

## Summary of Results from COVID Research Impact Study, Pulse 3 and Pulse 4 Including Comparison with Data from Prior Surveys December 21, 2020

The following report summarizes data from the COVID Research Impact Study Pulse 3 and Pulse 4 surveys. This report also includes comparisons of data collected for questions asked across the Baseline survey and each Pulse survey and/or across all three Pulse surveys.

### Response Rate & Profile of Responding Institutions

Pulse 3, Aug. 17-28, 2020: Seventy-five member institutions participated for a 40% response rate. Breakdown of responders: 29 responders were degree-granting institutions with an associated academic medical center (AMC); 39 responders were degree-granting institutions without an associated AMC; and 7 responders were stand-alone AMCs.

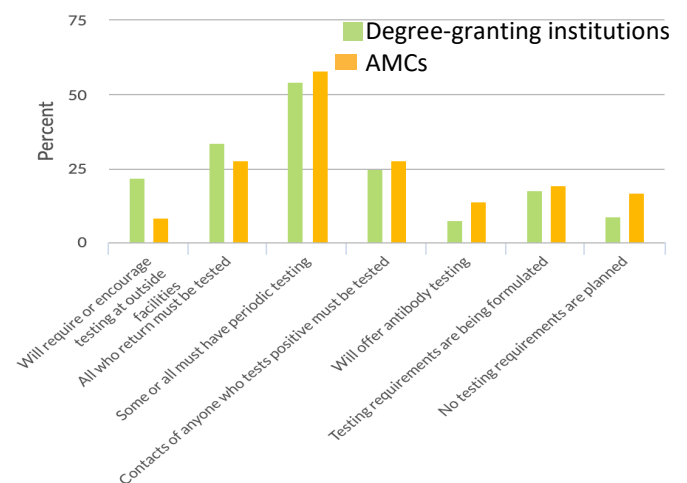
Pulse 4, Nov. 30 - Dec. 11, 2020: Seventy-six member institutions participated for a 40% response rate. Breakdown of responders: 24 responders were degree-granting institutions with an associated AMC; 45 responders were degree-granting institutions without an AMC; and 7 responders were stand-alone AMCs.

### Testing Policies Have Been Clarified

In Pulse 2, less than 60% of institutions had formulated testing requirements. By Pulse 3 this percentage fell to 18%. Reportedly, 53% of institutions will specify periodic testing of certain groups, and 31% will require all returning faculty, staff and students to be tested at baseline. Most anticipated self-funding this testing rather than attempting to charge third-party payors. Some reported state funding for testing. *About half felt that testing costs have influenced testing protocols.*

- 40% response rate for both Pulse 3 & 4.
- Degree-granting institutions without an associated AMC were largest segment of responders: 52% in Pulse 3 and 59% in Pulse 4.
- Degree-granting institutions with an associated AMC were the second largest segment of responders: 39% in Pulse 3 and 31% in Pulse 4.

To what extent is your institution implementing COVID-19 testing requirements for returning students, faculty and/or staff? Please check all that apply.

