

# COGR AAU Public Opinion Update

June 10, 2022

Pedro Ribeiro and Ken Goldstein

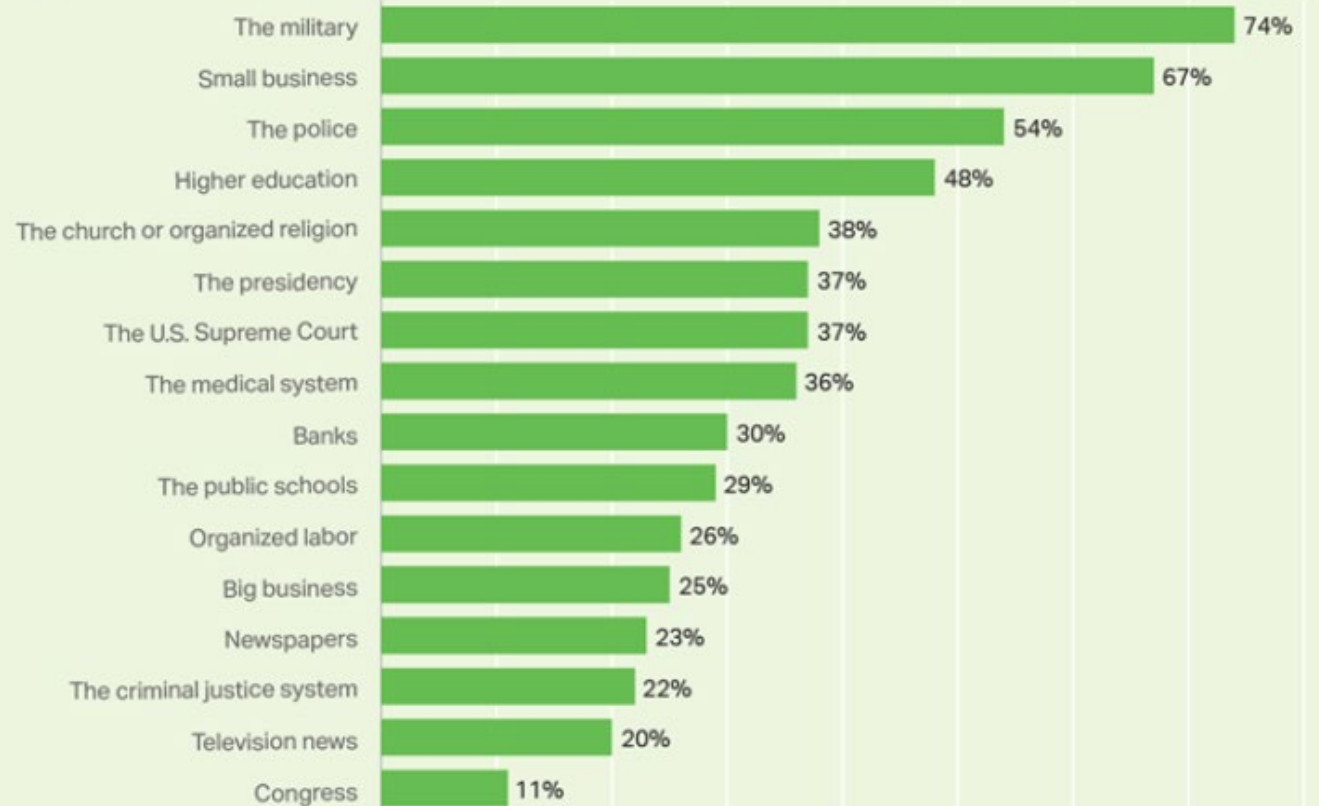


# Gallup Research

## Confidence in Institutions, 2018

Now I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one -- a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?

■ % Great deal/Quite a lot



GALLUP, JUNE 1-13, 2018

# Pew Research Center

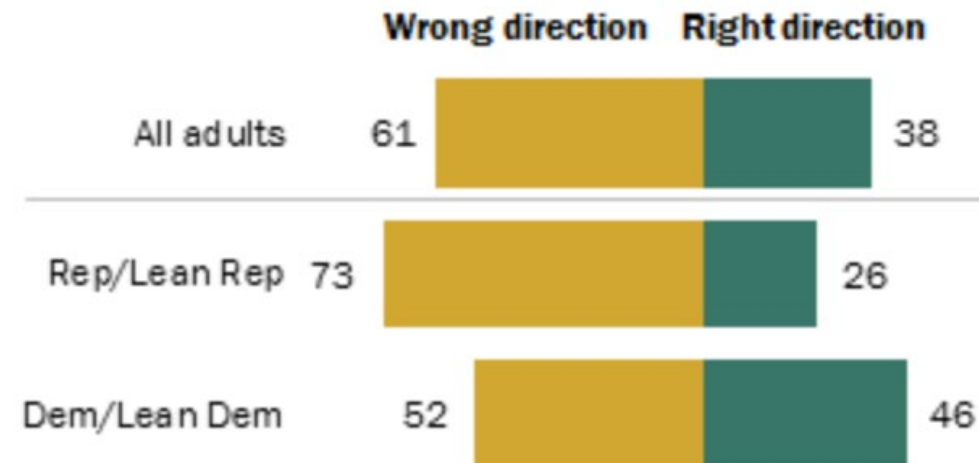
## Higher Education Report, 2019



Pew Research Center

### Majority of Americans say higher education is going in wrong direction

*% saying the higher education system in the U.S. today is generally going in the ...*

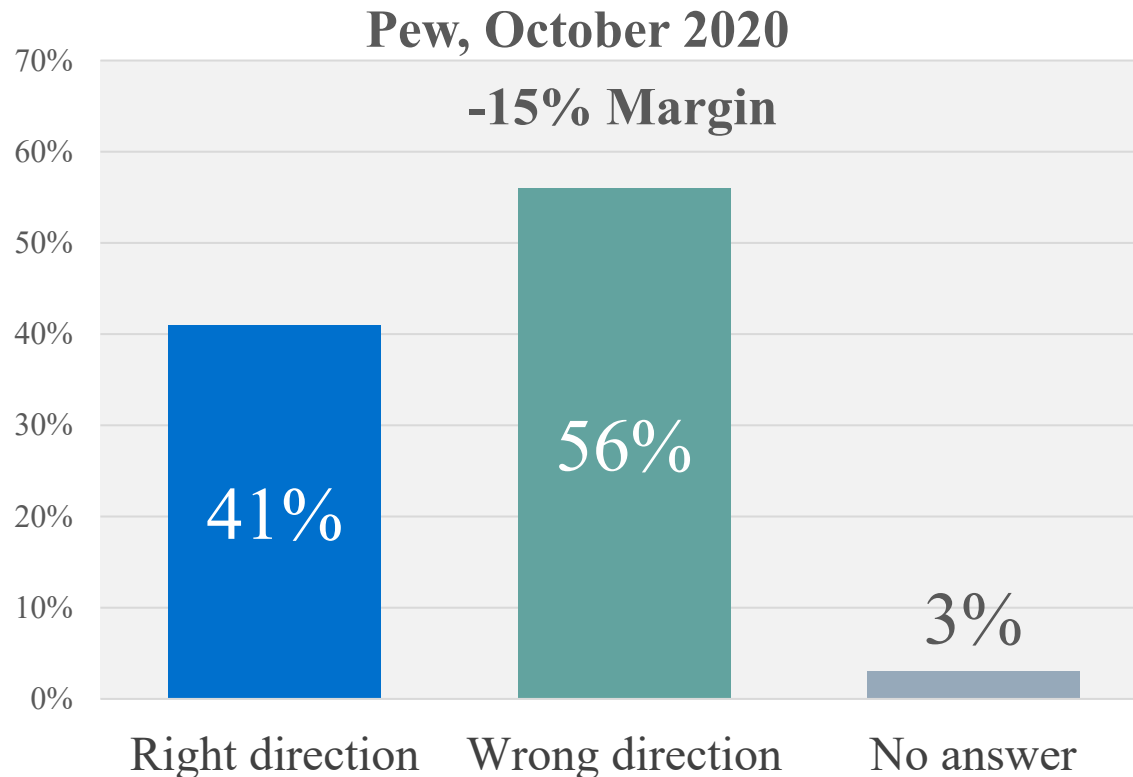


Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 19-July 2, 2018.

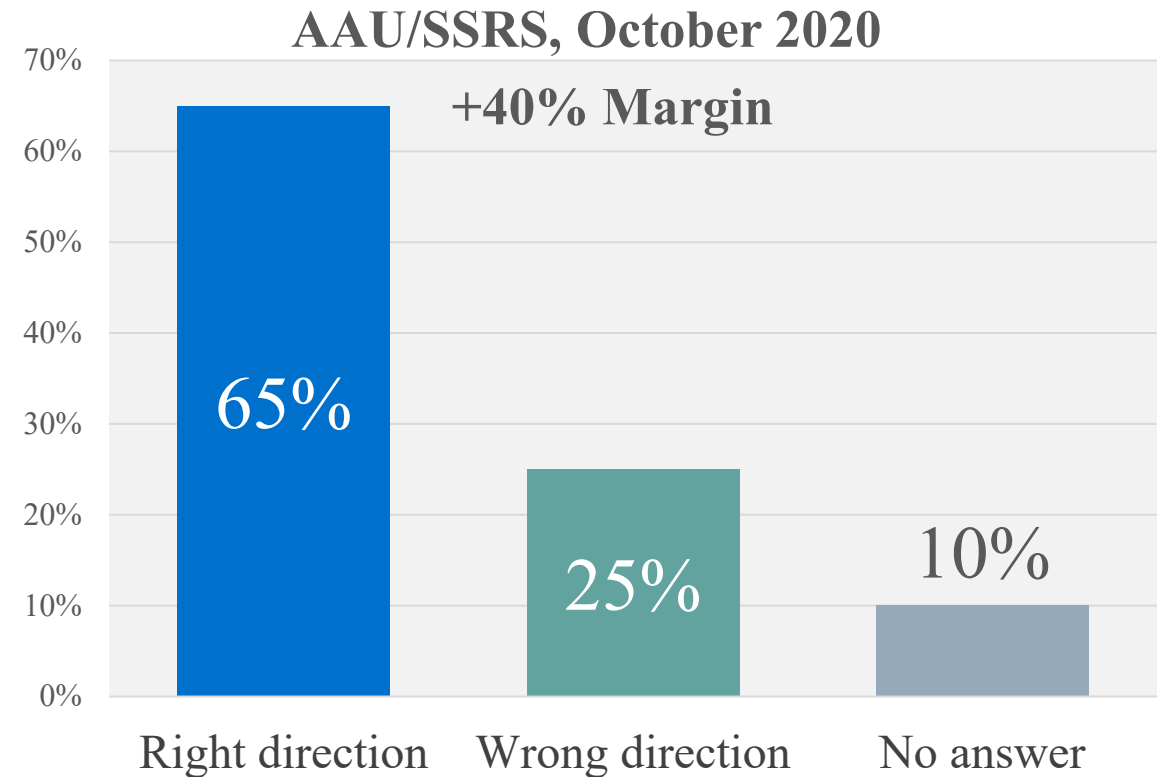
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# America's Leading Research Universities

Q. Now, thinking about the higher education system, that is colleges and universities, in the United States today... Do you think the **higher education system in the U.S.** is generally going in the...



Q. Thinking about how America's leading research universities are doing. Do you think **America's leading research universities** are generally going in the right direction or are they off on the wrong direction?



# America's Leading Research Universities

AAU Study, April 2022 - Momentive

Q. Please name three of America's leading research universities. *Open-ended responses.*

## Results from April 2022:

Almost nine-in-ten (88%) of all responses were AAU members

Top 29 most frequently mentioned institutions were AAU members, above #30 Mayo Clinic

Every AAU member was mentioned, with significantly higher prevalence in home regions/states

*We have asked this question on instruments fielded in October 2019, April 2020, October 2020, April 2021, and October 2021. These results and findings have been entirely consistent across time and methodology.*

# AAU Polling

2018-2022

**Our studies are nationally representative, reflecting the perceptions and opinions of the American public**

AAU fields studies on a variety of methodologies.

## **Dynata Research Panel**

Full national study, online interviews with 4,000 American adults



## **SSRS Panel Omnibus**

Ad hoc questions, biweekly, interviews both phone and online with ~1,000 American adults

## **Momentive Inc Omnibus**

River sample, two questions weekly, online interviews with ~2,500 American adults



**Weighting:** AAU's studies are adjusted, through a statistical process known as weighting, to represent known demographic targets derived from the Census Bureau's data. AAU also weights to party identification to account for partisan non-response.

