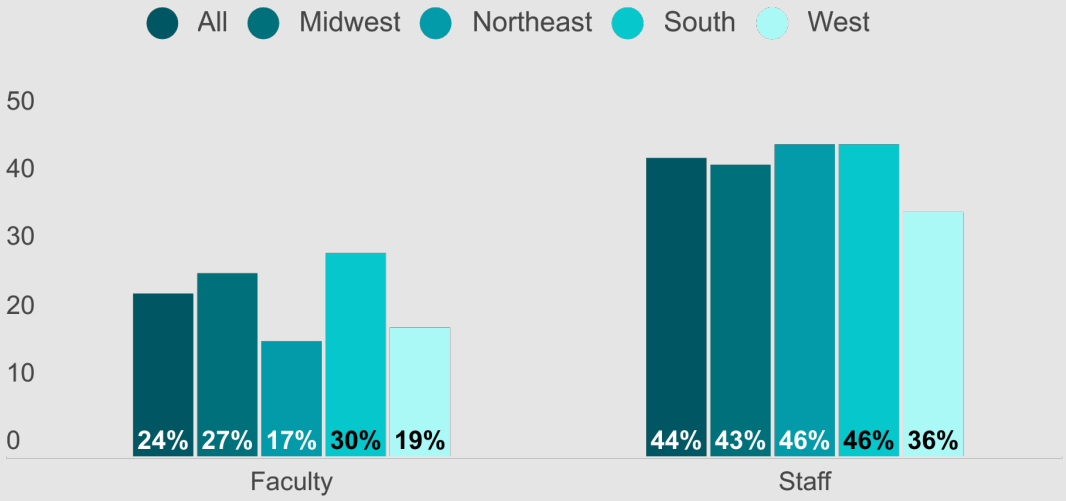
EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER

Most institutions represented (80 percent) survey their faculty, staff and administrators to assess their job satisfaction, and this is relatively consistent across sectors.

Some 44 percent of provosts agree or strongly agree that their institution is seeing higher than usual staff turnover rates—down from 64 percent in 2024, after the Great Resignation, and 49 percent in 2025. Fewer provosts, 24 percent, agree or strongly agree that their institution is seeing higher than usual faculty turnover rates, down from 35 percent in 2024 and 30 percent in 2025. All of this is relatively consistent across sectors.

By region—and amid concerns about faculty brain drain in states most impacted by legislative incursion into the curriculum—30 percent of provosts in the South and 27 percent of those in the Midwest report higher than usual faculty turnover, compared to 17 percent in the Northeast and 19 percent in the West.

Provosts (all and by U.S. region) who agree or strongly agree that their institution is seeing higher than usual turnover for the following groups:



REASONS FOR FACULTY DEPARTURES

Asked directly about the major causes of faculty turnover at their institution, the largest shares of provosts cite competitive offers elsewhere (64 percent) and natural career progression (45 percent). A third cite burnout (33 percent). Just 12 percent cite the political climate in their state or region. This increases to 18 percent of provosts in the Midwest and 15 percent of those in the South, versus 1 percent of provosts in the Northeast and 7 percent of those in the West.

Here is the full list of top reasons for faculty turnover, according to provosts, selecting up to five options:

- Competitive offers elsewhere: **64%**
- Natural career progression: **45%**
- Significant family or life events: **34%**
- Burnout: **33%**
- Insufficient resources for the demands/expectations of the job: **27%**
- Involuntary departures/employee terminations: **18%**
- Lack of work-life balance: **16%**
- Negative experiences with workplace culture: **13%**
- Internal promotions or transfers: **12%**
- Political climate in my state/region: **12%**
- Lack of opportunity for growth: **11%**
- Negative views of leadership: **11%**
- Lack of feedback or recognition: **3%**
- Other: **11%**

Some of the issues raised in write-in comments by the 11 percent of provosts who cite other reasons are low salaries, retirements and the challenges of operating in a rural location. One provost cites visa issues. Another cites a pause in tenure and promotion. Another says, “Done with academia.”

Which of the following best describes your primary role at your institution?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Provost	61	58	65	24	71	94	59	73
% Chief Academic Officer	28	32	24	59	23	2	32	15
% Other provost-equivalent role	11	10	11	17	6	4	9	13

How many years have you served as the provost or chief academic officer at this institution?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Less than 6 months	6	7	4	1	6	17	4	3
% 6 months to less than 3 years	36	36	37	30	44	35	41	34
% 3 years to less than 5 years	27	25	29	29	26	17	31	27
% 5 years to less than 10 years	23	24	21	28	18	25	17	26
% 10 or more years	8	8	9	11	6	6	8	9

How many years have you served as the provost or chief academic officer at any institution?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Less than 6 months	6	8	2	2	8	17	4	1
% 6 months to less than 3 years	25	25	26	21	27	29	31	22
% 3 years to less than 5 years	26	23	30	22	29	19	26	33
% 5 years to less than 10 years	30	30	31	35	24	29	33	30
% 10 or more years	13	13	11	20	11	6	6	15

What type of higher education institution do you work for?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Public (four-year)	26	50	0	0	81	92	0	0
% Private (four-year)	43	0	96	0	0	0	99	97
% Community college	25	48	0	100	19	0	0	0
% Private (two-year)	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
% For-profit institution	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Graduate-only institution	2	2	2	0	0	8	0	3

Do you consider your institution to be a liberal arts institution?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Yes	51	31	77	23	48	21	92	65
% No	49	69	23	77	52	79	8	35

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% I am more likely to leave my current role in the next two years than I was a year ago.								
% Strongly Disagree	18	18	18	19	13	22	14	21
% Disagree	20	24	17	24	23	24	14	18
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	16	14	17	13	13	18	17	16
% Agree	26	23	28	22	31	16	34	24
% Strongly Agree	20	21	20	23	20	20	20	21
% I have adequate resources (e.g., budget, personnel) to implement initiatives.								
% Strongly Disagree	7	9	7	7	15	4	4	9
% Disagree	32	28	37	22	32	31	47	30
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	14	14	13	12	13	18	13	13
% Agree	32	35	28	38	32	35	18	36
% Strongly Agree	15	14	15	21	8	12	18	13

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% I have adequate training to be serving effectively in my current role.								
% Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1
% Disagree	5	5	5	2	5	8	5	5
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	8	8	7	6	10	10	5	8
% Agree	39	38	39	32	44	43	41	38
% Strongly Agree	48	48	49	60	40	39	49	49
% My working relationship with my president is effective.								
% Strongly Disagree	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	3
% Disagree	7	6	7	6	5	8	6	7
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7	7	8	5	10	8	4	11
% Agree	27	30	24	28	36	26	27	22
% Strongly Agree	58	55	59	60	49	56	61	57

Thinking about the current higher education environment, which of the following best describes your outlook for your institution's academic mission over the next three years?

