



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION



EVOLVE

Equity in Access and Success Survey

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Introduction

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) conducted the Equity in Access and Success survey in January and February 2020 with the following goals in mind: capture a broad overview of the equity-related perspectives and practices among member institutions, and gather recommendations for defining HLC's own role in advancing equity in higher education. The Equity survey was originated under the 2021-2025 strategic planning process and catalyzed by HLC's recent work on developing a widely inclusive definition of student success and foregrounding the importance of equity in quality assurance.

A total of 361 institutions responded to the survey, accounting for 37% of HLC's membership. The breakdown of the response rates by institutional control, highest degree award level, and enrollment size indicate that the survey participants represent a cross section of HLC membership. The survey responses were largely comprised of open-ended narratives, which were analyzed through the process of manual coding and compiling into emergent categories or themes.

Survey participants provided important insights into the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices currently taking place at their campuses, as well as practical strategies to address inequities among the communities that they serve. Combined, the survey responses form a rich narrative about the real-life struggles, hard-fought results and lessons learned from a cross section of institutions. The survey findings will help HLC identify areas of public interest and need, and, as part of its new EVOLVE 2025 strategic plan, develop policies and practices that are responsive to the needs of the membership for advancing equitable access and success in higher education.

Key Insights

The survey results revealed that HLC member institutions have applied multidimensional definitions of equity, developed strategic equity goals and implementation frameworks that correspond to their context and mission, and, importantly, have led successful equity-focused change initiatives amid

many challenges. Member institutions expressed their deep interest in seeing HLC take the lead in creating a shared space for discussion of equity challenges and best practices, for collaboration and innovation, and in providing support for their equity journey.

The recommendations from the participating institutions for HLC's role to advance equity can be summarized in the following areas:

- Leading through advocacy
- Engaging with stakeholders of all levels
- Promoting equity through HLC's Criteria for Accreditation
- Providing educational programming and training resources
- Facilitating collaboration and information sharing
- Supporting innovation

Detailed Findings

DEFINING EQUITY

The survey begins with a two-part question about whether and how institutions define equity relative to access and success. Overall, four in ten (42%) institutions indicated having a definition for equity relative to access and/or success, while half of the institutions (51%) indicated not having a shared definition. Seven percent did not know if there was a definition. Survey respondents provided a total of 220 open-ended responses on how they define equity. The collected responses show diverse perspectives of the member institutions, reflecting the institutional context, mission, and core values. Equity was defined with nouns such as "awareness," "principle," "value," "commitment," "policy," "process," "practice," "approach," in phrases such as "being proactive," "be willing," "focused efforts," "creation of opportunities," "intentional engagement," "embedded in strategic vision," "part of mission statement," "act affirmatively." Inferred from the survey responses, equity can be, among other things, a state of mind, a set of values, or a path of actions toward achieving fair and equal outcomes in education, employment, and other aspects of society.

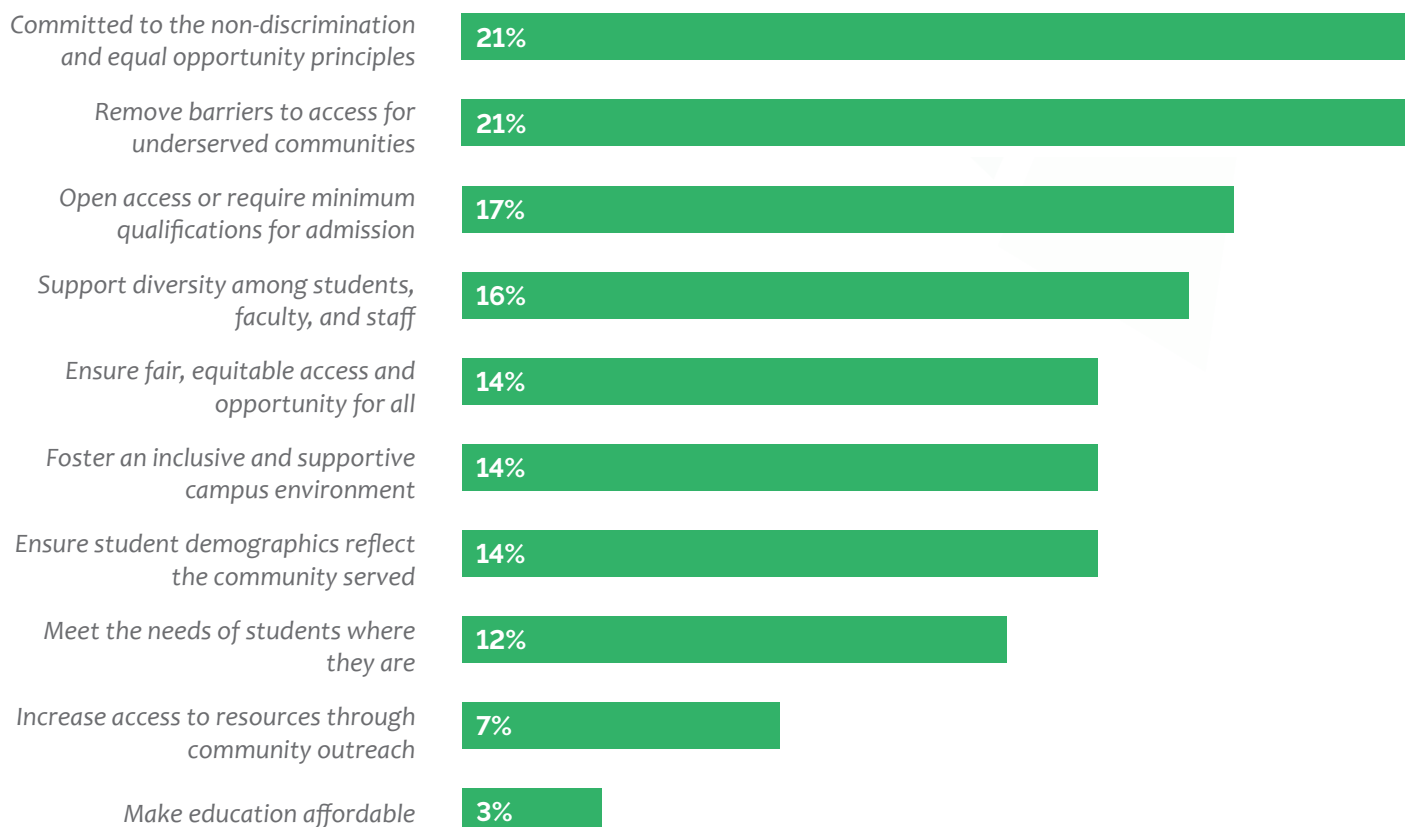
Equity Defined Relative to Access

Over a third (36%) of the participating institutions stated that they had a definition for equity relative to access. This proportion varies by institutional control: 42% among public institutions, 26% among private non-profit, 53% among private for-profit, and 40% among tribal colleges. Summarized below are the emerging themes from the open-ended survey responses on the definition of equity in access. The broad range of themes in the definition indicate that there exist many dimensions of the current understanding of equity among member institutions.

- Committed to the non-discrimination and equal opportunity principles (cited in 21% of responses).
- Remove barriers to access for underserved communities (21%).
- Open access or require minimum qualifications for admission (17%).
- Support diversity among students, faculty and staff (16%).
- Ensure fair, equitable access and opportunity for all (14%).
- Foster an inclusive and supportive campus environment (14%).
- Ensure student demographics reflect the community served (14%).
- Meet the needs of students where they are (12%).
- Increase access to resources through community outreach (7%).
- Make education affordable (3%).

Equity Defined Relative to Access

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



Equity Defined Relative to Success

Close to a third (32%) of the participating institutions indicated having a definition for equity relative to success. An analysis of the open-ended responses on the question of “How does the institution define equity relative to success?” resulted in the following four main themes:

- Recognize and address disparities in educational outcomes (cited in 44% of responses).
- Foster an inclusive and nurturing campus environment (39%).
- Remove barriers to resources and support for success (21%).
- Equitable support for faculty and staff advancement (8%).

