



National Alumni Career Mobility Annual Report 2023

Discover benchmarks and best practices to transform student career success.

About Lightcast



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www.lightcast.io

info@lightcast.io

(208) 883 3500



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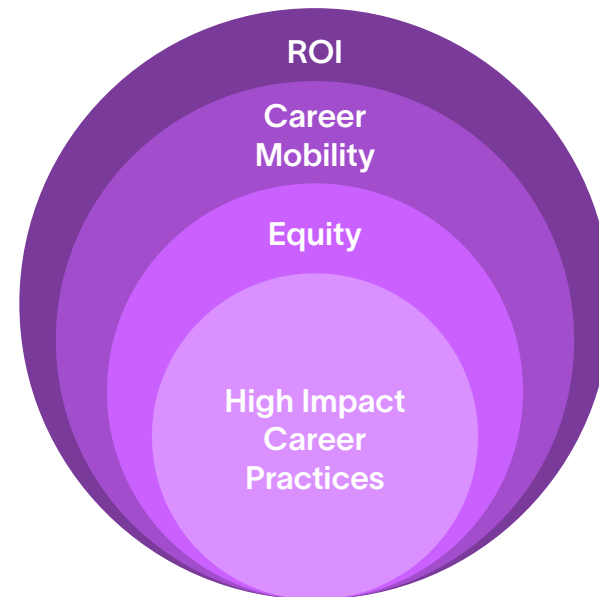
Introduction

ABOUT NACM

Created in 2019 to address a data gap in higher education, the National Alumni Career Mobility (NACM) survey gathers data around six themes: career pathways, career satisfaction, economic mobility, educational satisfaction, learning outcomes and experiences, and community engagement.

As higher education continues to face existential questions around addressing equity gaps, defining success and understanding return on investment, NACM data creates a much-needed understanding of these challenges through alumni data five and ten years after graduation. Going beyond defining ROI and career mobility, NACM data cycles back to the student experience, illuminating equity gaps and providing concrete strategies that transform career practices today.

At the center of transforming career preparation using NACM data are the High Impact Career Practices. Identified through previous NACM research and confirmed again in 2022, these practices have been shown to have a positive effect on career mobility, perceptions of return on investment, and closing equity gaps.



DEFINING CAREER MOBILITY

The Career Mobility Index™ (CMI) was created to provide a more nuanced understanding of success beyond job title and salary. Career mobility as defined by NACM data is a combination of career pathway preparation, career satisfaction, and economic mobility, with all factors weighing equally to create a CMI measure. (For further information on statistical modeling, see Appendix B)



Career Pathway Preparation: Indicates whether respondents feel they have the skills to do quality work and measures educational impact on preparedness prior to starting their career, the beginning of their career, career advancement, and preparedness for current job.

Career Satisfaction: Indicates whether respondents feel they are happy with their career and measures educational impact on satisfaction with their whole career. This metric includes progression of career, career so far, current career, sufficiency of salary, and level of responsibility in current job.

Economic Mobility: Indicates whether respondents are financially stable and satisfied, and measures educational impact on earning history, trajectory, and potential, compared to the household in which they grew up.



DEFINING HIGH IMPACT CAREER PRACTICES

Once CMI was created to measure alumni success, NACM researchers were able to connect CMI with tangible practices in higher education. Utilizing the data collected on [high impact learning experiences](#), various career preparation practices as well as [career readiness competencies](#), statistical models identified which of these had the largest influence on alumni scoring high on the CMI.

For the fourth consecutive year, the same High Impact Career Practices have had the most influence on high career mobility scores:

- Understanding career opportunities ($r^2=0.26$)
- Creating a plan for my career ($r^2=0.24$)
- Networking with employers ($r^2=0.18$)
- Receiving helpful career advice ($r^2=0.17$)
 - Receiving helpful career advice from career services ($r^2=0.17$)
 - Receiving helpful career advice from faculty ($r^2=0.16$)
 - Receiving helpful career advice from academic advisors ($r^2=0.16$)
 - Receiving helpful career advice from alum ($r^2=0.13$)
 - Receiving helpful career advice from employers ($r^2=0.10$)
- Internship related to my current career ($r^2=0.11$)

The content of this research is most useful to higher education professionals working in academic leadership, faculty positions, career services, academic advising, student success, alumni affairs, advancement, and institutional research. This report is particularly salient for campus leaders seeking to make data-informed, transformative growth in their career development practices and for those seeking to understand how transforming career development can influence alum affinity, educational satisfaction, return on investment, and equitable student success.



Executive Summary

This report explores the results from the NACM 2022 survey administration period. It is based on 9,052 responses from alumni who were five (class of 2017) and ten (class of 2012) years out from obtaining their undergraduate degrees. The data was collected by 38 campus partners. More information about the participants can be found in Appendix A. The following highlights some of the key findings from this year's data.

Students need career preparation skills and resources

- Around half (50%) of alumni decide on their career after they obtain their bachelor's degree. Given the timing of career decisions, students need institutions to invest in teaching career skills that go beyond the logistics of finding their first job, and include strategies to navigate their career post-graduation.

Career preparation is linked with ROI and Career Mobility

- Respondents who scored high on career mobility were **5.8 times** more likely to strongly agree/agree that their degree was worth their tuition.

- Respondents who scored high on Institutional Career Investment (ICI) were **2.4 times** more likely to agree/strongly agree that their degree was worth their tuition.
- In addition, those who engaged in High Impact Career Practices were statistically more likely to agree that their degree was worth the tuition and score high on the Career Mobility Index.

High Impact Career Practices provide strategic direction for career preparation resources

- Respondents who agreed that their institution helped them **understand career opportunities** were **4.4x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who agreed that their institution **helped them create a career plan** were **6.3x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who agreed that their institution **helped them network with employers** were **3.6x more likely** to score high on the CMI.



- Respondents who agreed that their **internship was related to their current career** were **1.9x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who received **helpful career advice** were **2.0x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

Addressing equity gaps can improve graduates' perceptions of ROI and Career Mobility

- A key factor in increasing ROI related to the value of student loan debt is closing equity gaps. Respondents from historically marginalized identities reported carrying more student loan debt and that their debt was overwhelming.
- Narrow equity gaps by focusing on these three High Impact Career Practices: 1) Creating a Career Plan, 2) Understanding Career Opportunities and 3) Networking with Employers.
- Equity gaps found in access to High Impact Career Practices echo throughout the research themes of Career Preparation, Institutional Career Investment and Career Satisfaction.



Return on Investment

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Around half (50%) of alumni decide on their career after they obtain their bachelor's degree. Given the timing of career decisions, alumni need institutions to invest in teaching career skills that go beyond the logistics of finding their first job to include strategies to navigate their career post-graduation.

There is a decline in ROI measures beginning with satisfaction with educational experience (82% agree) to degree worth the tuition (55% agree) to degree worth student loan debt (44%).

Respondents who scored high on career mobility were **5.8 times** more likely to strongly agree/agree that their degree was worth their tuition.

Respondents who scored high on Institutional Career Investment (ICI) were **2.4 times** more likely to agree/strongly agree that their degree was worth their tuition.

A key factor in increasing ROI related to the value of student loan debt is closing equity gaps. Respondents from historically marginalized groups reported carrying more student loan debt and that their debt was overwhelming.

INTRODUCTION

At its basic level, return on investment (ROI) is a business mathematical formula used to measure profitability. However, there have been increasing calls from parents, students, alumni, funders, regulators, and many other constituencies for higher education to translate this concept in a way that measures the return relative to the cost of a higher education degree.

Often ROI is measured using a readily available metric – salary. But reducing the ROI conversation to salary or earnings over time leaves higher education with little actionable data on how to increase ROI, beyond funneling more graduates into higher paying professions. In addition, the data has limitations when it comes to equity gaps and disparity in pay scales based on profession and identity.

NACM allows us to explore ROI from a different perspective. Gaining understanding of alumni perceptions of return on investment goes beyond income to consider that ROI for higher education is multi-faceted.

EXPECTATIONS

If the basic concept of ROI is to measure the amount of return on an investment relative to the cost, then it is important to first establish what return students are expecting from their higher education degree.

Motivation for Obtaining Degree

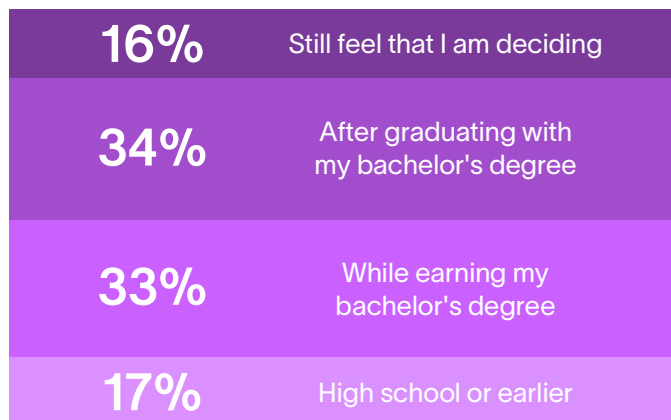
When asked for their top three motivations for obtaining their degree, respondents indicated 1) Career success 2) Intellectual development and 3) Required for my career aspirations. The typical measure for ROI, salary, is fourth on the list (Financial Gain).



If the primary motivations for obtaining a degree are career and academic success, then understanding more about the needs of alumni can help us understand their perception of how their primary motivations are being met (ROI). Just as intellectual development has layers and nuance, so too does career beyond just salary or obtaining a job. If alumni view how an institution provides support for their career development as a key factor in their decisions around ROI, what needs do they have related to their career?

Career Decision Making

A good starting place is understanding when alumni are making decisions about their career. Around half (50%) of alumni decide on their career after they obtain their bachelor's degree. Given the timing of career decisions, alumni need institutions to invest in teaching career skills that go beyond the logistics of finding their first job to include strategies to navigate their career post-graduation.



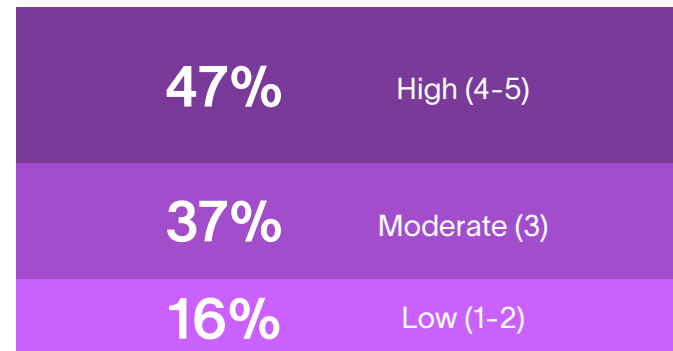
With motivation and need established, a better understanding of whether alumni perceive they are getting what they need in relation to career provides context for more comprehensive ROI metrics.

Career Preparation

Career Preparation is measured using five questions (see Appendix B for detailed methodology):

- My degree helped prepare me for my career.
- I was well prepared to begin my career when I graduated.
- The degree I earned helped me get started in my career.
- I am satisfied with my educational experience.
- My bachelor's degree is worth the tuition I paid.

Just under half (47%) of respondents scored high (4-5 on a scale of 5) on career preparation. An additional 37% of respondents scored moderate. This reveals room to improve when it comes to preparing graduates for their careers.



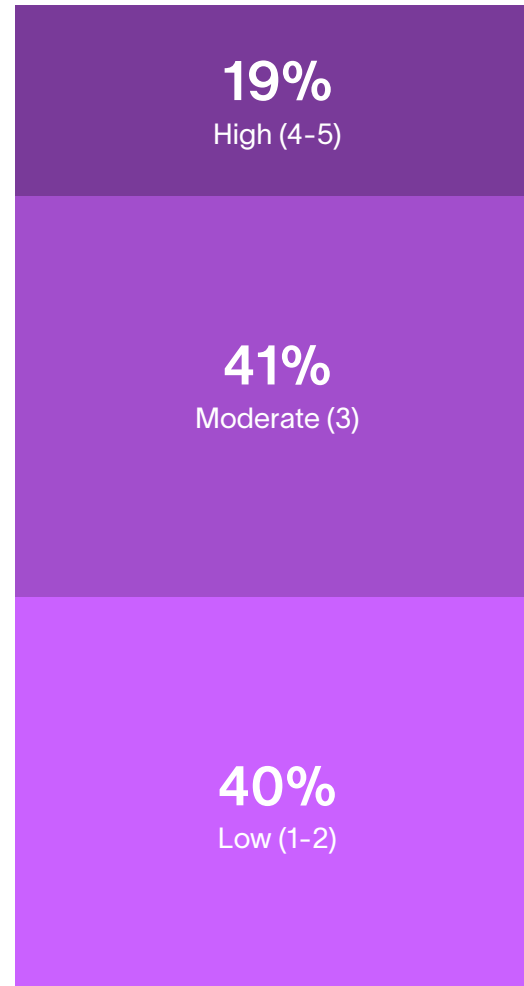
Institutional Career Investment

Institutional Career Investment is measured using the following questions (see Appendix B for detailed methodology):

- My institution invested in my career.
- My institution helped me to understand career opportunities.
- My institution helped me create a plan for my career.
- My institution helped me envision my career options.
- My institution helped me to network with employers.
- My institution helped me to network with alumni.