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% We will strengthen our mission by adapting successfully to changing student, workforce and societal needs.	58	59	57	63	50	62	51	64
% We will fulfill our mission, but doing so will require significant changes to programs, operations or priorities.	25	27	24	23	27	31	26	20
% It is too early to tell how current changes will affect our ability to fulfill our mission.	5	3	5	1	5	4	9	2
% Our ability to fulfill our mission will become increasingly constrained, requiring difficult tradeoffs and reductions.	12	11	12	12	16	4	13	13
% Our mission will need to be fundamentally redefined to remain viable.	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	1

Which of the following changes do you expect to have the greatest impact on higher education by 2030? Please select up to two options.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Demographic and enrollment shifts	34	30	40	30	31	27	41	40
% Advances in artificial intelligence or technology	45	47	41	46	53	40	45	39
% State and federal policy changes	30	34	25	34	29	40	24	26
% Declining public trust and politicization of higher education	25	26	25	16	26	40	23	26
% Workforce and credentialing transformations	18	23	11	32	16	19	14	9
% Cost and financial model pressures	44	35	55	34	40	31	53	56
% Climate and sustainability challenges	1	2	1	2	2	0	0	1
% Other	1	2	1	1	3	0	0	2

How concerned are you about your institution's financial position over the next three years, given the combined effects of demographic trends, changes to federal student aid and shifts in research funding?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Not at all concerned: Our financial position is stable.	13	16	9	21	10	17	6	11
% Mildly concerned: We are monitoring the situation but not in crisis mode.	36	39	32	39	34	44	38	27
% Moderately concerned: We have identified real vulnerabilities that require action.	27	26	31	20	32	27	26	33
% Very concerned: We are actively managing financial distress.	18	14	22	16	15	12	23	22
% Extremely concerned: Our institution's long-term viability is at risk.	6	5	7	5	10	0	6	7

How would you characterize the state of academic freedom at your institution today?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Strong and well protected, despite external pressures	48	41	56	45	47	27	64	49
% Generally maintained but with increasing challenges	44	49	38	50	44	54	31	45
% Under significant strain from multiple directions	5	7	2	2	6	13	1	3
% Actively being redefined or restricted	1	2	1	0	3	2	0	2
% Increasing/expanding	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
% Other	2	2	1	2	0	4	3	0

How would you rate the overall academic health of your institution?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Very Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Poor	2	0	4	0	0	0	4	3
% Fair	17	18	15	19	23	13	15	15
% Good	62	62	62	62	66	56	59	66
% Excellent	20	20	19	20	11	31	22	16

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% High-quality undergraduate education requires healthy departments in fields such as English, history, political science and other liberal arts.								
% Strongly Disagree	2	2	2	1	3	0	1	4
% Disagree	4	3	6	3	2	4	3	8
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	7	7	6	8	6	6	8	5
% Agree	33	36	30	40	35	29	29	32
% Strongly Agree	53	53	55	49	53	60	59	52
% Our institution is facing external political pressure to change our general education curriculum.								
% Strongly Disagree	26	15	40	12	23	10	36	41
% Disagree	39	35	41	37	37	31	47	38
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	14	18	10	16	21	18	12	9
% Agree	13	19	7	25	11	20	5	8
% Strongly Agree	7	12	2	10	8	20	0	4

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Open educational resources, freely available online materials, are of sufficiently high quality that they should be used in most general education courses.								
% Strongly Disagree	3	2	6	0	3	2	5	6
% Disagree	11	7	15	9	5	9	16	14
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	33	30	38	23	31	42	38	38
% Agree	36	43	29	44	44	40	29	29
% Strongly Agree	16	18	13	25	18	7	11	13
% My institution has a strong general education program that provides students knowledge and skills from a variety disciplines.								
% Strongly Disagree	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
% Disagree	6	5	7	2	3	10	5	8
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12	10	12	6	15	10	8	15
% Agree	46	52	40	49	49	60	43	37
% Strongly Agree	36	33	41	42	31	19	44	40
% I am confident that academic quality is consistent across all of my institution's degree programs.								
% Strongly Disagree	2	3	2	1	6	0	1	2
% Disagree	32	30	33	32	32	25	27	36
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	17	17	17	17	18	16	18	16
% Agree	40	42	39	40	37	53	42	38
% Strongly Agree	9	8	9	10	6	6	12	8
% My institution has adequate resources to support students with disabilities.								
% Strongly Disagree	1	2	1	2	3	0	1	0
% Disagree	17	19	15	15	26	18	22	10
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	22	18	26	14	18	24	18	34
% Agree	45	44	46	49	43	37	47	43
% Strongly Agree	15	17	12	20	10	22	12	13
% My institution is fundamentally student-ready.								
% Strongly Disagree	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0
% Disagree	6	5	7	2	8	4	4	9
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	14	14	15	10	19	14	15	15
% Agree	56	54	57	59	56	44	59	57
% Strongly Agree	24	26	20	26	16	38	21	19

How would you rate your institution's overall effectiveness at providing meaningful work-integrated learning experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, co-ops and employer-sponsored projects, to its students?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Very ineffective	2	1	4	1	2	0	5	2
% Somewhat ineffective	10	11	8	16	8	6	12	6
% Neither effective nor ineffective	10	10	9	10	13	8	8	11
% Somewhat effective	58	61	54	59	66	57	53	56
% Very effective	20	17	25	14	11	29	23	25

Which of the following barriers most limit your institution's ability to expand work-integrated learning opportunities? Please select up to three options.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Insufficient employer partnerships in our region or field	40	35	46	44	26	29	48	43
% Faculty skepticism about the academic value of work-integrated learning	17	15	20	11	18	18	21	20
% Difficulty ensuring equitable access for all student populations	28	30	27	26	31	37	35	18
% Accreditation or curricular constraints	6	6	5	7	2	8	5	5
% Limited staff capacity to coordinate and manage these programs	69	66	72	73	77	43	73	73
% Students' financial need to work for pay rather than pursue unpaid or lower-pay experiences	60	65	54	70	66	57	44	63
% We don't face significant barriers in this area.	6	7	5	6	3	12	6	5
% Other	5	5	5	5	2	10	5	5

