SMALL INVESTMENT, BIG RESULTS: THE IMPACT OF COMPLETION GRANTS ON STUDENT SUCCESS

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AGENDA

- About NASPA
- About Amelia
- Why Do Students Drop Out?
- Emergency Aid
- Completion Grants
  - In the News
  - National Trends
- Future Considerations
- Pair and Share Activity
- Questions

ABOUT NASPA

- NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession.

- NASPA addresses common functional areas within student affairs (housing, advising, conduct, assessment) as well as broad higher education themes (access, persistence, and degree completion).

- Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.

ABOUT AMELIA

- Connector (of people and ideas)

- Mix of generation X and millennial

- Not afraid to try and *fail*

- Fraternal twin

- Received an emergency loan in college

- First-generation college graduate

"Why do students drop out of college? Do you happen to have any data on this? I'm doing research on the Internet but thought I would ask you as well."

IT IS TYPICALLY A CHALLENGE (OR MIX OF CHALLENGES) IN ONE OF THREE PRIMARY AREAS
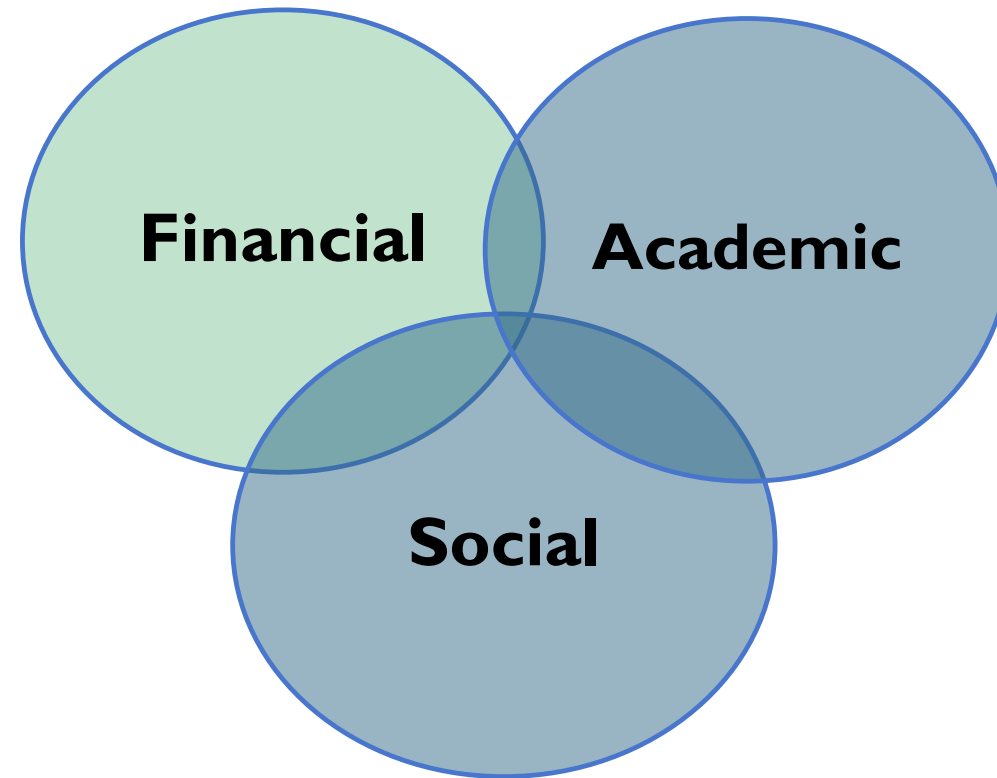
COMMON INSTITUTION RESPONSES

Invest in new technology or consulting

- **Predictive analytics; early alert systems**

Start a new program or initiative

- **Emergency aid; completion scholarships**
- Intrusive advising; peer mentoring
- Additional on-campus work opportunities

Discuss return on investment

- What does it cost to retain a student?
- Are students prepared for the workforce?

Quick Spotlight on Emergency Aid

Audience Poll:

Does your institution have an emergency aid program?

ADDRESSING STUDENTS' FINANCIAL NEEDS

SPOTLIGHT ON EMERGENCY AID PROGRAMS

How are institutions addressing complex financial needs such as food insecurity, homelessness, as well as unexpected emergencies such as a flat tire?

What functional units are involved in delivering timely aid to students?

What resources do institutions need to scale these efforts and measure the impact of these investments on student success?

NASPA'S LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS FOUND 500+ INSTITUTIONS WHO ARE DELIVERING EMERGENCY AID

Campus Interviews

October – December 2015

- **20+ institutions** interviewed

- **Multiple perspectives:** financial aid, student affairs, development

National Survey

January – March 2016

- 695 institutions responded

- **523** have an existing emergency aid program

(WORKING) DEFINITION OF EMERGENCY AID

Emergency aid includes one-time grants, loans, and completion scholarships of less than $1,500 provided to students facing unexpected financial crisis, as well as food pantries, housing assistance, and transportation assistance.