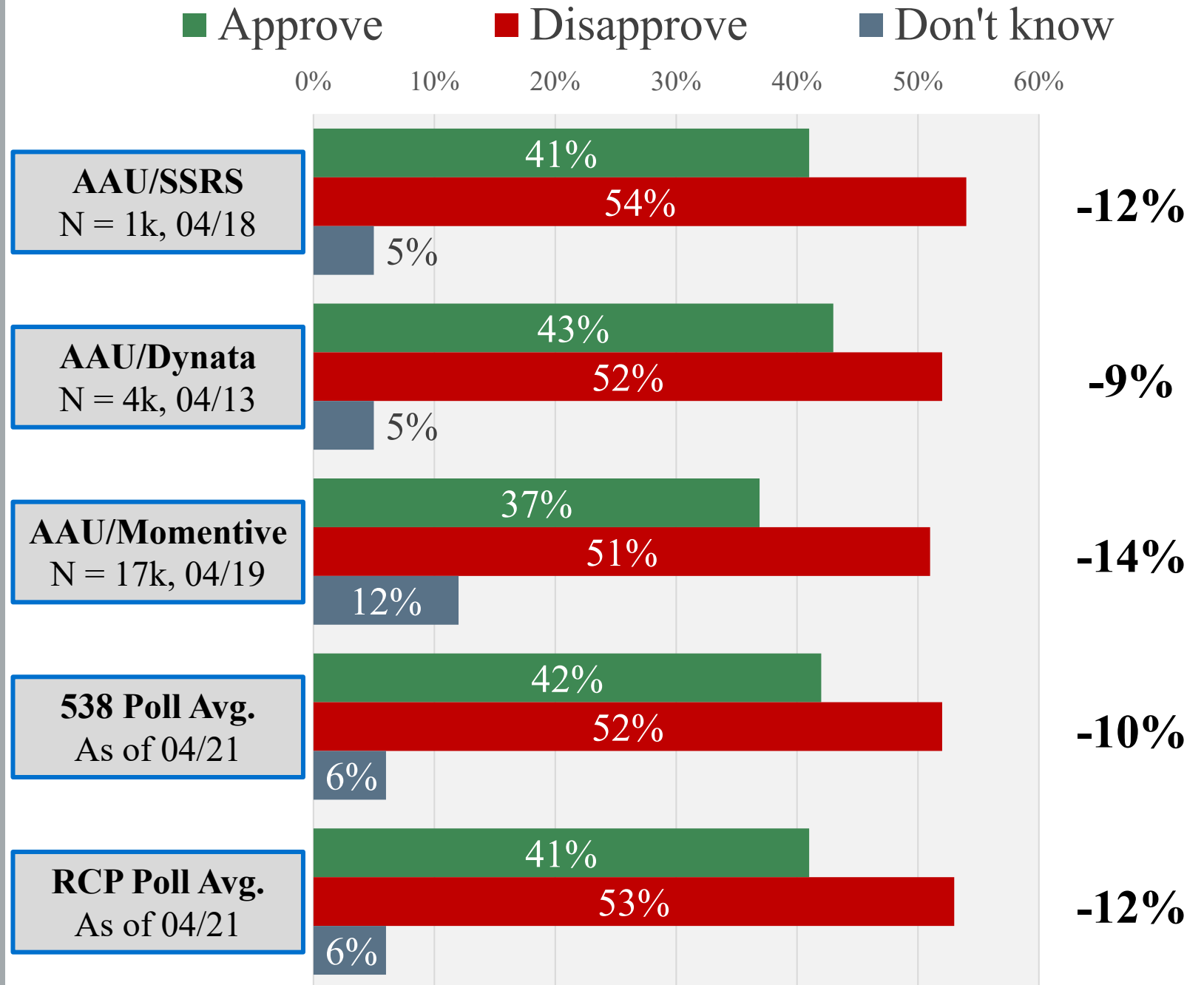
# AAU Polling: Ideology and Partisanship

**Ideology & Partisanship: Cell Percentages**  
Interviews April 6<sup>th</sup> – April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. N = 17,648 US Adults

		Ideology				
Party ID	<i>All US Adults</i>	Very liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very conservative
<i>All US Adults</i>	100%	7%	15%	45%	23%	11%
Democrats	33%	4%	11%	14%	3%	1%
Independents	37%	2%	4%	22%	7%	2%
Republicans	31%	0%	1%	8%	14%	7%

# Biden Approval

## AAU Polling Comparison



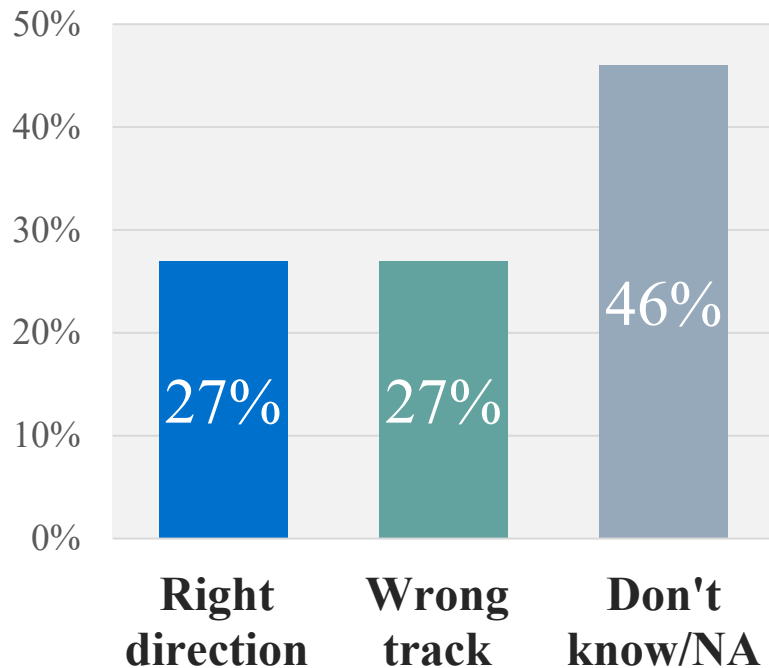


# Direction of Higher Education

**AAU Study, April 2022, Q.** Thinking about how \_\_\_\_\_ is doing, do you think \_\_\_\_\_ are generally going in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?

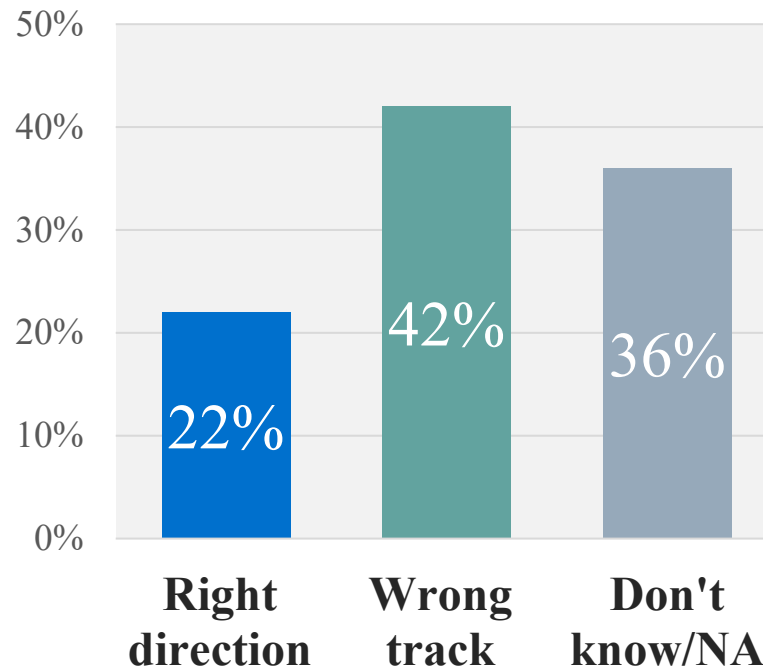
## America's leading research universities