How easy or difficult is it currently for your institution to evaluate and award transfer credit in a timely and consistent manner?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Very difficult	3	3	3	1	8	0	4	2
% Somewhat difficult	23	21	27	16	27	20	26	30
% Neither difficult nor easy	23	27	20	23	24	35	18	20
% Somewhat easy	36	38	36	42	34	35	34	36
% Very easy	14	12	14	17	6	10	18	11

Which factor creates the greatest challenge for transfer-credit decisions at your institution?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Faculty review requirements	21	20	23	4	35	27	19	25
% Variations in course content	12	10	14	7	5	22	13	15
% Accreditation differences	1	2	0	2	0	4	0	0
% Staffing capacity	22	23	23	27	24	14	21	24
% Technology and records systems	15	16	13	20	13	14	16	11
% State or federal policies	1	2	1	4	2	0	1	0
% Transfer credit is not a significant challenge.	28	27	27	36	21	20	30	25

Thinking about undergraduate education at your institution, to what degree does it help students explore deeper questions, like what kind of person they want to be, what gives their life meaning or how they want to contribute to the world?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Not at all: Students interested in these questions pursue them entirely on their own.	2	2	2	4	0	0	5	0
% Very little: The undergraduate experience is mostly about credentials and career preparation.	15	19	10	26	18	8	5	12
% Somewhat: It comes up, but it's not what our institution focuses on.	48	62	31	54	63	73	32	30
% A great deal: This is a central part of the undergraduate experience.	35	18	57	16	19	19	57	58

Does your institution offer online courses?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Yes	92	98	85	100	95	100	69	98
% No	8	2	15	0	5	0	31	2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements related to digital learning at your institution? (n=343)								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% I am confident in the quality of our online/hybrid course and program offerings.								
% Strongly Disagree	4	5	3	5	7	4	6	1
% Somewhat Disagree	15	17	14	18	20	12	9	16
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	17	21	13	23	19	20	15	12
% Somewhat Agree	42	43	41	43	42	45	49	36
% Strongly Agree	21	14	29	13	12	20	21	35
% My institution has a technology infrastructure that can meet evolving academic needs.								
% Strongly Disagree	4	3	4	1	3	6	4	3
% Somewhat Disagree	16	11	23	8	14	14	28	20
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	13	16	11	17	10	19	15
% Somewhat Agree	39	45	33	51	36	47	30	35
% Strongly Agree	27	28	24	29	31	24	19	27
% Student demand for online and/or hybrid course options has substantially increased since last year.								
% Strongly Disagree	5	3	9	3	5	0	12	6
% Somewhat Disagree	21	20	22	23	14	24	31	18
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	23	23	25	21	22	26	25	26
% Somewhat Agree	32	32	34	31	36	30	31	35
% Strongly Agree	18	22	11	23	22	20	2	15

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% We have added a substantial number of new online/hybrid course options in the last year.								
% Strongly Disagree	9	6	14	8	5	4	19	10
% Somewhat Disagree	24	24	24	21	26	25	28	22
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	22	27	17	24	33	25	21	15
% Somewhat Agree	29	27	33	30	22	27	26	37
% Strongly Agree	15	16	12	18	14	18	6	15
% We have robust technology infrastructure for nondegree credentials.								
% Strongly Disagree	19	12	29	14	14	8	37	25
% Somewhat Disagree	29	30	28	27	40	24	27	29
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	17	18	15	21	12	22	14	15
% Somewhat Agree	25	30	18	28	25	40	14	18
% Strongly Agree	10	9	11	10	9	6	8	13

Where has investment in AI delivered the most tangible value so far at your institution? Please select up to three options.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Administrative efficiency	36	35	38	35	44	25	33	43
% IT operations/service management	17	16	19	13	20	17	14	23
% Teaching and learning	29	31	25	30	29	35	14	34
% Research	7	11	2	0	5	38	1	4
% Student advising or support	10	13	8	13	14	10	5	10
% Compliance/risk management	4	2	5	5	0	0	7	4
% Individual employee productivity gains	39	43	34	43	53	33	30	39
% Departmental workflow optimization	12	14	10	23	8	6	5	13
% Institutionwide operational transformation	8	9	4	8	7	13	1	7
% None of the above: AI has not delivered value in any of these areas.	8	8	9	6	8	8	12	7
% Not applicable: We have not invested in AI.	15	10	21	16	7	6	28	13

What has most limited the impact of AI at your institution to date? Please select up to three options.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Skills and staff capacity	51	51	51	52	46	56	46	53
% None of the above	4	3	5	4	3	2	5	5
% Data quality or integration	19	14	24	6	17	23	21	28
% Governance and policy uncertainty	24	28	19	32	24	25	20	19
% Faculty or staff resistance	50	54	48	48	58	58	51	45
% Cost	29	25	34	23	29	23	32	35
% Vendor maturity	9	8	10	8	7	8	4	17
% Legal or ethical concerns not related to students	18	18	19	21	22	8	26	13
% Concerns about how AI affects students	39	40	39	45	44	27	43	36

Based on your experience so far, how do you perceive the overall impact of AI on higher education?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Very negative	3	2	3	3	2	2	5	1
% Negative	17	13	22	13	19	4	33	13
% Neither negative nor positive	48	46	50	45	47	46	43	57
% Positive	28	33	22	30	31	42	18	25
% Very positive	5	6	3	9	2	6	0	4

Which best describes how your institution is responding to AI's impact on assessment of student learning?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Primarily defensive: focused on detecting and preventing AI-assisted cheating	8	10	6	14	10	2	7	5
% Primarily adaptive: adjusting existing assignments and assessments to account for AI	13	13	14	19	10	6	21	8
% Primarily generative: actively rethinking what we assess and how, given what AI makes possible	20	16	23	8	17	27	13	33
% A mix of all of these, without a primary focus	49	49	49	47	45	56	51	48
% We have not yet developed a clear institutional response.	10	13	7	12	17	8	8	6

Which of the following best describes your institution's current approach to AI governance and decision-making?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% We have a centralized, institution-wide AI strategy with coordinated governance.	10	12	8	6	14	19	4	12
% We have collaborative governance with multiple stakeholders involved in AI decisions.	37	36	38	35	31	42	34	42
% AI decisions are made autonomously by individual departments or units.	12	14	11	17	17	6	12	11
% We have fragmented approaches with no formal governance structure.	26	25	28	22	28	27	28	28
% We do not have any formal AI governance processes at all.	13	12	13	18	9	6	18	7
% Unsure	2	1	2	1	2	0	4	0

