

Montana's partnerships for delivering higher education value



2025

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In both 2021 and 2023, we surveyed a representative sample of Montanans about their perceptions of higher education

Region	2021		2023	
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
Eastern	7%	169	7%	172
North Central	13%	205	14%	176
Northwest	32%	245	32%	215
South Central	19%	211	20%	213
Southwest	29%	263	27%	252
Gender				
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
Male	50%	437	48%	382
Female	50%	640	51%	629
Self-describe	0%	2	1%	4
Household Income				
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
\$0 to \$29,999	15%	109	15%	113
\$30,000 to \$49,999	17%	162	19%	154
\$50,000 to \$74,999	19%	221	17%	181
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20%	190	18%	177
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19%	209	18%	197
\$150,000 or more	11%	149	12%	137

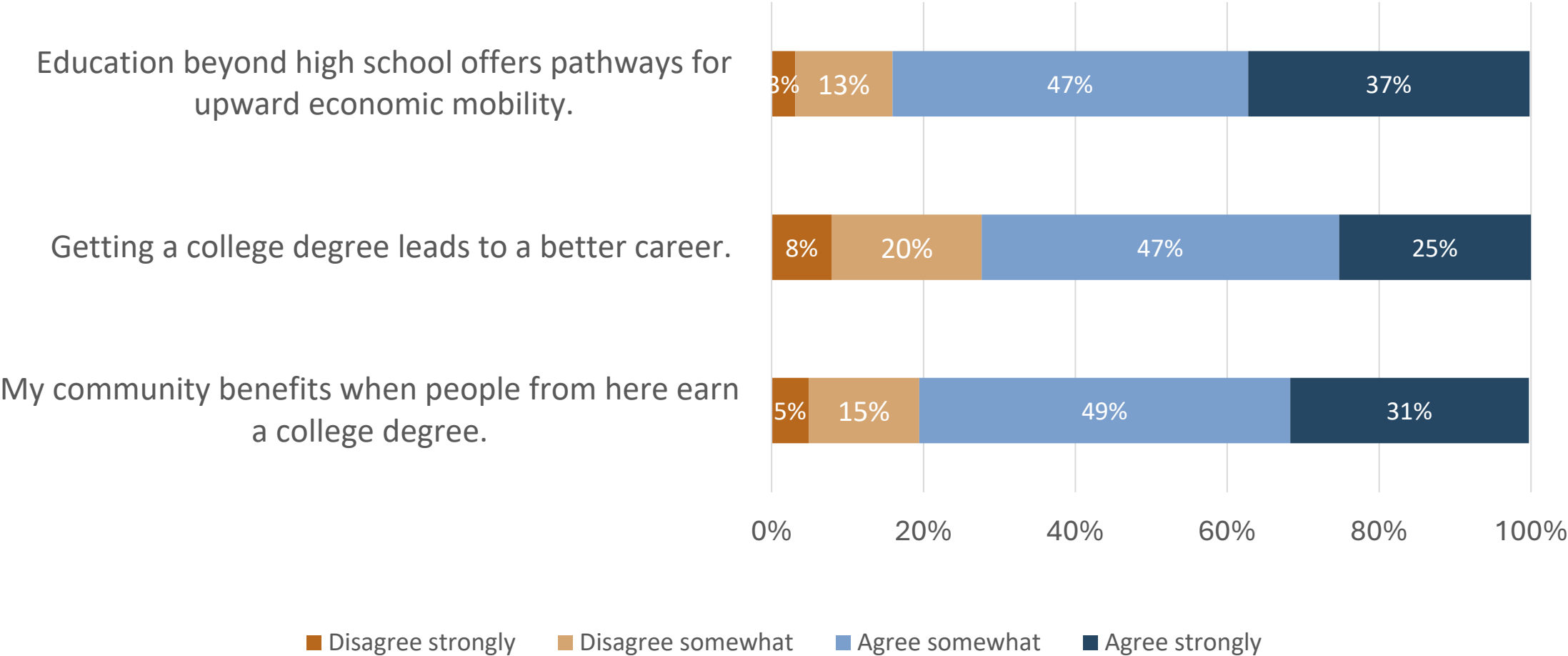
Household Size	2021		2023	
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
1	25%	260	26%	255
2	42%	528	41%	478
3	13%	122	13%	115
4 or more	19%	173	20%	166
Community Size				
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
Less than 1,000	13%	149	13%	148
1,000 to 9,999	28%	322	25%	292
10,000 to 49,999	23%	192	20%	160
50,000 or more	36%	409	43%	400
Educ. Attainment				
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
No HS diploma	4%	25	3%	17
High school diploma	14%	99	17%	104
Some college	33%	192	31%	182
Associate Degree	20%	122	16%	97
Bachelor's degree	13%	287	15%	299
Some grad school	3%	70	3%	68
Graduate degree	13%	295	14%	252