**+0% Right Direction Margin**



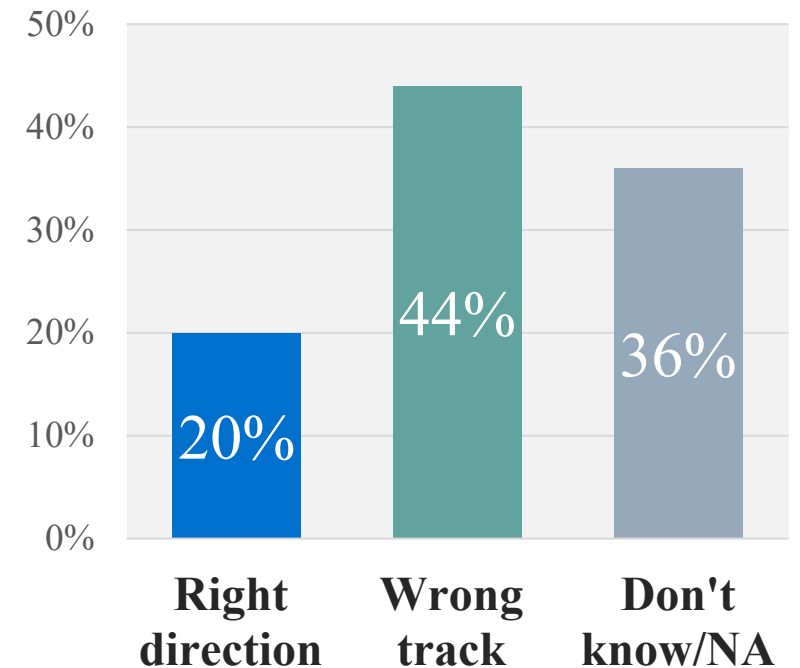
## Colleges and Universities

**-20% Right Direction Margin**

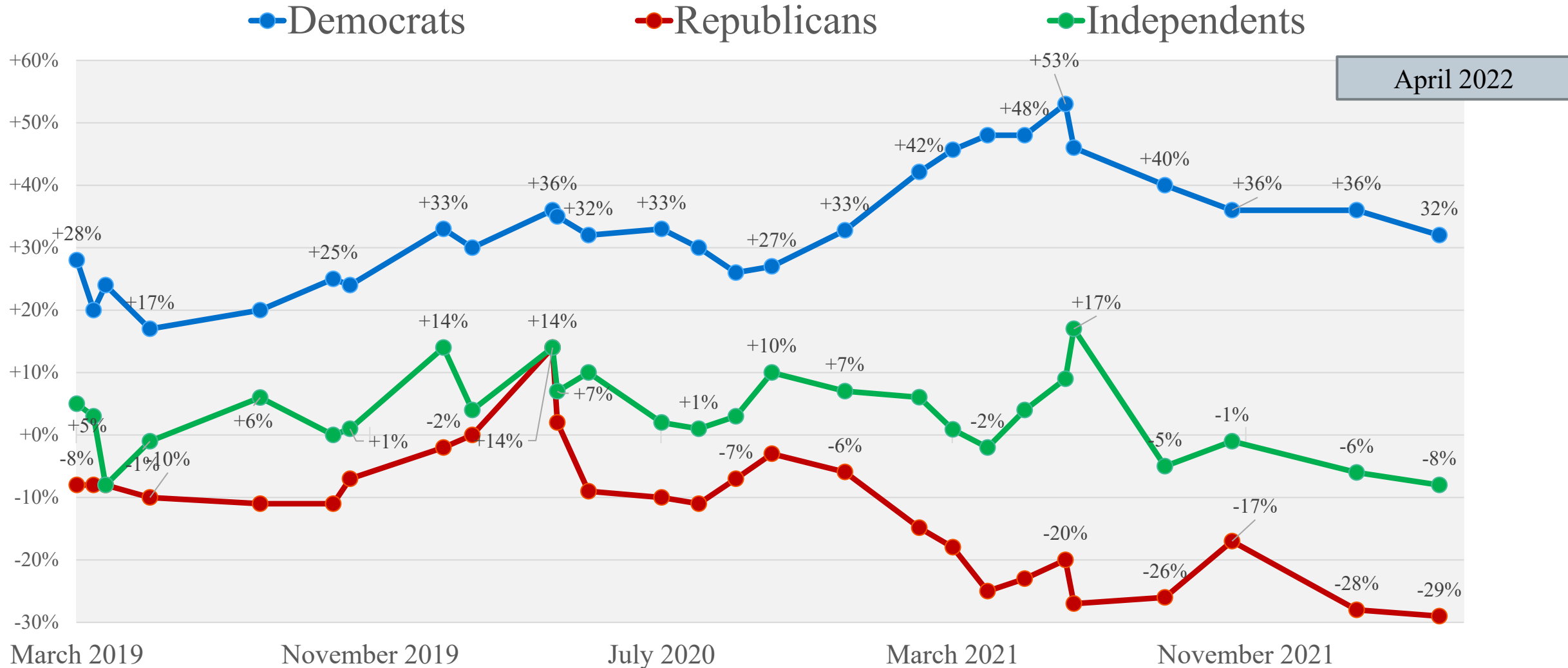


## Higher Education

**-24% Right Direction Margin**



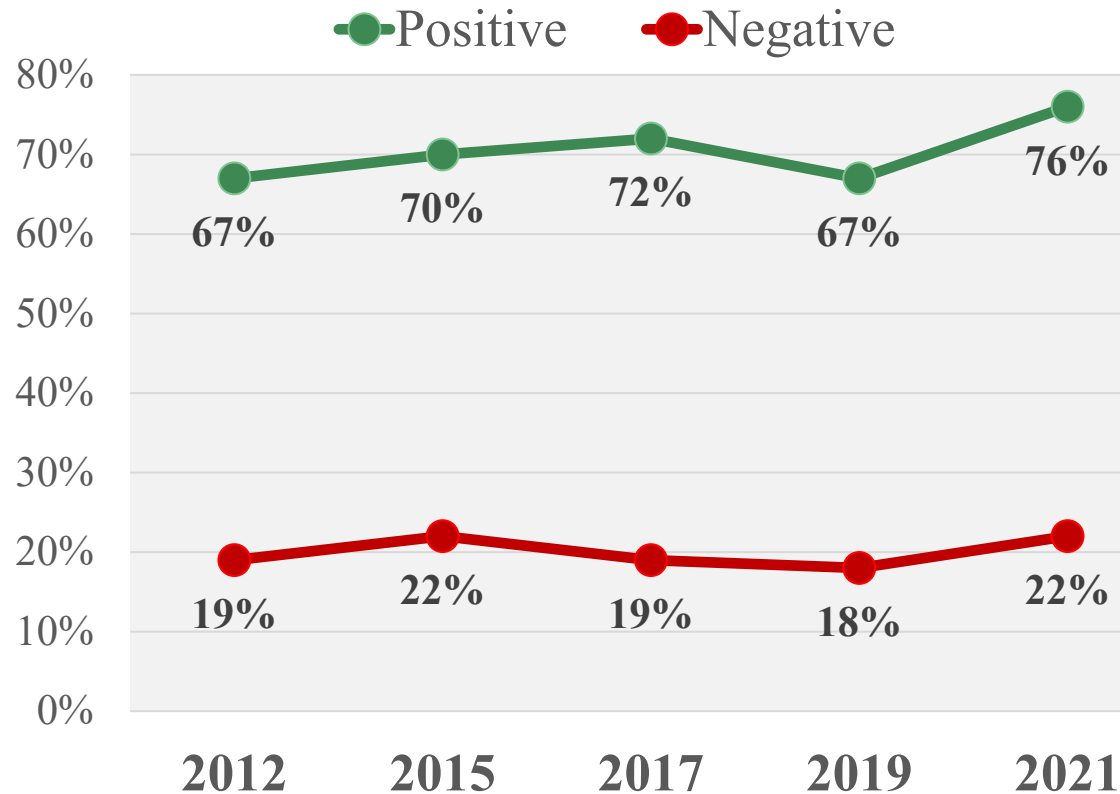
# Partisanship in Perceptions of ALRUs – 2019 to 2022



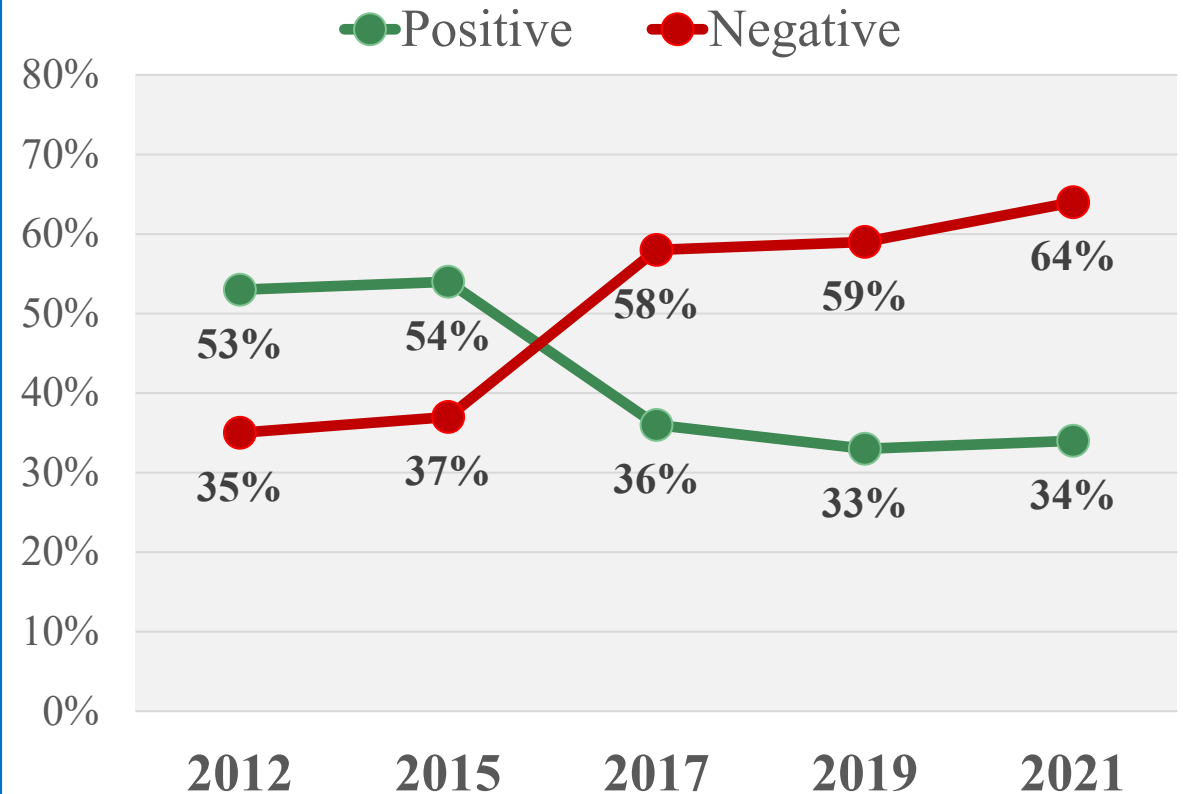
# Pew Research Center: Colleges' Effect on Country

**Pew, 2010-2021: Q. Are colleges and universities having a positive or negative effect on the country...**

## Democrats/Lean Dem.



## Republicans/Lean R



# Informed Ballot: Impact of Research Universities

We regularly test different messages about the role and impact of research universities in split sample ‘informed ballots,’ where different samples of respondents are asked to choose between different **positive messages** and a strong **negative message**.

## Informed Ballot Test: **Research Impact** Message against Strong Anti-ALRU **Message**

**Q.** Please tell me which of the following statements about **America’s leading research universities** you agree with more.

- ALRUs are a valuable national asset producing **groundbreaking research in science, medicine, and other areas** that will make me and my family better off even if it is unlikely that someone close to me will attend one of them
- Strong anti-ALRU message

## Informed Ballot Test: **Economic Impact** Message against Strong Anti-ALRU **Message**

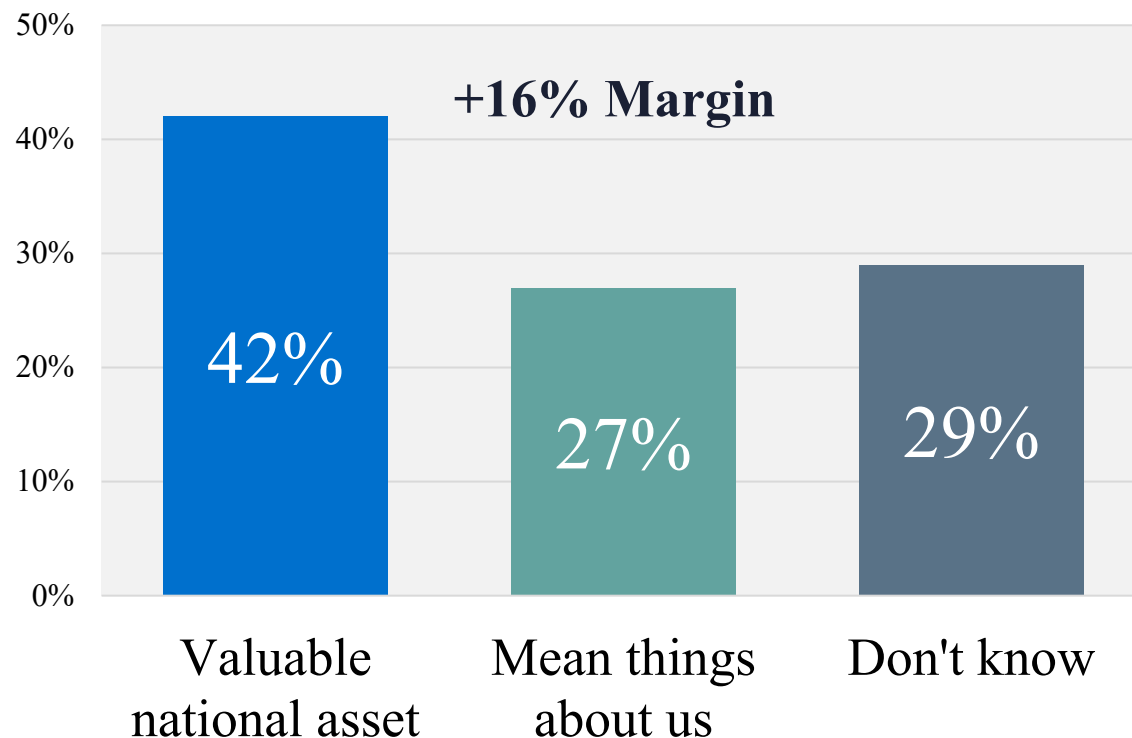
**Q.** Please tell me which of the following statements about **America’s leading research universities** you agree with more.

- ALRUs are engines of economic innovation that develop new technologies, support local businesses, and create jobs where I live that can make me and my family better off even if it is unlikely that someone close to me will attend one of them
- Strong anti-ALRU message

# Research Message Outperforms Economic Impact

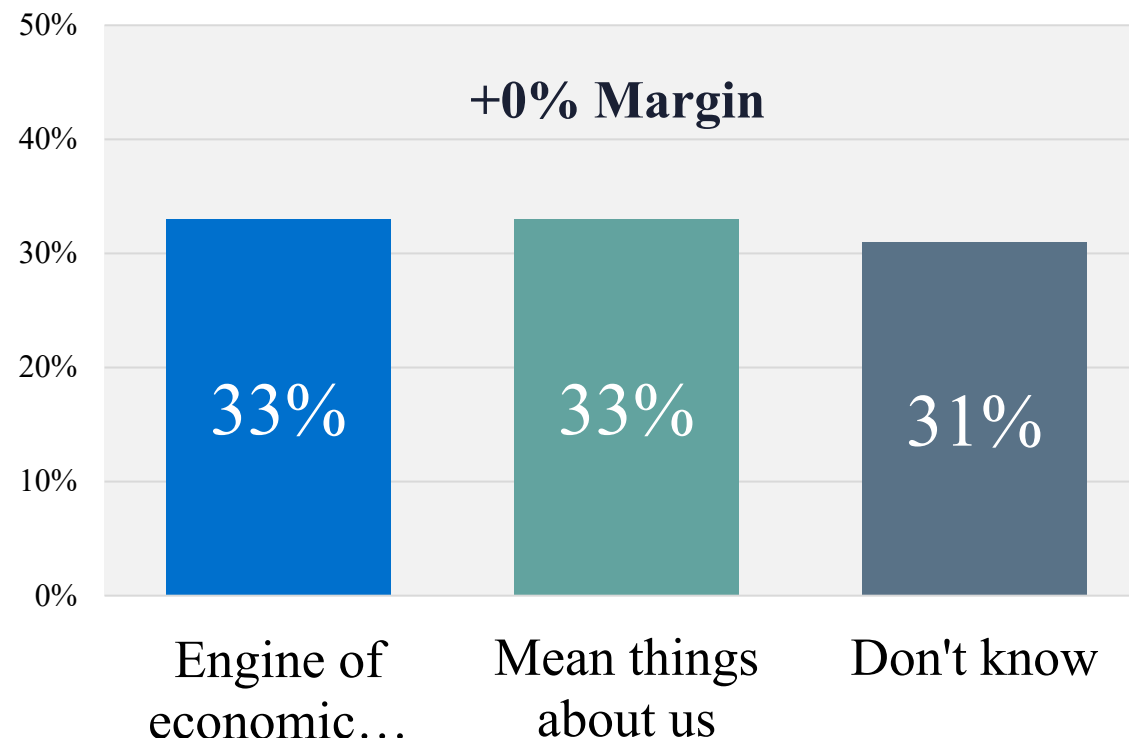
**Q. Informed ballot one.**

- Valuable national asset; **Research impact message.**
- Anti-research universities **message.**