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about AI and your institution's academic mission?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% My institution has a coherent vision for how AI will change what we teach and how we teach it.								
% Strongly Disagree	12	10	14	12	12	6	21	7
% Disagree	43	41	46	44	43	33	45	47
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	26	28	23	32	22	29	24	24
% Agree	17	18	15	10	21	27	11	19
% Strongly Agree	3	2	2	1	2	4	0	2
% My institution is moving at an appropriate pace in responding to AI—not too fast or too slow.								
% Strongly Disagree	4	4	5	6	2	2	8	1
% Disagree	34	35	34	29	47	31	37	31
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	21	19	23	17	23	13	24
% Agree	38	36	40	40	29	38	41	41
% Strongly Agree	3	4	2	1	5	6	1	2

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Preparing students for a workforce shaped by AI is now a central organizing principle for our academic planning.								
% Strongly Disagree	7	7	8	10	3	4	13	4
% Disagree	21	19	25	21	17	17	33	17
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	25	22	28	19	22	27	29	27
% Agree	39	44	33	42	52	40	22	45
% Strongly Agree	8	8	6	8	5	13	3	8
% We have sufficient faculty capacity and buy-in to lead AI-related curriculum development.								
% Strongly Disagree	10	11	9	13	9	13	13	5
% Disagree	36	36	38	40	38	27	38	37
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	25	25	26	22	26	29	24	29
% Agree	24	23	23	19	26	27	22	24
% Strongly Agree	4	4	4	5	2	4	3	5

In what areas or ways is your institution currently using artificial intelligence? Please select all that apply.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Admissions processes	26	23	30	14	29	29	25	36
% Student advising and support	23	26	18	20	31	31	13	22
% Learning management systems (LMS)	34	39	30	45	36	33	24	35
% Research and data analysis	42	43	40	38	33	65	32	47
% Virtual chat assistants and chatbots	54	59	48	57	59	63	41	55
% Predictive analytics to predict student performance and trends	28	29	24	29	29	29	20	29
% Administrative processes (e.g., scheduling, resource allocation)	39	39	38	42	36	38	29	47
% Cybersecurity	14	17	11	13	21	19	8	14
% Grading and assessment	20	25	15	21	26	29	12	16
% Institutional planning and decision-making	22	20	25	17	19	25	18	29
% Facilities management	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	5
% Student engagement	21	25	17	25	26	23	11	20
% Personalized learning pathways	8	8	7	3	16	8	4	8
% Fundraising	11	8	15	3	9	15	12	18
% Other	6	4	7	4	7	2	12	4
% None of the above: My institution does not currently utilize AI.	7	5	9	5	5	6	14	4

In your own day-to-day work as provost, which of the following do you personally use AI tools for? Please select all that apply.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Drafting communications to faculty, staff or students	65	69	60	63	79	65	59	59
% Summarizing documents or reports	71	76	65	75	79	73	57	72
% Preparing for presentations or meetings	66	70	62	71	76	60	55	67
% Strategic planning or scenario analysis	47	49	43	53	47	46	39	46
% Budget or data analysis	33	34	33	42	34	19	24	40
% Academic research	17	20	14	20	16	25	13	13
% None of the above: I do not personally use AI tools in my work.	11	9	14	7	7	15	20	10
% Other	3	3	2	5	3	0	4	1

How frequently do you personally use generative and/or agentic AI tools in your work?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Never	8	5	10	7	3	6	14	7
% Less than monthly	8	6	9	3	9	8	11	8
% Monthly	13	14	13	16	19	4	16	11
% Weekly	34	36	31	34	34	40	30	33
% Daily or almost daily	37	39	36	41	34	42	29	41

How would you describe your own current level of proficiency with generative and/or agentic AI tools?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Little or no proficiency	5	2	9	1	4	0	9	8
% Basic	46	49	43	45	51	54	42	45
% Intermediate	35	35	36	41	32	31	41	30
% Advanced	13	12	13	11	12	15	8	17
% Expert	1	2	0	3	2	0	0	0

To what degree do you agree with the following statements related to mental health:								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Undergraduate mental health across higher education seems to be improving.								
% Strongly Disagree	12	9	15	8	14	6	15	13
% Somewhat Disagree	44	44	45	38	51	45	45	46
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	29	31	28	38	23	28	23	33
% Somewhat Agree	14	16	12	16	12	21	16	9
% Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Undergraduate mental health at my institution seems to be improving.								
% Strongly Disagree	7	4	10	3	7	4	7	11
% Somewhat Disagree	36	35	37	34	37	33	38	38
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	33	36	30	36	36	35	29	30
% Somewhat Agree	21	22	20	21	19	27	25	17
% Strongly Agree	3	3	3	6	2	0	1	4

Which of the following pose the biggest threats to student well-being and/or safety at your institution? Please select up to three options.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Mental health concerns	83	83	85	86	81	80	82	86
% Alcohol and substance use issues	10	8	14	5	10	10	19	9
% Sexual assault and relationship violence	2	3	2	3	3	4	4	0
% Physical security threats	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	2
% Food and housing insecurity	47	67	23	85	68	39	19	25
% Personal stress	68	64	76	59	66	69	71	78
% Academic stress	40	31	51	23	27	47	55	49
% Digital safety and cybersecurity risks	9	10	8	8	11	14	4	11
% Physical health issues	2	2	2	3	2	0	5	0
% Hazing and/or dangerous group behaviors	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
% Transportation safety	5	8	1	16	3	0	1	1
% Other	8	6	8	1	11	8	4	10
% None of these	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

How would you rate your own well-being, including your mental health, factoring in your level of job stress?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Very Poor	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1
% Poor	8	6	9	8	6	4	6	11
% Fair	28	31	26	30	37	24	35	19
% Good	44	41	46	43	42	39	44	47
% Excellent	20	21	18	19	13	33	14	22

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement regarding the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action in 2023? The 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision on affirmative action has...	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% ...led to a decrease in student racial diversity at my institution.								
% Strongly Disagree	22	24	21	24	33	12	17	23
% Disagree	36	34	36	39	24	37	38	35
% Neither Agree Nor Disagree	29	29	32	31	26	29	37	29
% Agree	9	10	8	3	14	16	6	11
% Strongly Agree	3	4	3	3	3	6	3	2