SIX TYPES OF EMERGENCY AID

Emergency Aid Type	Description
Campus vouchers	Cover materials from the bookstore or meals from the dining hall; few barriers to distribution
Completion scholarships	Cover outstanding balances for students poised to graduate or continue to the next semester
Emergency loans	Address hardship related to the timing of a student's financial aid disbursement
Food pantries	Address food insecurity on campus
Restricted grants	Support students who experience unexpected hardship; typically require that students meet certain academic or other requirements
Unrestricted grants	Support students who experience unexpected hardship; typically awarded without restrictions

EMERGENCY AID IS NOT A NEW STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGY

Survey Question: Approximately how long has your institution's emergency aid program been established?
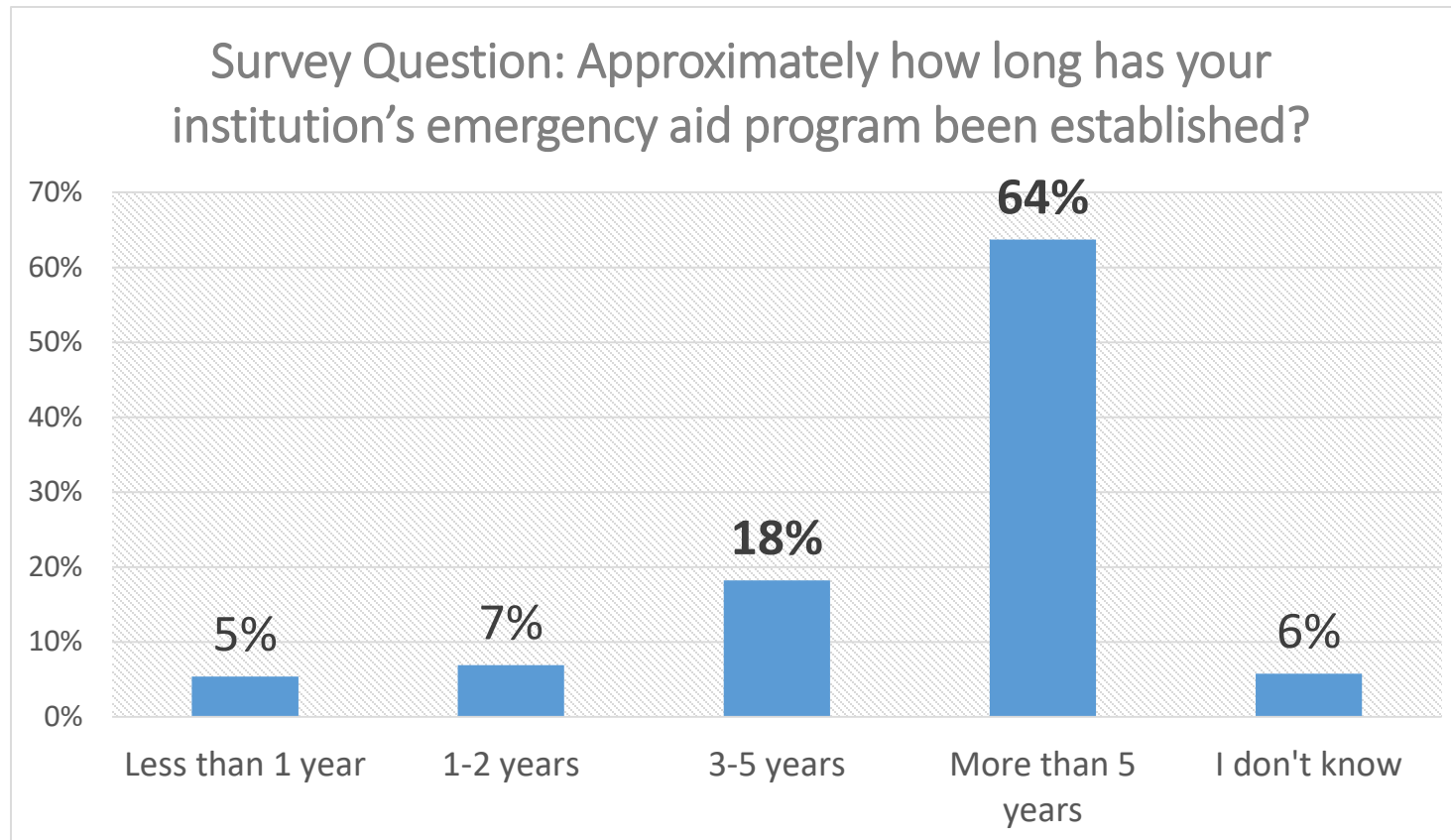
Over **80% of colleges** that have an emergency aid program have had it for **3 or more years**.

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs

EMERGENCY AID PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA

- 80% (*n = 45*) of participating institutions in California have an emergency aid program

- These institutions represent approximately 425,000 students

Yes
No
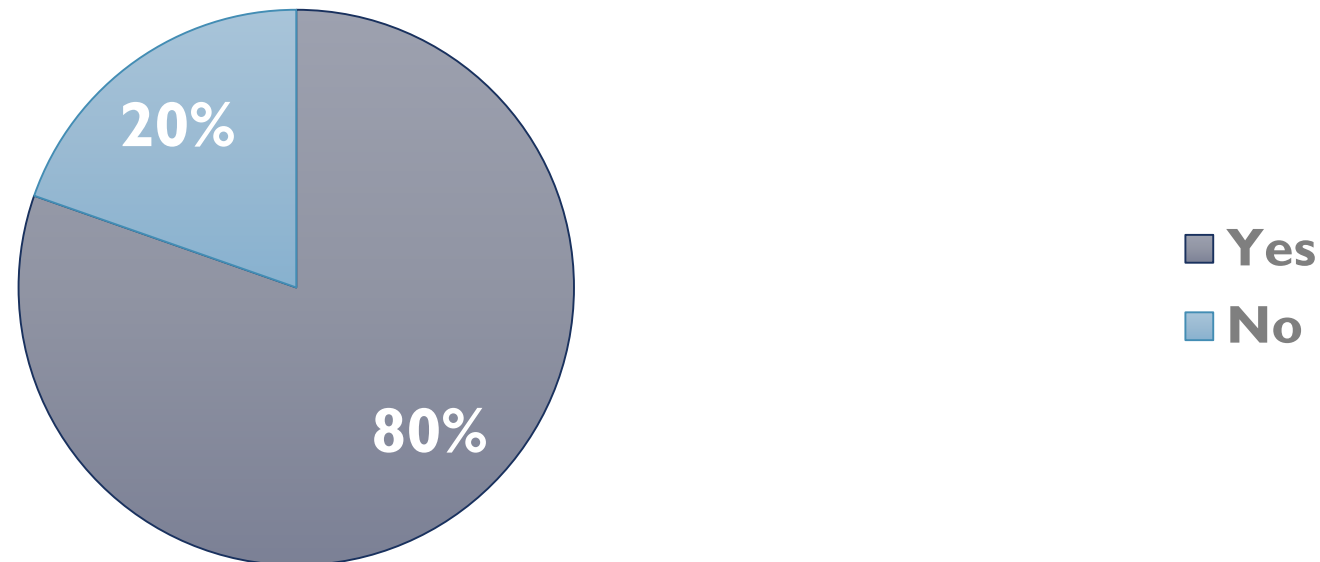
ALL TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS ARE DELIVERING EMERGENCY AID