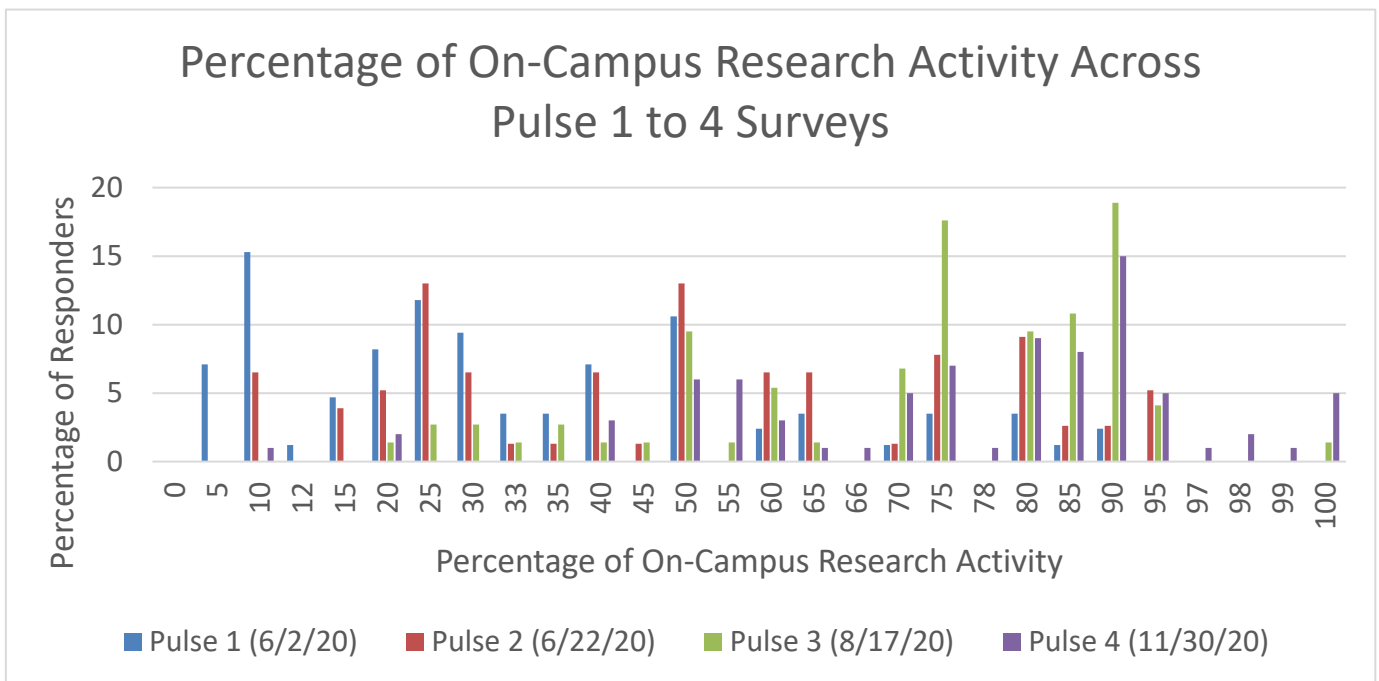
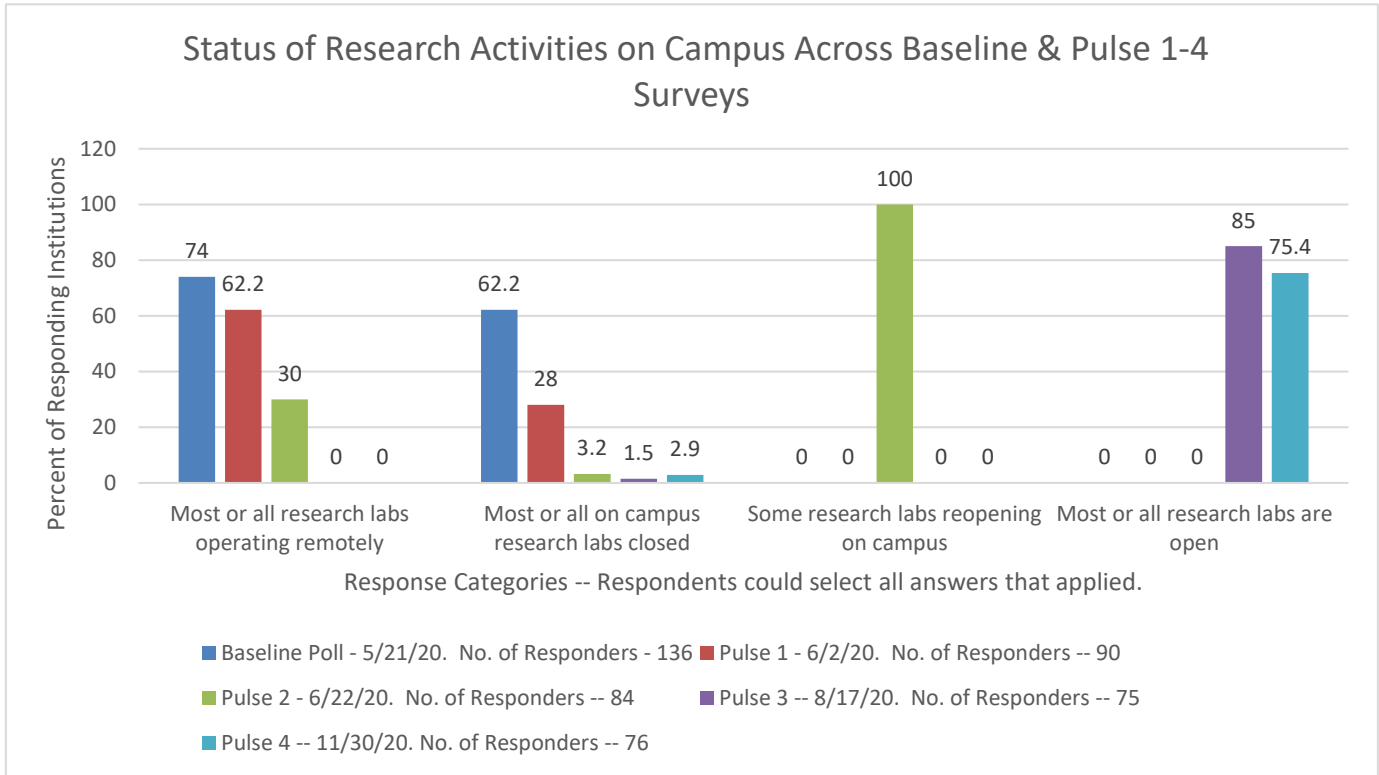