To what extent has your institution modified its approach to DEI initiatives in the last two years? Please select all that apply.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% We have significantly reduced or eliminated DEI offices, staff roles or programs.	19	30	7	25	19	49	5	9
% We have somewhat reduced DEI offices, staff roles or programs.	7	7	8	5	6	10	7	9
% We have maintained our current DEI initiatives without major changes.	24	20	28	23	26	10	33	24
% We have restructured or rebranded DEI efforts under alternate frameworks (e.g., "belonging," "access," or "inclusive excellence").	49	43	57	48	40	39	59	55
% We have shifted DEI resources toward broader student or institutional priorities (e.g., wellness, academic success, affordability).	30	35	25	34	29	45	24	27
% We have expanded or strengthened our DEI commitments and programming.	4	5	2	5	8	2	1	3
% Not sure/Not applicable	8	5	10	9	2	4	8	11

In what areas has your institution scaled back diversity and inclusion efforts (beyond admissions) in the last two years? Please select all that apply. (n=97)								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Faculty or staff hiring	31	33	28	8	19	60	44	19
% Curriculum/curriculum development	25	30	4	17	38	37	0	6
% Training programs	35	44	12	29	50	53	22	6
% Outreach and community engagement	27	29	24	29	25	30	11	31
% Scholarship and financial aid	37	41	28	25	50	50	11	38
% Leadership positions	27	24	36	17	19	33	33	38
% Student support services	38	39	40	17	56	47	56	31
% Campus facilities and accessibility	9	7	16	8	0	10	11	19
% Research initiatives	13	19	0	4	25	27	0	0
% Alumni engagement	4	6	0	4	6	7	0	0
% Mentorship programs	26	29	20	21	44	27	22	19
% Marketing/websites	47	50	40	46	50	53	44	38
% Retention efforts	16	23	0	21	19	27	0	0
% Campus climate surveys	19	19	16	21	13	20	11	19
% Other	6	6	8	13	6	0	0	13

How would you rate the climate for civil discourse in each of the following?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Higher education generally								
% Very Poor	6	7	5	9	6	4	4	6
% Poor	29	28	30	29	34	18	24	34
% Fair	45	43	49	34	40	58	53	45
% Good	19	21	17	24	18	20	20	15
% Excellent	1	2	0	4	2	0	0	0
% Your campus								
% Very Poor	1	2	1	0	3	2	0	1
% Poor	4	5	2	5	8	2	3	1
% Fair	27	29	26	34	27	22	22	28
% Good	55	52	57	47	53	57	68	50
% Excellent	13	12	14	13	8	16	7	19

How effective is your institution in promoting (including giving students the opportunity to practice) the following:								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Critical thinking								
% Not at All Effective	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
% Somewhat Effective	3	2	4	1	0	4	4	3
% Moderately Effective	33	41	25	46	34	42	20	28
% Very Effective	43	43	44	39	50	42	45	44
% Extremely Effective	20	14	27	14	16	12	30	25
% Free expression								
% Not at All Effective	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	0
% Somewhat Effective	9	7	12	11	3	6	12	13
% Moderately Effective	41	44	38	39	52	42	38	39
% Very Effective	36	35	35	34	35	38	35	36
% Extremely Effective	13	13	13	14	10	15	12	13

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Free inquiry								
% Not at All Effective	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	0
% Somewhat Effective	9	10	8	9	11	8	9	7
% Moderately Effective	35	41	30	49	38	33	27	31
% Very Effective	40	35	44	26	41	43	40	47
% Extremely Effective	15	13	18	14	10	16	21	15
% Understanding and consensus-building								
% Not at All Effective	2	2	2	4	0	0	1	2
% Somewhat Effective	15	16	16	13	20	14	21	12
% Moderately Effective	43	47	40	49	42	49	42	38
% Very Effective	32	28	36	25	30	33	30	40
% Extremely Effective	7	8	7	9	8	4	5	8

Does your college or university have an institutional neutrality policy?

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Yes	27	33	20	16	40	51	17	23
% No	47	41	55	48	37	33	57	53
% Unsure	26	26	25	35	23	16	26	24

How has federal funding at your institution been affected under the second Trump administration? It has...

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% ...decreased	50	60	39	44	64	80	37	43
% ...increased	3	2	4	1	2	4	1	5
% No change	39	30	49	44	26	14	51	47
% Not sure	8	7	8	10	8	2	11	6

How much has federal funding at your institution decreased under the Trump administration? (n=183)								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Under 5%	34	29	43	20	38	27	50	38
% 5% to 10%	42	43	40	54	38	39	50	32
% More than 10%	24	28	17	26	23	34	0	30

How has your institution responded to changes in federal funding for higher education under under this administration? Please select all that apply.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Implemented hiring freeze(s)	10	9	11	8	11	10	9	14
% Reduced staff positions	25	27	24	16	36	33	20	29
% Paused or reduced graduate student admissions	4	5	3	0	3	16	0	6
% Restructured or scaled back specific programs dependent on federal grants	29	41	17	34	44	47	14	20
% Pursued alternative funding sources (e.g., private donors, industry partnerships)	49	54	45	39	57	75	43	46
% Reallocated internal resources to protect vulnerable programs/research	22	29	15	20	30	41	18	11
% Partnered with other institutions to share resources	7	9	4	9	11	8	3	6
% Reduced operational expenses	24	24	23	18	28	29	20	26
% Postponed planned facility projects/ improvements	11	9	14	6	11	12	12	17
% Limited professional development and/or travel funds	13	14	13	18	10	12	8	17
% Our institution has not yet been significantly impacted by federal funding changes.	31	25	37	28	28	16	36	39
% Other	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	1
% None of the above	13	10	14	20	3	4	17	11

Which of the following academic program adjustments has your institution made in response to recent federal policies and/or actions? Please select all that apply.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Modified language in course descriptions or program materials	24	30	17	23	33	38	11	23
% Revised curriculum content in politically sensitive areas	11	15	6	10	20	16	5	7
% Adjusted research priorities to align with current federal funding opportunities	14	17	10	5	16	38	7	14
% Changed terminology in departmental names or descriptions	21	23	19	19	26	26	14	24
% Scaled back climate change research or sustainability initiatives	3	5	1	1	7	8	1	1
% Altered data collection/analytics processes linked to student demographics/identities	17	16	18	13	16	22	13	22
% Implemented new oversight processes for research with international components	9	13	5	0	8	40	4	7
% Reviewed and modified international student/scholar programs	24	26	20	11	26	50	16	25
% Created contingency plans for programs that may face increased scrutiny	14	15	14	13	16	18	18	9
% Consolidated academic departments or programs	8	11	6	1	15	20	4	8
% Other	2	3	2	3	3	2	4	1
% None of the above	40	38	40	61	28	16	50	32