Survey Question: Does your institution have an emergency aid program?
SECTOR BREAKDOWN

Sector	Yes	No
Public, 2-year	70%	27%
Private for-profit, 4-year or above	38%	54%
Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above	73%	27%
Public, 4-year or above	82%	17%

■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

Survey Question: Does your institution have an emergency aid program?
SIZE BREAKDOWN

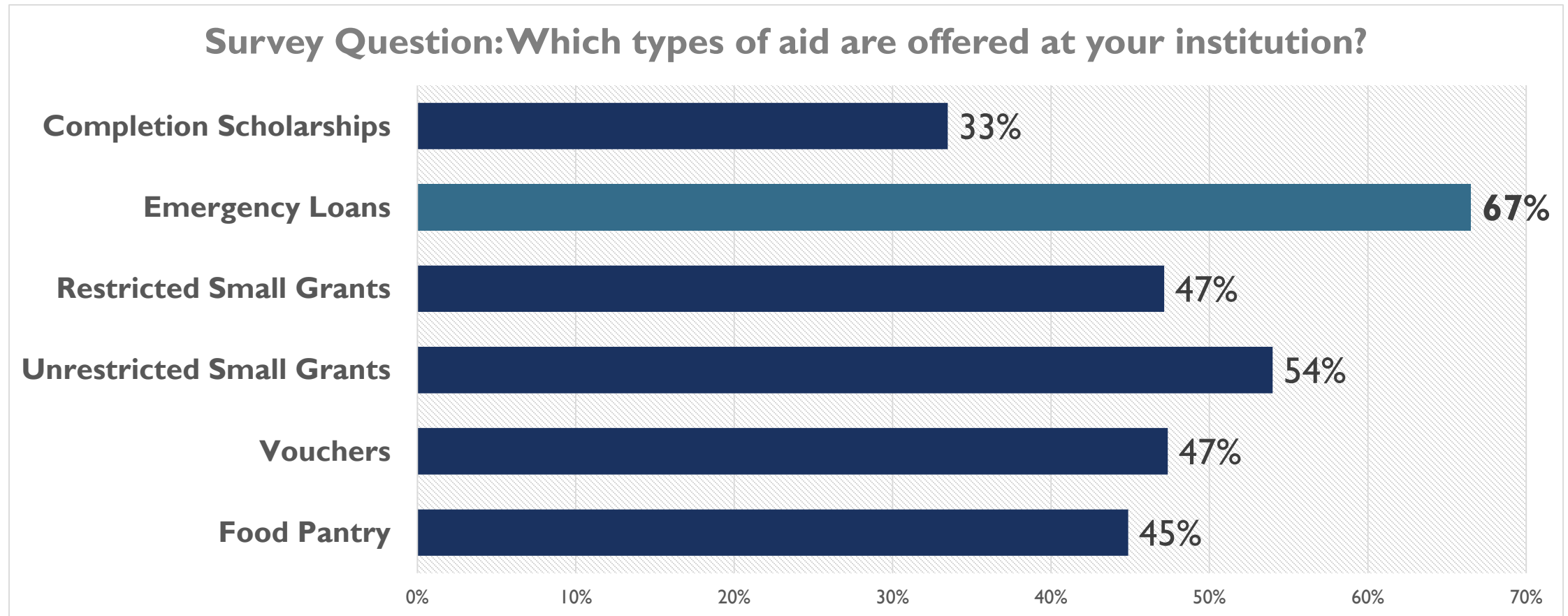| Size	Yes	No
20,000 and above	91%	9%
10,000 - 19,999	81%	16%
5,000 - 9,999	79%	19%
1,000 - 4,999	68%	31%
Under 1,000	65%	32%