In Pulse 3, 85% of institutions reported “most” of their campus labs were open, but this fell to 75% in Pulse 4.

### Re-Opening of On-Campus Research Peaked in Pulse 3 & Research Capacity has Leveled Off

In the Baseline survey, 74% of responding institutions reported that most or all research labs were operating remotely, which declined to 30% by Pulse 2. At Pulse

3, 85% of responders reported that most or all research labs are now open, and this fell to 75% at Pulse 4. Approximately 22% of responders to the Pulse 4 survey selected “other research changes” in response to this question and several commented on reduced densities in labs.



In the Baseline and each subsequent Pulse survey, institutions were asked to estimate on-campus research activity, assuming a pre-pandemic level of 100%. At Pulse 1, 61% of responders reported on-campus

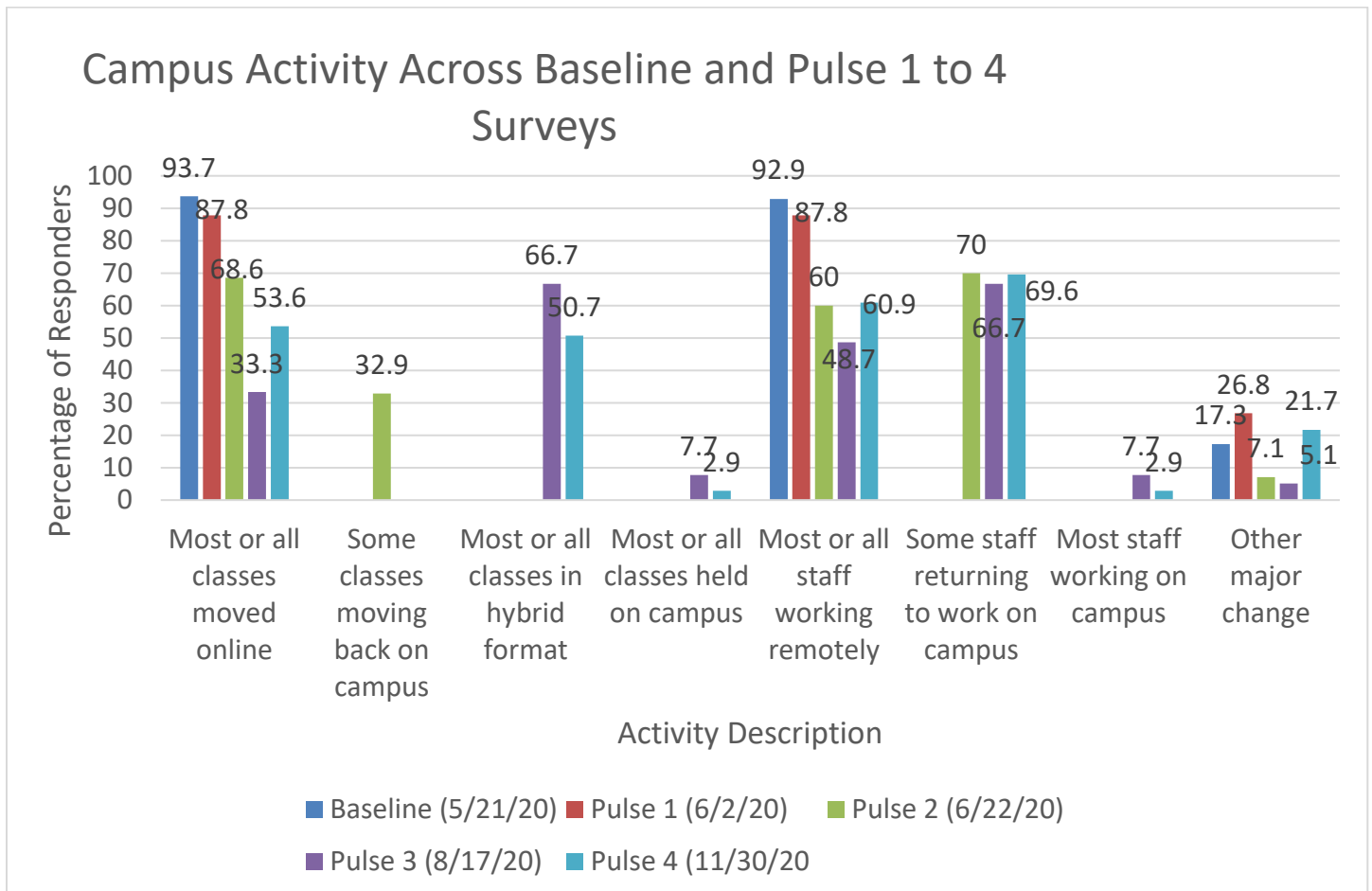
research levels of 33% or less. By Pulse 2, 64% of responders reported levels of 25% to 75%, and by Pulse 3, 61% of institutions reported that on-campus research activity was at 75% or more. Overall, Pulse 4 responders reported having reached a mean of 77% of pre-pandemic research, with a median of 80%, both only slightly higher than in Pulse 3.