**Q. Informed ballot two.**

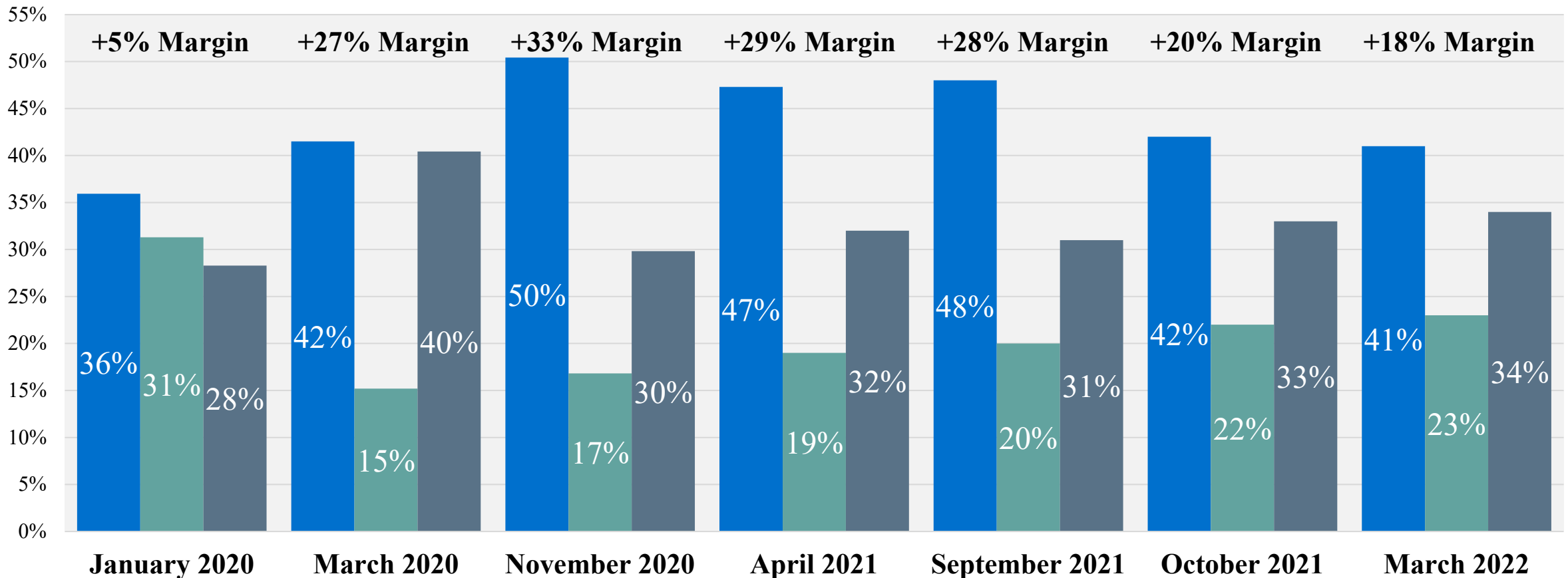
- Engine of economic innovation; **Economic impact message.**
- Anti-research universities **message.**



# Research Impact Message - Over Time

Q. Please tell me which of the following statements about America's leading research universities you agree with more.

- ALRUs are a valuable national asset producing groundbreaking research in science, medicine...
- Mean things about us



# Research Message Outperforms Economic Impact

Over the past 2.5 years, we have tested the research impact message against the economic impact message's performance on **20** separate public opinion studies. These studies have had different sampling methodologies, different interview methods, and been fielded at the national, state, and county level.

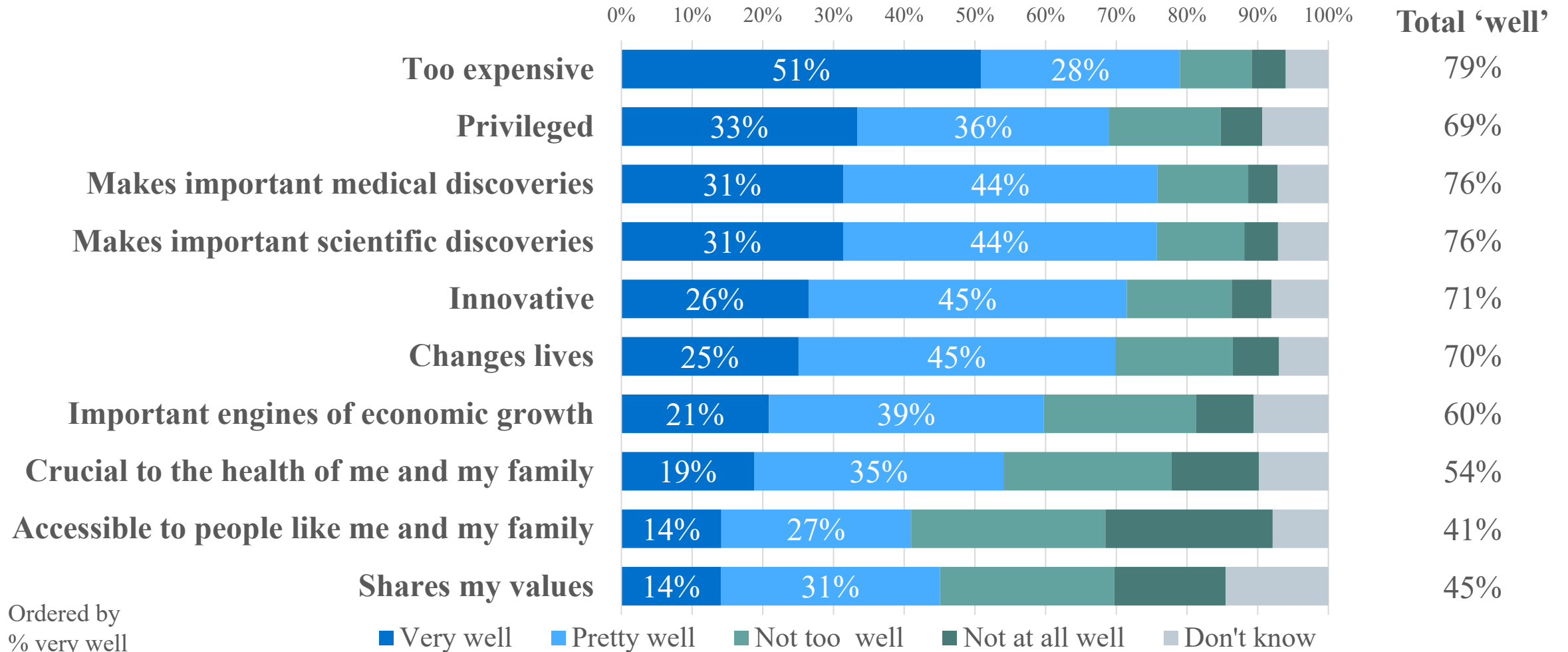
The **research impact message** has outperformed the economic impact message **every time**.

## AAU Studies that Tested Both Research and Economic Impact Messaging

April 2022 County Study	December 2021 State Study #2	May 2021 National Study	November 2020 National Study
April 2022 State Study	November 2021 State Study	May 2021 State Study	October 2020 State Study
March 2022 National Study	October 2021 State Study	March 2021 National Study	April 2020 National Study
January 2022 State Study	October 2021 County Study	February 2021 State Study	January 2020 National Study
December 2021 State Study #1	June 2021 National Study	February 2021 National Study	October 2019 National Study

# ALRU Traits

**Q. For each one below, please indicate how well you think it describes America's leading research universities.**



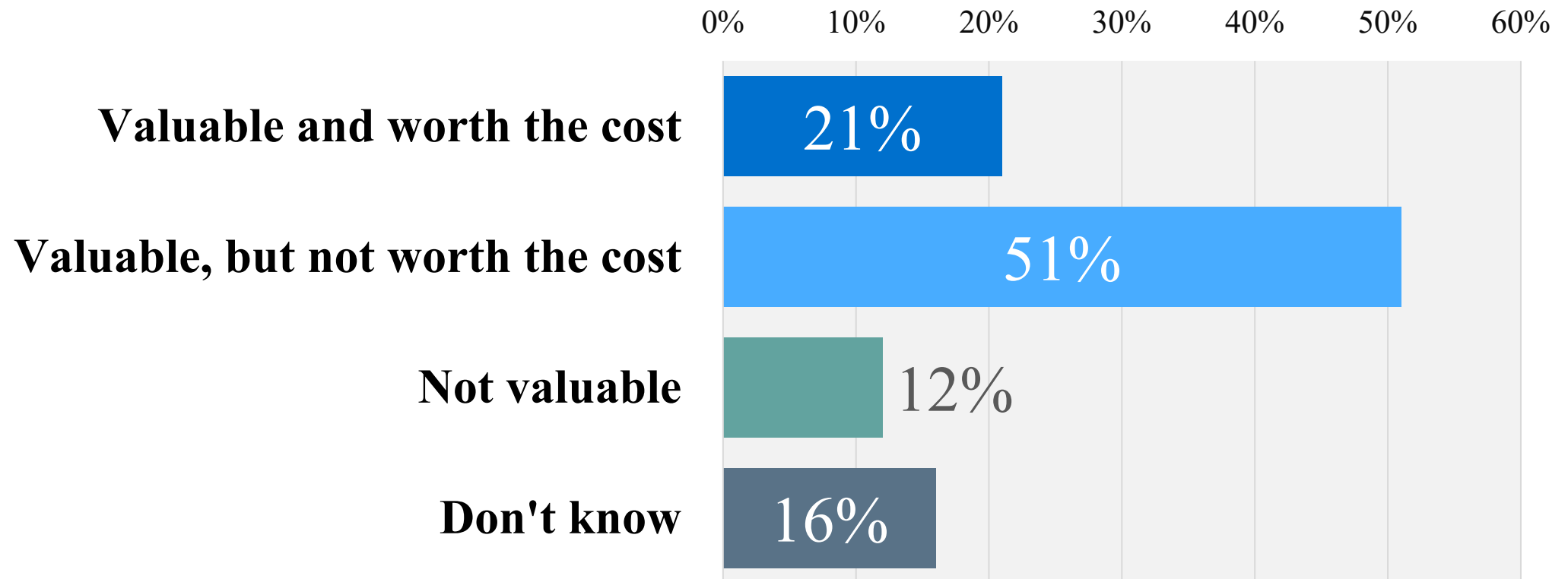


# Value and Worth of ALRU Degrees

**AAU Study, March 2022**

**Q.** When it comes to getting a college degree from one of America's leading research universities, which one of the following statements comes closest to your point of view?

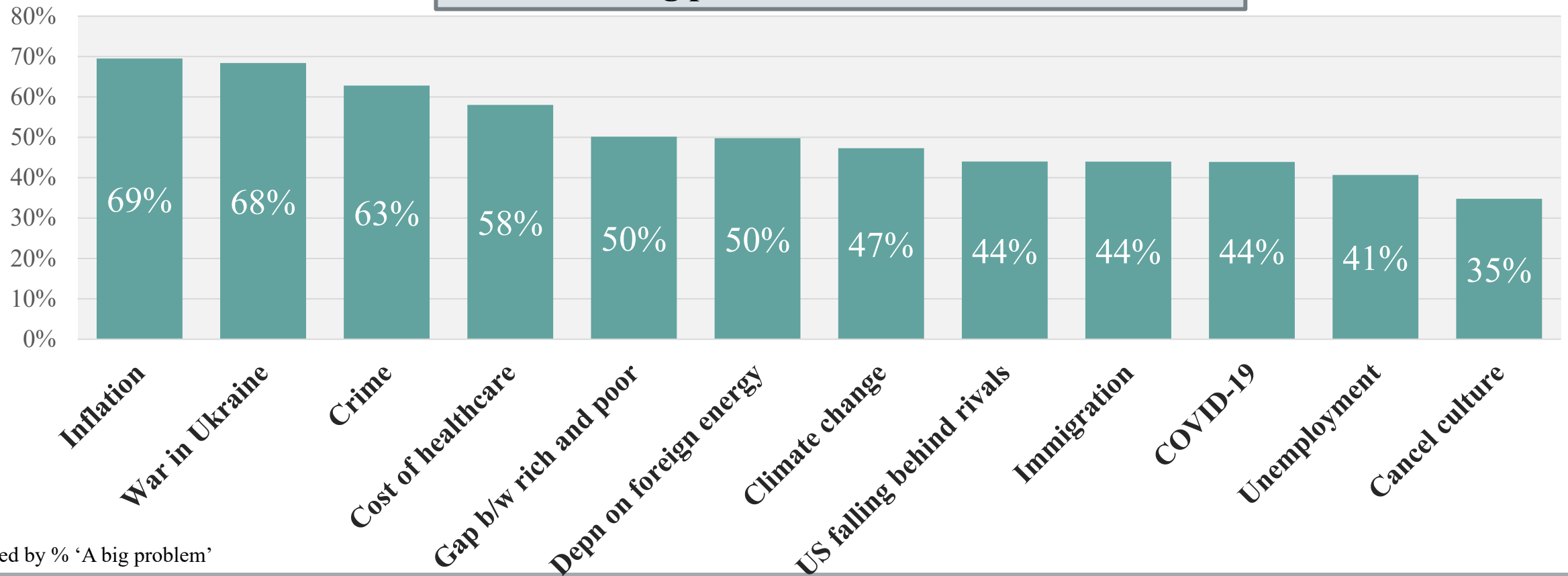
**A degree from one of America's leading research universities...**



# What Issues Are Americans Focused On?

**AAU Study, April 2022, Q.** We are going to show you a list of issues that some people have told us are major problems in the country today. Please indicate how big of a problem you consider them to be.