How is your institution responding to changes in research funding availability, specifically? Please select all that apply.	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Increasing institutional research support funds	11	14	10	1	15	32	11	9
% Expanding grant-writing support services	17	18	16	9	18	34	16	17
% Diversifying funding sources beyond traditional government agencies	31	35	30	3	41	78	25	33
% Developing more industry partnerships	24	35	14	11	34	72	9	17
% Adjusting tenure and promotion criteria to reflect funding realities	4	4	3	0	3	12	4	2
% Reducing research expectations	4	3	4	1	2	8	0	8
% Creating more opportunities for collaborative/shared funding	11	15	7	6	11	32	4	10
% Other	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1
% Not applicable: My institution does not receive significant research funding.	54	48	58	81	44	2	63	53

How confident are you that the U.S. university research enterprise will remain strong over the next decade?	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Not at All Confident	14	14	16	13	21	6	13	18
% Not Very Confident	37	33	42	39	30	27	43	41
% Neutral	24	25	22	27	23	24	22	22
% Somewhat Confident	21	24	17	16	25	35	18	15
% Very Confident	4	5	3	5	2	8	3	3

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) introduces several major changes for higher education. Which of the following do you expect to have the greatest effect on your institution? Please select up to two options.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Expanded eligibility for Workforce Pell Grants and short-term workforce programs	19	30	7	48	21	12	5	7
% Changes in undergraduate enrollment and student access due to new federal student aid rules	31	31	32	29	33	33	34	29
% Changes in graduate enrollment due to the elimination of Grad PLUS loans and new graduate borrowing limits	36	25	47	0	25	67	18	74
% New federal program accountability requirements under the earnings-based accountability standards	52	52	53	66	56	27	59	47
% Increased administrative and compliance workload associated with implementing OBBBA	36	35	37	25	43	43	47	30
% None of the above: We do not expect OBBBA to significantly affect our institution.	4	3	4	4	2	2	9	0

About how frequently do you have direct, substantive contact with each of the following?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Federal legislators or their staff								
% Rarely or Never	57	52	62	49	57	50	75	51
% A few times a year	37	40	36	43	34	42	24	46
% Monthly	5	7	2	6	8	8	1	3
% Weekly or more	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
% Local, state or national business leaders								
% Rarely or Never	13	7	17	5	10	8	25	11
% A few times a year	46	42	52	32	49	50	54	49
% Monthly	32	39	25	46	33	38	17	32
% Weekly or more	9	11	5	18	8	4	4	7
% Local, state or national K–12 leaders								
% Rarely or Never	24	13	34	1	15	29	36	32
% A few times a year	47	45	50	35	54	50	57	45
% Monthly	24	35	12	48	30	19	7	16
% Weekly or more	6	7	4	15	2	2	1	7

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Members of your institution's governing board								
% Rarely or Never	3	5	1	4	8	2	1	0
% A few times a year	35	26	45	10	38	35	50	39
% Monthly	55	62	49	77	46	56	46	52
% Weekly or more	8	8	6	9	8	6	3	9
% State executive branch officials (e.g., governor's office, state higher education agency)								
% Rarely or Never	35	24	46	22	30	21	58	36
% A few times a year	46	45	48	46	41	50	41	55
% Monthly	17	28	5	29	26	27	1	8
% Weekly or more	2	3	1	4	3	2	0	1
% State legislators or their staff								
% Rarely or Never	28	14	42	14	15	13	58	28
% A few times a year	60	68	52	63	72	71	38	64
% Monthly	11	16	6	19	13	15	4	8
% Weekly or more	1	2	0	4	0	2	0	0

Compared to two years ago, how much influence do the following have on academic decision-making at your institution?

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Employers/industry								
% Much Less Influence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Less Influence	1	2	1	1	3	0	1	1
% About the Same	61	58	63	54	54	69	66	60
% More Influence	35	37	34	39	41	29	29	39
% Much More Influence	3	3	2	5	2	2	4	0
% Faculty governance bodies								
% Much Less Influence	2	3	1	3	2	4	1	1
% Less Influence	9	10	8	8	10	13	9	7
% About the Same	78	76	80	78	72	75	76	82
% More Influence	9	9	10	8	15	4	11	10
% Much More Influence	2	3	1	4	2	4	3	0

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Federal policymakers								
% Much Less Influence	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
% Less Influence	2	3	1	4	3	2	0	2
% About the Same	58	51	63	59	48	42	58	66
% More Influence	32	35	31	29	34	46	37	26
% Much More Influence	7	11	4	8	15	10	3	6
% Governing boards								
% Much Less Influence	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
% Less Influence	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	3
% About the Same	73	67	78	80	59	56	74	80
% More Influence	21	26	16	15	36	31	20	13
% Much More Influence	5	6	4	5	3	13	4	3
% State legislators								
% Much Less Influence	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
% Less Influence	2	1	2	1	2	0	3	1
% About the Same	69	55	84	58	59	44	82	86
% More Influence	23	35	11	30	31	48	12	10
% Much More Influence	5	9	2	10	8	8	3	1

If enacted largely as proposed, what impact do you believe recent federal accreditation reforms would have on your institution? These include emphasizing student outcomes; eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion standards; evaluating intellectual diversity; deregulating the recognition process for new accreditors; assessing academic research integrity; and easing transfer of academic credit between institutions:

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Strongly Negative	19	17	23	15	22	14	25	21
% Somewhat Negative	36	37	37	32	43	36	34	39
% Little or No Impact	27	24	29	24	20	31	31	28
% Somewhat Positive	12	16	7	25	9	12	8	7
% Strongly Positive	5	5	4	4	6	7	3	5

Some see the federal government's growing emphasis on workforce outcomes and return on investment as an opportunity for higher education; others see it as a threat to the broader mission of colleges and universities. Which of the following comes closest to your view?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Primarily a threat: It will damage higher education's broader mission over the long run.	7	2	15	3	2	0	16	13
% More of a threat than an opportunity, though it has some benefits.	22	14	30	11	20	13	37	26
% A mixed bag: roughly equal opportunity and risk.	31	31	32	30	30	33	28	36
% More of an opportunity than a threat, though it carries real risks.	26	34	16	37	34	29	16	17
% Primarily an opportunity: It will push higher education toward greater accountability and relevance.	14	19	7	19	15	25	4	8