Equity Defined Relative to Success

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



IDENTIFYING EQUITY GAPS

Equity Gaps Relative to Access

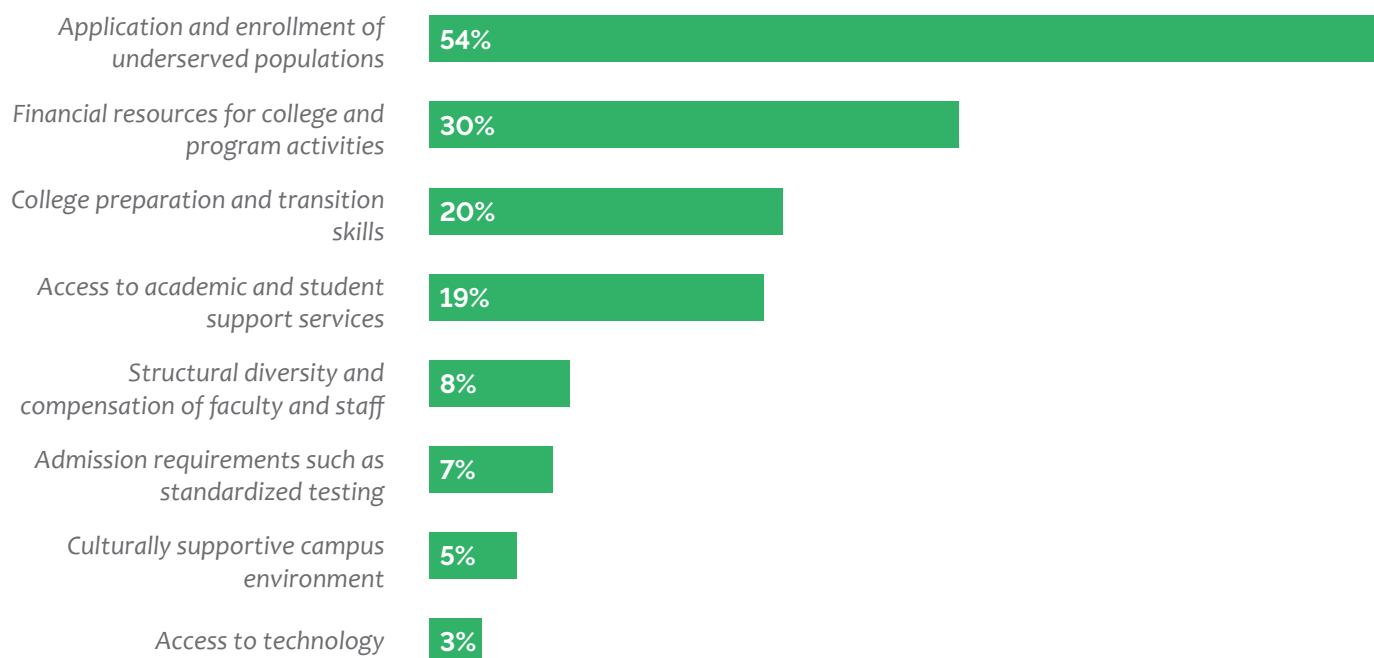
Forty percent (40%) of the participating institutions responded affirmatively that they have identified equity gaps with regards to access to opportunities in higher education. Of this group, the proportion among tribal institutions is the highest (67%), followed by public (45%), private for-profit (40%), and private not-for-profit institutions (31%). The emerging themes from the survey responses that described the equity gaps relative to access are summarized below.

- Application and enrollment of underserved populations (cited in 54% of responses).
- Financial resources for college and program activities (30%).
- College preparation and transition skills (20%).
- Access to academic and student support services (19%).
- Structural diversity and compensation of faculty and staff (8%).
- Admission requirements such as standardized testing (7%).
- Culturally supportive campus environment (5%).
- Access to technology (3%).

It is no surprise that the gap in college application and enrollment of underserved populations is recognized here as the most-cited equity gap relative to access. Evidence of this disparity has been well documented in the literature (Carnevale et al., 2018; Espinoza et al., 2019; Monarrez and Washington, 2020).

Equity Gaps Relative to Access

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



Equity Gaps Relative to Success

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the participating institutions reported having identified equity gaps relative to student success. In describing the equity gaps in success, survey respondents converged resoundingly on identifying academic performance, retention, and graduation as the top three disparities in outcomes for underserved populations. These outcomes are among the key indicators of college success. A smaller number of survey respondents also referred to the equity gaps in a range of factors that can impact college success, such as college readiness, financial support, mental health, food and housing insecurities, and lack of the practical skills to adapt for college environment. Employing an equity lens in examining student experiences beyond course grade, retention and completion metrics echoes the recommendations from HLC's *Defining Student Success Data* report series (HLC, 2018, 2019) for institutions to take a holistic approach to define and measure student success.

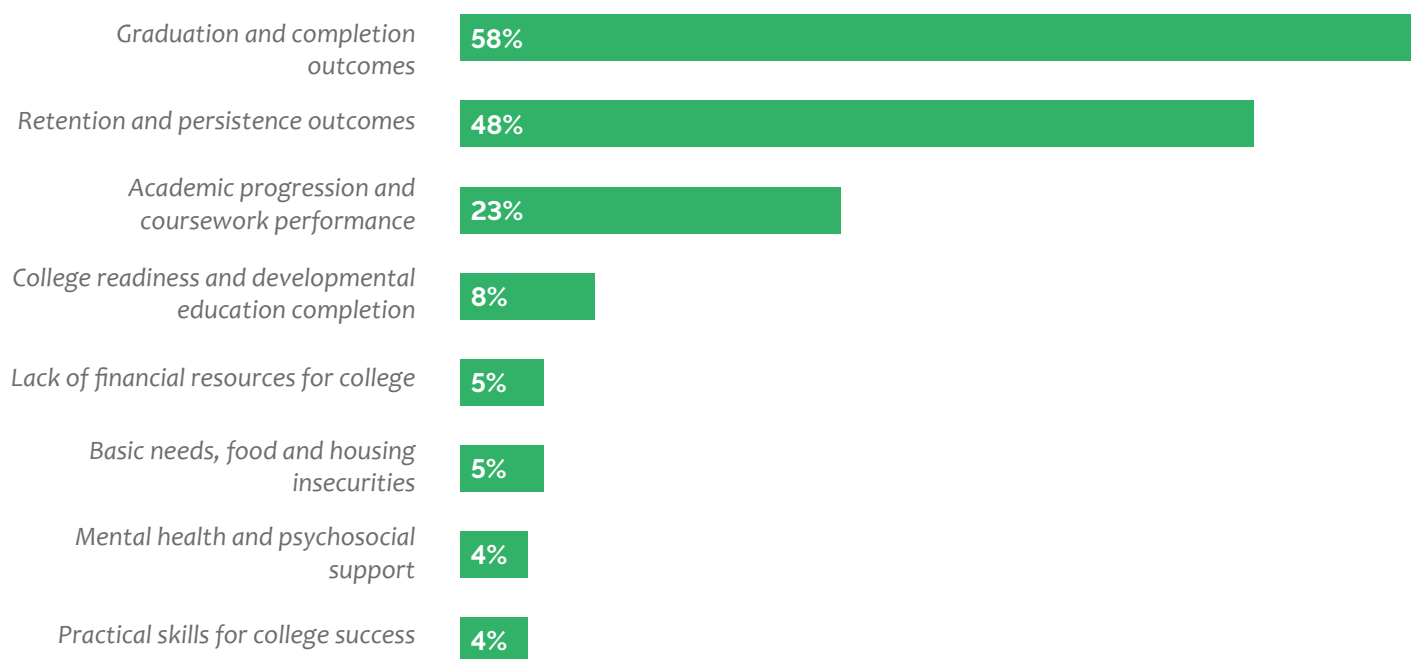
The full list of themes that emerged from the survey responses describing the identified equity gaps in success are summarized below.

- Graduation and completion outcomes (cited in 58% of responses).
- Retention and persistence outcomes (48%).
- Academic progression and coursework performance (23%).
- College readiness and developmental education completion (8%).

- Lack of financial resources for college (5%).
- Basic needs, food and housing insecurities (5%).
- Mental health and psychosocial support (4%).
- Practical skills for college success (4%).

Equity Gaps Relative to Success

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



SETTING EQUITY GOALS

Of the institutions that identified existing equity gaps in access and/or success (see page 5), an overall 75% (167 out of 224 institutions) indicated having set equity goals to address these gaps. To gauge the overall institutional commitment to equity work, HLC asked if the identified equity goals were included in an institutional strategic plan. Among the institutions that have identified equity goals, 77% indicated that the equity goals were included in the institutional strategic plan. The public institutions led in this regard with 81%, followed by tribal colleges (73%), private not-for-profit (72%), and private for-profit (67%).

Equity Goals Relative to Access

An analysis of the open-ended survey responses shows that the identified goals to address equity gaps relative to access center around the following four themes:

- Strengthen and broaden the college pipeline (cited in 59% of responses).
- Remove structural barriers to resources (40%).
- Ensure college affordability (18%).
- Promote structural diversity among faculty and staff (10%).

The most-cited theme in setting equity goals relative to access is on strengthening the college pipeline development programs and resources. Equity goals included in this theme ranged from expanding community outreach and engagement, aligning educational program offerings with community needs, partnering with K-12 for college readiness, to the recruitment and enrollment of the underserved populations.

The second most-cited theme in setting equity goals relative to access is about removing structural barriers to access caused by administrative processes or outdated policies. Under this theme, institutions set goals to improve application and admission processes, enhance student support services, streamline academic scheduling, and foster an inclusive environment on campus.