■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs

CALIFORNIA PARTICIPATION IN EMERGENCY AID LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

- 56 institutions in California representing approximately 452,000 students

Legend:
- **Public, 2-year** — 21%
- **Private for-profit, 4-year** — 4%
- **Private non-profit, 4-year** — 48%
- **Public, 4-year** — 27%
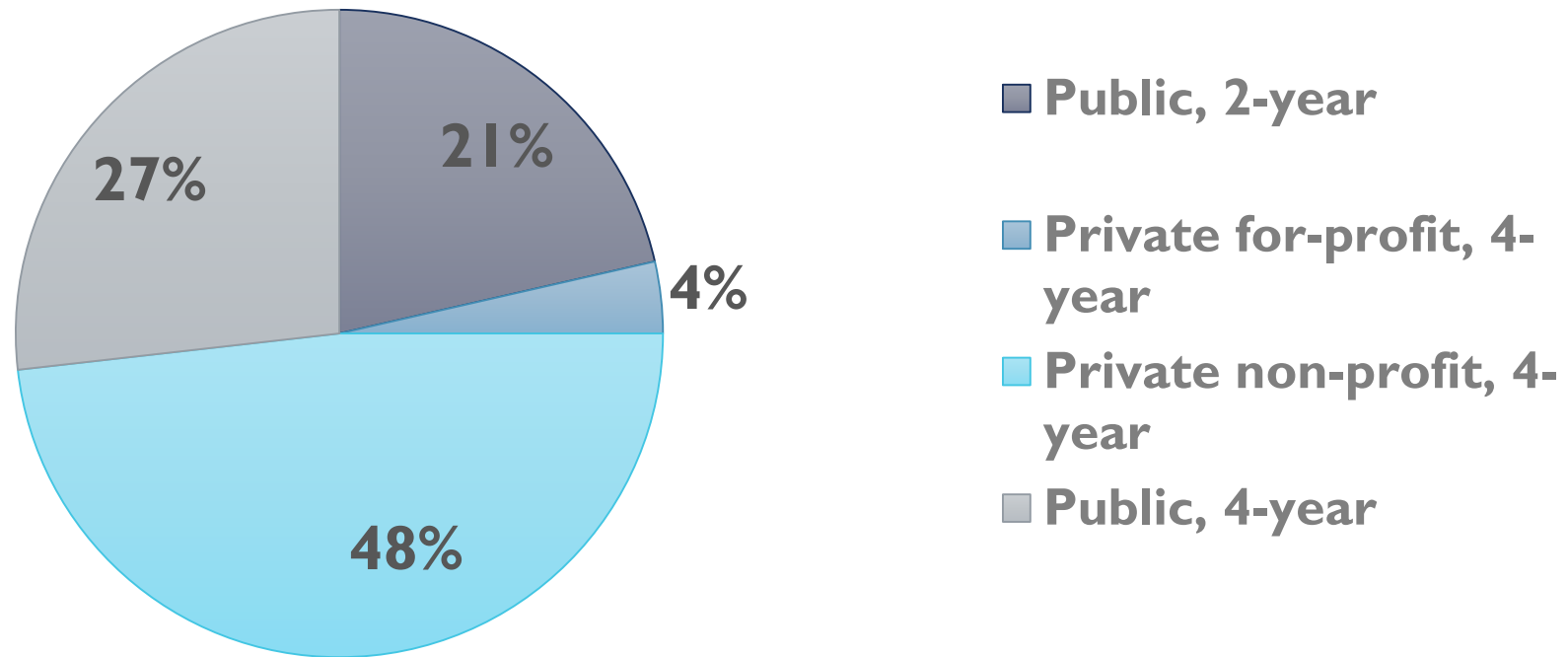
EMERGENCY LOANS ARE OFFERED MOST BY CAMPUSES

Survey Question: Which types of aid are offered at your institution?

Type of Aid	Percentage
Completion Scholarships	33%
Emergency Loans	67%
Restricted Small Grants	47%
Unrestricted Small Grants	54%
Vouchers	47%
Food Pantry	45%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs

TYPES OF EMERGENCY AID PROGRAMS (CALIFORNIA)

Completion scholarships — 30%
Emergency loans — 78%
Restricted small grants — 40%
Unrestricted small grants — 53%
Vouchers — 58%
Food pantry — 35%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%

MOST INSTITUTIONS DO NOT USE DATA TO PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED AID

Only 23% of institutions use data to proactively identify students

Survey Question: What prevents your institution from using data to proactively identify students who may benefit from emergency aid.

Category	Percentage
Concerns about students' privacy	16%
Not comfortable using data to target students	19%
Do not have capacity to analyze data	30%
Do not collect the data that is needed	30%
Too many students qualify	42%
Not clear what data is relevant	40%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
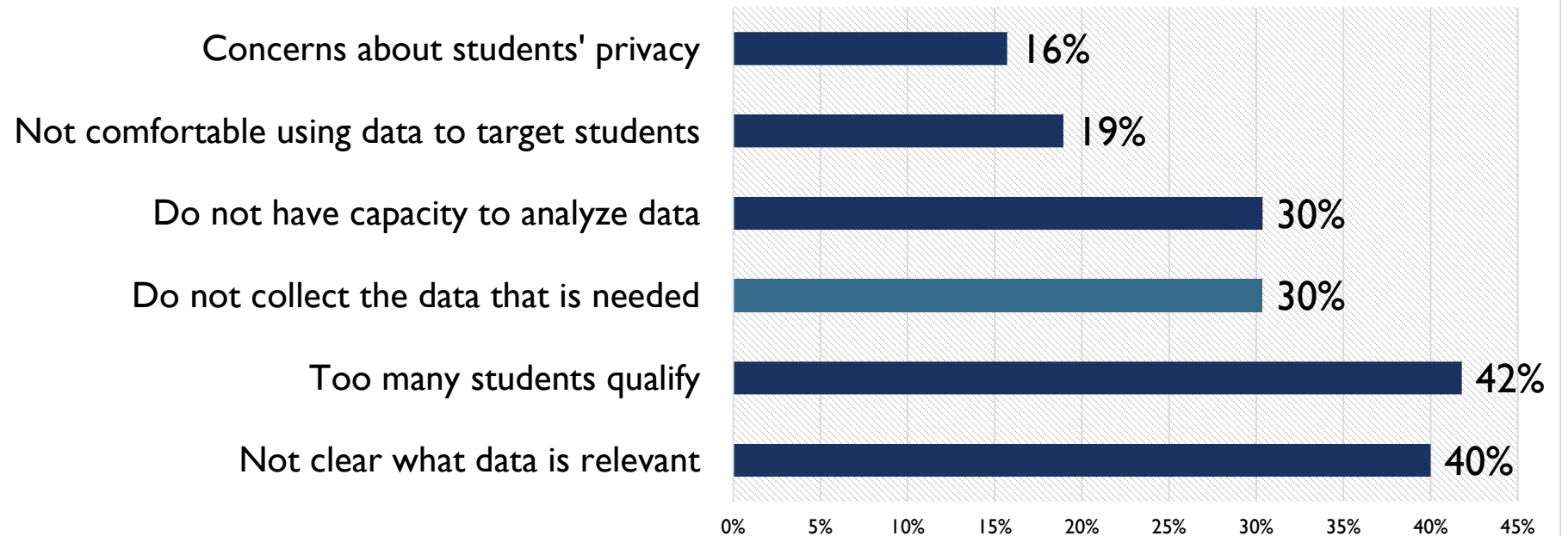
Spotlight on Completion Grants