Overall, only 19% of respondents scored high on institutional career investment, leaving a considerable gap for campuses to improve ROI through intentionally investing in career preparation. The items that make up the factor may be a good place to start: networking with employers and alumni, creating a plan for career, and understanding career opportunities.

The data is beginning to show gaps between motivations to obtain a degree, the need for career decision making skills, and alumni's scores on Career Preparation and Institutional Career Investment. These gaps give us some context for how respondents are defining "return" on a higher education degree and if campuses are meeting those expectations. More can be discovered by looking at better-defined measurements of ROI.

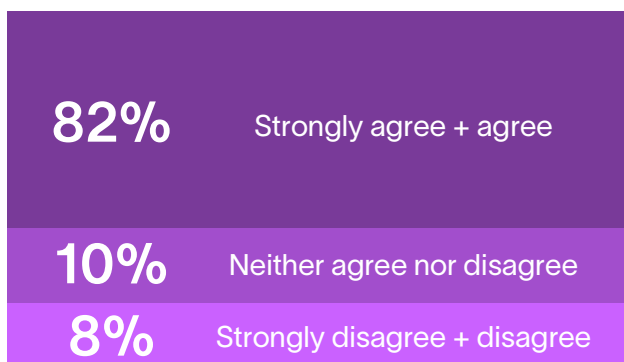


MEASURING ROI

Three questions on the NACM survey measure ROI from three different perspectives. Each provides a view of alum perceptions of the value of their degree.

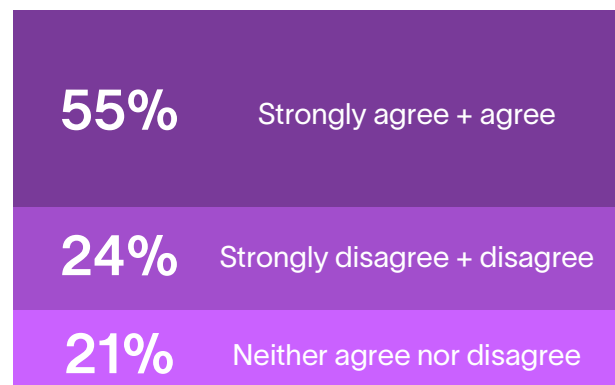
Overall, respondents were highly satisfied with the educational experience, with 82% strongly agreeing or agreeing. Respondents are seeing value in their degree.

I am satisfied with my educational degree.



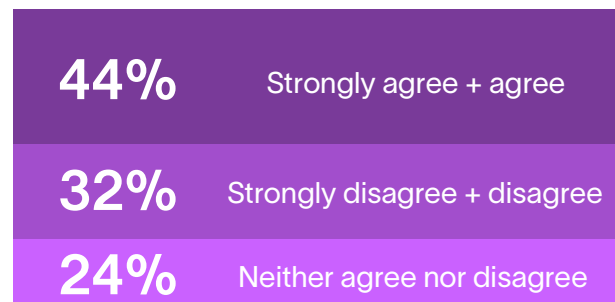
However, satisfaction did not transfer when asked whether their degree was worth the tuition they paid. From that perspective, the number of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed dropped to 55%.

My degree is worth the tuition I paid.



In addition, the number of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed that their degree was worth their student loan debt dips down to 44%.

My degree was worth my student loan debt.

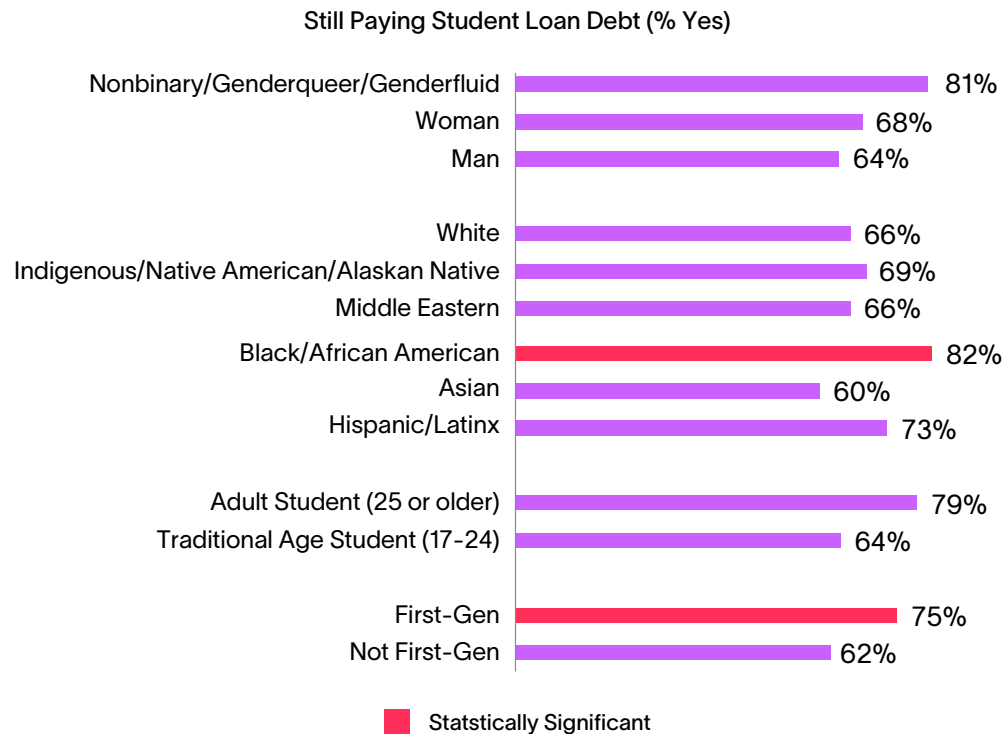


STUDENT LOAN DEBT

An additional layer to student loan debt is revealed once equity gaps are explored. Ultimately, if institutions wish to increase ROI scores related to degrees being worth student loan debt, closing these gaps will be essential.

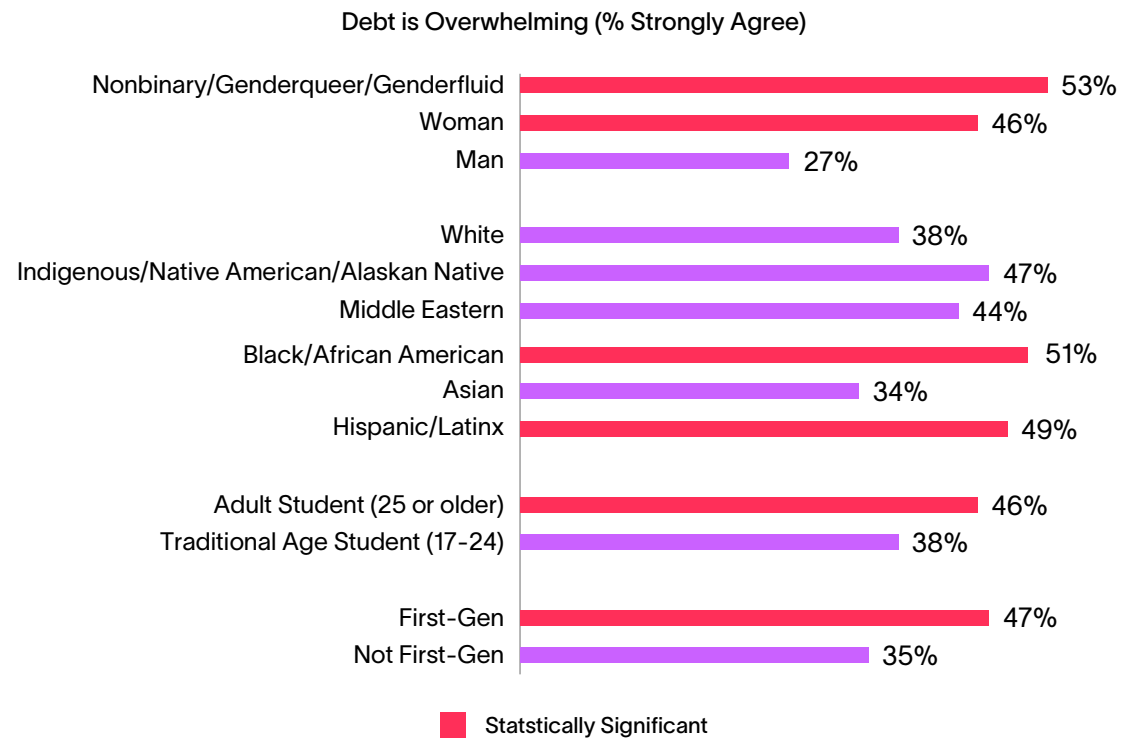
Respondents who identify as **first-generation** and/or **Black/African American** responded yes to **still paying student loan debt** at statistically higher levels than all other groups.

In addition, respondents who identified as 25 years or older when they obtained their degree, Hispanic/Latinx, and Nonbinary/Genderqueer/Genderfluid show levels that have practical significance.



Beyond still paying debt, it is helpful to explore the impact of that debt on alumni. Respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their student loan debt was overwhelming at a significantly higher level from the following identities: Nonbinary/Genderqueer/Genderfluid, Hispanic/Latinx, Black/African American, those who obtained their degree when they were 25 years or older and First generation.

Increasing perceptions of ROI related to student loan debt begins with addressing the equity gaps by lowering the amount of student loan debt for historically marginalized identities.



CONNECTING ROI TO PRACTICE

This disconnect between satisfaction with their educational experience and seeing the value of their degree adds complexity to the ROI conversation. Institutions who are solely measuring student satisfaction have a gap in understanding the student experience. Those who are measuring ROI without taking career preparation into account are often left with less actionable data.

The question becomes this: how can institutions reduce student loan debt while also transforming the student experience, so that more alumni find their degree to be worth the financial investment?

The answer to the question above can be answered in part by the synergy between ROI and career mobility and high impact career practices.

- Respondents who scored high on the Career Mobility Index (CMI) were 5.8 times more likely to strongly agree/agree that their degree was worth their tuition. The association between CMI and perception of degree worth tuition was found to be statistically significant.
- Respondents who scored high on Institutional Career Investment (ICI) were 2.4 times more likely to agree/strongly agree that their degree was worth their tuition. The association between ICI and perception of degree worth tuition were found to be statistically significant.

- Targeting efforts to reduce student loan debt for historically marginalized populations (while also focusing on access to the high impact career practices) has a positive impact on both student success and ROI.
- In addition, those who engaged in High Impact Career Practices were statistically more likely to agree that their degree was worth the tuition.

ROI, Career Mobility, closing equity gaps and the High Impact Career Practices are all associated with alumni success. When alumni succeed, so do institutions of higher education. NACM research shows that when institutions invest in career preparation and reduce student loan debt for historically marginalized groups, they see returns in ROI and career mobility.

Campus Spotlight: University of St. Thomas

University of St. Thomas uses first destination and NACM data in their presentations to parents and families during new student orientation. By showing the connection between high impact career practices and career outcomes, they are able to demonstrate the value of the career preparation experiences students have while they are obtaining their degree.



Defining Alumni Success through Career Mobility

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Career Mobility Index measures alumni success by combining three factors: Career Preparation, Career Satisfaction and Economic Mobility.

Overall Career Mobility has declined from the NACM 2020 cohort (47%) to the 2022 cohort (38%).

Career Satisfaction continues to be the strongest of the three factors with 65% of respondents scoring high.

Career Preparation (47%) and Economic Mobility (46%) are the factors that need improvement.