Equity Goals Relative to Access

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



Equity Goals Relative to Success

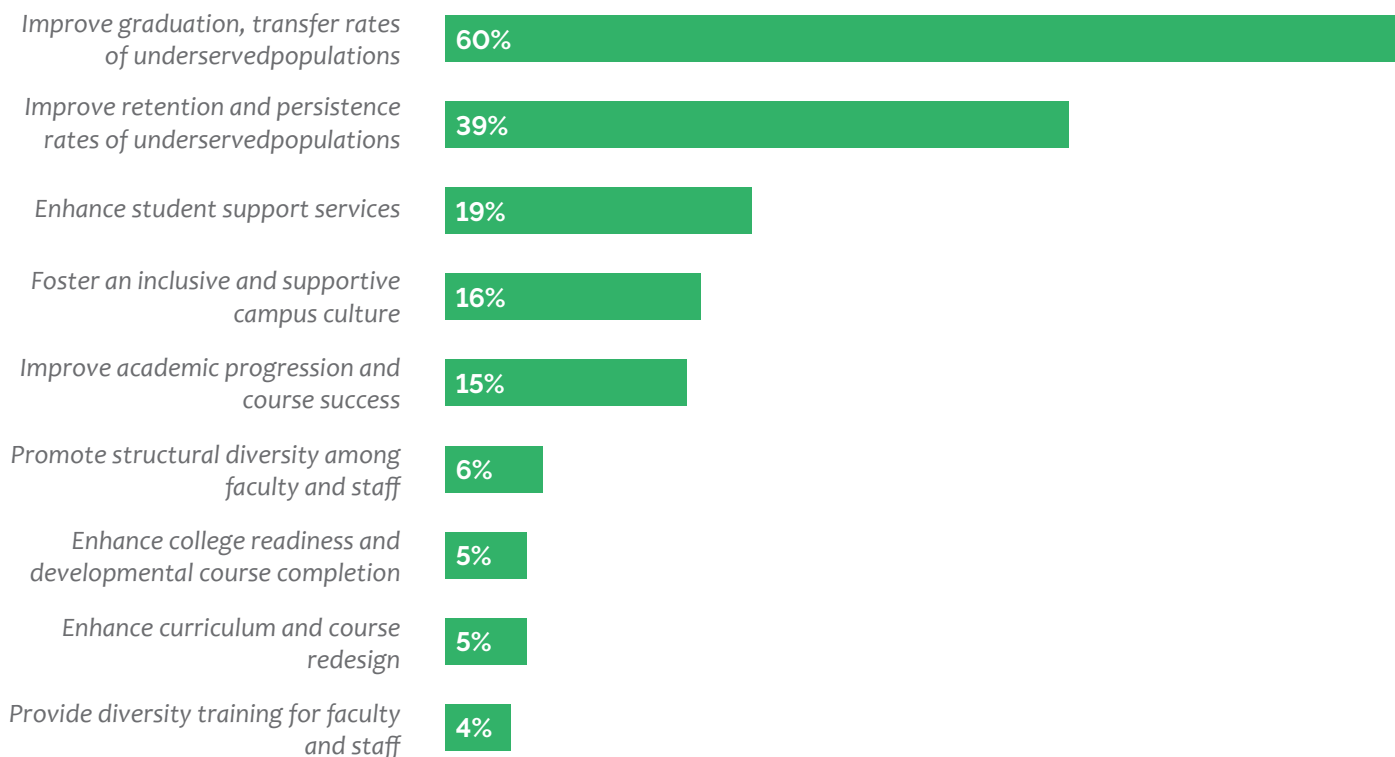
The themes in setting equity goals relative to success were in good alignment with the themes in identifying equity gaps that were discussed on page 6. The goals for closing disparities in retention and graduation outcomes, largely known as the traditional markers of student success, were at the top of the list, at 39 percent and 60 percent of the responses, respectively.

The full list of emerging themes in the institutional goals for equity relative to success include:

- Improve graduation, transfer rates of underserved populations (cited in 60% of responses).
- Improve retention and persistence rates of underserved populations (39%).
- Enhance student support services (19%).
- Foster an inclusive and supportive campus culture (16%).
- Improve academic progression and course success (15%).
- Promote structural diversity among faculty and staff (6%).
- Enhance college readiness and developmental course completion (5%).
- Enhance curriculum and course redesign (5%).
- Provide diversity training for faculty and staff (4%).

Equity Goals Relative to Success

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS EQUITY GAPS

Of the institutions having identified existing equity gaps in access and/or success (see page 5), an overall 86% (192 out of 224 institutions) indicated having identified strategies to address these gaps.

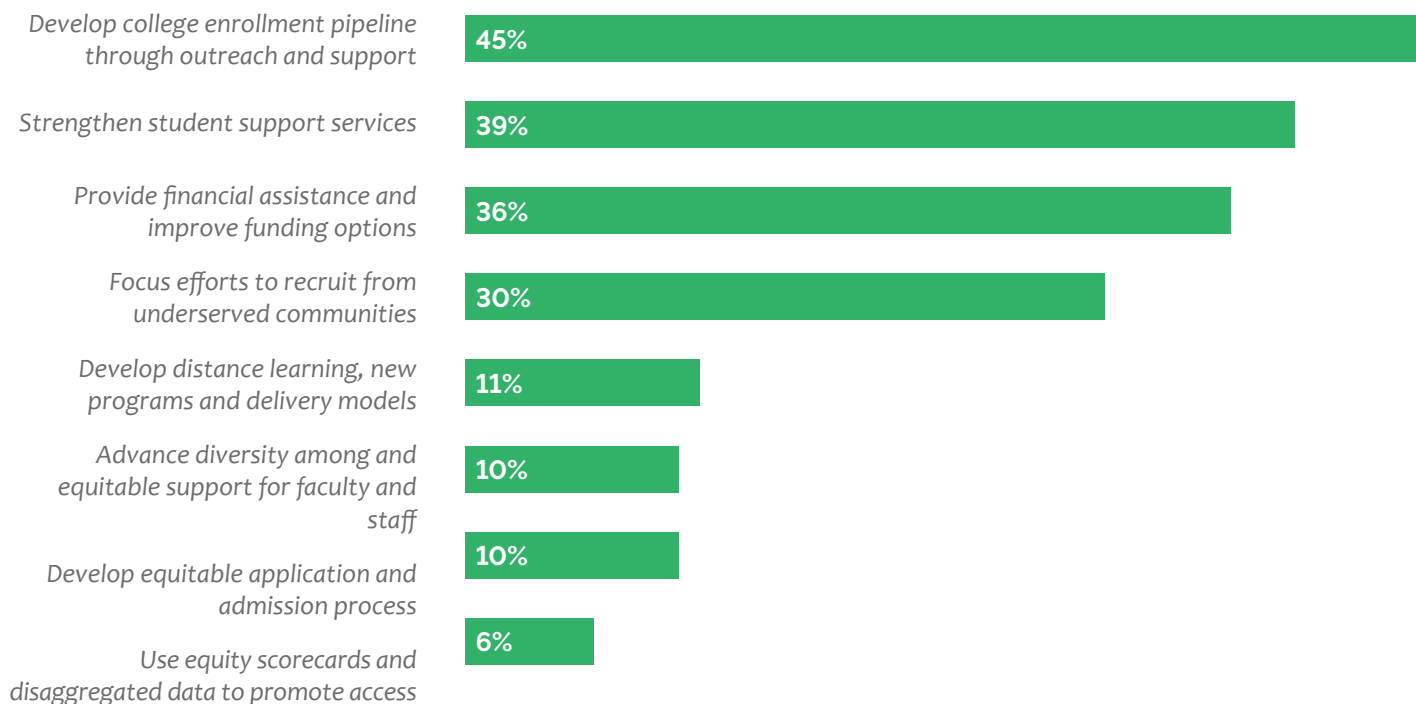
Equity Strategies Relative to Access

Among the institutions that identified equity gaps in access (see page 5), 78% indicated having developed strategies to address those gaps. Among the diverse set of strategies to address equity gaps in access shared by the survey respondents, the following themes emerged:

- Develop college enrollment pipeline through outreach and support, such as early college programming, dual enrollment programs, or “flexible course and program offerings for adult students” (cited in 45% of responses).
- Strengthen student support services, such as “redesign student on-boarding and first year experiences”, “peer mentoring, embedding tutoring, scaling corequisite remediation, and summer bridge programs” (39%).
- Provide financial assistance and improve funding options (36%).
- Focus efforts to recruit from underserved communities (30%).
- Develop distance learning, new programs and delivery models to enhance student choice (11%).
- Advance diversity among and equitable support for faculty and staff (10%).
- Develop equitable application and admission process (10%).
- Use equity scorecards and disaggregated data to promote access (6%).

Equity Strategies Relative to Access

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



Equity Strategies Relative to Success

Of the institutions that have identified equity gaps in success (see page 6), 81% indicated having developed strategies to address those gaps. Amid the vast range of strategies for student success, the top emerging themes, as seen in the chart below, were on providing robust student support services (57% of the responses), targeted support programs for underserved communities (40%), transition and skill development programs for new students (19%) and on enhancing curriculum and redesigning courses for better outcomes (19% of the responses).

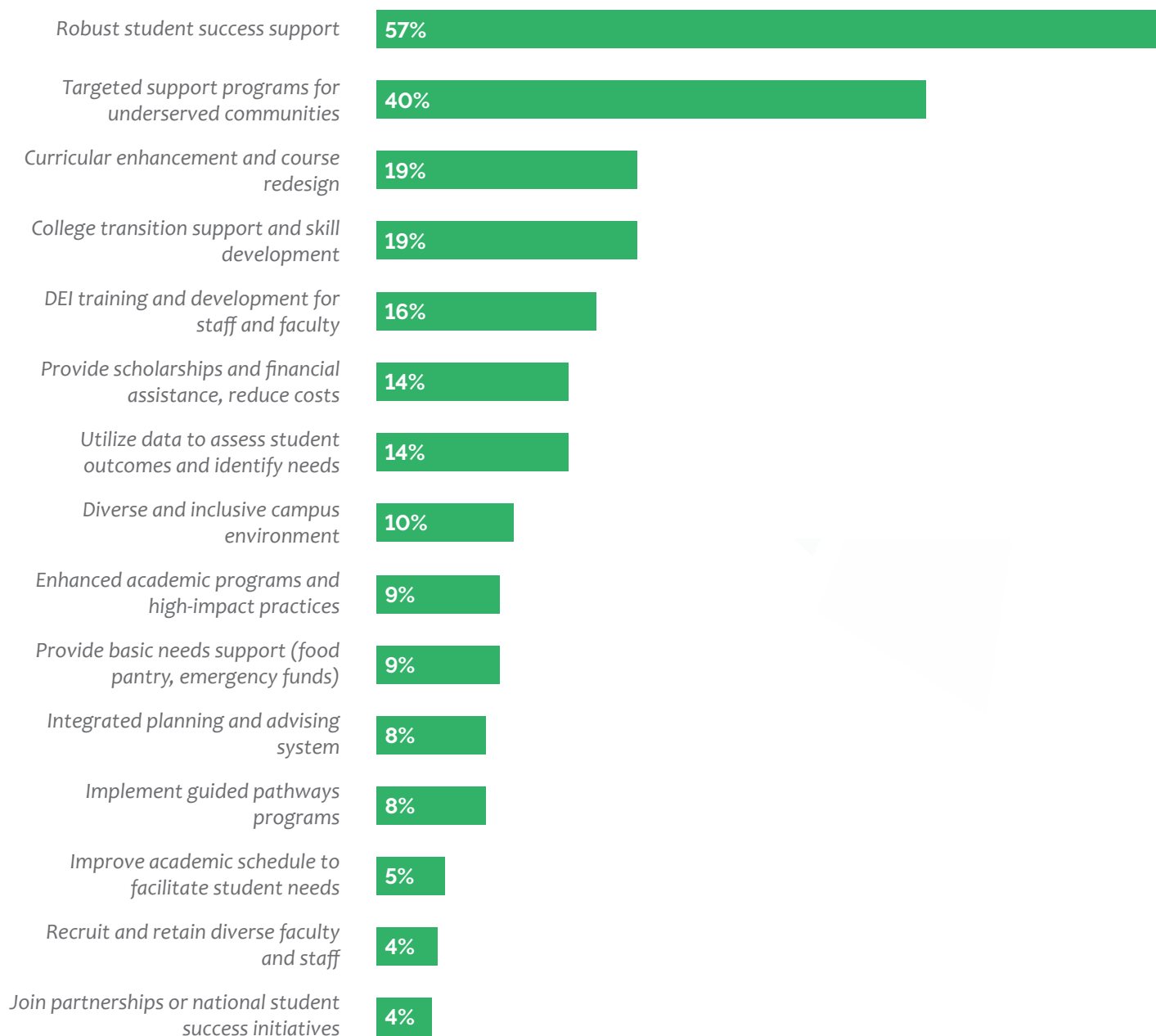
The full list of themes that emerged from the survey responses are summarized below.