COMPLETION GRANTS IN THE NEWS

Georgia State University – Panther Retention Grant

- Students are offered micro grants if they agree to participate in activities such as meeting with a financial counselor.

- 2,000 grants offered last year

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities – Research on Completion Grants
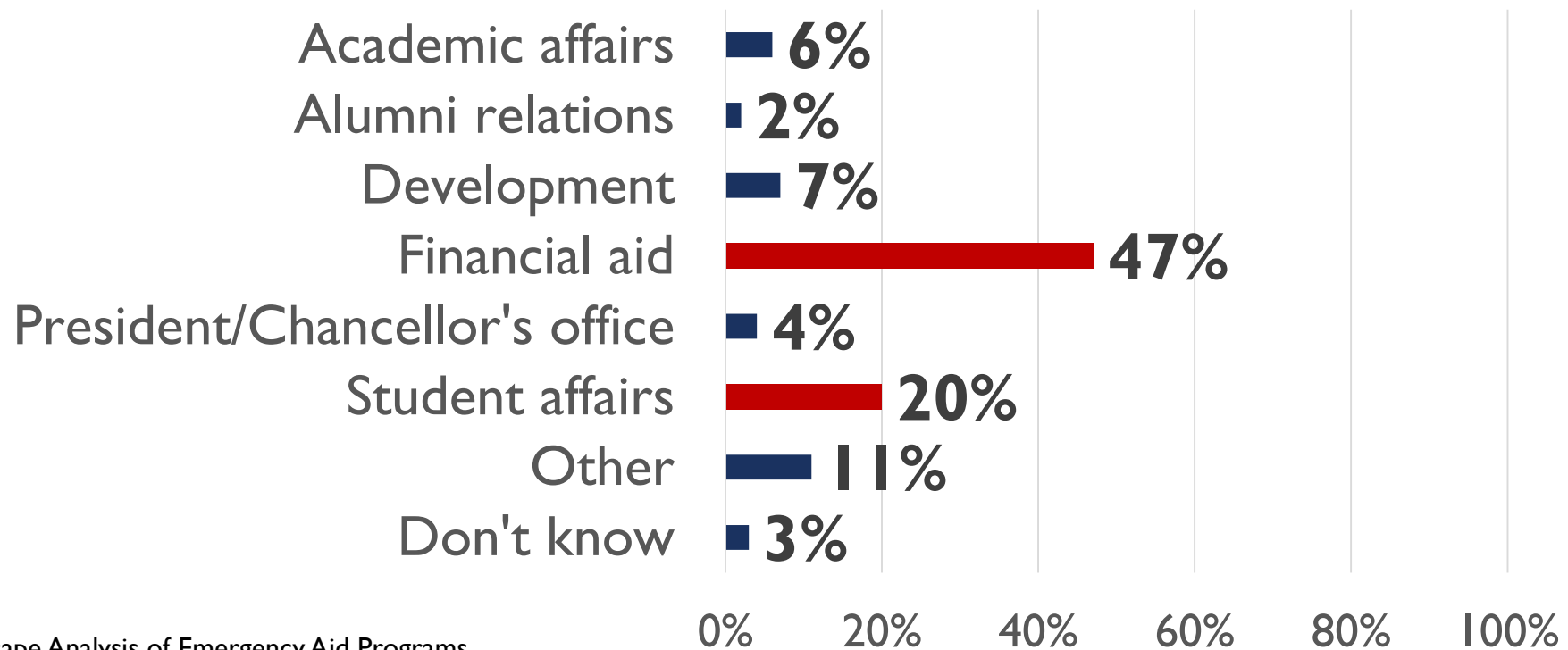
- Report: Foiling the Drop-out Trap