**“A big problem”, % of Americans**



Ordered by % 'A big problem'

# Where do Higher Education Issues Fit In?

**“A big problem”, % of Americans**

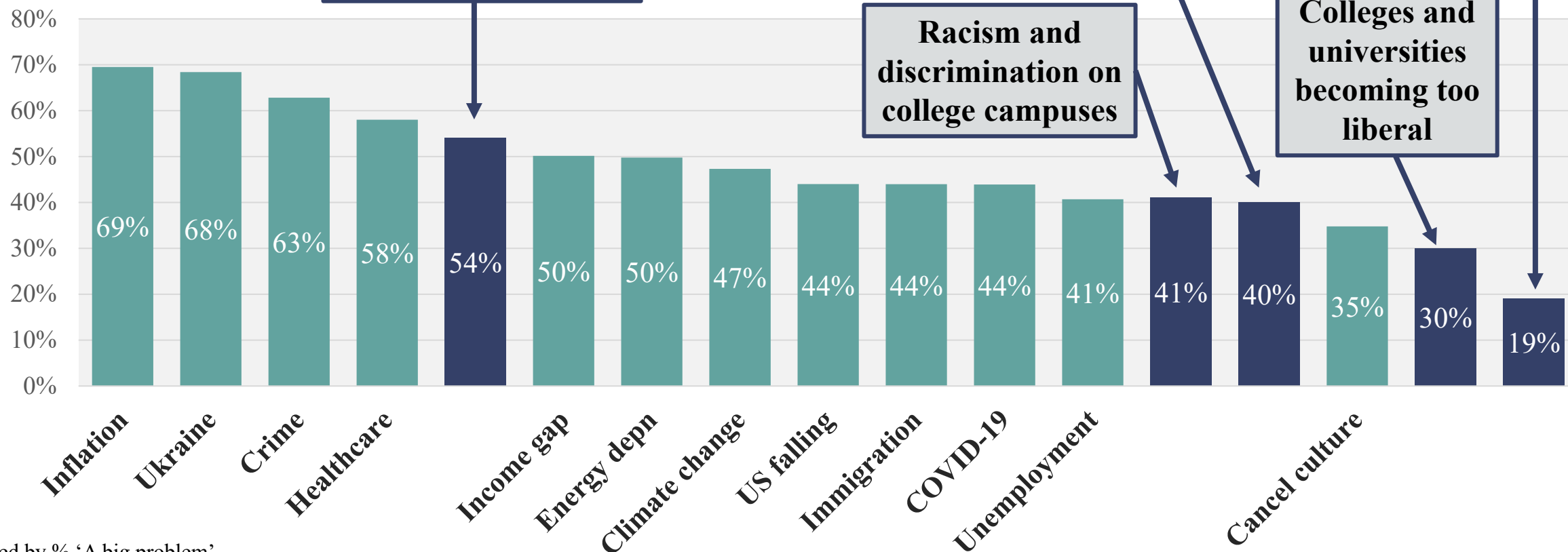
**The cost of a college education**

**Student debt in America**

**Free speech on college campuses**

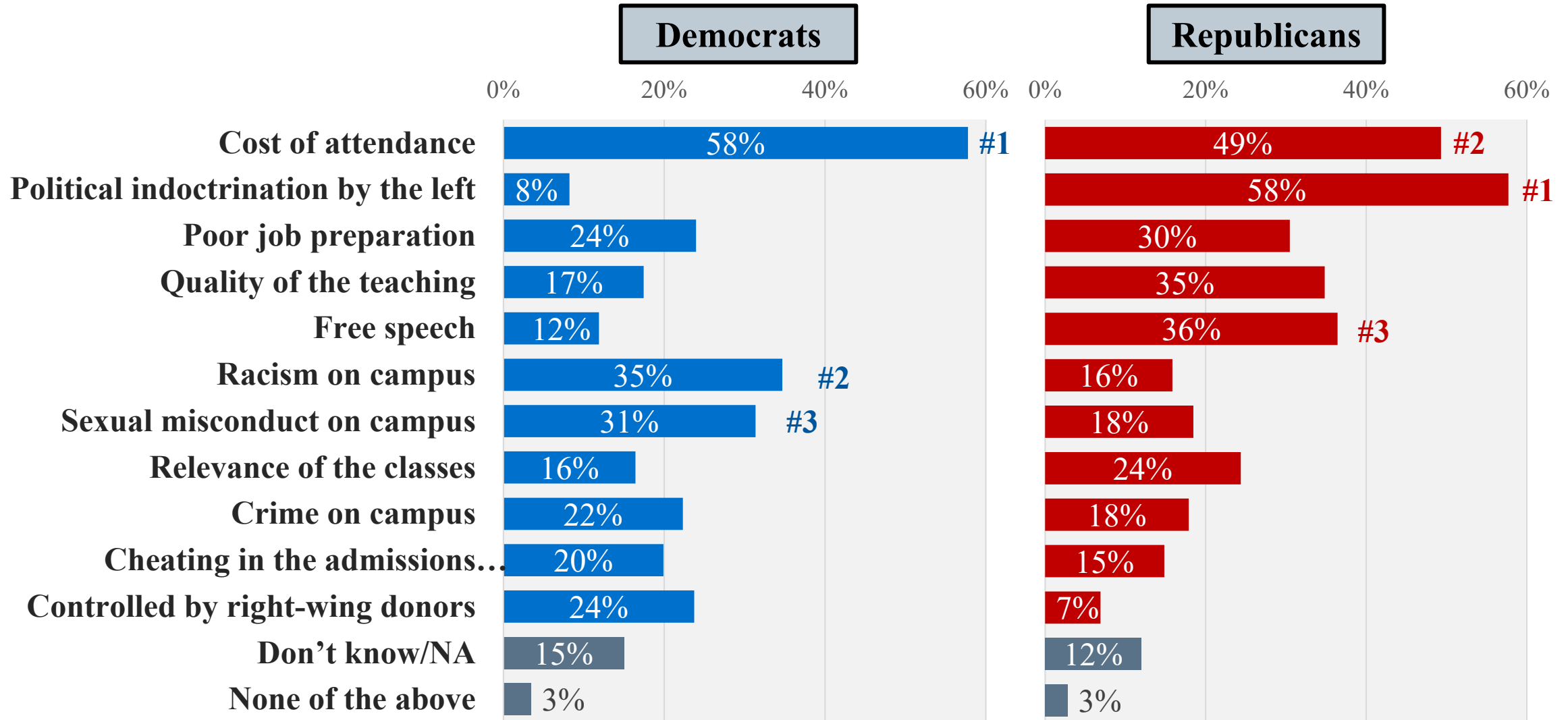
**Racism and discrimination on college campuses**

**Colleges and universities becoming too liberal**



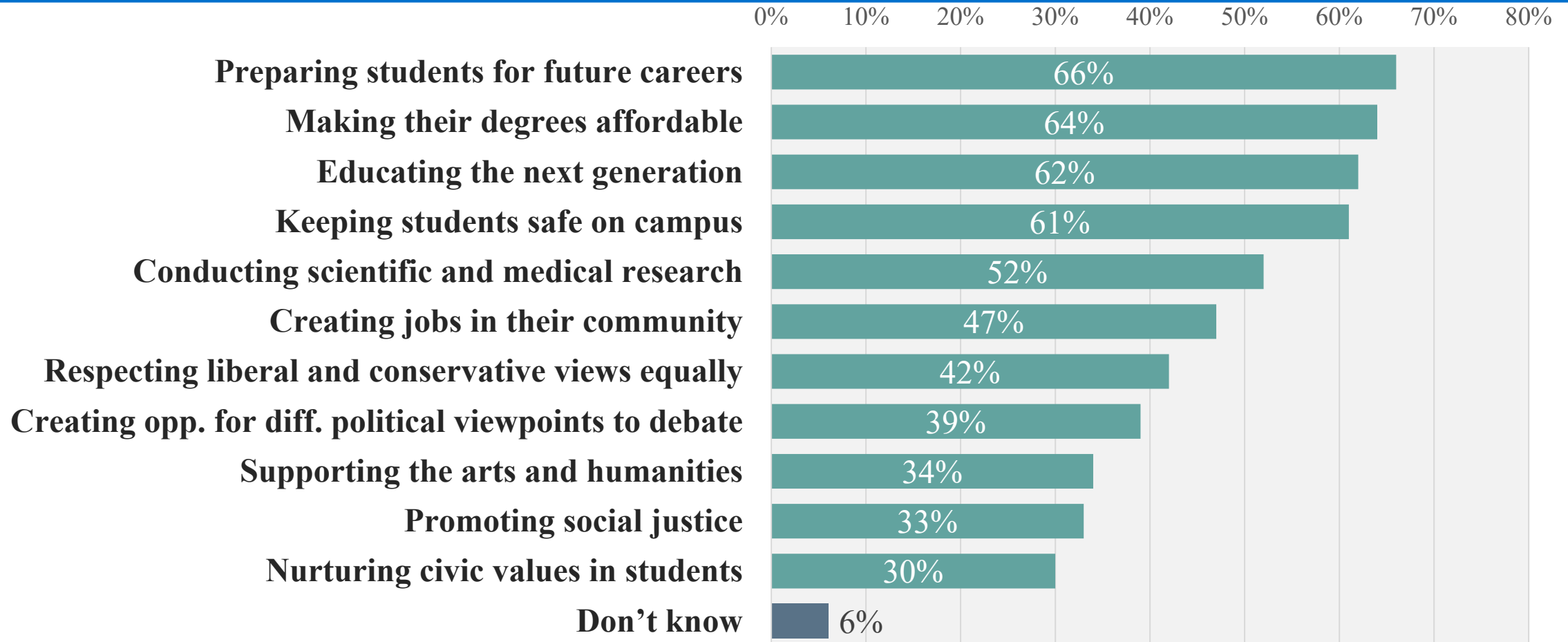
Ordered by % ‘A big problem’

# “Serious Problems” at Leading Research Universities



# What do Americans Want Universities to Prioritize?

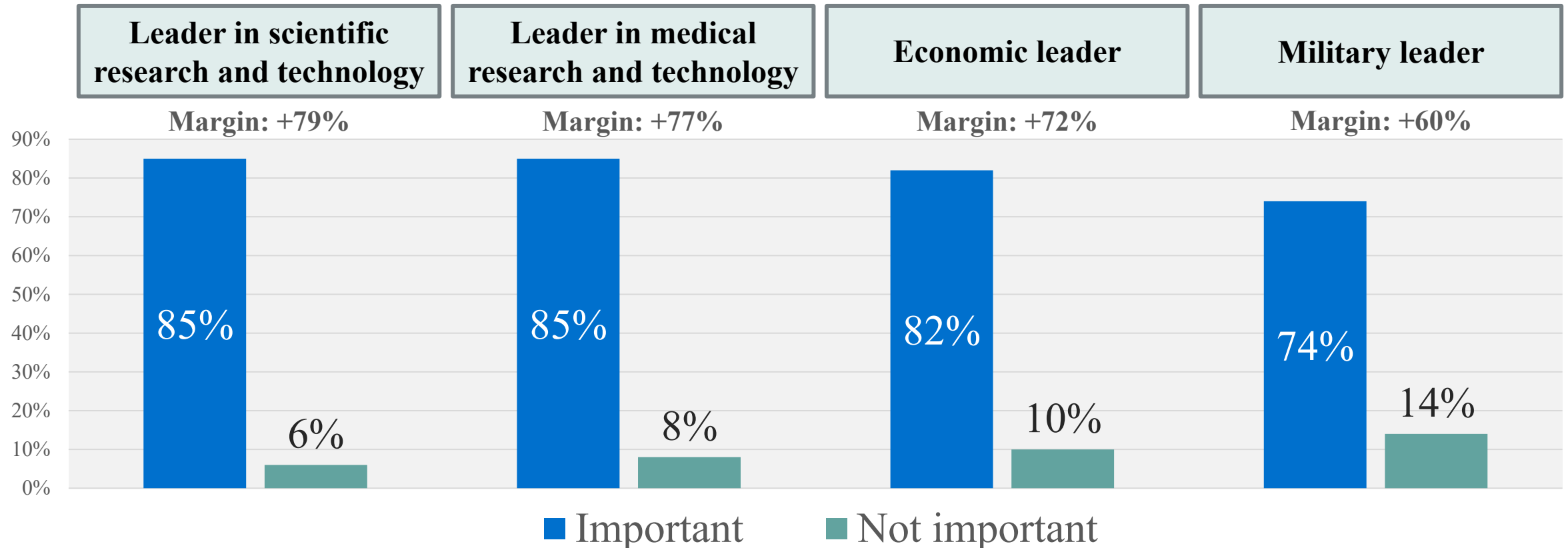
**AAU Study, April 2022 Q.** Looking at just the below list, which of the following initiatives are important for colleges and universities to prioritize? Please select all that you believe to be important.