- Robust student success support (cited in 57% of responses).
- Targeted support programs for underserved communities (40%).
- Curricular enhancement and course redesign (19%).
- College transition support and skill development (19%).
- DEI training and development for staff and faculty (16%).
- Provide scholarships and financial assistance, reduce costs (14%).
- Utilize data to assess student outcomes and identify needs (14%).
- Diverse and inclusive campus environment (10%).
- Enhanced academic programs and high-impact practices (9%).
- Provide basic needs support (food pantry, emergency funds) (9%).
- Integrated planning and advising system (8%).

- Implement guided pathways programs (8%).
- Improve academic schedule to facilitate student needs (5%).
- Recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff (4%).
- Join partnerships or national student success initiatives (4%).

Equity Strategies Relative to Success

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

Moving from the strategic level to the tactical level of equity work, survey respondents provided descriptions and examples of the implemented changes in their practices to address equity gaps.

Equity Practices Relative to Access

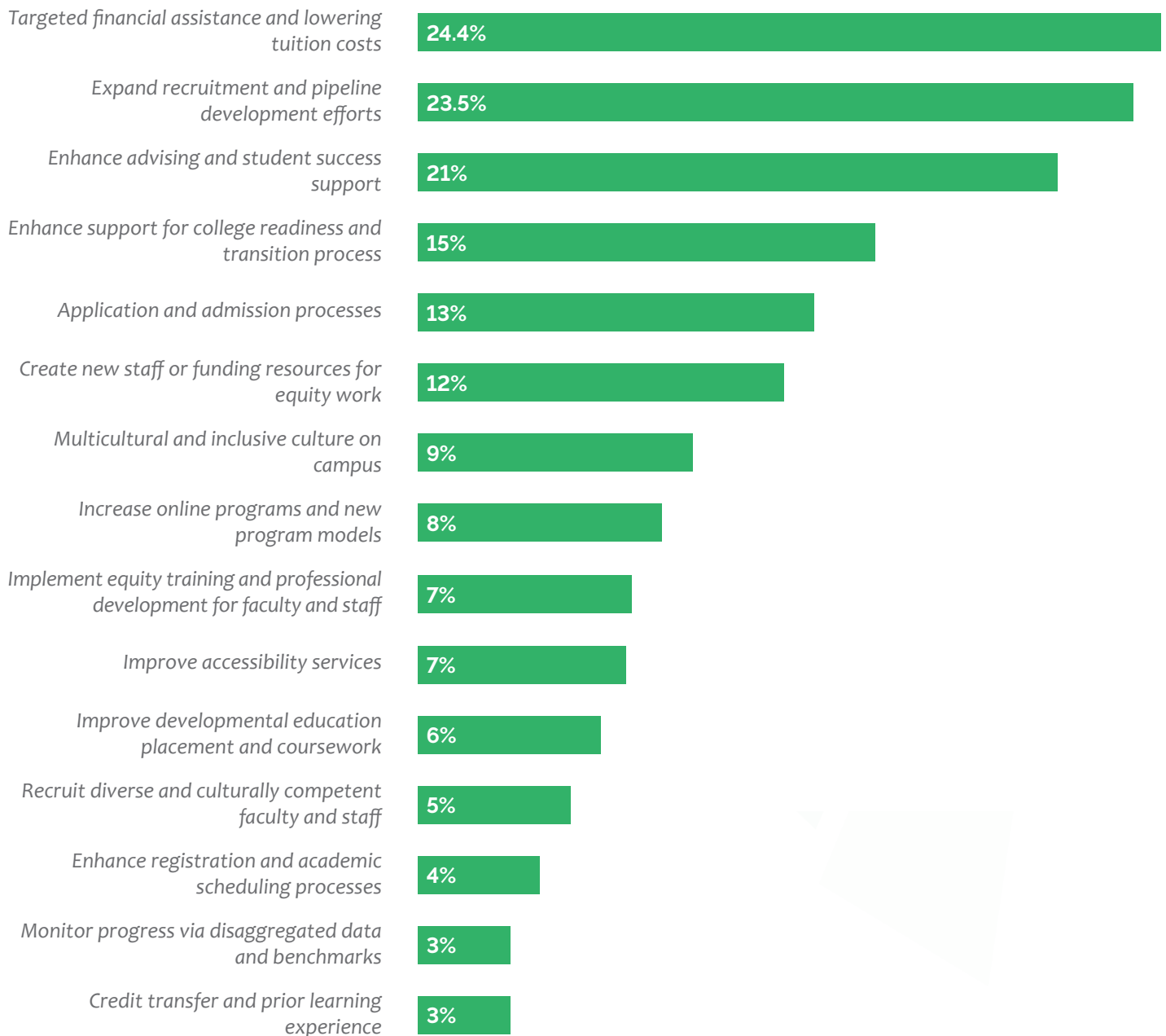
Of the institutions that have identified equity gaps in access (see page 5), 66% indicated having implemented changes in their practices to address those gaps. While institutions apply a wide range of changes in their practices to address equity gaps in access, the top cited efforts are on providing financial assistance to targeted student segments (24% of the responses), expanding recruitment and college pipeline development efforts (23.5%), and enhancing advising and student success support (21%).

The full list of themes revealed by an analysis of the survey responses include the following:

- Targeted financial assistance and lowering tuition costs (cited in 24.4% of responses).
- Expand recruitment and pipeline development efforts (23.5%)
- Enhance advising and student success support (21%).
- Enhance support for college readiness and transition process (15%)
- Application and admission processes (13%).
- Create new staff or funding resources for equity work (12%).
- Multicultural and inclusive culture on campus (9%).
- Increase online programs and new program models (8%).
- Implement equity training and professional development for faculty and staff (7%).
- Improve accessibility services (7%).
- Improve developmental education placement and coursework (6%).
- Recruit diverse and culturally competent faculty and staff (5%).
- Enhance registration and academic scheduling processes (4%).
- Monitor progress via disaggregated data and benchmarks (3%).
- Credit transfer and prior learning experience (3%).