University Innovation Alliance

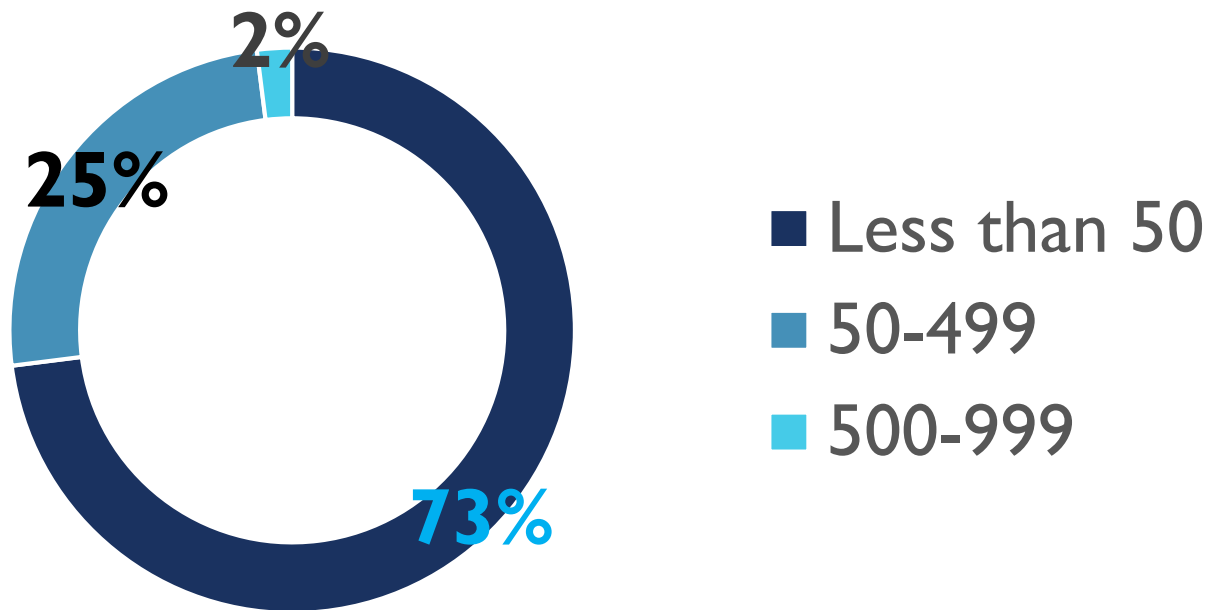- New completion grant program for 11 institutions

HOW ARE COMPLETION GRANTS ADMINISTERED?

Department primarily responsible for administering completion grants
(n = 127)

Department	Percentage
Academic affairs	6%
Alumni relations	2%
Development	7%
Financial aid	47%
President/Chancellor's office	4%
Student affairs	20%
Other	11%
Don't know	3%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

WHAT IS THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SCALE?

Number of students served annually (n = 104)

- ■ Less than 50
- ■ 50-499
- ■ 500-999

2%

25%

73%

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AWARD AMOUNT?

Average aid amount distributed annually (n = 82)

Category	Percentage
Less than $100	1%
$100-$499	6%
$500-$999	16%
$1,000 or more	77%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
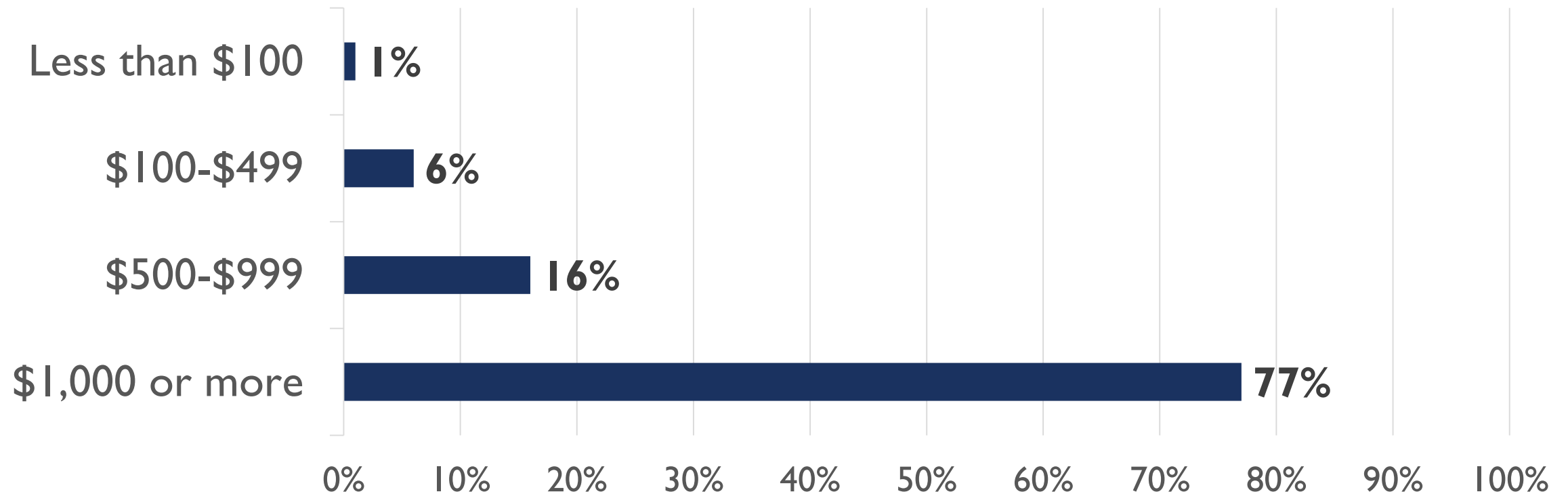
WHAT IS THE ANNUAL BUDGET?