Of the questions that make up Career Pathway Preparation, respondents were less likely to agree that they were well prepared to begin their career when they graduated, and their degree is worth the tuition they paid.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional measures of student success post-graduation often focus on career paths and/or salary, a view of success that lacks nuance, especially for career paths that do not lead to high salary positions. These findings leave little variation that speaks to the distinguishing factors that make higher education, and the outcomes associated with it, valuable.

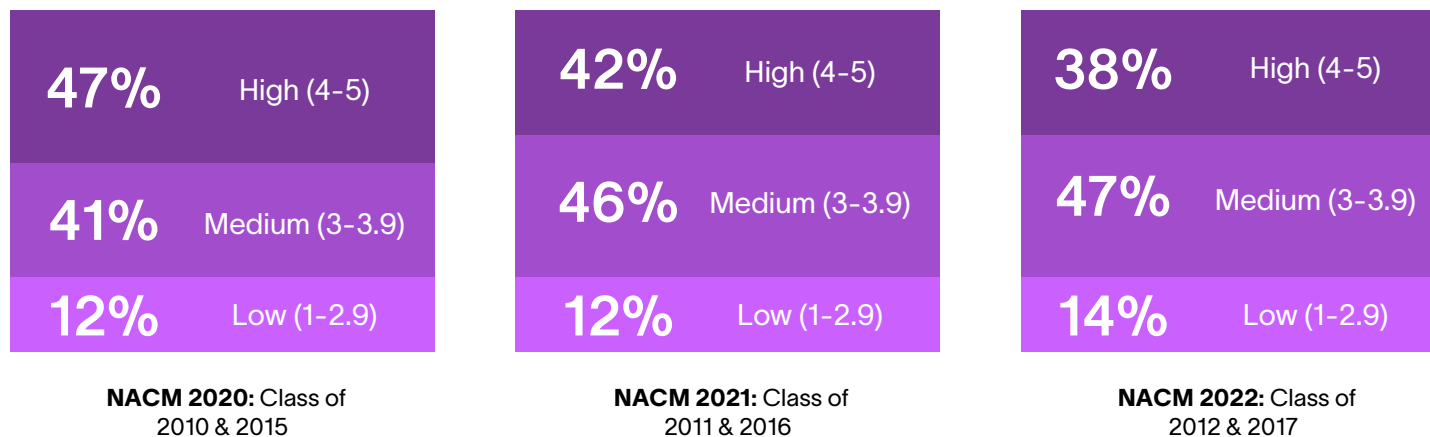
NACM research established the Career Mobility Index with three primary goals:

1. To define alumni success in a more complex manner beyond career path and salary.
2. To provide a framework to identify practices that increase alumni career mobility.
3. To utilize the framework, in combination with the High Impact Career Practices, to identify and narrow equity gaps.

CMI OVERALL

When comparing CMI for the past three years, the overall scores on the Career Mobility Index appear to be trending downward. Further analysis is needed to see if the trend is happening because of changes to the sample from year to year or due to a true decrease in career mobility.

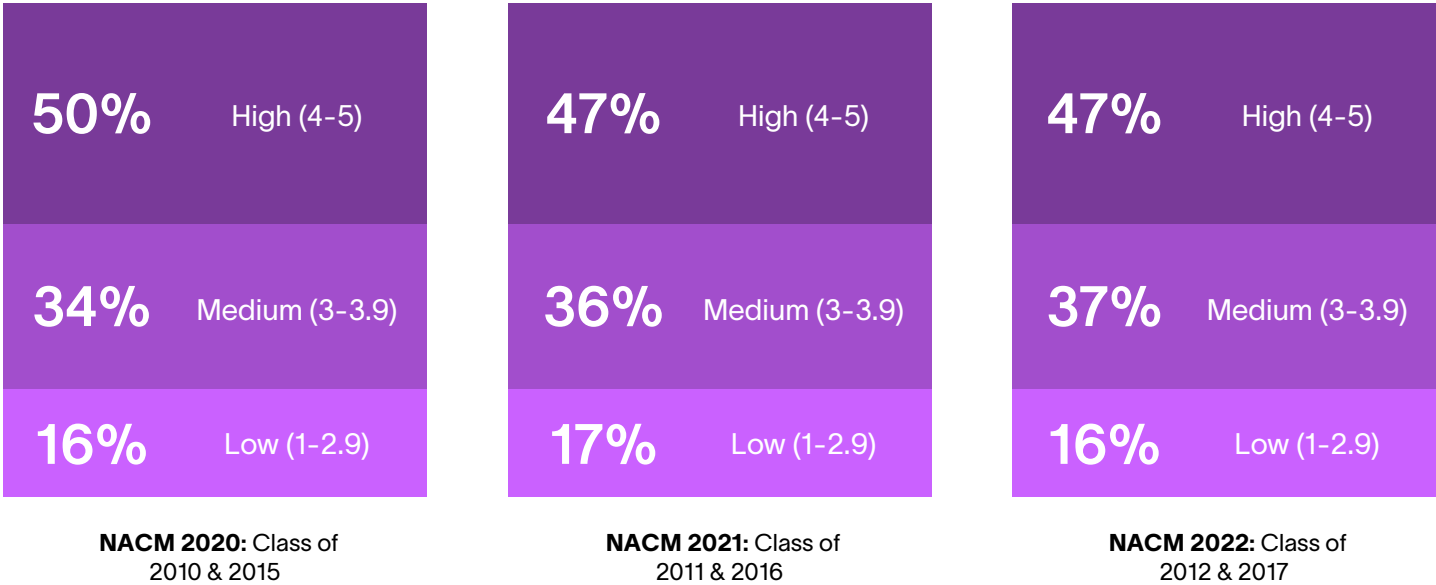
Overall CMI scores over time



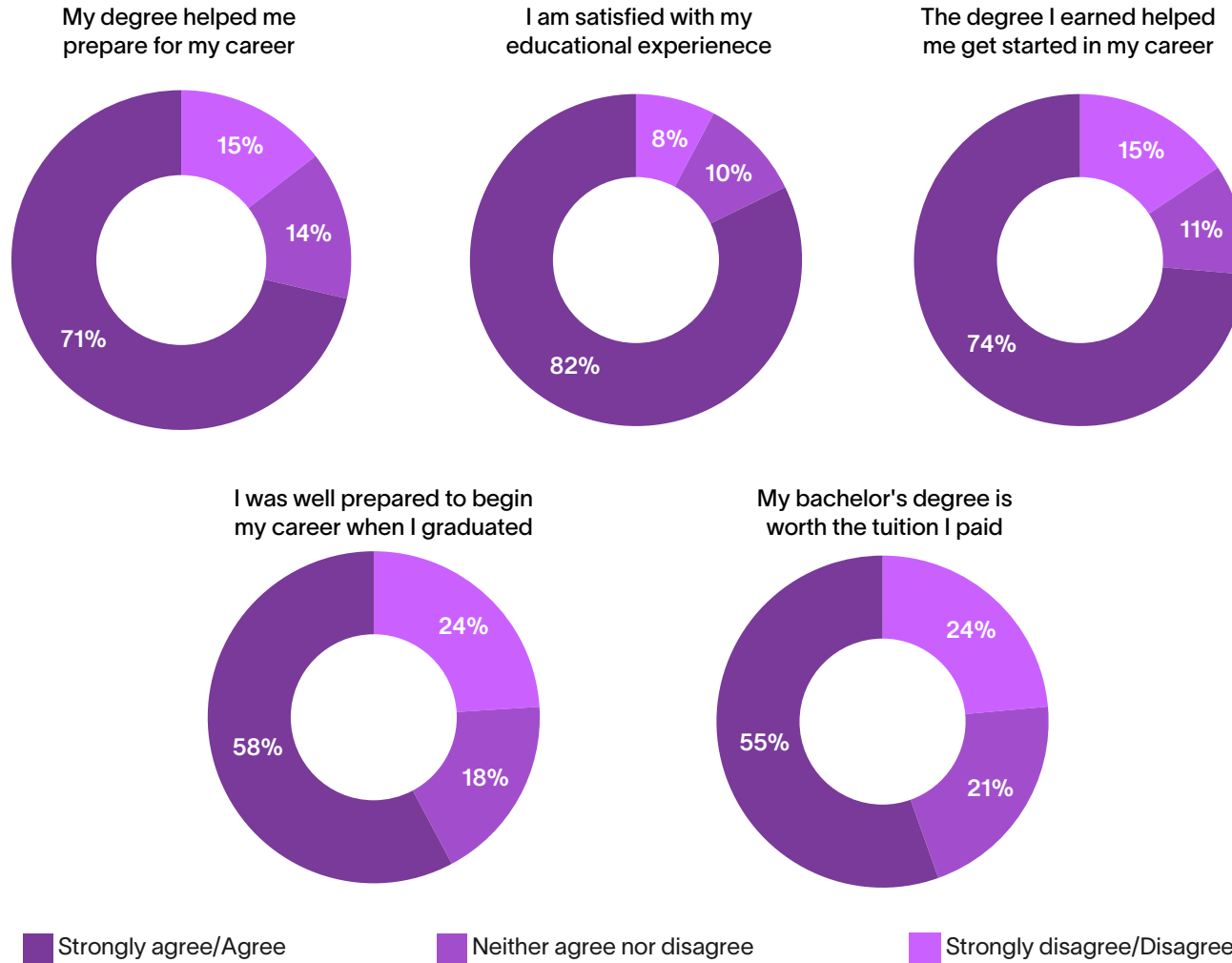
CAREER PATHWAY PREPARATION

The first factor included in the Career Mobility Index is Career Pathway Preparation. A list of the questions that make up this factor can be found in the ROI section of the report. Scores on overall Career Pathway Preparation have remained consistent over the past three cohorts.

Career Preparation Over Time



Of the questions that make up Career Pathway Preparation, respondents were less likely to agree that they were well prepared to begin their career when they graduated, and their degree is worth the tuition they paid.



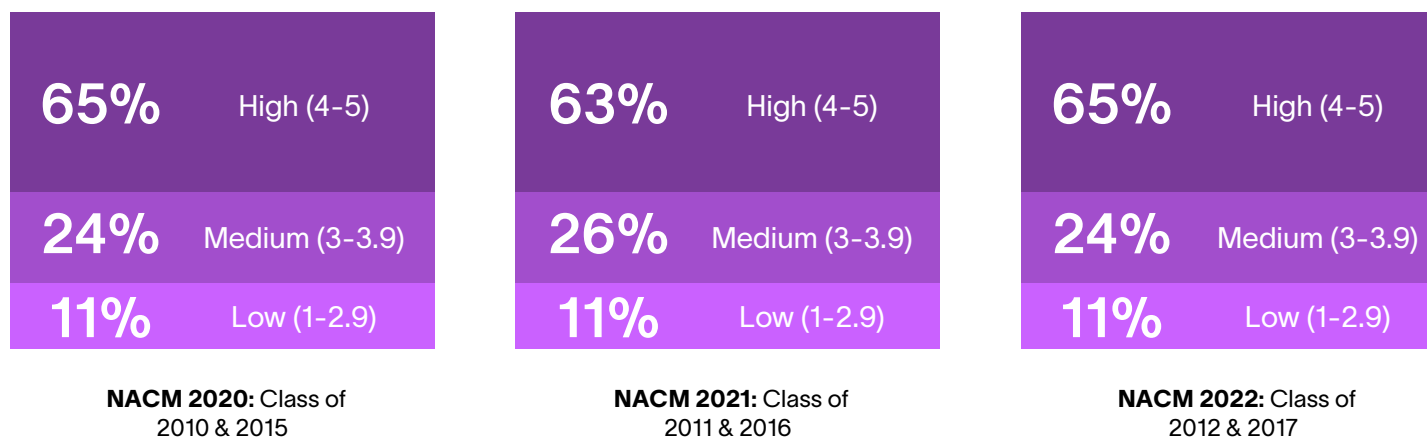
CAREER SATISFACTION

The second factor included in the Career Mobility Index is Career Satisfaction. This factor is calculated using six questions (see Appendix B for detailed methodology):