Equity Practices Relative to Access

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



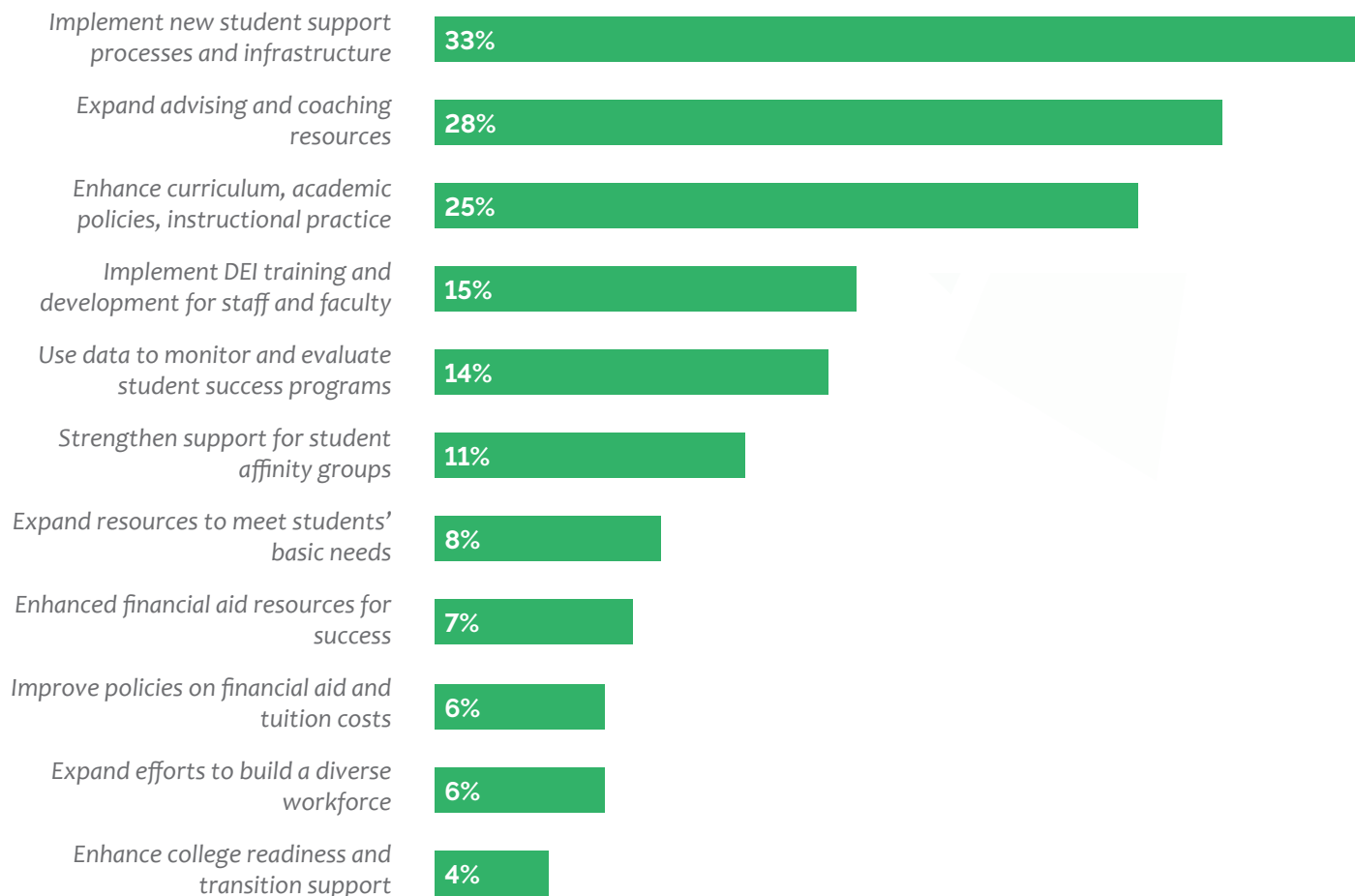
Equity Practices Relative to Success

Among the institutions that have identified equity gaps relative to success (see page 6), 75% indicated having implemented changes in their practices to address those gaps. The top three themes in the types of changes in institutional practices for equity goals include implementing new support processes and infrastructure (33% of the responses), expanding advising and coaching resources (28%), and enhancing curriculum, academic policies, or instructional practices (25%).

The full list of themes that emerged from the survey responses are summarized below.

- Implement new student support processes and infrastructure (cited in 33% of responses).
- Expand advising and coaching resources (28%).
- Enhance curriculum, academic policies, instructional practice (25%).
- Implement DEI training and development for staff and faculty (15%).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate student success programs (14%).
- Strengthen support for student affinity groups (11%).
- Expand resources to meet students' basic needs (8%).
- Enhanced financial aid resources for success (7%).
- Improve policies on financial aid and tuition costs (6%).
- Expand efforts to build a diverse workforce (6%)
- Enhance college readiness and transition support (4%).

Equity Practices Relative to Success Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES IN EQUITY PRACTICES

Responding to the survey question on the challenges of doing work focused upon equity, participating institutions shared many sides of the issue that are both instructive and thought-provoking.

Equity Challenges Relative to Access

Among the institutions that identified equity gaps relative to access (see page 5), 60% responded affirmatively about experiencing challenges during the implementation of equity initiatives, 20% indicated not having challenges, and the remaining 20% did not respond.

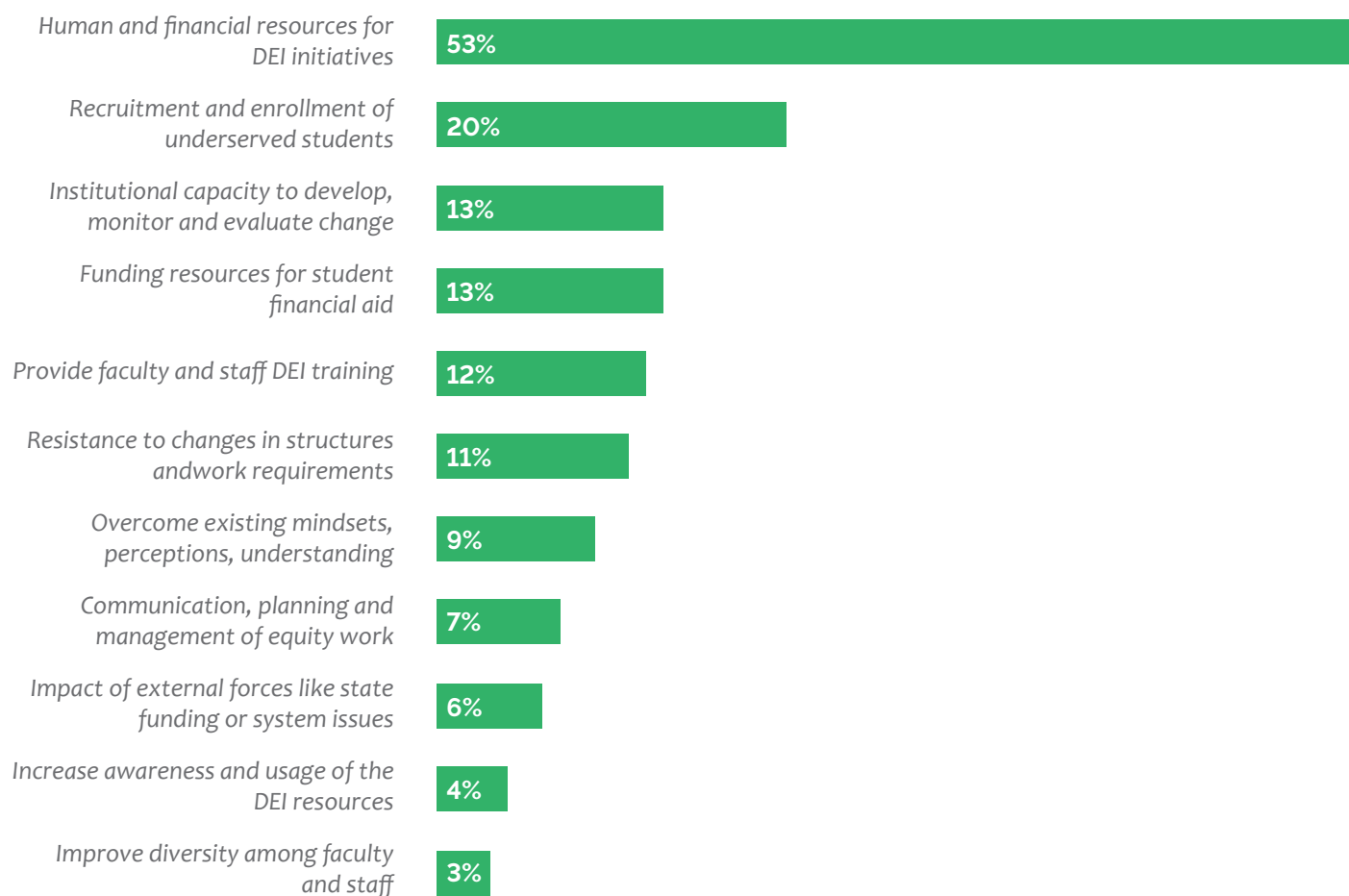
More than half of the received responses (53% of responses) described challenges in finding staff and financial resources to implement equity initiatives. The next most-cited challenge was related to recruiting and enrolling students from underserved communities (20%).

The emerging themes from the open-ended survey responses on the challenges in implementing initiatives to address equity gaps in access are summarized below.

- Human and financial resources for DEI initiatives (cited in 53% of responses).
- Recruitment and enrollment of underserved students (20%).
- Institutional capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate change (13%).
- Funding resources for student financial aid (13%).
- Provide faculty and staff DEI training (12%).
- Resistance to changes in structures and work requirements (11%).
- Overcome existing mindsets, perceptions, understanding (9%).
- Communication, planning and management of equity work (7%).
- Impact of external forces like state funding or system issues (6%).
- Increase awareness and usage of the DEI resources (4%).
- Improve diversity among faculty and staff (3%).

Equity challenges Relative to Access

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



Equity Challenges Relative to Success

Sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated that their institution faced challenges in implementing initiatives to address equity gaps in success, 20% did not face challenges, and the remaining 17% did not answer this question.

Not surprisingly, a lack of resources in terms of staff, budget and technology was cited by almost half of the respondents (49%) as the top implementation challenge. The proportion was slightly lower here in comparison to that same measure among the institutions implementing equity efforts for access. As noted by a survey respondent, “funding and staffing are the primary challenges.”