Annual budget (n = 80)

Less than $10,000	18%
$10,000-$99,999	61%
$100,000-$499,999	15%
$500,000-$999,999	5%
$1,000,000 or more	1%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
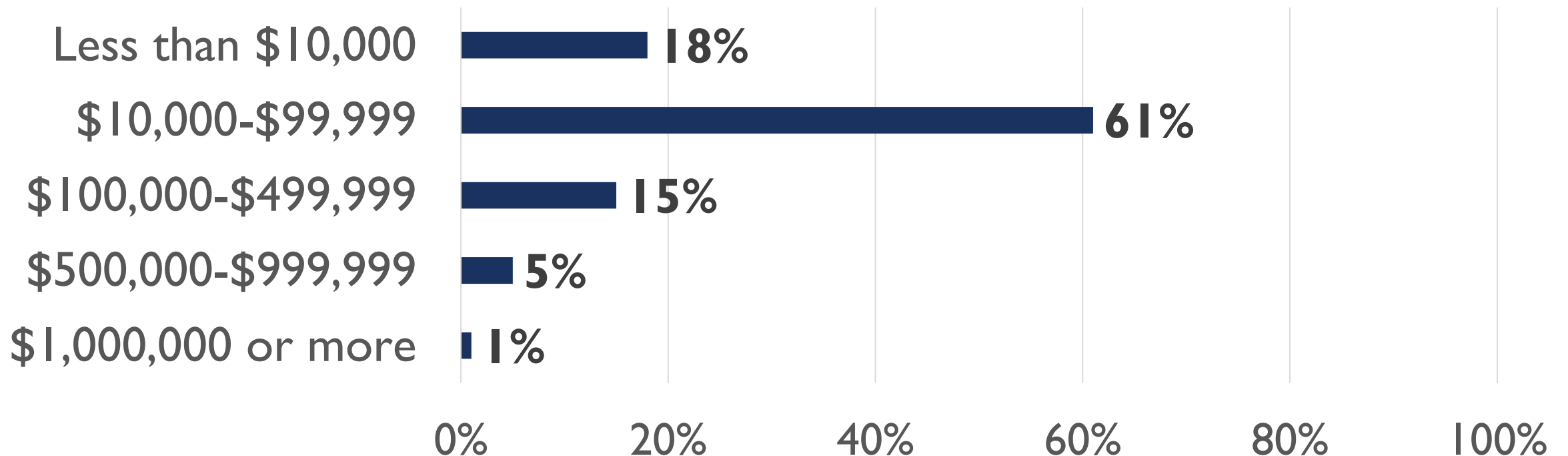
WHAT ARE THE FUNDING SOURCES?

Primary source of funding for completion grants (n = 125)

Source	Percentage
Alumni association	2%
Campus fundraisers	3%
External funders	6%
Federal or state government assistance programs	3%
Operating budget	26%
Student senate	0%
University foundation/individual donors	44%
Vendors	0%
Other	8%
Don't know	8%

Source: NASPA Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs
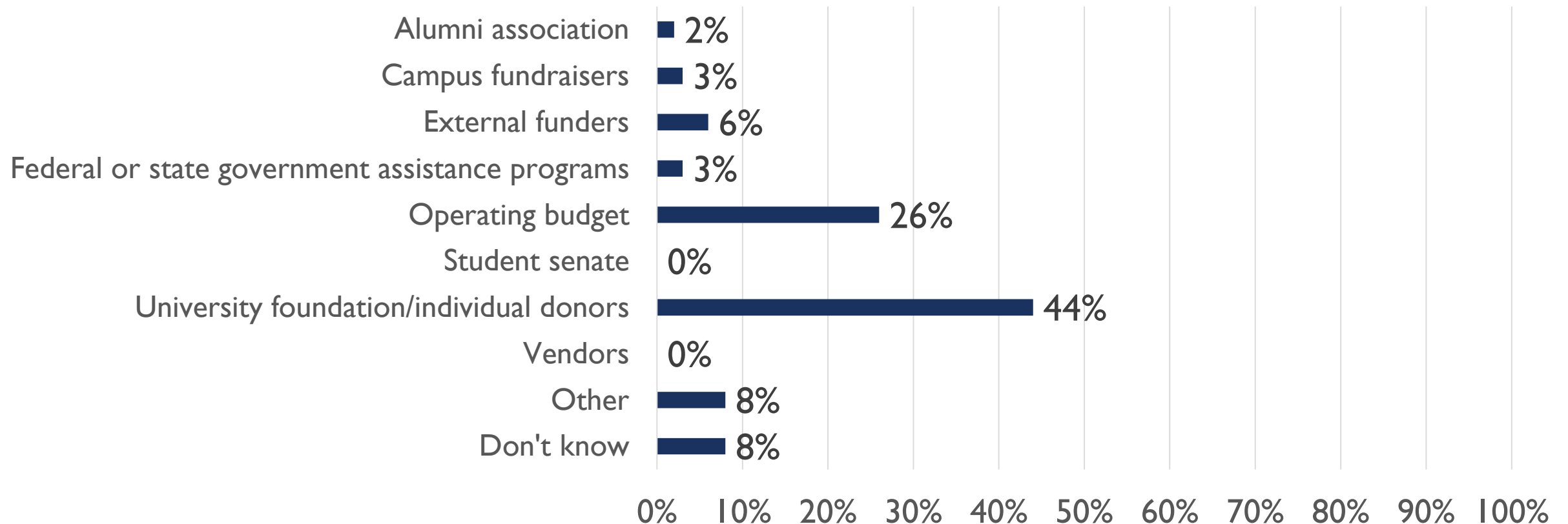
WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS?