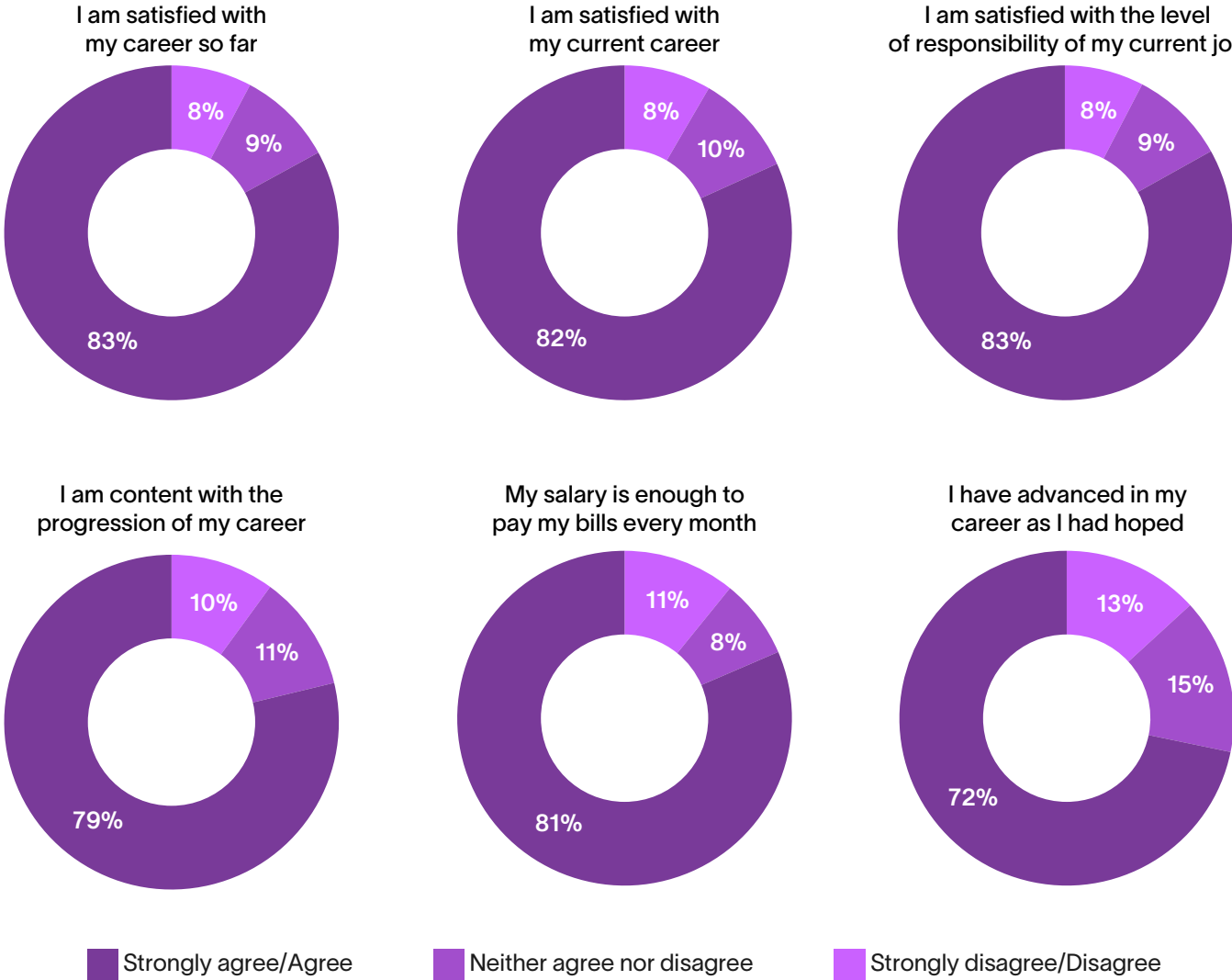
- I am satisfied with my career so far.
- I am satisfied with my current career.
- I am satisfied with the level of responsibility of my current job.
- I am content with the progression of my career.
- My salary is enough to pay my bills every month.
- I have advanced in my career as I had hoped.

Scores on overall Career Satisfaction have remained consistent over the past three cohorts. In addition, Career Satisfaction is the factor within Career Mobility that continues to see the largest percentage of respondents scoring high.

Career Satisfaction Over Time



Most of the respondents strongly agree or agree with at least one of the statements that is factored into career satisfaction.



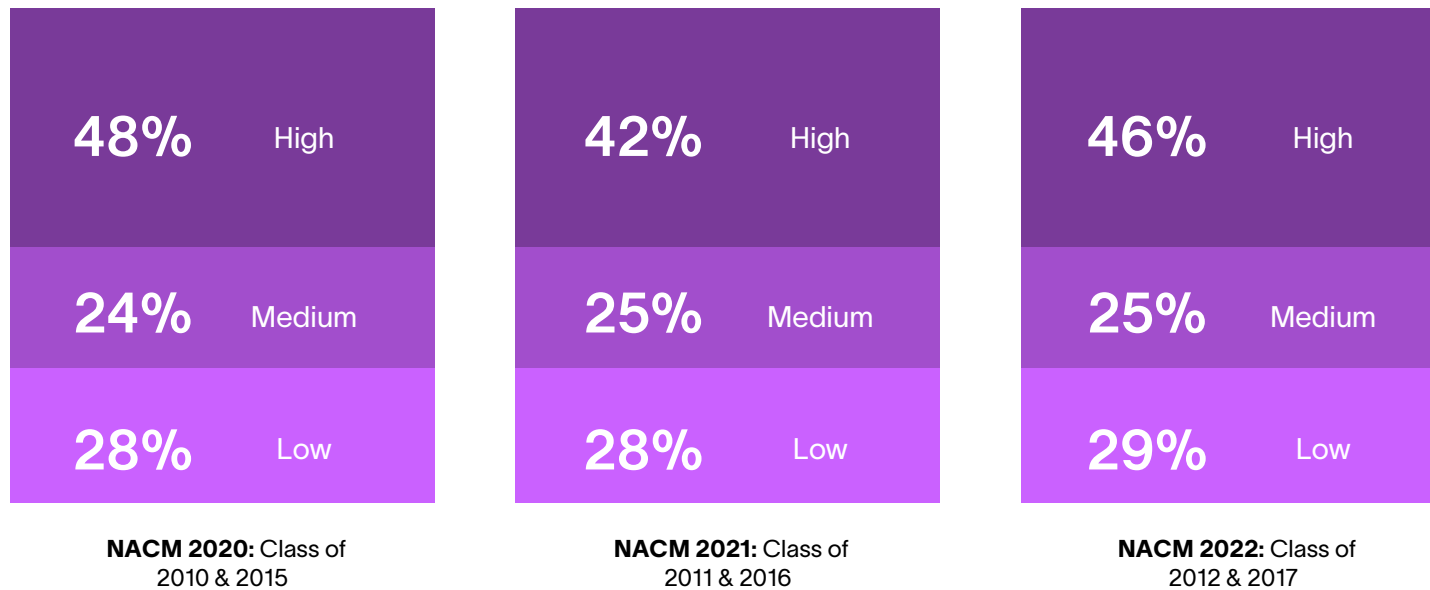
ECONOMIC MOBILITY

The third factor included in the Career Mobility Index is Economic Mobility. This factor is calculated using three questions (see Appendix b for detailed methodology):

- I currently earn a higher income than the household in which I grew up.
- I expect to earn more in the future than the household in which I grew up.
- My earning potential is higher than the household in which I grew up.

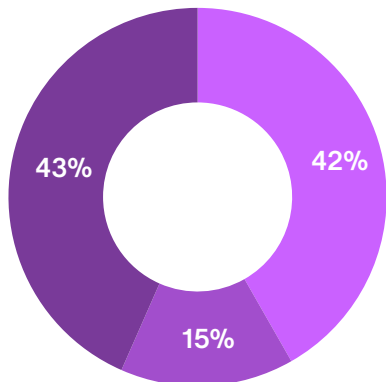
Scores on overall Economic Mobility have remained consistent over the past three cohorts.

Economic Mobility Over Time

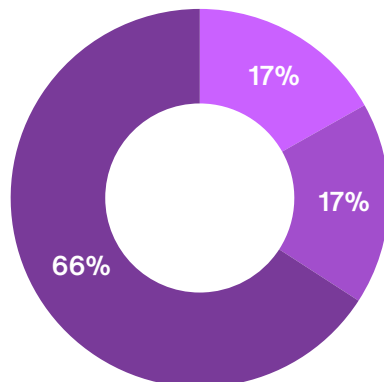


While respondents were split about current income being higher than the household in which they grew up, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they expect to earn more in the future and that their earning potential is higher than the household in which they grew up.

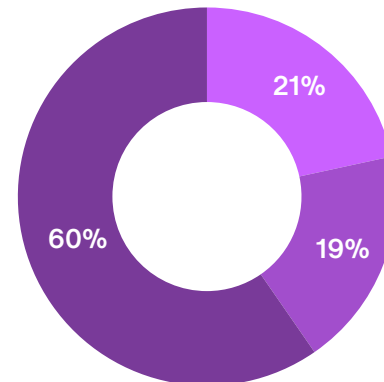
I currently earn a higher income than the household in which I grew up



I expect to earn more in the future than the household in which I grew up



My earning potential is higher than the household in which I grew up



Strongly agree/Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

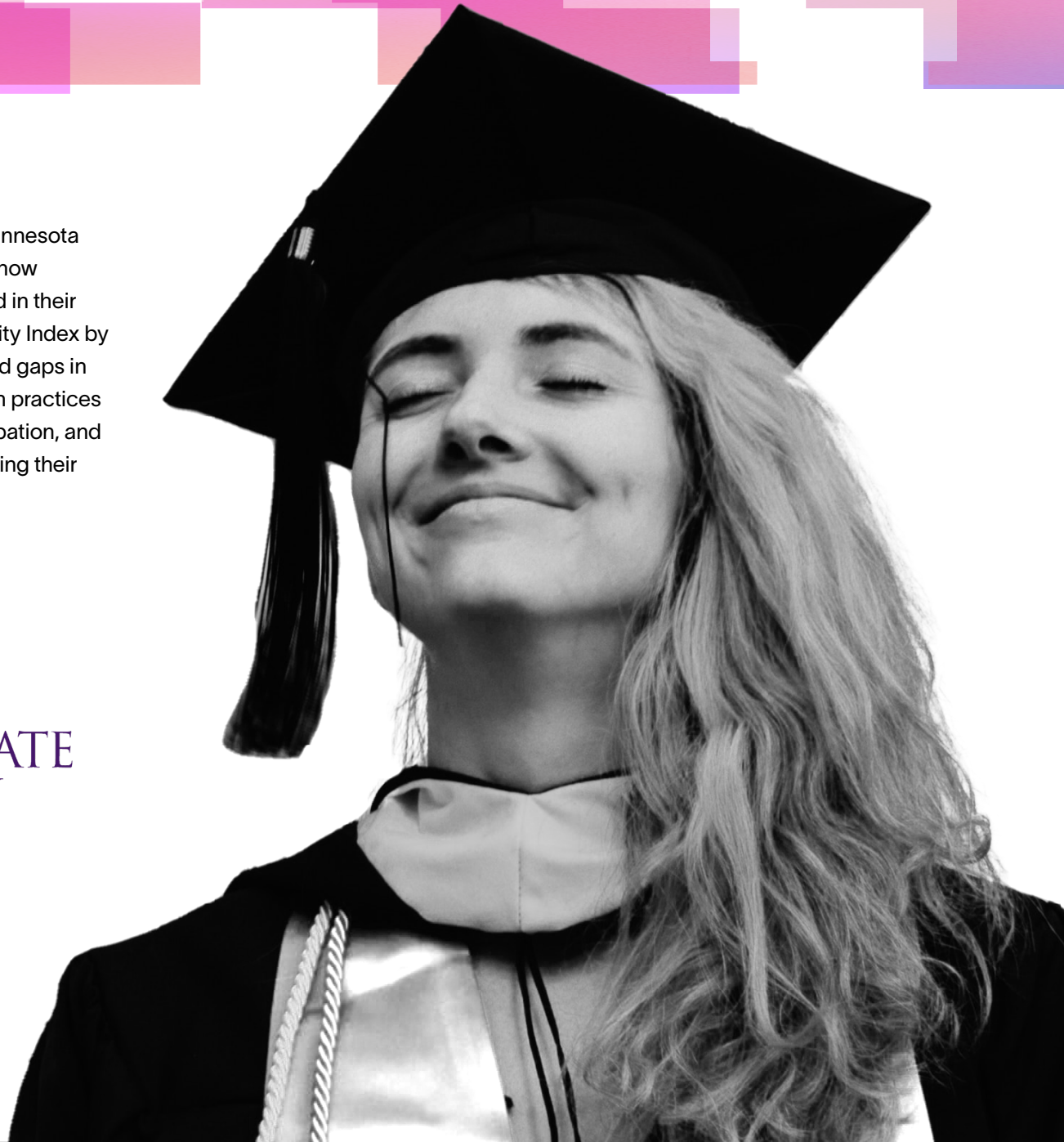
Strongly disagree/Disagree

The Career Mobility Index provides higher education with the opportunity to define student success beyond the traditional measures of retention, graduation and first job/salary. Measuring success five and ten years after graduation while using a model that includes career preparation, career satisfaction and economic mobility not only provides a multifaceted and concise metric to demonstrate success, but also an opportunity to use that metric to further examine how experiences during the student life cycle can influence it.