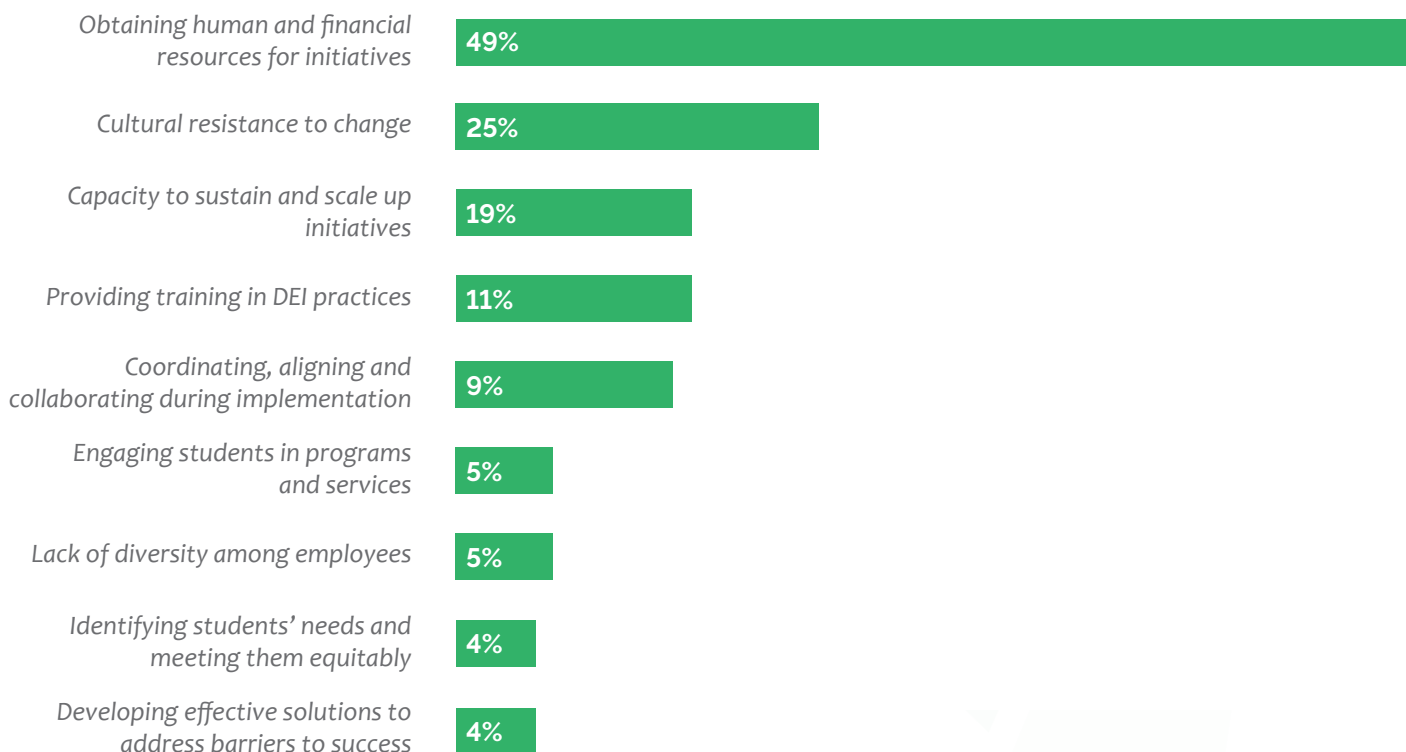
The full list of themes that emerged from the survey responses are summarized below.

- Obtaining human and financial resources for initiatives (cited in 49% of responses).
- Cultural resistance to change (25%).
- Capacity to sustain and scale up initiatives (19%).
- Providing training in DEI practices (11%).
- Coordinating, aligning and collaborating during implementation (9%).

- Engaging students in programs and services (5%).
- Lack of diversity among employees (5%).
- Identifying students' needs and meeting them equitably (5%).
- Developing effective solutions to address barriers to success (4%).

Equity Challenges Relative to Success

Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



ACHIEVEMENTS IN EQUITY EFFORTS

Institutions were asked to reflect on their achievements, big or small, in working toward their equity goals relative to access and/or success.

Equity Achievements Relative to Access

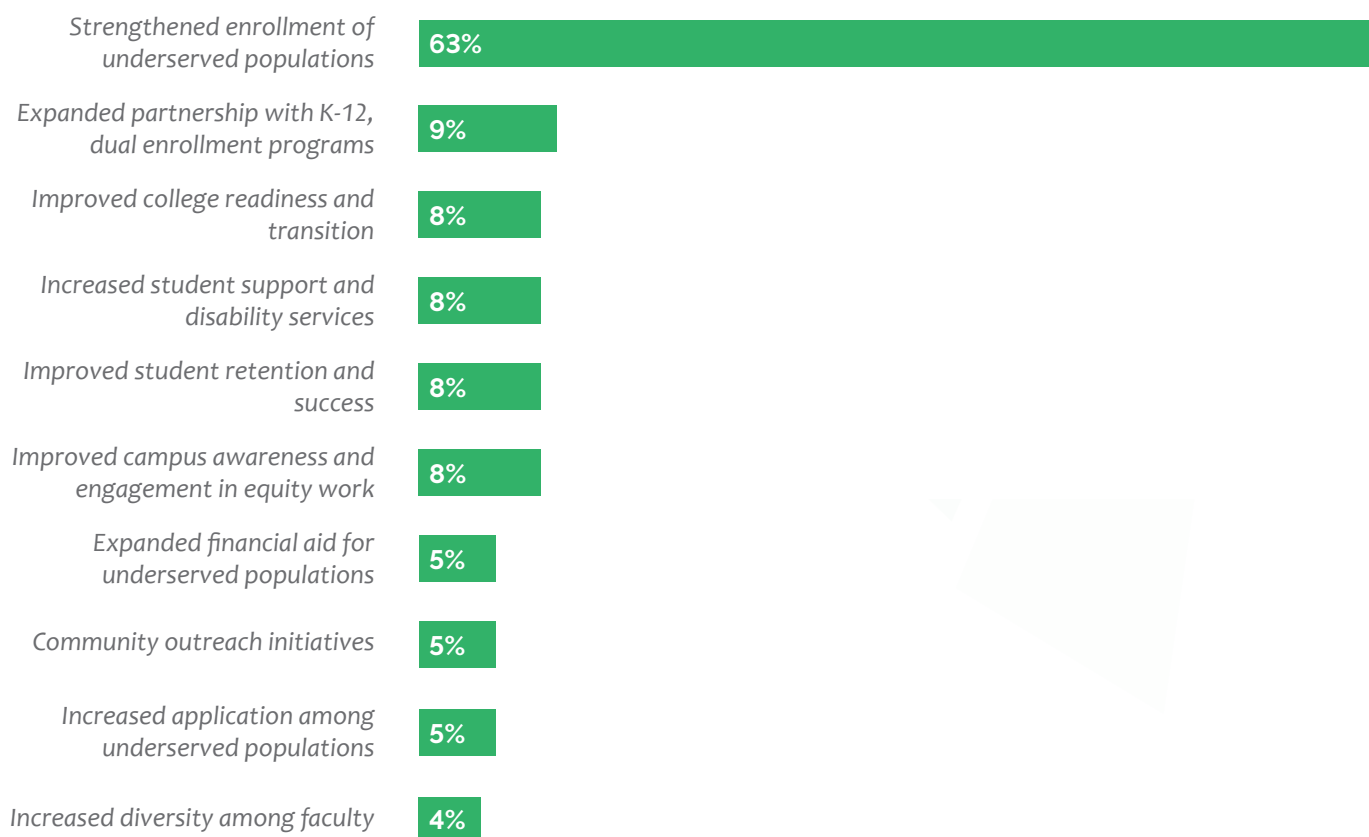
Among the institutions that have identified equity gaps relative to access (see page 5), slightly more than half (53%) responded affirmatively about seeing improvements from their equity efforts, 17% indicated not having results, and 30% did not answer.

The emerging themes from the open-ended survey responses on the results of the efforts to address equity gaps in access are summarized below.

- Strengthened enrollment of underserved populations (cited in 63% of responses)
- Expanded partnership with K-12, dual enrollment programs (9%)

- Improved college readiness and transition (8%)
- Increased student support and disability services (8%)
- Improved student retention and success (8%)
- Improved campus awareness and engagement in equity work (8%)
- Expanded financial aid for underserved populations (5%)
- Community outreach initiatives (5%)
- Increased application among underserved populations (5%)
- Increased diversity among faculty (4%)

Equity Achievements Relative to Access Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes

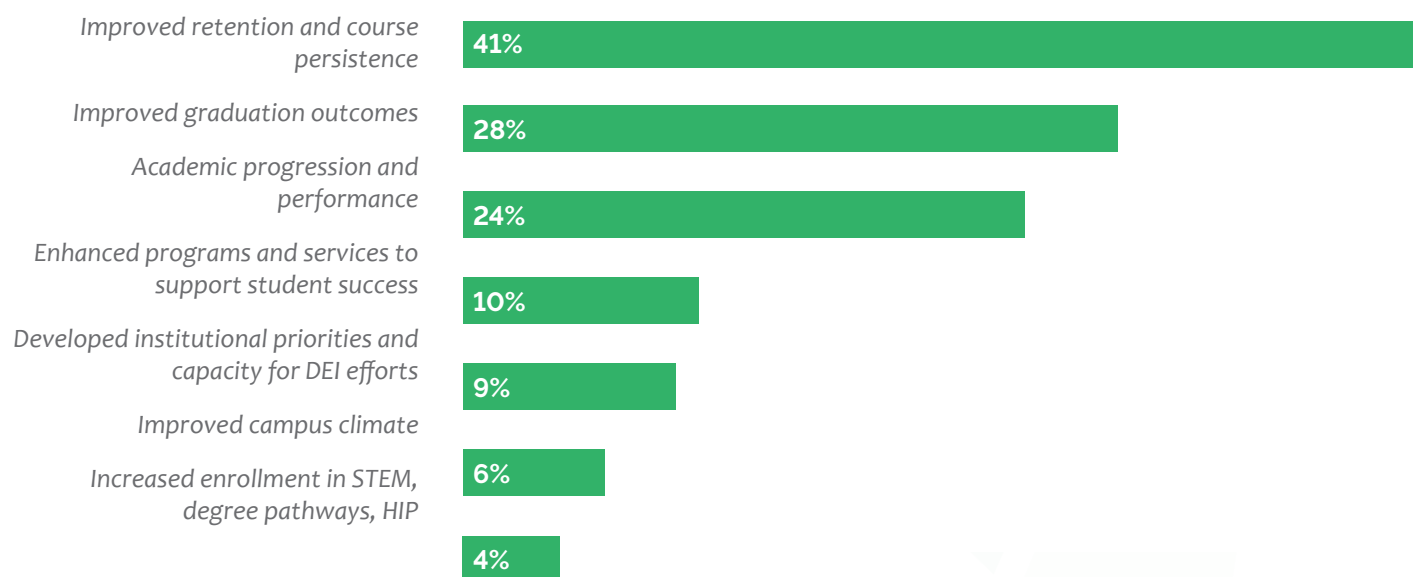


Equity Achievements Relative to Success

Half of the institutions that identified equity gaps relative to success (see page 6) indicated seeing improvements from their equity efforts, while 20% did not see improvements, and the remaining 30% did not provide an answer. The emerging themes from the survey responses on the improvements achieved in efforts to address equity gaps in success are summarized below.