**Human Subject Trials Most Affected**

One-fourth of institutions at Pulse 4 reported that the recent rise in COVID cases impacted studies involving in-person activities with human subjects. Some institutions reported halting non-COVID related trails that were not yet recruiting. Six of ten institutions modified on-campus research activities, with more than a third having reduced on-campus research staff.

**Remote Activities were Prevalent Through All Surveys and Increased at Pulse 4**

Although classes and staff also began to return to campus at Pulse 2 and 3, that trend slowed at Pulse 4. For example, at Baseline over 90% of institutions reported that most or all classes were moved online and that most or all staff were working remotely. This declined at Pulse 2, when 68% of institutions reported most or all classes had moved online, and 60% reported most or all staff were working remotely. Remote activity dipped further at Pulse 3, with a low of 33% reporting most or all classes on-line and approximately 48% reporting most staff working remotely. At Pulse 4, however, virtual activity increased with 53.6% reporting most classes online and 60.9% reporting most staff working remotely. AMCs noted that hospital capacity is again a concern with more telemedicine visits and virtual clinical trials noted at Pulse 4 than at Pulse 3.



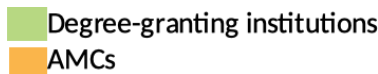
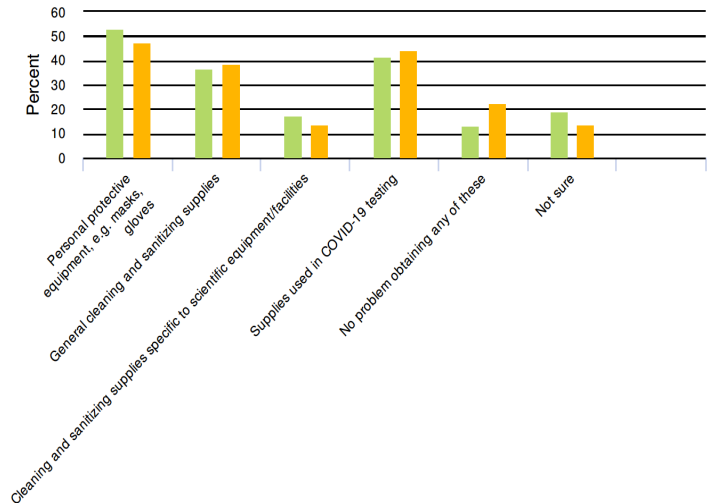
## Recent Shifts Largely Self-Initiated