Campus Highlight

After receiving their 2022 NACM data, Minnesota State University Mankato asked themselves how they define success, and where gaps existed in their student body. By exploring the Career Mobility Index by demographic variables, they were able to find gaps in alumni success and connect those gaps with practices such as student loan debt, internship participation, and career readiness competencies, thus furthering their conversation around diversity and equity.



Transforming Career Preparation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Those who engaged in the high impact career practices were statistically more likely to agree that their degree was worth the tuition.

Respondents who agreed that their institution helped them **understand career opportunities** were **4.4x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

Respondents who agreed that their institution helped them **create a career plan** were **6.3x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

Respondents who agreed that their institution **helped them network with employers** were **3.6x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

Respondents who agreed that their **internship was related to their current career** were **1.9x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

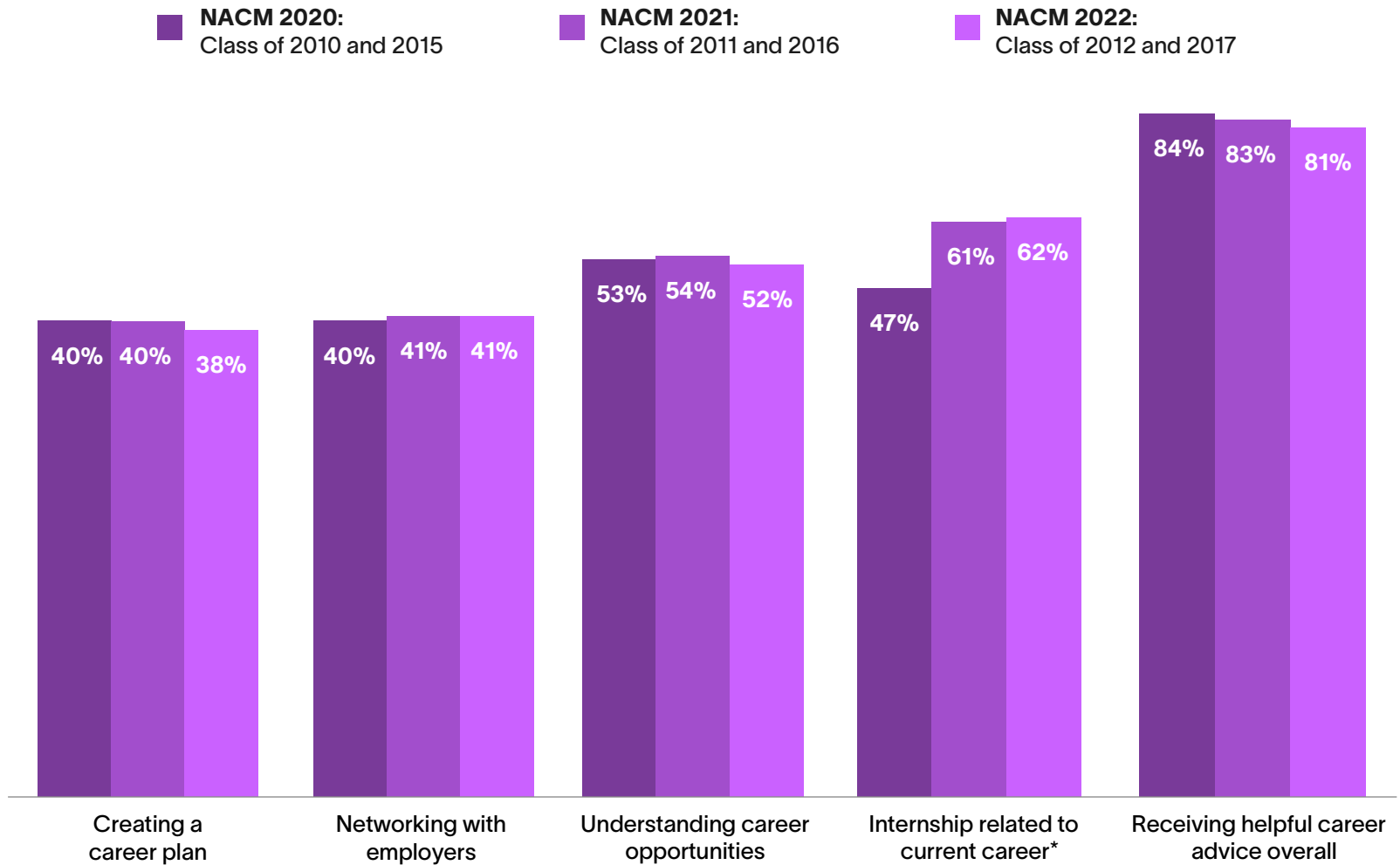
Respondents who received **helpful career advice** were **2.0x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

INTRODUCTION

The Career Mobility Index (CMI) builds a foundation for measuring success. Its link to perceptions of the value of a given degree make the case that higher career mobility leads to higher ROI. The next step is to examine the practices linked with high CMI with the goal of understanding how to influence success during the student life cycle. This provides a much-needed feedback loop between alumni success five and ten years after graduation and the student experience while obtaining a degree.

Engagement in the High Impact Career Practices followed similar patterns from previous years, with most respondents receiving helpful career advice. Less alumni engaged with internships related to their career, networking with employers, creating a plan for their career, and understanding career opportunities.



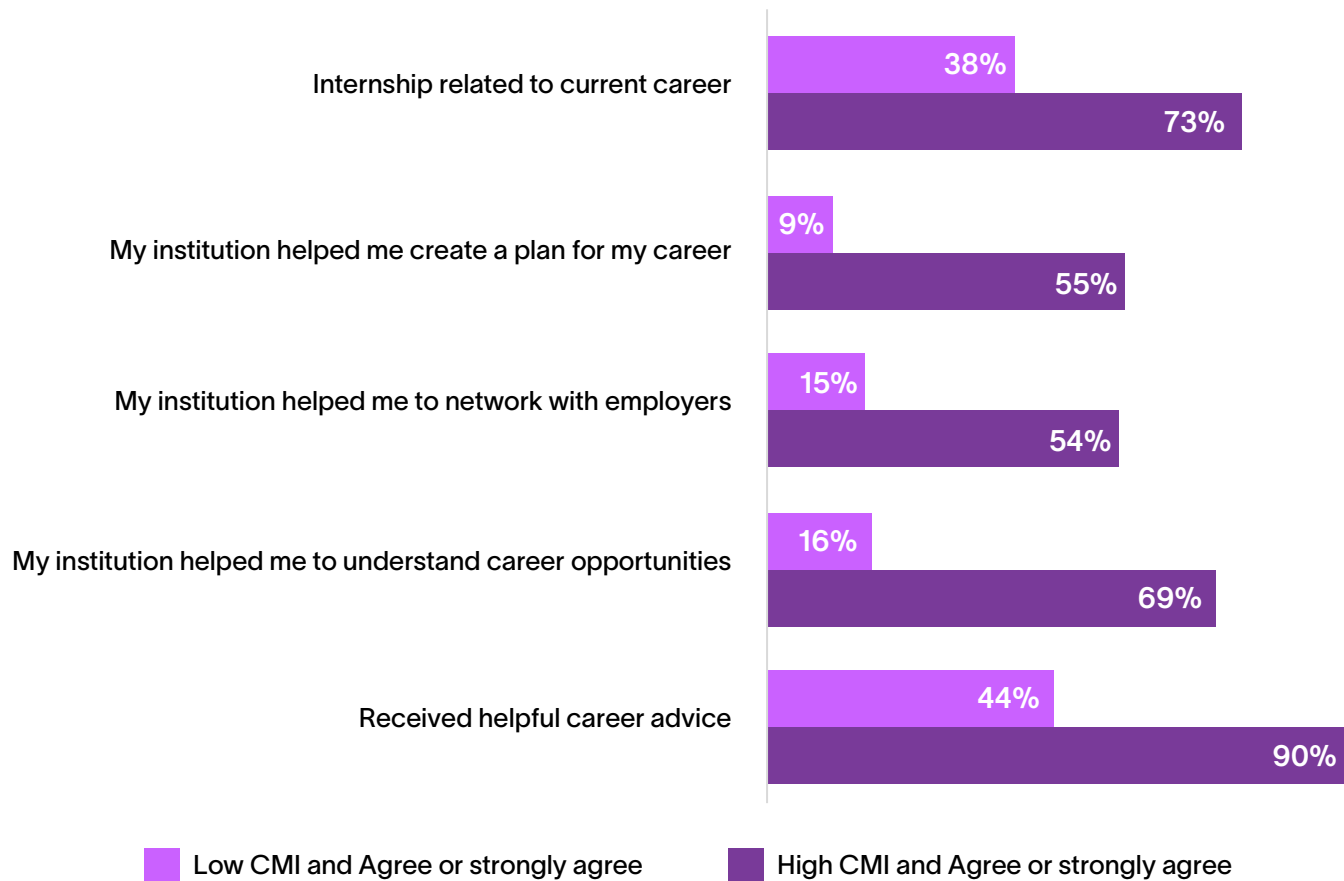



*change in percent between 2020-2021 for internship is due to a change in scale used to measure this variable



HIGH IMPACT CAREER PRACTICES AND CAREER MOBILITY

The connection between career mobility and these practices is statistically strong. When explored through the lens of those scoring high on the CMI (4-5 on a 5-point scale) or low on the CMI (1-2 on a 5-point scale) the difference becomes clear.





Through experiencing the High Impact Career Practices, alumni are more likely to score higher on the Career Mobility index:

- Respondents who agreed that their institution helped them **understand career opportunities** were **4.4x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who agreed that their institution **helped them create a career plan** were **6.3x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who agreed that their institution **helped them network with employers** were **3.6x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who agreed that their **internship was related to their current career** were **1.9x more likely** to score high on the CMI.
- Respondents who received **helpful career advice** were **2.0x more likely** to score high on the CMI.

CONNECTING HIGH IMPACT CAREER PRACTICES TO CAMPUS INITIATIVES

High Impact Career Practices are most effective when woven into the fabric of the University. Therefore, it's important to consider the places where these practices connect with key competencies and other high impact experiences.

In addition to the high impact career practices, six influential career readiness competencies also factored into scoring high on the CMI. These competencies include:



- My degree helped me gain career & self-development skills ($r^2=0.26$)
- My degree helped me gain decision making skills ($r^2=0.19$)
- My degree helped me gain professionalism skills ($r^2=0.18$)
- My degree helped me gain leadership skills ($r^2=0.18$)
- My degree helped me gain adaptability skills ($r^2=0.17$)
- My degree helped me gain teamwork skills ($r^2=0.17$)

While most [high impact educational experiences](#) do not have statistical significance when modeled with CMI, they do have practical significance given their proven effect on student success in relation to retention and graduation, as well as their wide-spread implementation at many institutions.

Both the competencies and high impact educational experiences present an “and” opportunity in conjunction with the High Impact Career Practices. When designed with career preparation in mind, high impact educational experiences present an ideal environment for experiencing the high impact career practices. For example, undergraduate research can be designed as an opportunity to explore career opportunities or create a career plan. In addition, High Impact Career Practices can be made a priority when constructing learning experiences that meet the career readiness competencies.

Campus Highlight

Belmont University noticed that their alumni reported lower scores in “My institution helped me create a plan for my career” compared to their peers, as well as being the lowest score of all high impact career practices for their institution. They set to work creating an initiative to ensure that all students have access to explore, prepare, connect, and flourish in creating a career plan. In addition, they are tracking individual and institutional progress via a Career Plan Scorecard.



Career Pathways, Salary, and Satisfaction

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Career pathways has remained stable over the past 3 years of NACM data with the exception of fewer respondents earning additional degrees.