- Improved retention and course persistence (cited in 41% of responses).
- Improved graduation outcomes (28%).
- Academic progression and performance (24%).
- Enhanced programs and services to support student success (10%).
- Developed institutional priorities and capacity for DEI efforts (9%).
- Improved campus climate (6%).
- Increased enrollment in STEM, degree pathways, high-impact practices (HIP) (4%).

Equity Achievements Relative to Success Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



PERFORMANCE MEASURES OF EQUITY EFFORTS

Institutions were asked to discuss the performance measures used to monitor the progress of equity efforts.

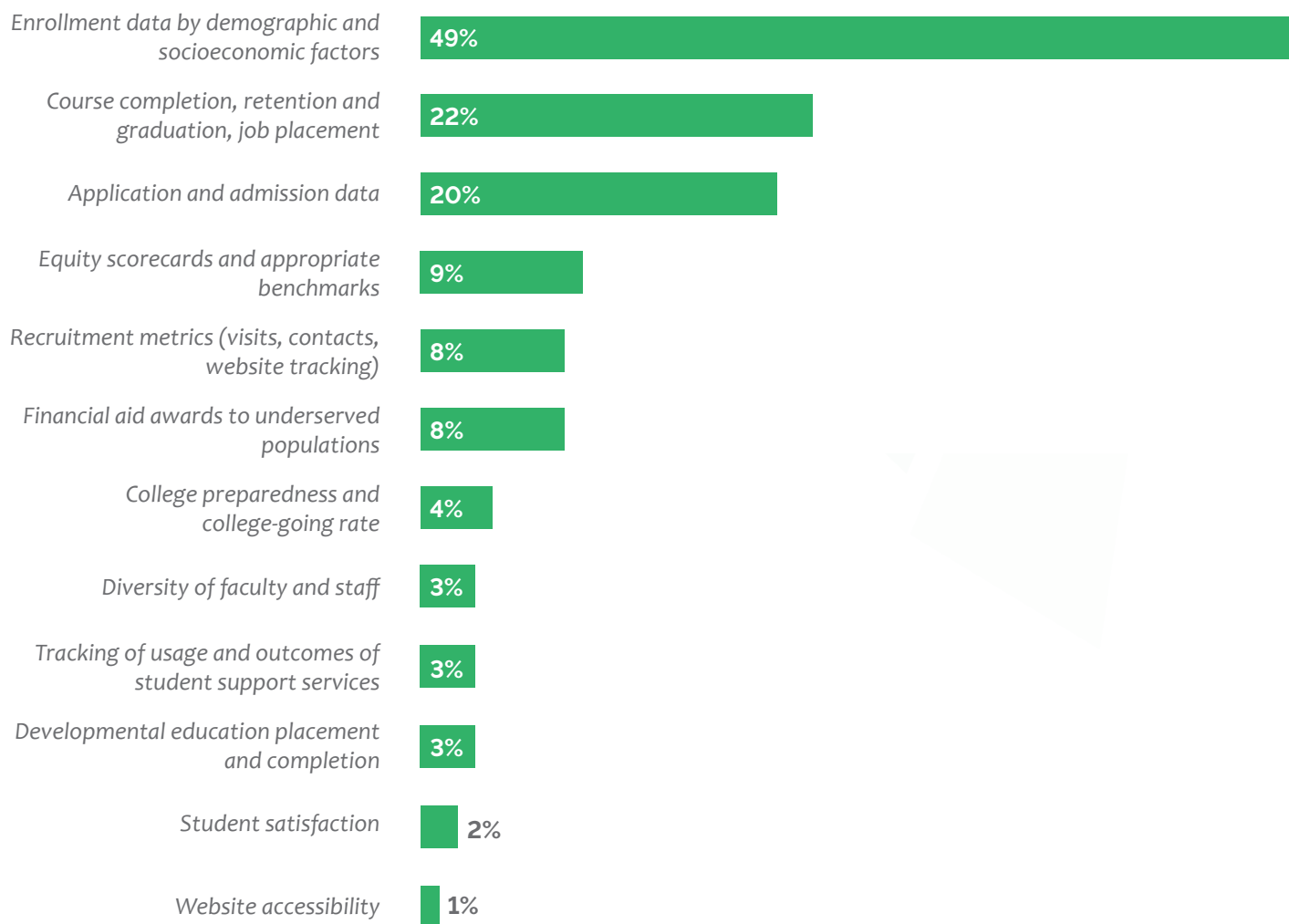
Equity Performance Measures Relative to Access

Among the institutions with equity gaps relative to access, 64% used performance measures to monitor the progress of equity efforts, 17% did not use performance measures, and 19% did not provide an answer. The emerging themes from the open-ended survey responses regarding the performance measures for efforts to improve equity in access are summarized below.

- Enrollment data by demographic and socioeconomic factors (cited in 49% of responses).
- Course completion, retention and graduation, job placement (22%).
- Application and admission data (20%).
- Equity scorecards and appropriate benchmarks (9%).

- Recruitment metrics (visits, contacts, website tracking) (8%).
- Financial aid awards to underserved populations (8%).
- College preparedness and college-going rate (4%).
- Diversity of faculty and staff (3%).
- Tracking of usage and outcomes of student support services (3%).
- Developmental education placement and completion (3%).
- Student satisfaction (2%).
- Website accessibility (1%).

Equity Performance Measures Relative to Access Frequency Distribution of the Emerging Themes



Equity Performance Measures Relative to Success

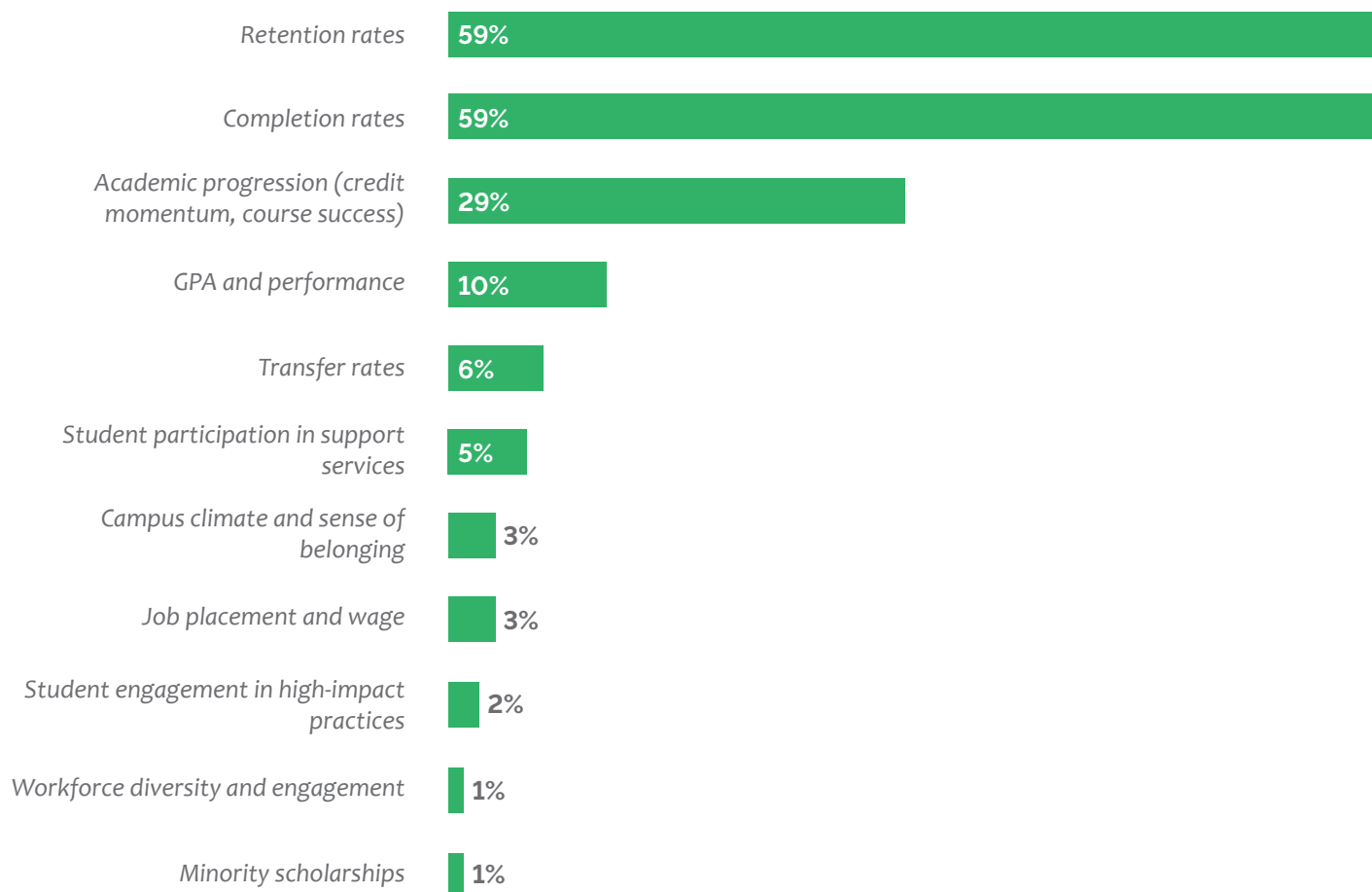
Among the institutions that have identified equity gaps relative to success (see page 6), 71% had adopted performance measures to monitor the progress of their equity efforts, 15% had not, and 14% did not provide an answer.