Although recent news headlines have indicated that states are implementing additional restrictions because of increasing COVID cases, only one out of six institutions reported at Phase 4 that recent local or state requirements had impacted reopening plans. Rather, due to spiking fall cases, many institutions, of their own accord, shifted to online or hybrid formats after the Thanksgiving holiday, and two institutions reported ending their fall term at that time.

## Availability of Supplies

At Pulse 3, institutions noted supply shortages, particularly PPE (51%), COVID testing supplies (40%), and general cleaning supplies (37%). To address these shortages, institutions reported a number of strategies including centralized purchasing, stockpiling, working with local sources, and planning for supply chain delays. Some commented that N95 masks were particularly difficult to source.

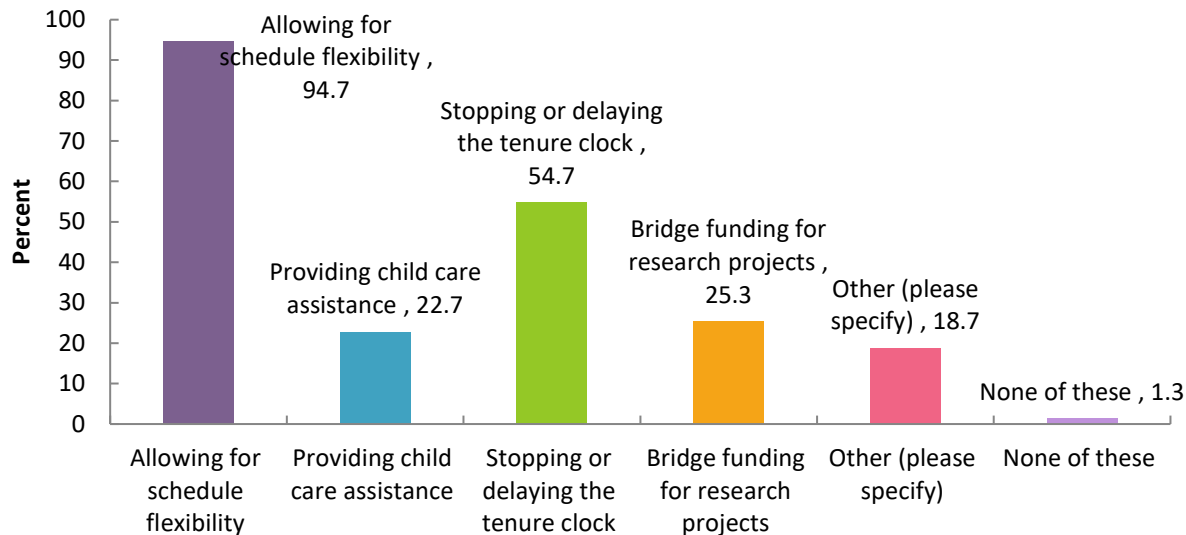
For which of the following, if any, has your institution had problems maintaining supplies? Please check all that apply.