# Global Leadership in Research Most Important to Public

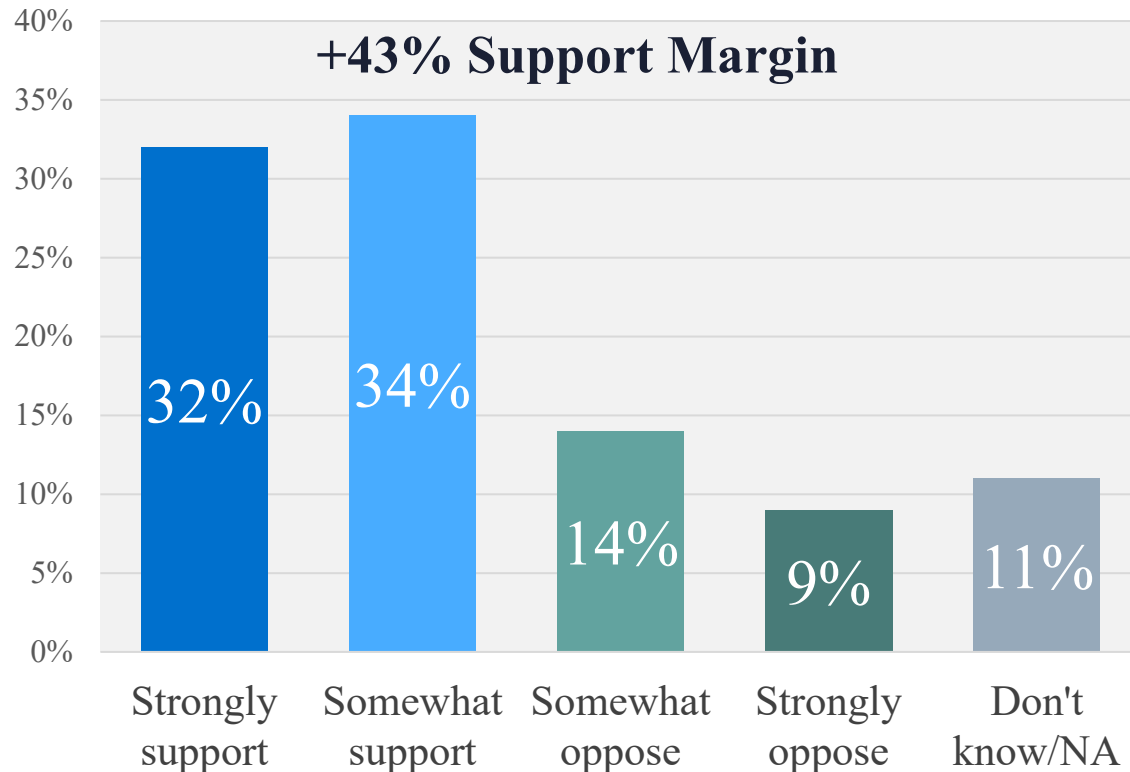
**AAU Study, August 2021.** The sample was divided into four groups, each asked to rate the importance of America's global leadership in a different area. *Displaying Total 'Important' and Total 'Not important' percentages.*

**Q. "In your opinion, how important is it that the United States be the global..."**



# Broad Support for Funding Scientific & Medical Research

**Q.** As you may know, the federal government provides public funds to America's leading research universities to conduct scientific and medical research. Do you support or oppose the federal government using taxpayer funds to invest in scientific and medical research?



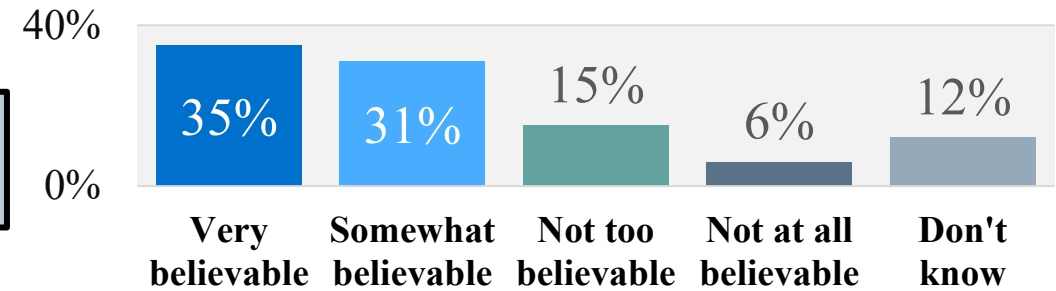
Group	Support	Oppose
All Adults	66%	23%
Men	70%	23%
Women	62%	22%
Race: White	69%	22%
Race: Black	62%	21%
Race: Hispanic	60%	25%
Edu: HS or less	54%	28%
Edu: Some coll.	68%	22%
Edu: College +	77%	18%
Republicans	60%	31%
Democrats	82%	12%
Independents	61%	26%

# Believability of Research Messages

**AAU Study, March 2022. Q.** How believable do you find the following statement?

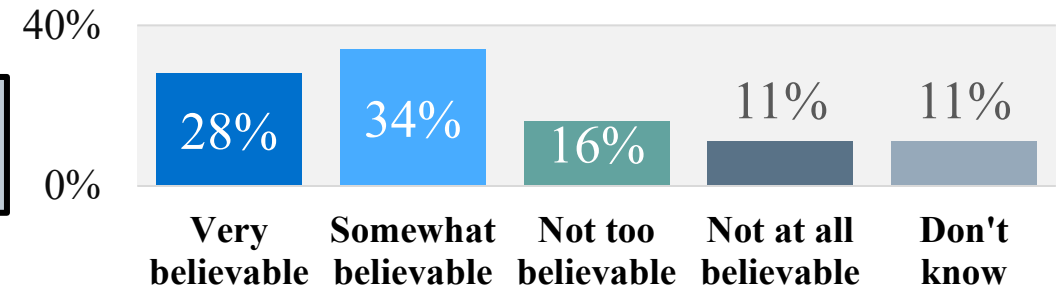
**#1** “The fact that America’s rivals Russia and China are beginning to out-pace us in funding science, medicine, and applied research is a national crisis that policymakers should respond to.”

**+45% Net Believable**



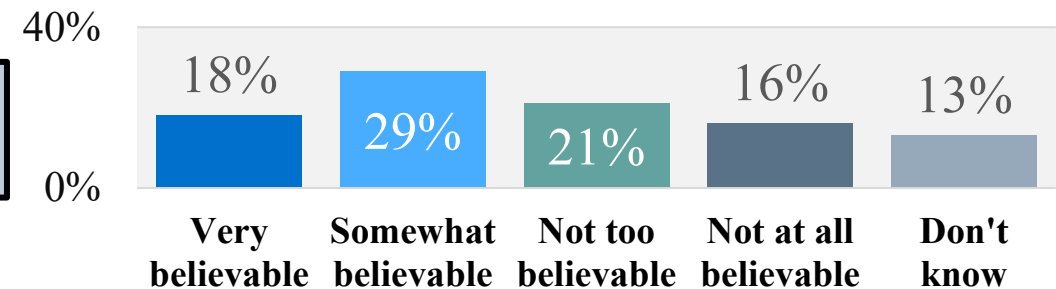
**#2** “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial medical advances against deadly diseases that will lead to lifesaving new cures and treatments.”

**+35% Net Believable**



**#3** “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial tech. advances that help guarantee our energy independence and will drive the transition to renewables.”

**+10% Net Believable**





# Believability of Research Messages

**AAU Study, March 2022. Q.** How believable do you find the following statement?

**#1** “The fact that America’s rivals Russia and China are beginning to out-pace us in funding science, medicine, and applied research is a national crisis that policymakers should respond to.”

	All Adults	Republicans	Democrats
Very believable %	35%	46%	32%

**#2** “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial medical advances against deadly diseases that will lead to lifesaving new cures and treatments.”

	All Adults	Republicans	Democrats
Very believable %	28%	12%	47%

**#3** “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial tech. advances that help guarantee our energy independence and will drive the transition to renewables.”

	All Adults	Republicans	Democrats
Very believable %	18%	7%	34%

# Research Messages Impact on Dependent Variable

## Research Messages

#1 “The fact that America’s rivals Russia and China are beginning to out-pace us in funding science, medicine, and applied research is a national crisis that policymakers should respond to.”

**+32% Net Increase**

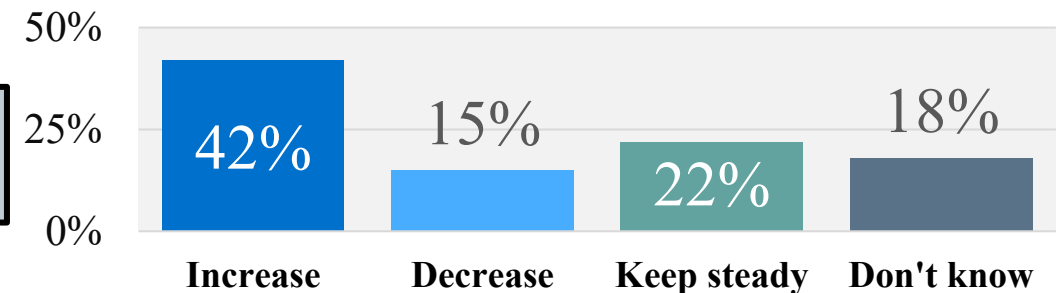
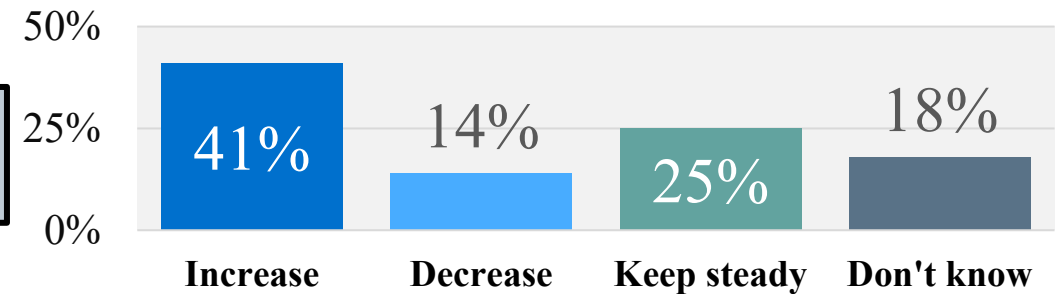
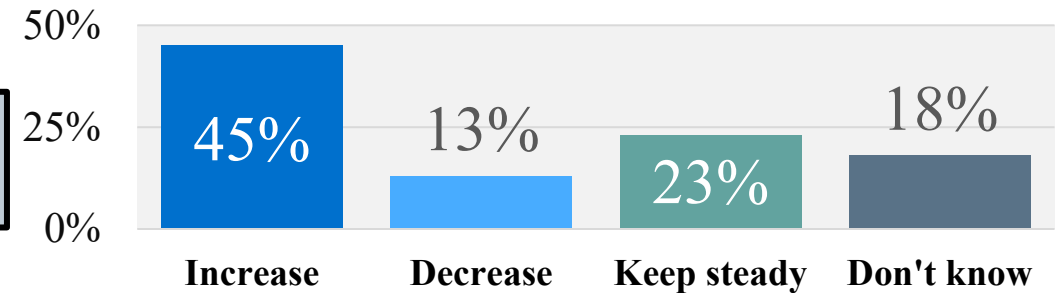
#2 “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial medical advances against deadly diseases that will lead to lifesaving new cures and treatments.”

**+26% Net Increase**

#3 “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial tech. advances that help guarantee our energy independence and will drive the transition to renewables.”

**+27% Net Increase**

Q. Should Congress \_\_\_\_\_ federal funding for research?



# Research Messages Impact on Dependent Variable

## Research Messages

#1 “The fact that America’s rivals Russia and China are beginning to out-pace us in funding science, medicine, and applied research is a national crisis that policymakers should respond to.”

#2 “Research funded by the federal government and conducted at ALRUs delivers crucial medical advances against deadly diseases that will lead to lifesaving new cures and treatments.”

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Q. Should Congress \_\_\_\_\_ federal funding for research?

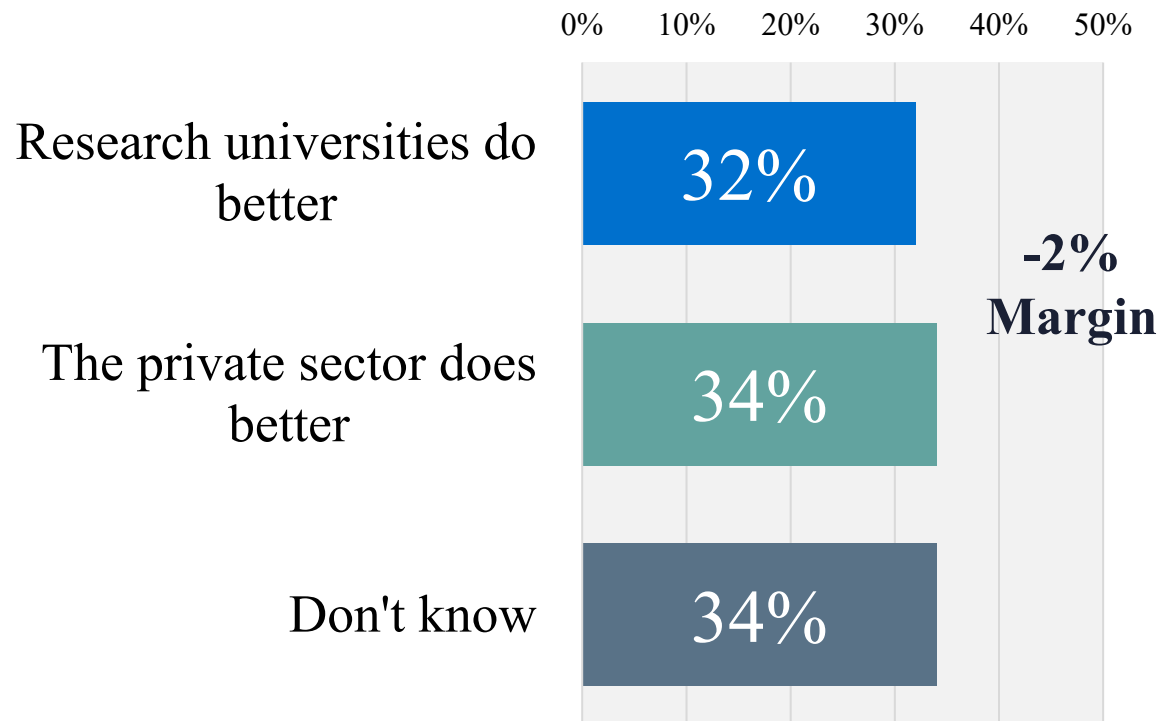
	All Adults	Republicans	Democrats
Net ‘Increase’ %	+32%	+14%	+53%