How would you rate the effectiveness of your institution in the following areas?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Controlling rising prices for students and their families								
% Not Effective at All	3	2	4	3	2	2	5	2
% Not Too Effective	18	11	25	12	15	6	28	22
% Somewhat Effective	44	38	52	34	32	52	49	56
% Very Effective	36	49	19	52	52	40	18	19
% Creating a data-driven campus culture around student success								
% Not Effective at All	2	2	1	3	0	2	1	1
% Not Too Effective	15	13	19	13	17	10	18	20
% Somewhat Effective	56	55	58	62	53	46	55	59
% Very Effective	27	30	22	23	30	42	25	20

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Meaningfully measuring student outcomes								
% Not Effective at All	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
% Not Too Effective	10	12	9	12	16	6	9	8
% Somewhat Effective	57	57	58	58	57	54	61	57
% Very Effective	32	32	32	31	26	40	29	34
% Offering undergraduate support services beyond academic advising								
% Not Effective at All	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
% Not Too Effective	6	5	6	4	5	6	3	8
% Somewhat Effective	39	40	39	30	48	45	43	37
% Very Effective	54	55	54	65	47	49	53	55
% Preparing students for the world of work								
% Not Effective at All	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
% Not Too Effective	4	3	5	3	5	0	9	2
% Somewhat Effective	46	49	44	45	48	56	49	41
% Very Effective	50	49	50	53	48	44	41	57
% Providing a quality undergraduate education								
% Not Effective at All	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Not Too Effective	1	0	3	0	0	0	3	4
% Somewhat Effective	27	30	22	35	30	24	16	25
% Very Effective	72	70	75	65	70	76	82	71
% Providing academic advising								
% Not Effective at All	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
% Not Too Effective	8	10	5	9	16	4	3	8
% Somewhat Effective	49	49	48	47	48	52	49	49
% Very Effective	43	41	46	44	34	44	49	43
% Recruiting and retaining talented faculty								
% Not Effective at All	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
% Not Too Effective	12	11	12	10	16	6	13	12
% Somewhat Effective	56	59	55	53	62	65	51	58
% Very Effective	31	29	32	36	21	29	35	30
% Using data to aid and inform campus decision-making								
% Not Effective at All	1	2	1	3	0	2	1	0
% Not Too Effective	9	9	9	13	10	2	8	9
% Somewhat Effective	58	53	63	50	56	56	63	65
% Very Effective	32	36	27	35	34	40	28	26

In your opinion, how important is faculty tenure to the overall health of your institution?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Not at all Important	14	14	14	31	7	0	8	18
% Slightly Important	16	14	19	20	15	6	17	20
% Moderately Important	25	23	26	21	27	21	19	33
% Very Important	26	29	23	20	37	32	33	13
% Extremely Important	19	19	19	8	14	40	22	16

To what extent do you agree with the following statements related to faculty, tenure and shared governance?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Shared governance at my institution works well.								
% Strongly Disagree	6	7	5	8	8	6	5	5
% Somewhat Disagree	14	14	15	18	15	6	9	19
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	20	20	23	15	21	16	24
% Somewhat Agree	43	42	42	31	51	50	54	33
% Strongly Agree	17	17	18	21	11	17	16	20
% Shared governance in higher education in general works well.								
% Strongly Disagree	6	4	8	4	3	6	8	8
% Somewhat Disagree	24	20	29	21	20	19	21	36
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	24	26	21	23	30	27	22	21
% Somewhat Agree	39	43	35	42	43	46	42	28
% Strongly Agree	7	6	7	10	5	2	7	7

What proportion of course sections at your institution are delivered by instructors who are not tenured (or on the tenure track)?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% 0–24%	27	16	41	8	28	13	66	21
% 25–49%	36	43	29	35	39	63	18	40
% 50–74%	15	20	9	19	26	15	1	16
% 75–100%	18	16	17	36	3	0	11	20
% Unsure	5	5	4	3	3	10	4	3

In the next two years, do you anticipate that your institution will become more reliant, less reliant or about as reliant as it is today on non-tenure-track faculty members for instruction?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Less reliant on non-tenure-track faculty members	8	9	7	6	15	6	9	5
% As reliant as it is today on non-tenure-track faculty members	65	67	63	76	56	69	59	66
% More reliant on non-tenure-track faculty members	27	24	30	18	30	25	32	29

Do you favor or oppose a system of long-term contracts for tenure-track and tenured faculty over the existing tenure system in higher education?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Favor	53	49	57	58	46	40	46	67
% Oppose	47	51	43	42	54	60	54	33

As you may know, some colleges are exploring new faculty models beyond a tenure track versus non-tenure track distinction. Please indicate whether your college has done or has considered doing each of the following for non-tenure-track faculty members:								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Better recognition of the roles of those who are teachers only								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	11	13	9	18	13	6	13	6
% My College Has Considered Doing This	22	20	25	14	33	13	30	20
% My College Has Done This	48	46	52	30	41	77	38	64
% Don't know/Does not apply	19	21	15	38	13	4	18	10
% Comprehensive onboarding and mentoring programs								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	4	3	6	0	3	6	5	7
% My College Has Considered Doing This	28	31	25	27	36	29	24	26
% My College Has Done This	61	58	64	57	56	60	64	64
% Don't know/Does not apply	8	9	5	16	5	4	7	2
% Formally extend academic freedom policies to non-tenure-track faculty								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	16	15	18	13	16	15	22	14
% My College Has Considered Doing This	4	4	4	1	3	10	4	4
% My College Has Done This	64	63	67	55	74	63	59	75
% Don't know/Does not apply	16	18	12	31	7	13	14	7
% Multiple-year contracts								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	30	38	22	52	36	17	16	29
% My College Has Considered Doing This	11	10	13	8	10	13	14	11
% My College Has Done This	48	40	59	18	49	65	62	57
% Don't know/Does not apply	11	12	6	22	5	6	8	4
% New job titles								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	28	33	22	38	38	21	30	15
% My College Has Considered Doing This	21	19	23	13	21	25	25	21
% My College Has Done This	37	28	47	17	30	46	37	56
% Don't know/Does not apply	15	19	9	32	11	8	8	7
% Opportunities for advancement or promotion								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	14	18	10	27	18	2	8	12
% My College Has Considered Doing This	14	11	18	13	8	10	25	12
% My College Has Done This	62	58	66	36	66	83	61	73
% Don't know/Does not apply	10	13	6	23	8	4	7	4