Median salary is on an upward trend across 3 years of NACM data.

85% of respondents find their work meaningful.

INTRODUCTION

The career paths of alumni five and ten years after graduation have remained relatively stable over the past three years. NACM 2020 (class of 2010 and 2015) saw slightly more diverse types of career paths, but that could be a consequence of COVID-19.

	NACM 2020: Class of 2010 and 2015	NACM 2021: Class of 2011 and 2016	NACM 2022: Class of 2012 and 2017
Full-time employment	97%	96%	96%
Earned additional degree(s)	47%	32%	33%
Part-time employment	48%	34%	32%
Contract/temporary work	32%	25%	24%
Internship or similar experience	40%	22%	22%
Self-employment	20%	14%	12%
Unemployed by choice	11%	6%	6%
Unemployed and seeking for more than 6 months	11%	6%	5%
Post-grad fellowship	8%	4%	5%
Founded a company or non-profit	10%	4%	5%
Service work (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, etc.)	7%	4%	4%
Military service	2%	2%	2%



SALARY

Self-reported median salary ranges show an upward trend over time.

Respondents who identified as Women, Nonbinary/genderqueer/genderfluid, Lantix, Black/African American, Indigenous/ Native American/Alaskan Native, and First-generation were significantly less likely to agree that their salary is enough to pay their bills every month.

	NACM 2020: Class of 2010 and 2015	NACM 2021: Class of 2011 and 2016	NACM 2022: Class of 2012 and 2017
1-year post degree	\$35,000 - \$39,999	\$30,000-\$34,999	\$35,000 - \$39,999
5-years post degree	\$55,000-\$59,999	\$55,000-\$59,999	\$60,000 - \$69,999
10-years post degree	\$70,000-\$79,999	\$70,000-\$79,999	\$90,000 - \$99,999

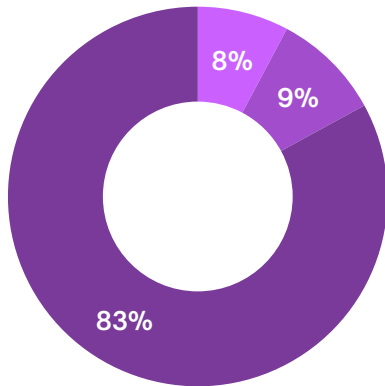
OVERALL SENTIMENTS ABOUT CAREER

Overall, most respondents have positive impressions of their career. They are using the skills learned during their degree and have opportunities for further learning. In addition, 85% are finding meaning in their work.

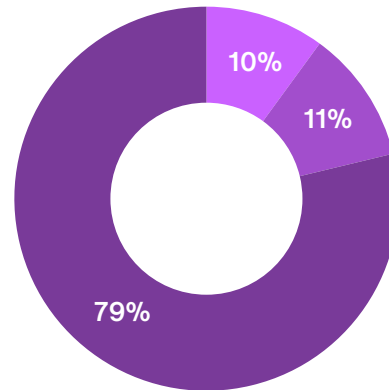
Tracking career pathways over time provides a larger perspective on alumni careers beyond first destination and can often assist in understanding alumni perceptions of their degree.



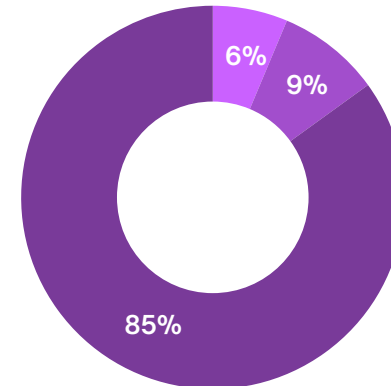
I am satisfied with my career so far



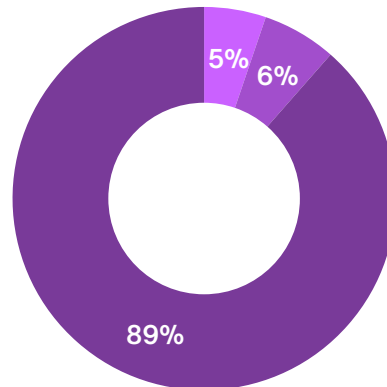
I am content with the progression of my career



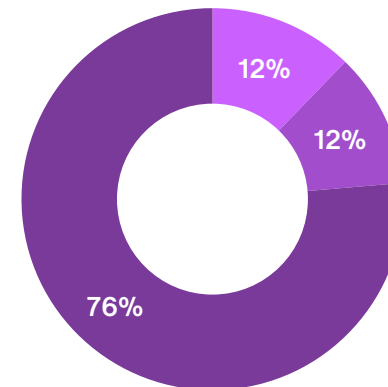
The work I do in my current position is meaningful to me



My current position provides opportunities for further learning and skill development



My current position requires me to use the skills I learned during my degree



Strongly agree/Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Strongly disagree/Disagree



Equitable Access to High Impact Career Practices

KEY TAKEAWAYS

There are statistically significant gaps in three practices: 1) Creating a Career Plan, 2) Understanding Career Opportunities, and 3) Networking with Employers.

Equity gaps found in access to high impact career practices echo throughout the research themes with scores:

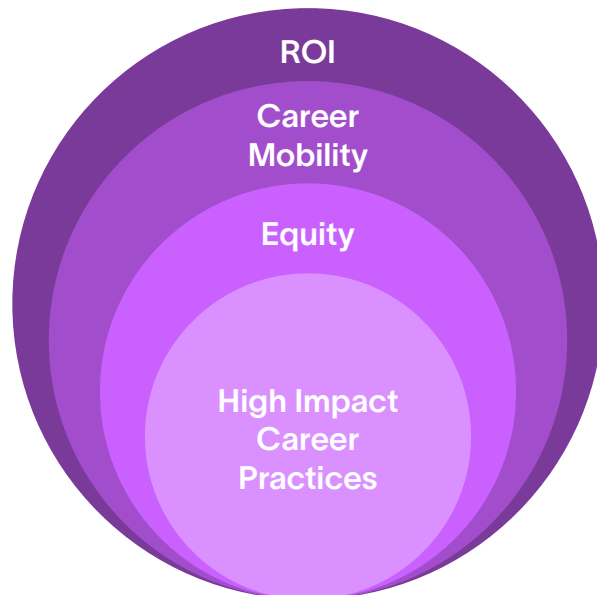
Career Preparation: Nonbinary, Hispanic and Black respondents score significantly lower.

Career Satisfaction: Nonbinary, Hispanic, Black and Indigenous respondents scoring significantly lower.

Institutional Career Investment: Nonbinary and first generation respondents scoring significantly lower.

INTRODUCTION

In the 2022 cohort, equity gaps are still evident, especially among three of the high impact career practices: creating career plans, understanding career opportunities, and networking with employers. Institutions seeking to address equity and increase CMI and ROI must first close gaps in how students access Higher Impact Career Practices.



When exploring equity gaps in the graphs below, notice the following themes:

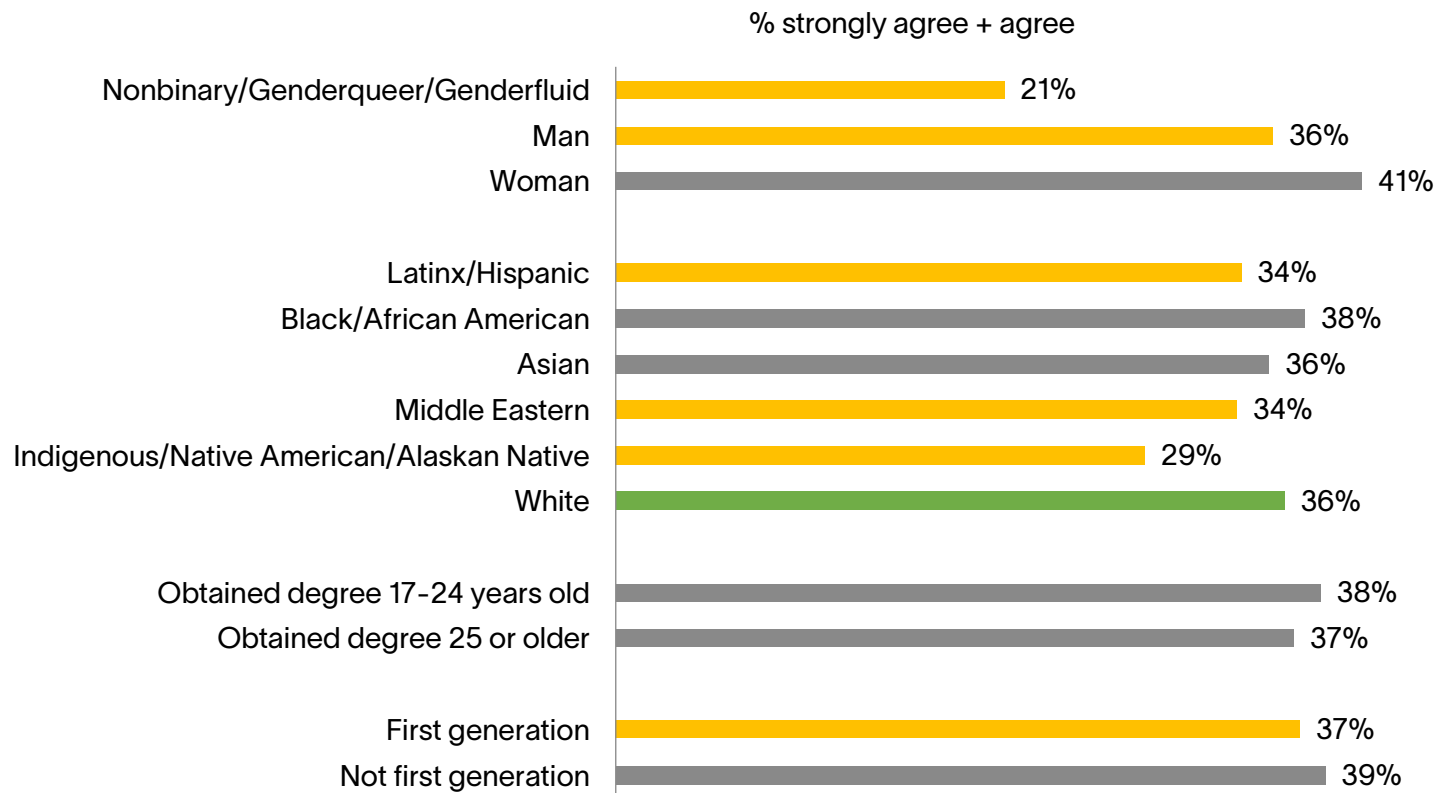
- There are statistically significant gaps in three practices, 1) Creating a Career Plan, 2) Understanding Career Opportunities, and 3) Networking with Employers.
- Only one identity group, Black/African American, reported having significantly less internship opportunities than other identity groups, AND those who do have them are less likely to have internships related to their career.
- Equity gaps found in access to high impact career practices echo throughout the research themes with scores:
 - **Career Preparation:** Nonbinary, Hispanic and Black identities score significantly lower.
 - **Institutional Career Investment:** Nonbinary and first generation respondents score significantly lower.
 - **Career Satisfaction:** Nonbinary, Hispanic, Black and Indigenous respondents score significantly lower.