	All Adults	Republicans	Democrats
Net ‘Increase’ %	+26%	+2%	+54%

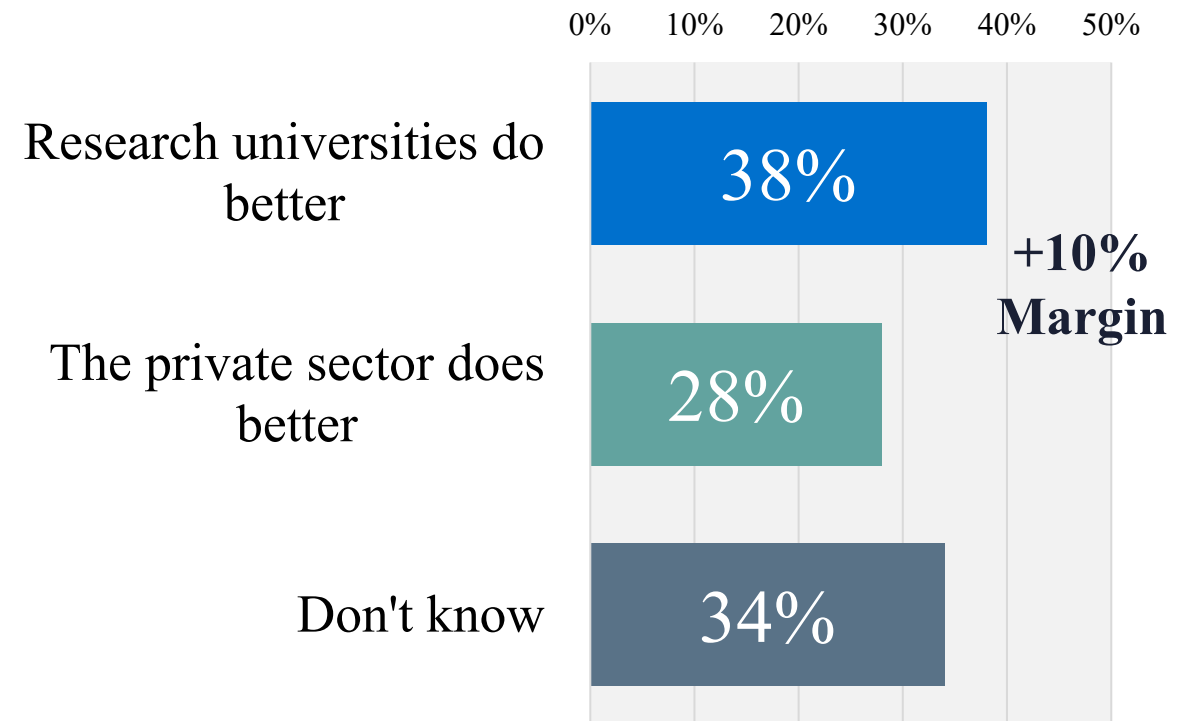
	All Adults	Republicans	Democrats
Net ‘Increase’ %	+27%	-4%	+55%

# Research “that Benefits the Public at Large”

**Q1 Split A.** Thinking about science in this country, who does better at producing research that benefits the public at large – the **private sector** or **government funded studies conducted at universities**?



**Q1 Split B.** Thinking about science in this country, who does better at producing research that benefits the public at large – the **private sector** or **research universities**?



# Research “That Benefits the Public at Large”

**Q1 Split A.** Thinking about science in this country, who does better at producing research that benefits the public at large – the **private sector** or **government funded studies conducted at universities**?

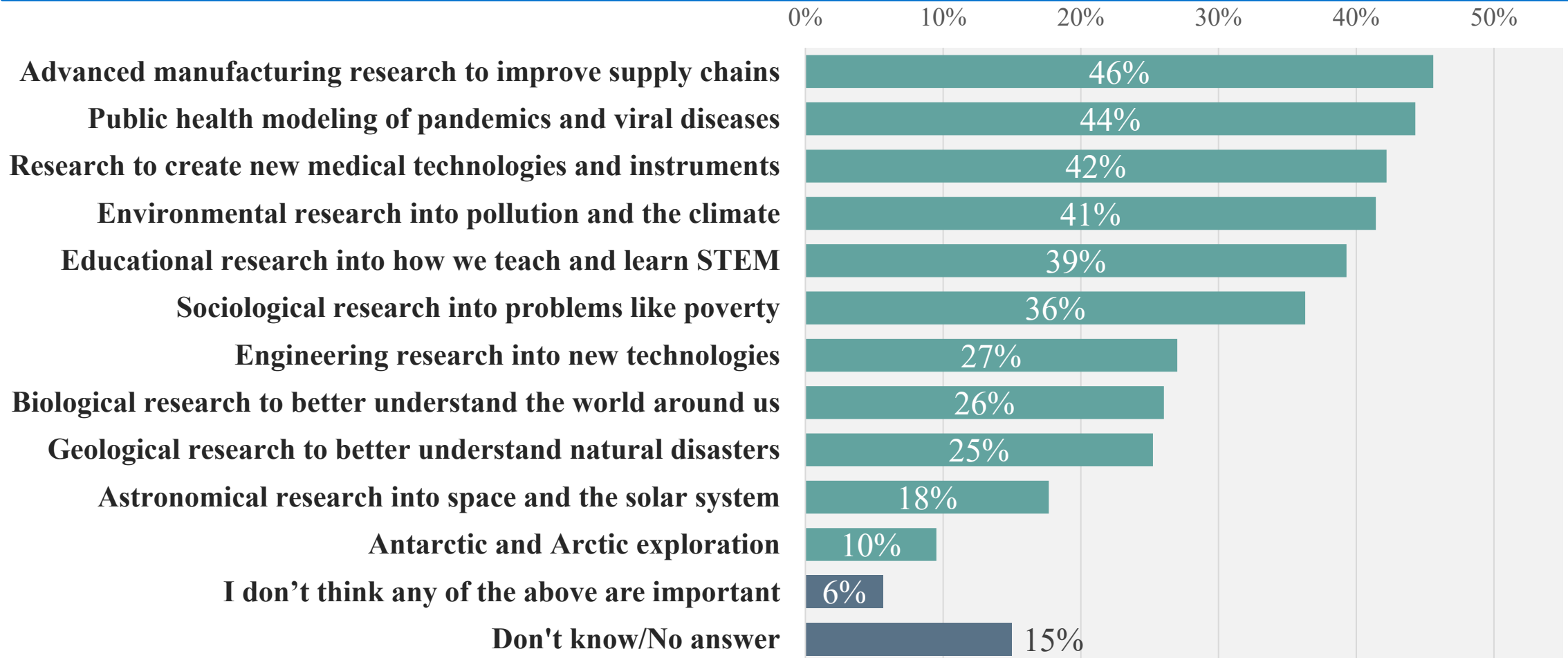
	Republic.	Democrats	Independ.
<b>Universities</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Private sector</b>	51%	15%	36%
Don't know	29%	40%	33%
<i>Univ. Margin</i>	<i>-31%</i>	<i>+29%</i>	<i>-5%</i>

**Q1 Split B.** Thinking about science in this country, who does better at producing research that benefits the public at large – the **private sector** or **research universities**?

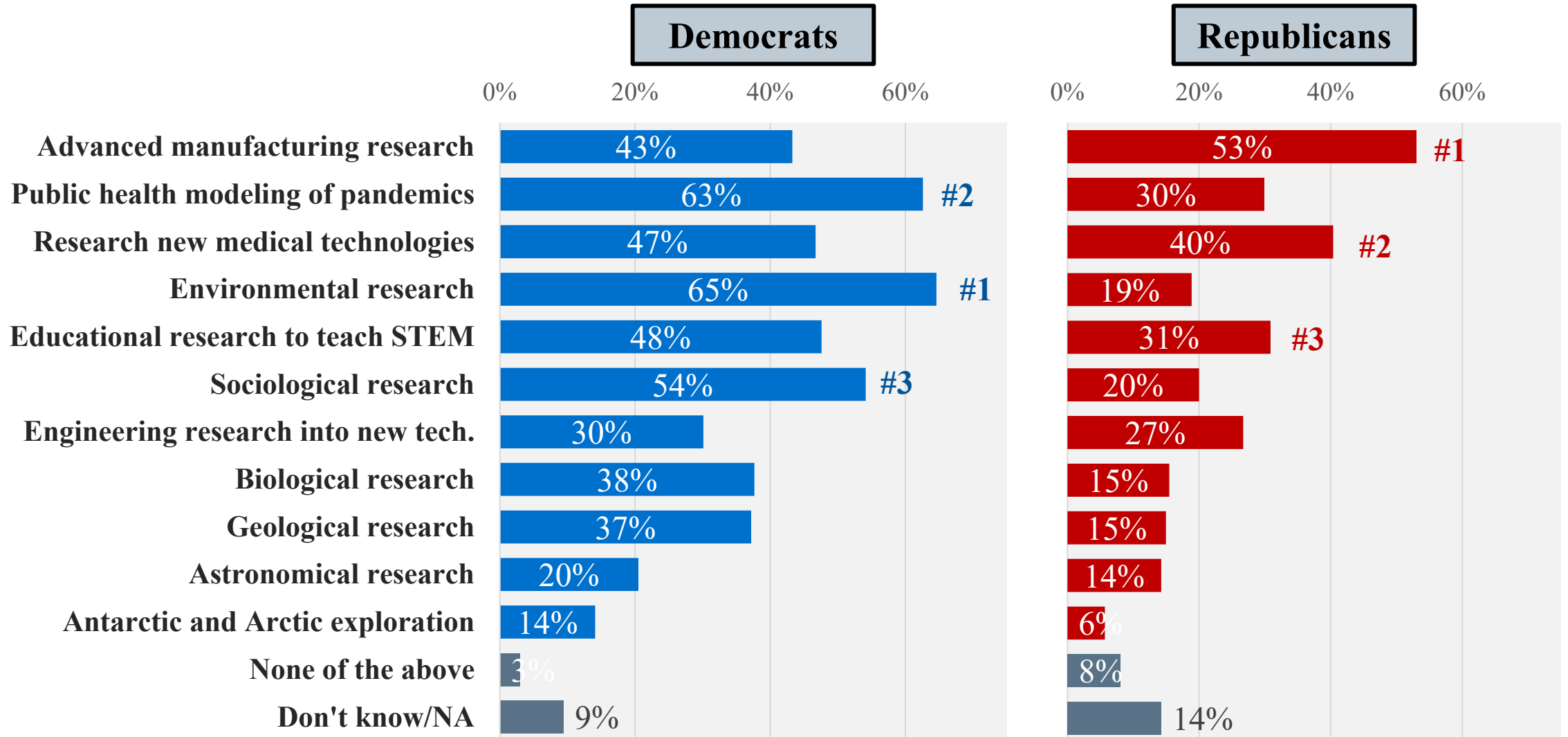
	Republic.	Democrats	Independ.
<b>Universities</b>	24%	49%	38%
<b>Private sector</b>	42%	16%	27%
Don't know	33%	35%	35%
<i>Univ. Margin</i>	<i>-18%</i>	<i>+33%</i>	<i>+11%</i>

# Most Important Areas to Fund

**Q.** As you may know, the federal government funds a significant part of America's scientific research output. Which of the following areas of scientific research do you think are important for the federal government to fund? **Please select all those that apply.**



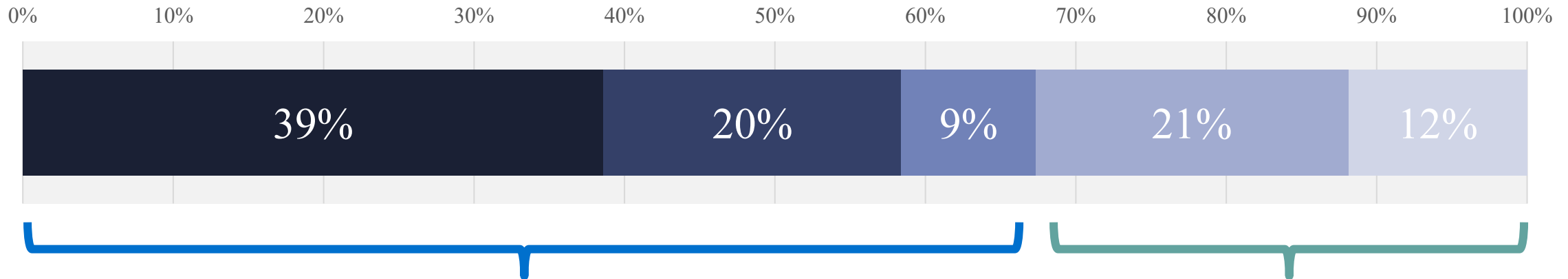
# Most Important Areas to Fund



# Two-in-Three Americans are Non-College

## Educational Attainment in the United States

■ HS degree/GED or less ■ Some college, no degree ■ Associate's degree ■ Bachelor's degree ■ Post graduate degree