The emerging themes from the survey responses on the performance measures adopted to monitor efforts to address equity gaps in success are summarized below. As shown, the frequently used indicators of student outcomes were also among the most-cited performance measures adopted for equity initiatives to improve student success. The top three outcome indicators include retention and completion rates (both were cited in 59% of the responses), followed by academic progression (29%).

- Retention rates (cited in 59% of responses).
- Completion rates (59%).
- Academic progression (credit momentum, course success) (29%).
- GPA and performance (10%).
- Transfer rates (6%).
- Student participation in support services (5%).
- Campus climate and sense of belonging (3%).
- Job placement and wage (3%).
- Student engagement in high-impact practices (2%).
- Workforce diversity and engagement (1%).
- Minority scholarships (1%).

Equity Performance Measures Relative to Success

Frequency Distribution Of the Emerging Themes



Using Disaggregated Data in Monitoring Progress

Among the institutions that identified equity gaps relative to access (see page 5), 68% used data disaggregated by student demographic characteristics in monitoring progress of their equity efforts, 14% did not, and 18% did not provide a definitive answer.

In comparison, nearly three-fourths (74%) of the institutions that identified equity gaps relative to success had used disaggregated data in monitoring equity initiatives, 13% had not, and another 13% of the respondents did not provide a definitive answer.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO LEAD EQUITY EFFORTS

Survey responses revealed that, in aggregate, 70% of the institutions employ either one of the two most popular organizational structures to lead equity efforts. Specifically, equity efforts are spearheaded either by an executive management position such as a Chief Diversity Officer, or by an institutional-level DEI committee and advisory group (35% of the responses, each option). Among the remaining cases, the organizational structures for coordinating equity efforts are the functional areas of an institution, such as the student success and engagement office (14%), the student support services or community engagement affairs (13%), or the equal opportunity office (3%).

External Funding Sources for Equity Efforts

As equity issues have increasingly gained prominence in the public discourse in recent years, institutions of higher education can find financial support from public and private sources for their equity-focused efforts.

Among institutions implementing initiatives to address inequities in access (see page 5), 42% received funding support from federal grants, 28% received support from philanthropic and private grants, 16% from state grants, and 14% from alumni and individual donations.

For the institutions implementing initiatives to address inequities in student success (see page 6), nearly half (48%) were supported by federal grants, 30% by philanthropic and private grants, 12% by state grants, and 10% by alumni and individual donations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HLC'S ROLE

The central thread of the recommendations on HLC's role in promoting equity from the participating institutions is that HLC as an accreditation agency has the power to advocate, educate, create partnerships, and convene stakeholders to advance equity in tangible and impactful ways.

Leading through advocacy

Given HLC's longstanding role in providing quality assurance oversight and advocating for higher education, survey respondents suggested that HLC is well-positioned to raise awareness and draw focus on the significant issues in equity in postsecondary access and success.

Engaging with stakeholders of all levels

The survey respondents recommended that HLC could have a significant impact on their equity work by engaging with stakeholders of all stripes, from federal, state and regional levels to the public at large, through providing information, recognizing good practices, and other means of communication.

Promoting equity through Criteria for Accreditation

In alignment with HLC's EVOLVE 2025 strategic plan, survey respondents recommended that HLC review its current Criteria for Accreditation and other accreditation policies from an equity perspective.

Institutions also provided helpful suggestions on collecting and using disaggregated data and benchmarking metrics to evaluate outcomes of equity efforts.

Providing educational programming and training resources

Respondents emphasized the need for training and professional development resources to support institutions as they embark on equity work or strengthen capacity for equity practices. The suggestions for training resources include the basic and essential concepts in equity, a broad framework to adapt to the local specific conditions, effective approaches, best practices, communication and change management strategies to address equity gaps in higher education.

Facilitating collaboration and information sharing

Survey respondents asked that HLC continue to strengthen its role as a convener and facilitator for information sharing and collaboration among higher education practitioners, policy makers and the public.

Supporting innovation

Survey participants also recommended that HLC expand support for innovative approaches in educational offerings and student support by expanding partnerships to leverage resources and maximize impact.

Next Steps

The survey results help HLC gain insight into the equity practices at a diverse range of institutions and an overview of the work being done across sectors, states and regions. Equity is no longer an abstract issue in the year 2021, as the global pandemic has exposed the enormous scope and challenges of inequities in higher education and in many other aspects of social and economic life.

HLC will continue to learn from and respond to the information and recommendations contributed by its member institutions through this survey. HLC will conduct follow-up discussions with

member institutions on innovative practices and new directions in equity practices in response to the impact of the global pandemic and evolving conditions in higher education. HLC also will engage with equity practitioners and thought leaders to broaden the conversation on equity issues and equitable quality assurance.

Armed with the fresh perspectives on equity and informed by its recent work on student success data and innovation, HLC is poised to embark on new equity initiatives under the EVOLVE strategic plan. The initiatives will focus on educating stakeholders about equity principles in quality assurance, strengthening organizational capacity, and building collaborative partnerships for advancing and promoting equity in access and success in higher education.

Appendix

RESPONSE RATE BY SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Institutional Characteristics	Population (n)	Respondents (n)	Response Rate (%)
Number of Institutions	978	361	37%
Institution Control			
Public	492	194	39%
Private Not-for-Profit	435	137	31%
Private For-profit	25	15	60%
Tribal Colleges	26	15	58%
Highest Degree Offered			
Associate's	315	129	41%
Bachelor's	119	39	33%
Master's	215	69	32%
Specialist	19	9	47%
Doctoral	310	115	37%
Enrollment Headcount			
Up to 2000	478	179	37%
2,001 to 4,000	194	63	32%
4,001 to 6,000	75	26	35%
6,001 to 8,000	68	28	41%
8,001 to 10,000	32	11	34%
More than 10,000	131	54	41%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Institutional Information

- Please indicate the highest degree offered by the institution.
- Please select the control status that best describes the institution (public, private not-for-profit, private for-profit, tribal).
- Is the institution currently designated as a minority-serving institution by the U.S. Department of Education?

If “yes”:

Please indicate the specific minority-serving designation(s) of the institution.

- What is the institution’s total student enrollment?
- In which state is the institution located?

Equity Efforts

Equity efforts relative to access and success can include a wide range of institutional programs and initiatives, such as outreach, recruitment, financial assistance, support services, curricular innovations, training and development, and many others.

- Does the institution have a definition for equity relative to access and success? Please select a response (yes, no, don’t know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

How does the institution define equity relative to access?

If “yes” for success:

How does the institution define equity relative to success?

- Has the institution identified equity gaps relative to access and success? Please select a response (yes, no, don’t know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What equity gaps relative to access to opportunities has the institution identified?

If “yes” for success:

What equity gaps relative to success and outcomes has the institution identified?

If “no” for both:

Skip to HLC’s Involvement on page 3.

If equity gaps have been identified for access and/or success, please answer the following questions:

- Has the institution set specific goals to address the identified equity gaps relative to access and success? Please select a response (yes, no, don’t know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What goals have been set to address equity gaps relative to success?

If “yes” for success:

What goals have been set to address equity gaps relative to success?

- Have the goals to address equity gaps been included in an institutional strategic plan? (Possible responses: yes, no, don’t know/not applicable)
- Has the institution identified strategies to address equity gaps in access and success? Please select a response (yes, no, don’t know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What strategies have been identified to address equity gaps in access?

If “yes” for success:

What strategies have been identified to address equity gaps in success?

- Has the institution received external funding sources, such as federal, state or private grants, in support for equity efforts to access and success? Please select a response (yes, no, don’t know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

Please specify the external funding sources received for equity efforts relative to improving access.

If “yes” for success:

Please specify the external funding sources received for equity efforts relative to improving success.

- Has the institution created an organizational structure, such as a committee or an office, to coordinate equity initiatives? (Possible responses: yes, no, don't know/not applicable)

If “yes”:

Please describe the organizational structure created to coordinate equity initiatives.

- Has the institution implemented any changes in its practices to address equity gaps relative to access or success? Please select a response (yes, no, don't know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What changes in institutional practices have been adopted to address equity gaps relative to access?

If “yes” for success:

What changes in institutional practices have been adopted to address equity gaps relative to success?

- Has the institution experienced any challenges in implementing equity initiatives relative to access and success? Please select a response (yes, no, don't know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What are the challenges that the institution has experienced in implementing equity initiatives relative to access?

If “yes” for success:

What are the challenges that the institution has experienced in implementing equity initiatives relative to success?

- Has the institution identified any improvement as a result of the efforts to address equity gaps relative to access or success? Please select a response (yes, no, don't know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What improvement has the institution achieved in addressing equity gaps relative to access?

If “yes” for success:

What improvement has the institution achieved in addressing equity gaps in success?

- Does the institution use quantifiable performance measures to monitor progress of its equity efforts? Please select a response (yes, no, don't know/not applicable) for each area.

If “yes” for access:

What performance measures are used to monitor progress of equity relative to access?

If “yes” for success:

What performance measures are used to monitor progress of equity relative to success?

- Does the institution use data disaggregated by student population characteristics in monitoring progress from equity efforts? Please select a response (yes, no, don't know/not applicable) for each area.

HLC’s Involvement

- What can HLC do to promote and support equity in access and success?
- HLC’s president and staff will be reaching out to a sample of institutional representatives to obtain diverse perspectives on addressing equity gaps in access and success. If the institution would like to be considered for participation, please provide a representative’s contact information in the survey. Include the name of the institution and the representative’s name, title, email address and phone number.

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