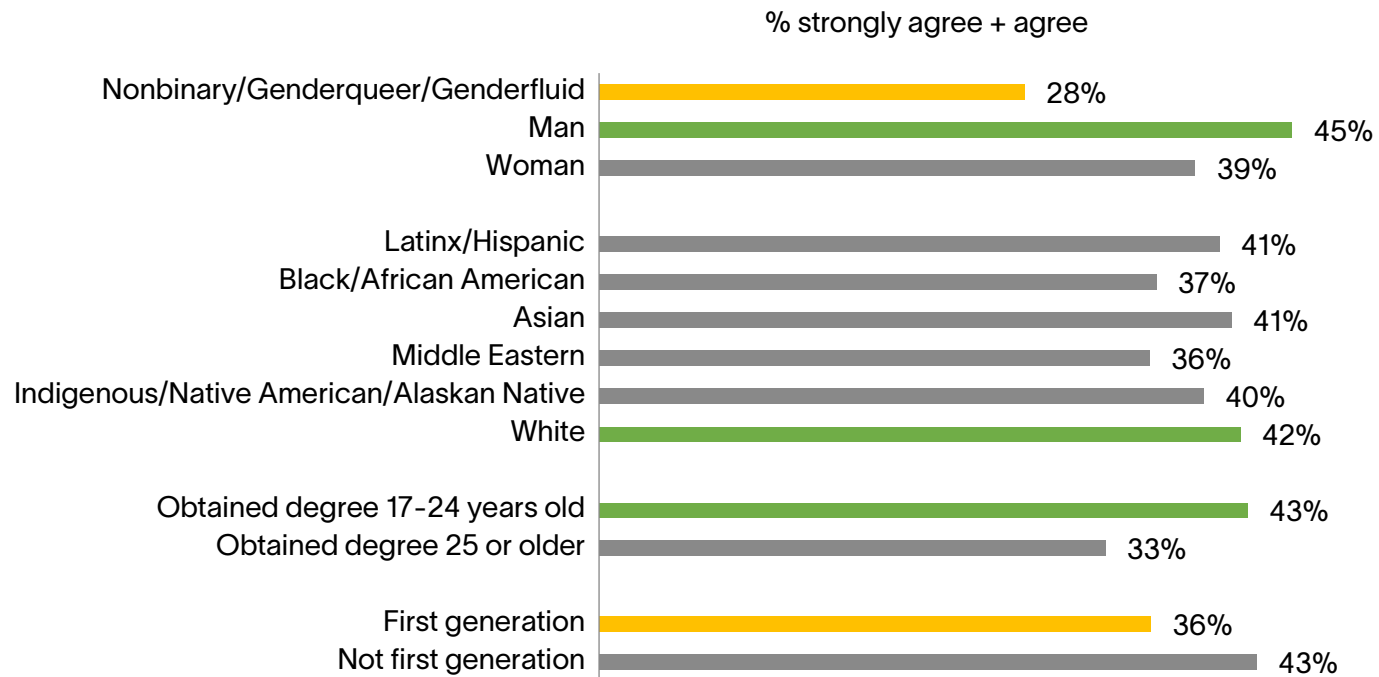
STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE BY IDENTITY GROUP

In the graphs below, **green indicates identities who were significantly more likely to agree** and **yellow represents identities who were significantly less likely to agree** compared to those who did not identify with that category.