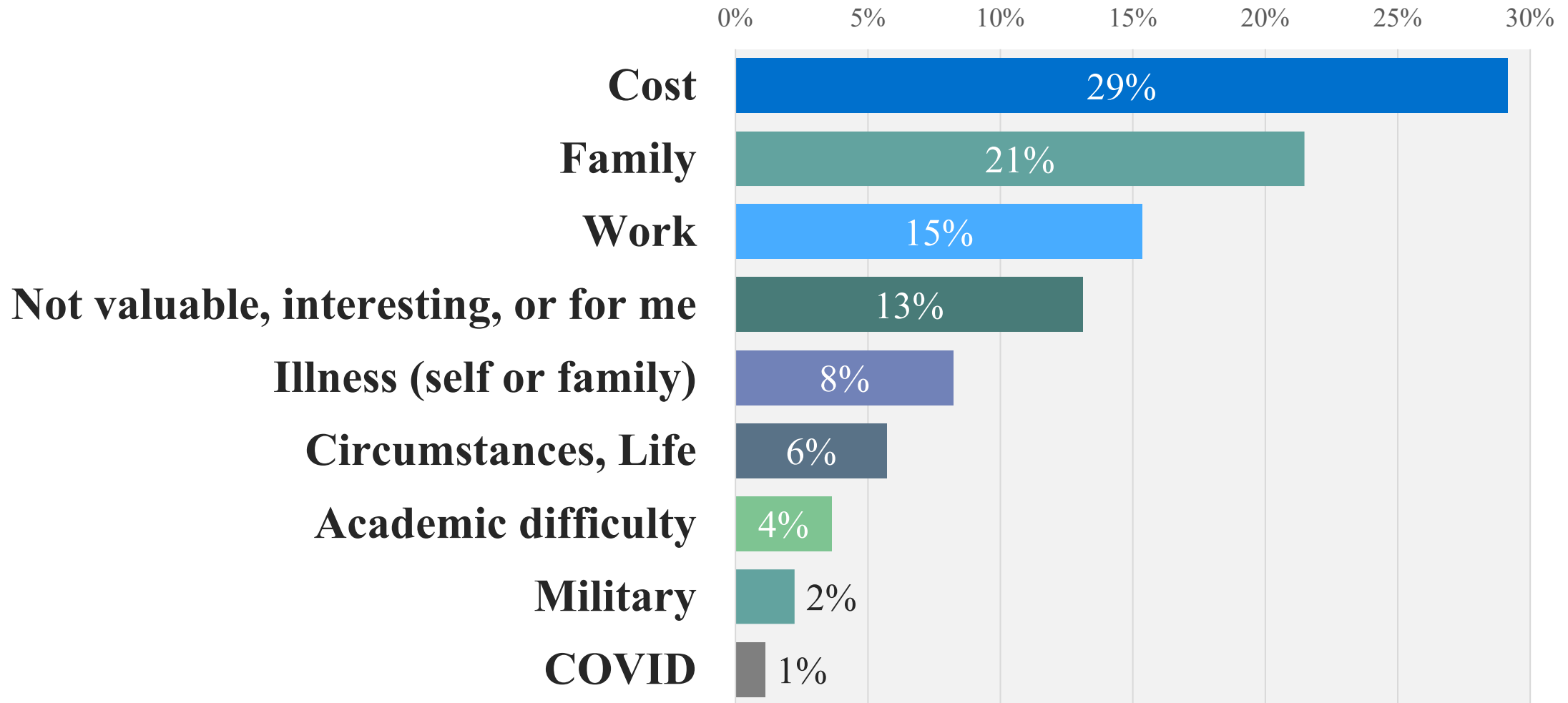
**67%** of American adults do not have a Bachelor's degree

**33%** of American adults have a Bachelor's degree



# “Some College, No Degree”

*Asked of “some college” respondents: Q. What were the main reasons you didn’t finish your college degree?*

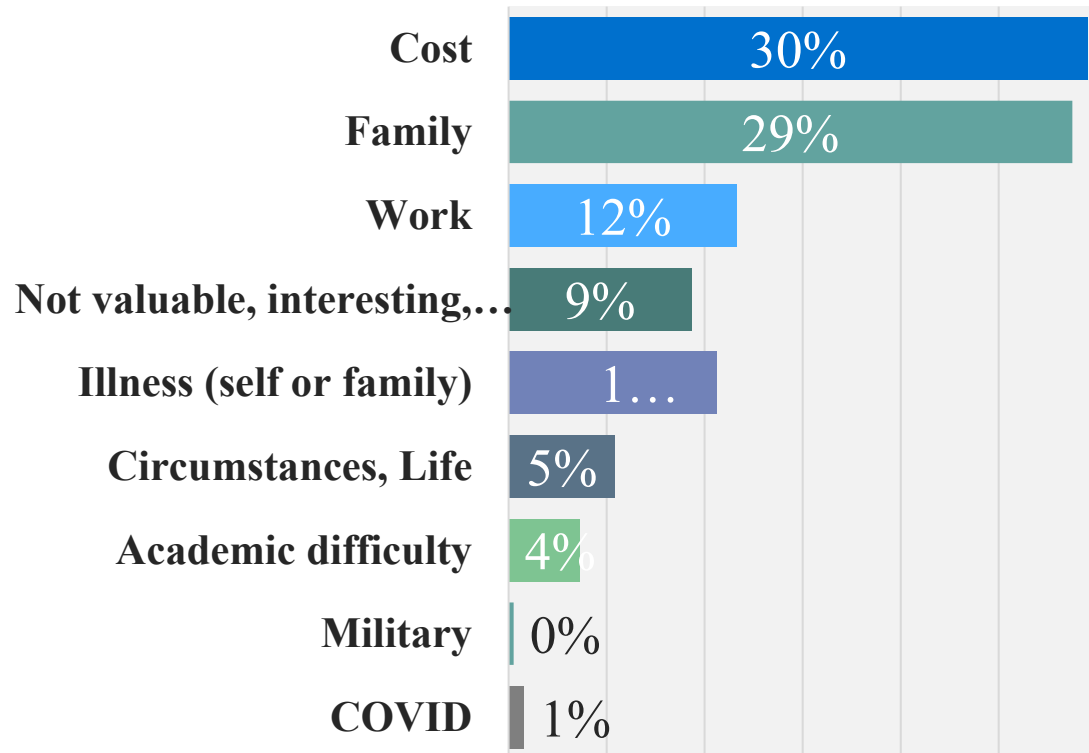


# “Some College, No Degree”

*Asked of “some college” respondents: Q. What were the main reasons you didn’t finish your college degree?*

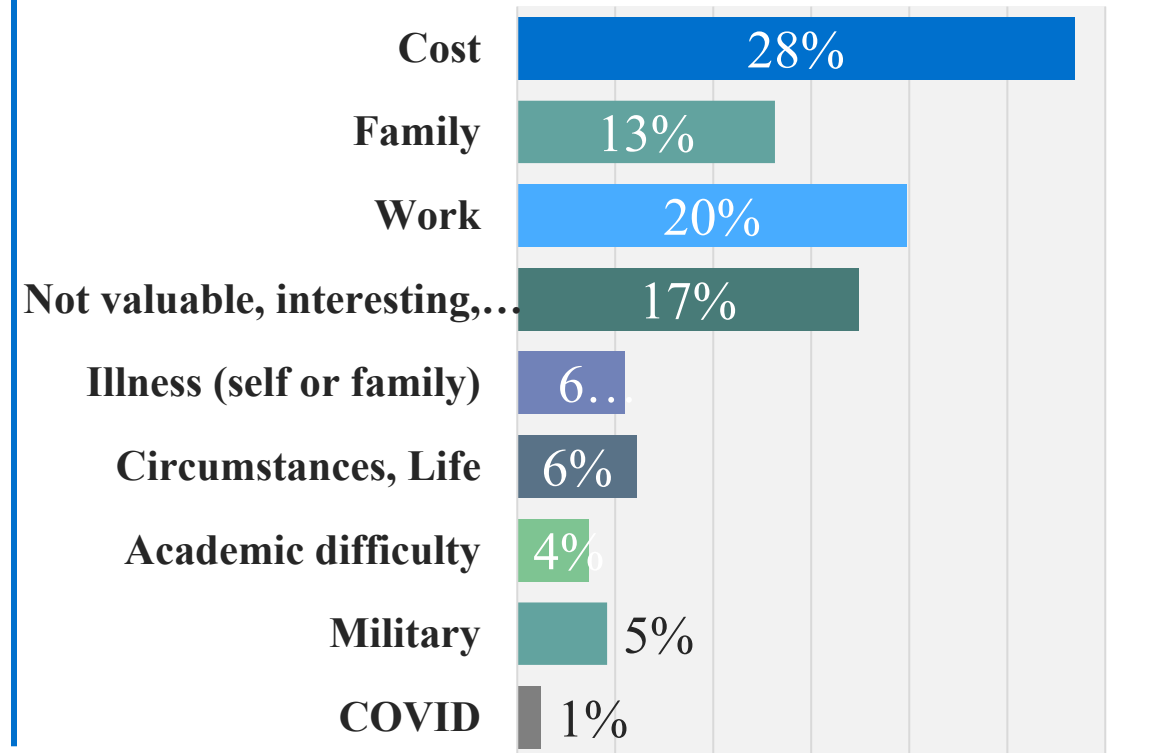
## Female Respondents

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30%



## Male Respondents

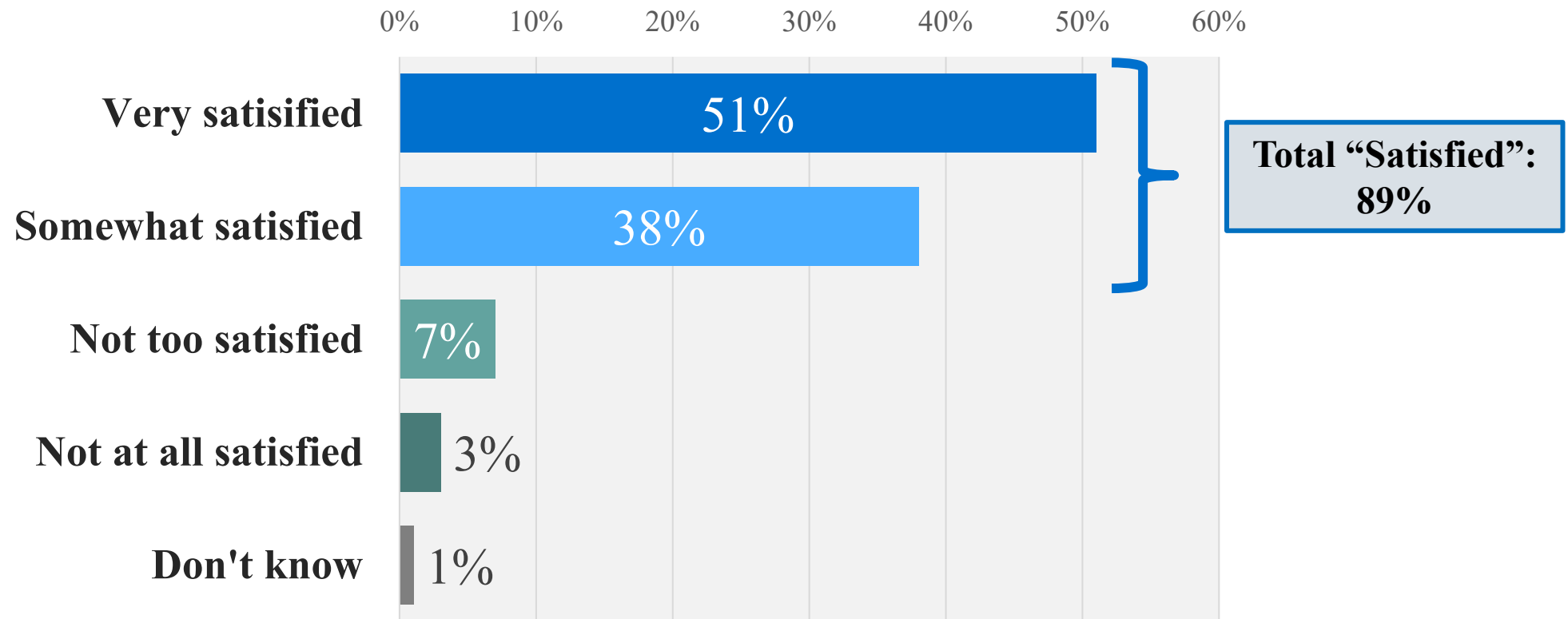
0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30%



# Americans Who Attended College Are Satisfied

*Asked only of college-educated Americans...*

**Q.** Overall, how satisfied are you with your undergraduate experience at the college or university you attended?



# Other Issues & Research

- NIL
- Race, diversity and admissions
- Campus free speech
- Access and affordability
- Sexual assault and sexual harassment
- PILOT
- Fetal tissue research
- DACA
- China and research universities
- Gambling and college athletics
- Standardized testing
- Student debt forgiveness
- NSF and science funding