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Professional development opportunities specifically for contingent faculty								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	15	13	18	9	20	10	22	15
% My College Has Considered Doing This	15	14	15	6	15	25	13	18
% My College Has Done This	59	60	58	64	56	60	57	61
% Don't know/Does not apply	12	13	8	21	10	4	8	6
% Provide benefits								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	14	15	13	25	10	4	11	15
% My College Has Considered Doing This	5	6	4	6	7	4	5	2
% My College Has Done This	71	68	77	48	77	90	78	77
% Don't know/Does not apply	10	11	6	21	7	2	7	5
% Regular evaluation and feedback processes								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	3	2	4	4	2	0	5	2
% My College Has Considered Doing This	9	4	13	3	5	6	11	17
% My College Has Done This	82	84	79	79	85	92	79	80
% Don't know/Does not apply	7	9	4	14	8	2	5	1
% Voting rights as a faculty member/involvement in governance								
% My College Has Not Considered Doing This	21	23	20	27	26	13	20	21
% My College Has Considered Doing This	9	10	8	9	10	13	8	8
% My College Has Done This	57	48	66	32	56	65	64	68
% Don't know/Does not apply	13	18	6	31	8	10	8	2

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: Graduate programs at higher education institutions in this country are admitting more Ph.D. students than they should, given the current job market.

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Strongly Disagree	4	5	2	9	6	2	2	3
% Disagree	17	24	10	29	22	23	9	10
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	33	32	33	34	33	29	37	31
% Agree	37	31	44	26	27	40	40	45
% Strongly Agree	9	8	11	3	12	6	12	10

Does your institution survey its faculty, staff and administrators to assess their job satisfaction?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Yes	80	83	77	82	77	92	74	80
% No	20	17	23	18	23	8	26	20

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% We are seeing higher than usual faculty turnover rates.								
% Strongly Disagree	8	11	6	18	5	6	7	5
% Disagree	40	42	39	39	41	46	36	39
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	27	26	28	21	26	35	22	33
% Agree	22	20	24	18	28	13	30	19
% Strongly Agree	3	1	4	3	0	0	5	4
% We are seeing higher than usual staff turnover rates.								
% Strongly Disagree	2	3	1	4	0	6	0	2
% Disagree	29	33	24	34	24	42	22	24
% Neither Agree nor Disagree	25	23	27	21	28	21	23	31
% Agree	35	32	38	32	36	27	43	35
% Strongly Agree	9	9	9	9	12	4	12	7

What do you think are the major causes of faculty turnover at your institution? Please select up to five options.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Lack of opportunity for growth	11	12	10	18	7	8	11	8
% Burnout	33	30	35	27	34	29	37	35
% Lack of feedback or recognition	3	3	2	3	2	6	3	2
% Negative views of leadership	11	11	12	10	14	8	14	10
% Negative experiences with workplace culture	13	13	14	6	20	15	20	10
% Lack of work-life balance	16	16	14	14	20	13	14	14
% Natural career progression	45	46	44	47	37	54	42	45
% Competitive offers elsewhere	64	63	65	43	68	90	68	61
% Insufficient resources for the demands/ expectations of the job	27	26	30	16	36	31	29	31
% Involuntary departures/employee terminations	18	15	21	19	17	6	18	24
% Significant family or life events	34	33	36	34	31	33	32	41
% Internal promotions or transfers	12	15	9	21	12	10	7	11
% Political climate in my state/region	12	17	6	9	17	31	9	4
% Other	11	13	10	14	15	6	12	10

What is your age?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Under 30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% 30–39	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
% 40–49	18	19	17	29	18	6	22	12
% 50–59	51	47	56	47	51	42	55	55
% 60–69	27	27	25	14	30	44	21	28
% 70 and older	3	4	3	5	2	4	1	5
% Prefer not to respond	1	2	0	3	0	4	0	0

With which of the following gender identities do you most identify?								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Female	54	50	56	53	54	42	64	47
% Male	45	48	43	46	44	56	34	52
% Nonbinary/Gender nonconforming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Prefer not to respond	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1

With which of the following categories do you identify? Please select all that apply.								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Asian	3	2	3	0	2	4	4	2
% American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	3	0	0	1	0
% Black or African American	7	11	4	12	16	4	8	0
% Hispanic or Latin(o/a/x)	3	3	3	3	5	0	3	2
% Middle Eastern or North African	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	1
% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
% White	84	82	88	83	75	88	86	90
% Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
% Prefer not to respond	3	3	3	0	5	4	1	5

Do you consider yourself to be:								
	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Assoc.	Master's/ Bacc.	Doctoral	Bacc.	Doctoral/ Master's
% Heterosexual or straight	86	85	90	86	82	88	86	93
% Gay or lesbian	5	5	3	4	7	4	4	2
% Bisexual	3	2	3	4	2	0	7	0
% Different identity	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0
% Prefer not to respond	6	7	4	7	7	8	3	5

ABOUT *INSIDE HIGHER ED*

Inside Higher Ed is the leading digital media company serving the higher education space. Since our founding in 2004, we have become the go-to online source for higher education news, analysis, resources and services. Our mission is to serve all of higher education—individuals, institutions, corporations and nonprofits—so they can do their jobs better, transforming their lives and those of the students they serve. We are proud to have earned the trust and loyalty of our more than 2 million monthly readers by speaking as a fiercely independent voice, providing thoughtful, substantive analysis on the pressing issues facing higher education today. *Inside Higher Ed* is owned by *Times Higher Education* (THE).

Learn more about *Inside Higher Ed* at www.insidehighered.com.

ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Founded in 2003, Hanover Research is a global research and analytics firm that delivers market intelligence through a unique, fixed-fee model to more than 1,200 clients. Headquartered in Arlington, Va., Hanover employs high-caliber market researchers, analysts, and account executives to provide a service that is revolutionary in its combination of flexibility and affordability. Hanover was named a Top 50 Market Research Firm by the American Marketing Association in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 and has also been twice named a *Washington Business Journal* Fastest Growing Company.

To learn more about Hanover Research, visit www.hanoverresearch.com.



Inside Higher Ed

Copyright © 2026. All rights reserved.