## Assistance for Faculty at Risk

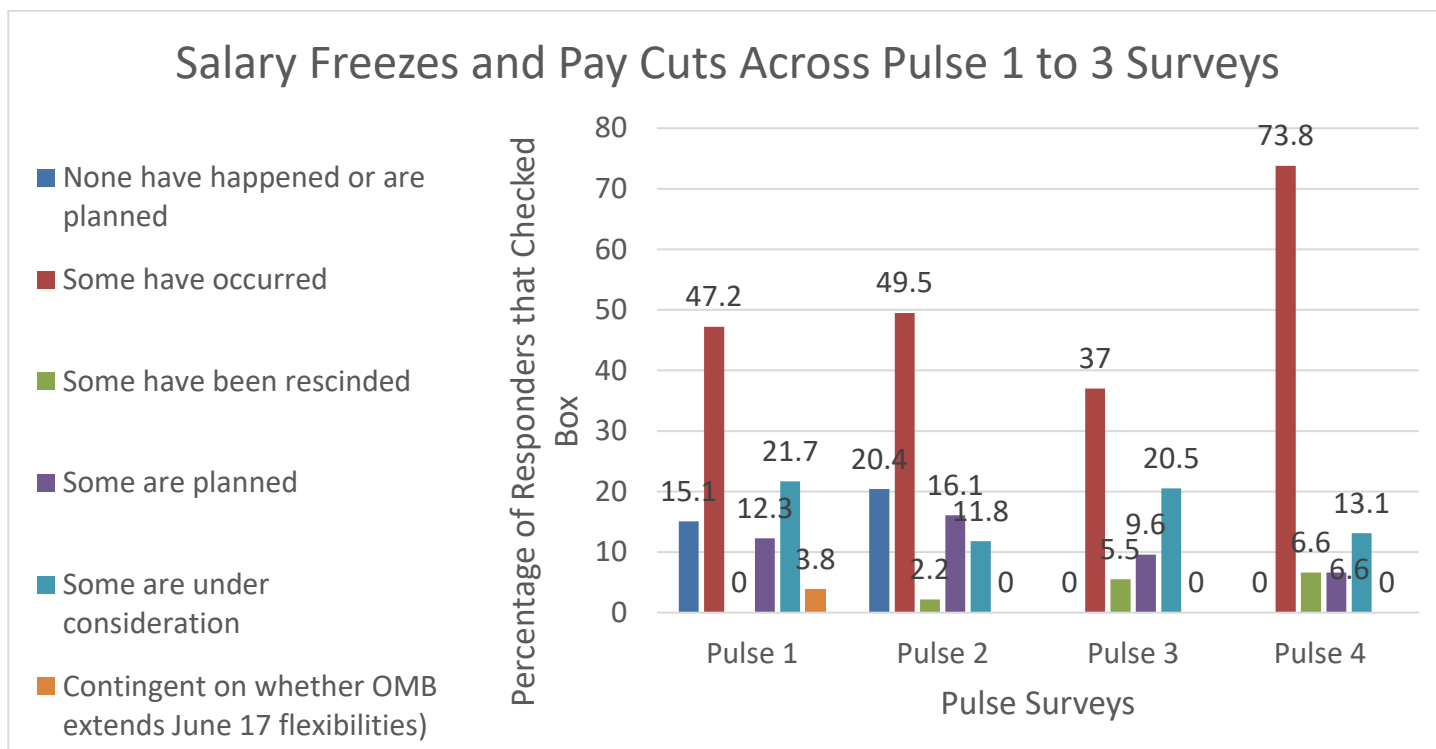
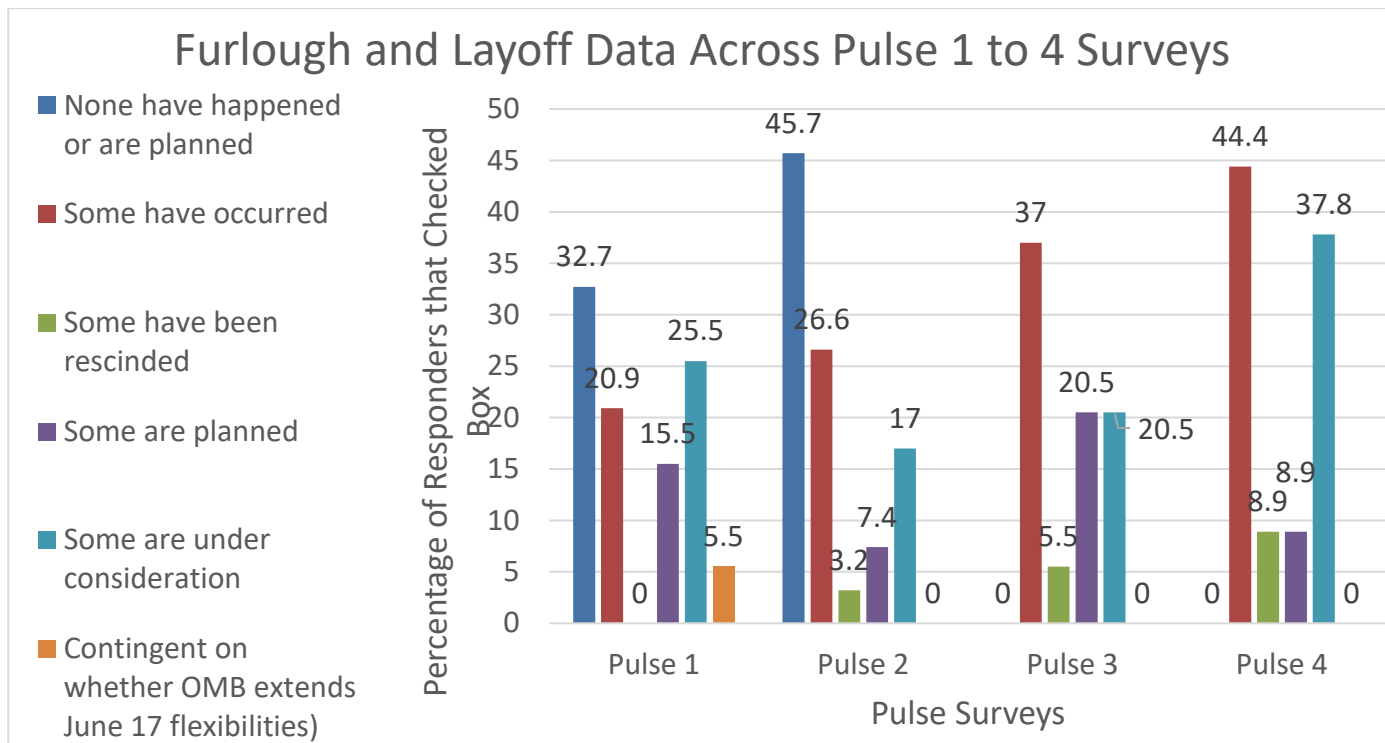
A new question in the Pulse 4 survey sought information about the steps institutions were taking to ameliorate the pandemic's impact on at-risk faculty (e.g., early stage, female, and minority investigators). In addition to the steps listed in the chart below, several responders noted that they are providing additional flexibility with respect to work sites, such as permitting faculty to teach from home, or to come to campus temporarily if they have no quiet space at home. Reducing administrative duties was mentioned as another strategy, although one tempered by the press of funding agency deadlines for reports and deliverables.