Primary communication channel(s) to inform students about completion grants (n = 125)

Channel	Percentage
Direct communication to certain student populations	24%
E-mail or other mass communication to all students	6%
Institution newspaper	2%
Institution website	9%
Student orientation meetings	2%
Word of Mouth	25%
Other	26%
Don't know	6%
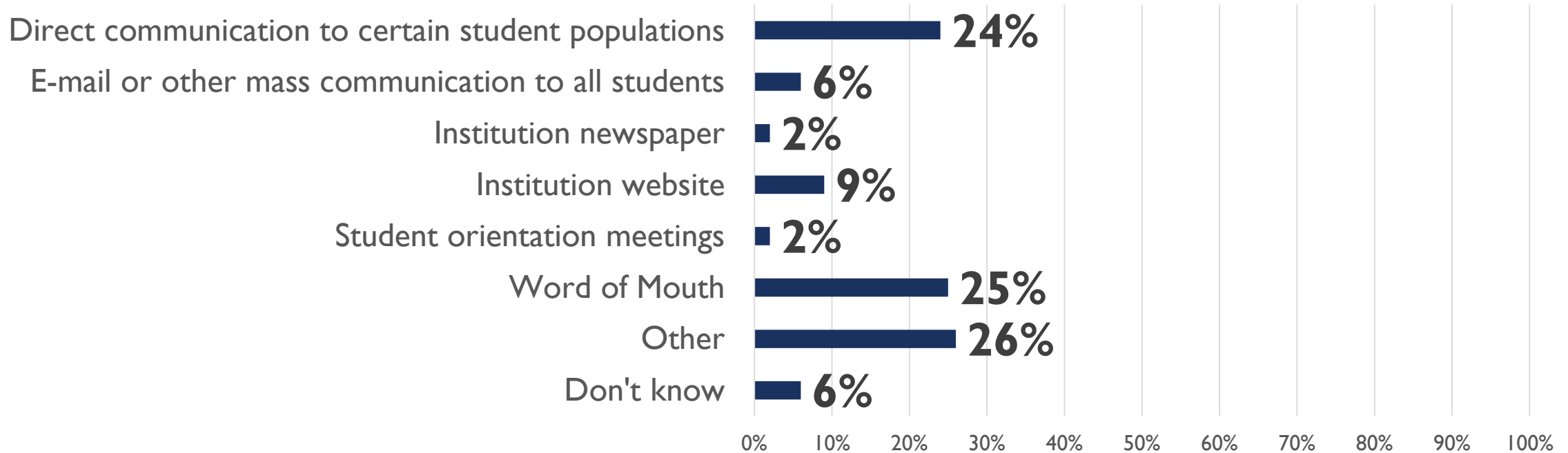
WHAT ABOUT DATA PRIVACY?

- Several institutions are using **early alerts** and other proactive approaches to identify students

- **Predictive models** include data that identify students who might have financial challenges (high school GPA; free or reduced lunch recipient)

Campus Examples: Reclamation and Last-Dollar Models

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS & MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: RECLAMATION MODELS

University of Memphis – Finish Line Program

- Operated by Division of Academic Innovation and Support Services

- Students must have earned **90+ hours** and **stopped out**

- Support includes grant funds, waived financial holds

- 100+ students served so far

Morgan State University – Reclamation Initiative

- The university offers aid to any student who has earned **90+ credits**, at least a 2.0 GPA, and has **stopped out** for a semester

- Institution invites students to return to the university by applying for the grant

- 56 students have returned to the university since the start of the program

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA & VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY: LAST-DOLLAR MODELS

University of Central Florida

- Knight Success Grant covers tuition and fees

- Students must be in their final semester or within less than 18 hours of degree completion

- All other financial aid options must have been exhausted

- Students with a 2.75 GPA get first consideration

Virginia Commonwealth University

- Graduation Funds program identifies students who have a 3.0 GPA or less, 103+ credits, and an unpaid balance of $5,000 or less.

- Program will fund half of the money owed, up to a maximum of $2,500

- Program supports about 100 students per year

Future Considerations

READINESS RUBRIC

Rating	Definition
Forming	The institution is identifying a course of action for the area
Emerging	Decisions have been made and/or implementation has started
Functioning	The most critical pieces are in place to execute the work needed
Exemplar	Well-positioned to scale and sustain efforts

READINESS RUBRIC

Area	Considerations
Management	Clear office/department/individual responsible for the program's implementation and success; organization of resources
Securing Resources	Allocating and leveraging multiple sources to secure enough funding
Policy Implications	Adherence to relevant state and federal guidelines for distributing financial aid; clear requirements and application processes
Technology	Use of technology to administer aid efficiently
Increasing Awareness	Methods for informing students, faculty, administrators, and external stakeholders about the program
Measuring Success	Use of data to identify students who could benefit from the program; assess the impact of the program

10-minute pair and share (with handout)

Which capacity areas need more attention to scale your program?

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS!

- **Institutional Research:** early-alert/proactive identification of students

- **Financial Aid:** disbursement of funds

- **Academic Affairs:** budget authority for the program

- **Student Affairs:** financial literacy programs; management of interventions

- Example: Boise State University's Final Mile Program

  - Institution allocates $27,000 to help meet the financial needs of students who do not register when they are close to graduation

  - Joint effort between the offices of the provost, advising, institutional research, and information technology

Source: APLU Report: Foiling the Drop-out Trap: Completion Grant Practices for Retaining and Graduating Students - http://www.aplu.org/library/foiling-the-drop-out-trap-completion-grant-practices-for-retaining-and-graduating-students/File

IN CLOSING: 5 INSTITUTION NEEDS

- A **common language** to describe and discuss the resources

- **Procedures** to guide the development of new and existing programs

- Better **use of data** to identify students who need aid and assess effect of programs on student success

- Increased **leveraging of technology** to deliver resources efficiently

- More communication and **sharing of resources** across institutions and networks

Questions?

THANK YOU!

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