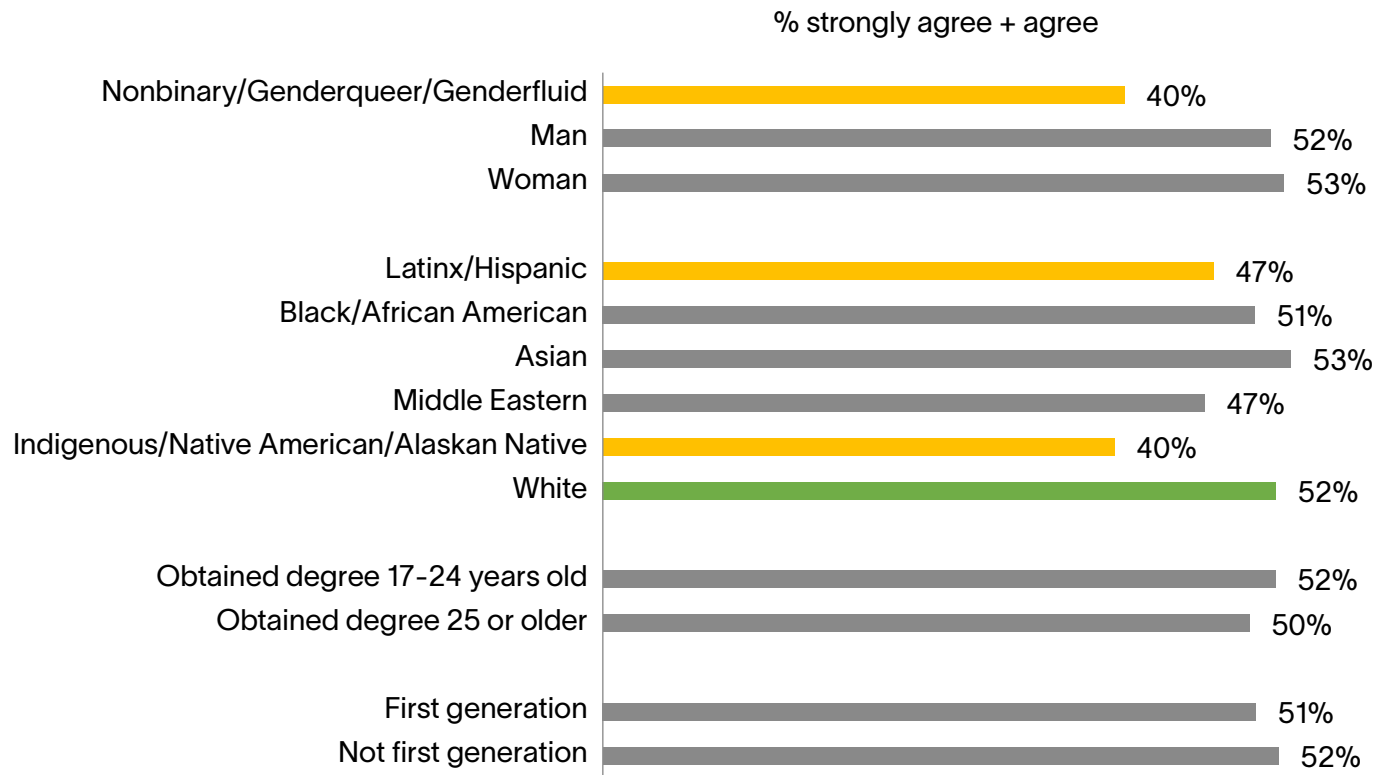
Creating a Plan for Career



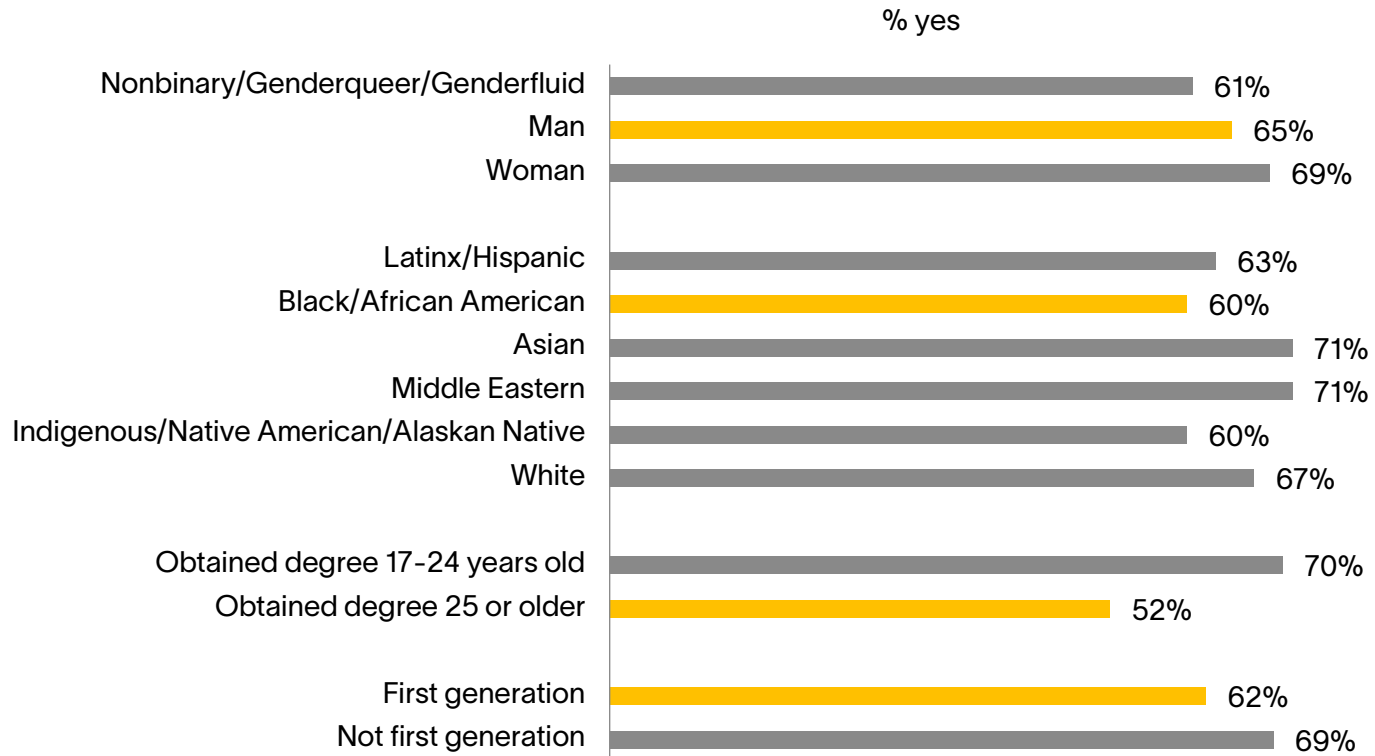
Networking with Employers



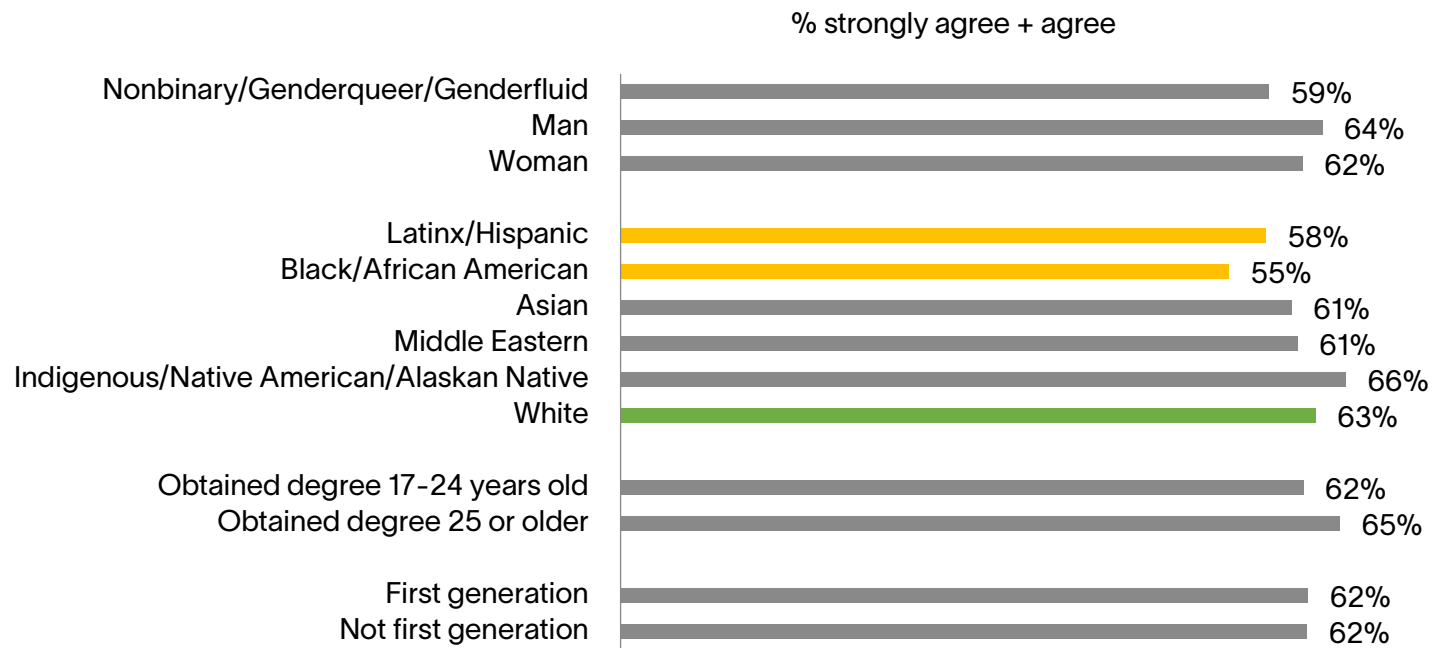
Understanding Career Opportunities



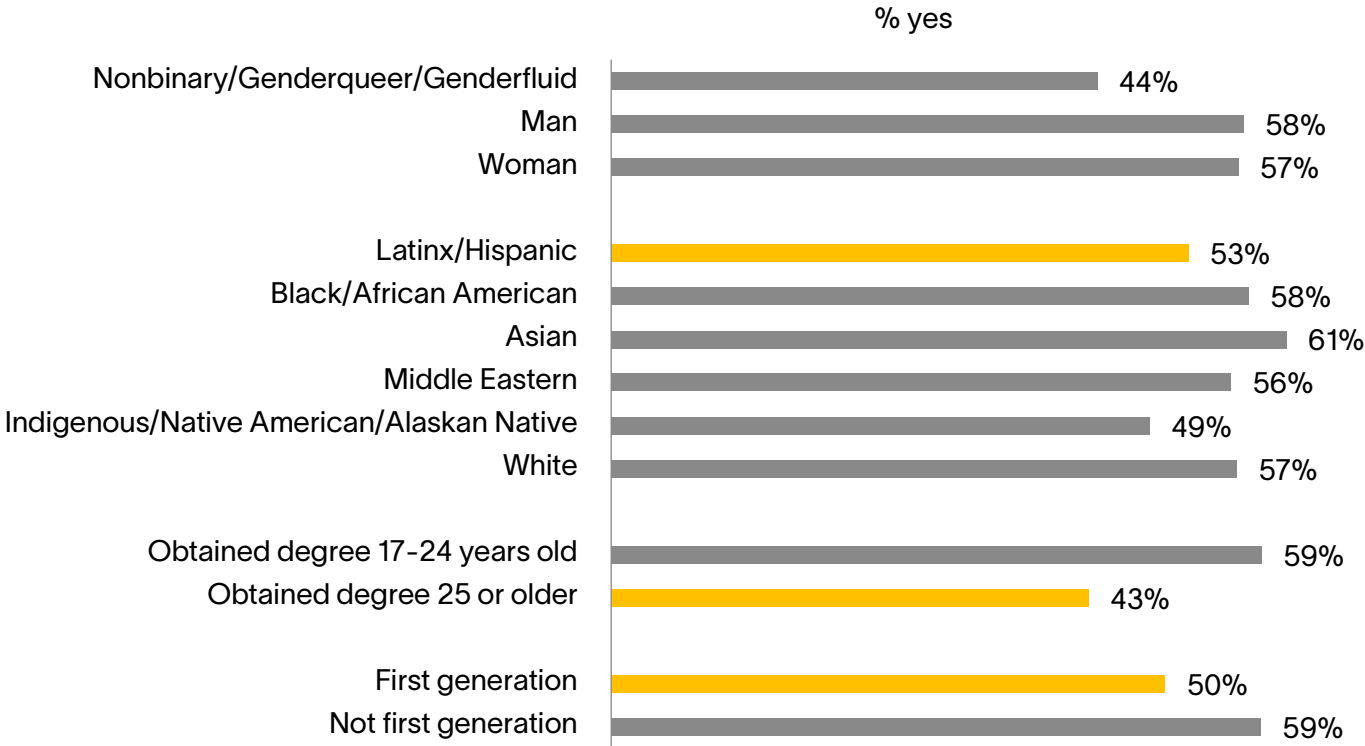
Participated in an Internship



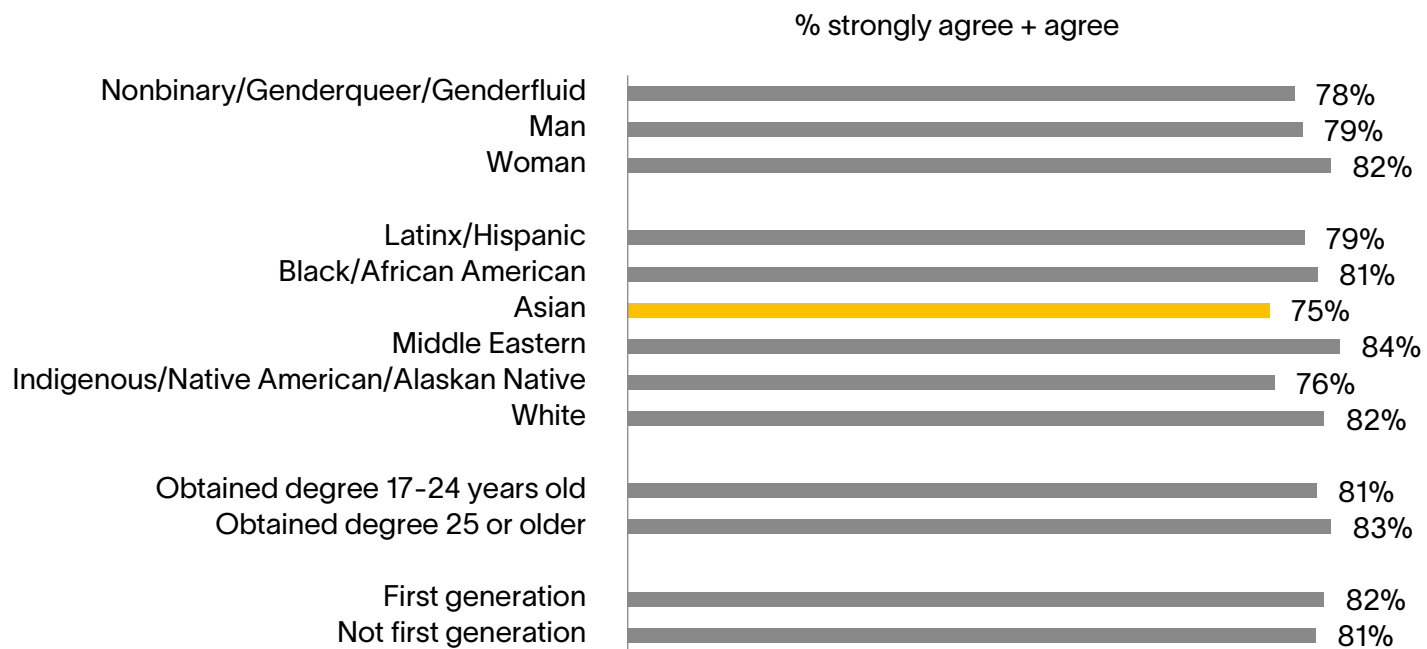
Internship Related to Career Goals



Received Career Advice



Career Advice was Helpful



Campus Highlight

An important part of the mission of St. Paul's Metro State University is to be an anti-racist institution. To assist in this effort, they combined three years of NACM data to conduct an in depth study of equity gaps. They then triangulated that data with assessments being conducted on the student life cycle, and evidence being gathered for strategic planning. Together, the data helped in focusing the institution's work on career readiness. They are working with a group of faculty to build three high impact career practices (understanding career opportunities, creating a plan for career, and networking with employers) into the curriculum to address equity gaps.



**METRO STATE
UNIVERSITY**



Recommendations

Ensure collection of robust alumni data on your campus

Most campuses around the country lack alumni career data beyond the first job. Pursuing broader and longer-term career data allows your campus to discern a more comprehensive set of trends related to success, equity, satisfaction, and the overall career mobility of your alumni in accordance with your institutional mission.

Connect intellectual development with career preparation

Use the High Impact Career Practices to integrate career preparation into the academic experience, and to provide alumni with tools for career decision-making, both during and after their degree. Consider integrating experience so that intellectual development AND career preparation are connected throughout the student lifecycle.

Focus on gains in Career Mobility

The connection between ROI and career mobility is key for campuses. By taking steps to improve career mobility, they not only improve the long-term success of their graduates, but also see larger gains in return on investment.

Amplify the importance of high impact career practices throughout the student life cycle

Respondents engaged in the High Impact Career Practices are more likely to have higher levels of career mobility, decide on their career in high school or during their degree, and perceive the degree to be worth the tuition they paid. The High Impact Career Practices enable a campus to focus on the best strategies for career preparation, and consider how they might become more embedded into the life cycle of instruction, curriculum, the co-curricular, and advising practices on campus. Campus-specific successes, offerings, and commitments to career mobility should be showcased to internal and external audiences.

Strategically address equity gaps

To address equity gaps, particular attention should be paid to engaging historically marginalized groups with three of the High Impact Career Practices: 1) networking with employers, 2) career planning, and 3) understanding career opportunities. In addition, institutions need to address student loan debt, particularly for these groups.



Appendices

Demographics and Institutional Information

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

9,052 alumni with undergraduate degrees responded to the 2022 NACM survey. The demographic make-up of respondents are as follows:

Class year	
2012	44%
2017	56%
Gender	
Woman	60%
Man	37%
Nonbinary	1.3%
Agender	0.1%
Another identity not listed	0.3%
Prefer not to respond	1.7%
First Generation Status	
First Generation college student	26%
Not first generation	74%
Age while obtaining degree	
17-24 years old	84%
25 years old or older	15%

Race	
Asian	8%
Black/African American	5%
Latinx	7%
Indigenous, Native American, Alaskan Native	1%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.5%
Middle Eastern	1.7%
White	83%
None of the above	0.5%
Prefer not to respond	3%
Years spent living in same state as institution after graduating	
No years	25%
1-2 years	12%
3-5 years	40%
6-7 years	4%
8-10 years	20%



INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Data collected in partnership with 38 institutions contributed to the data in this dataset. Institutional characteristics are as follows:

Public/Private	
Private	47%
Public	53%
Carnegie Basic Classification	
Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus	16%
Doctoral Universities: High Research Activities	8%
Doctoral University: Very High Research Activity	34%
Doctoral/Professional Universities	8%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs	18%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs	13%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs	3%
Carnegie Enrollment Profile	
Exclusively Undergraduate 4-year	5%
High undergraduate	37%
Majority undergraduate	24%
Very high undergraduate	29%
Majority graduate	5%

Carnegie Size Classification	
Four-year, small, highly residential	18%
Four-year, medium, primarily residential	8%
Four-year, medium, primarily nonresidential	8%
Four-year, medium, highly residential	18%
Four-year, large, primarily residential	16%
Four-year, large, primarily nonresidential	13%
Four-year, medium, highly residential	18%
Size Condensed	
Small	18%
Medium	34%
Large	47%
Region of Country	
U.S. Midwest	32%
U.S. Northeast	26%
U.S. South	13%
U.S. West	11%
U.S. Southwest	11%
U.S. Mid-Atlantic	8%



Methodology

Face validity of NACM was established at a national convening in March 2019 where administrators and career leaders from 25 public and private colleges and universities came together to review, edit, and refine the instrument. In 2020, item analysis after two subsequent pilot administrations established statistical validity of multiple constructs addressing the areas of interest.

RESEARCH THEMES

A factor analysis was conducted in April 2021 for the five NACM 2020 research themes using maximum likelihood extraction and direct oblimin rotation. All factors had good reliability ($\alpha > .80$). The final model had good fit and residual statistics: CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05. The resulting structure is as follows:

- Career Pathway Preparation ($\alpha = .85$)
- Career Satisfaction ($\alpha = .91$)
- Community Engagement ($\alpha = .83$)
- Economic Mobility ($\alpha = .90$)
- Institutional Career Investment ($\alpha = .90$)

A factor information sheet for the research themes is available upon request.

CAREER MOBILITY INDEX

A hierarchical factor analysis was conducted in April 2021 for the 14 Career Mobility Index (CMI) items using maximum likelihood extraction and bifactor rotation. The general CMI

factor as well as three subfactors had good reliability ($\alpha > .80$). The final model had excellent fit and residual statistics: CFI = .99, RMSEA = .04. The resulting structure is as follows:

- CMI Overall ($\alpha = .90$)
 - Career Pathway Preparation ($\alpha = .85$)
 - Career Satisfaction ($\alpha = .91$)
 - Economic Mobility ($\alpha = .90$)

A factor information sheet for the CMI is available upon request.

FACTOR SCORES AND INTERPRETATION

Factor scores range from 1.0 to 5.0 and are calculated by taking the average of the items in each factor for each respondent. Scores for a given factor are only calculated for respondents who answered all the questions in that factor. A low score on the CMI or a research factor is defined as 1.0 – 2.9, a moderate score is defined as 3.0 – 3.9, and a high score is defined as 4.0 – 5.0.





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NACM was developed by the Career Leadership Collective and is now part of Lightcast's suite of data-driven solutions powering learner career success.

Lightcast and the Collective maintain a strategic partnership to meet the alumni tracking and tracking and career-readiness needs of higher education.

232 N Almon St, Moscow, ID 83843 | 66 Long Wharf, Boston, MA 02110
(208) 883-3500
info@lightcast.io
lightcast.io





lightcast.io