What steps is your institution taking to assist faculty who may be particularly affected by the pandemic?



### Pandemic's Negative Impact on Jobs and Salary Continues

Employees at research institutions, just as those in other areas of the economy, have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. The number of institutions that reported furloughs or layoffs continually increased from a low of 20.9% at Pulse 1 to 44.4% at Pulse 4. Reports of salary freezes/pay cuts temporarily decreased from over 45% at Pulse 1 and 2 to 37% at Pulse 3, but then shot up to 73.8% at Pulse 4.



## **Summary**

When COGR first administered the Baseline survey in May, no one imagined that the United States would still be facing such high COVID infection and death rates moving into the beginning of 2021. Accordingly, institutions have well-founded sustainability concerns, and as one responder commented “We are exhausted and scared.” Loss of OMB flexibilities, continuing costs in the face of reduced research output due to density controls, uncertainty about federal economic assistance, and trainees’ delayed completion of educational and training program all remain key concerns. Moreover, these concerns and others are coupled with the ever-present anxiety for the health and safety of faculty, staff and students in the face of rising COVID cases. Nevertheless, with the recent introduction of vaccines, institutions remain hopeful that perhaps they are now witnessing the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

The Baseline and Pulse 1 and 2 reports are available on the COGR website here. If you have questions about this report or survey, please contact Kris West, COGR’s Research and Ethics Compliance Director, at [kwest@cogr.edu](mailto:kwest@cogr.edu).