Age	2021		2023	
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
18-34	26%	128	22%	140
35-44	18%	134	18%	149
45-54	13%	152	14%	116
55-64	21%	215	20%	179
65+	23%	442	26%	420
Race/Ethnicity				
	Weighted Percent	Total Responses	Weighted Percent	Total Responses
White/Caucasian	89%	991	90%	937
Black/AA	1%	4	1%	6
AIAN	7%	52	4%	50
Hispanic/Latino	4%	24	1%	10
Asian	1%	14	0%	6
Pacific Islander	1%	5	0%	2
Other	2%	19	2%	26

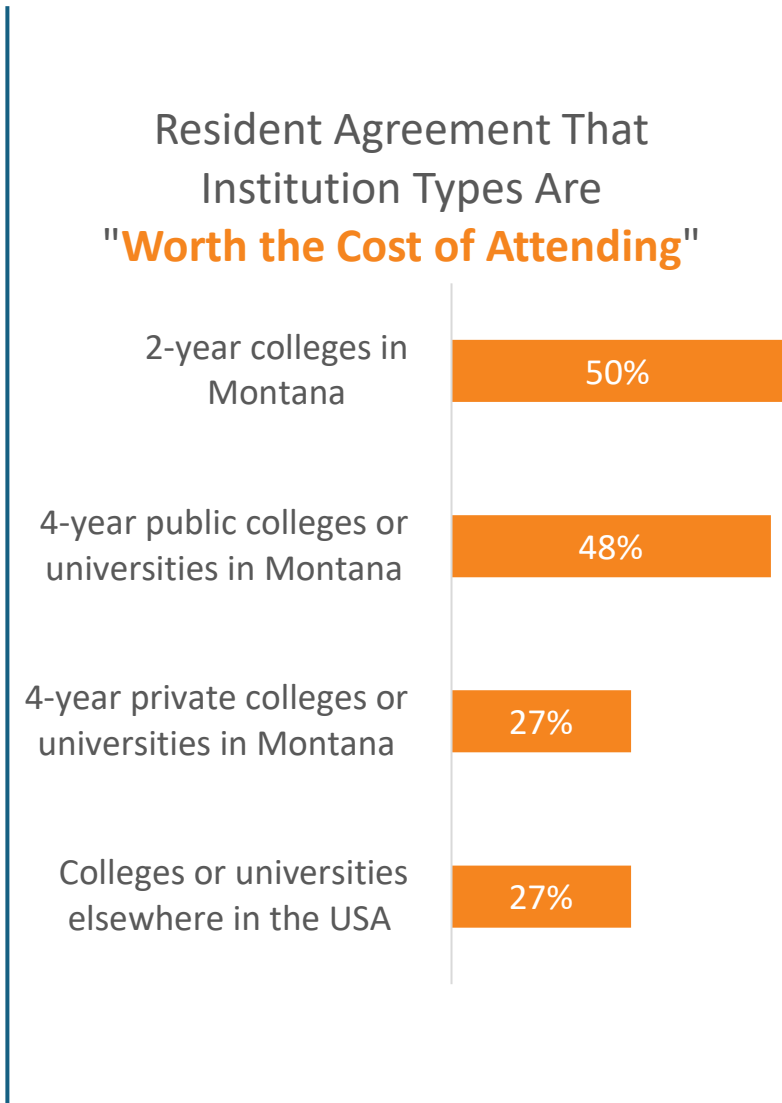
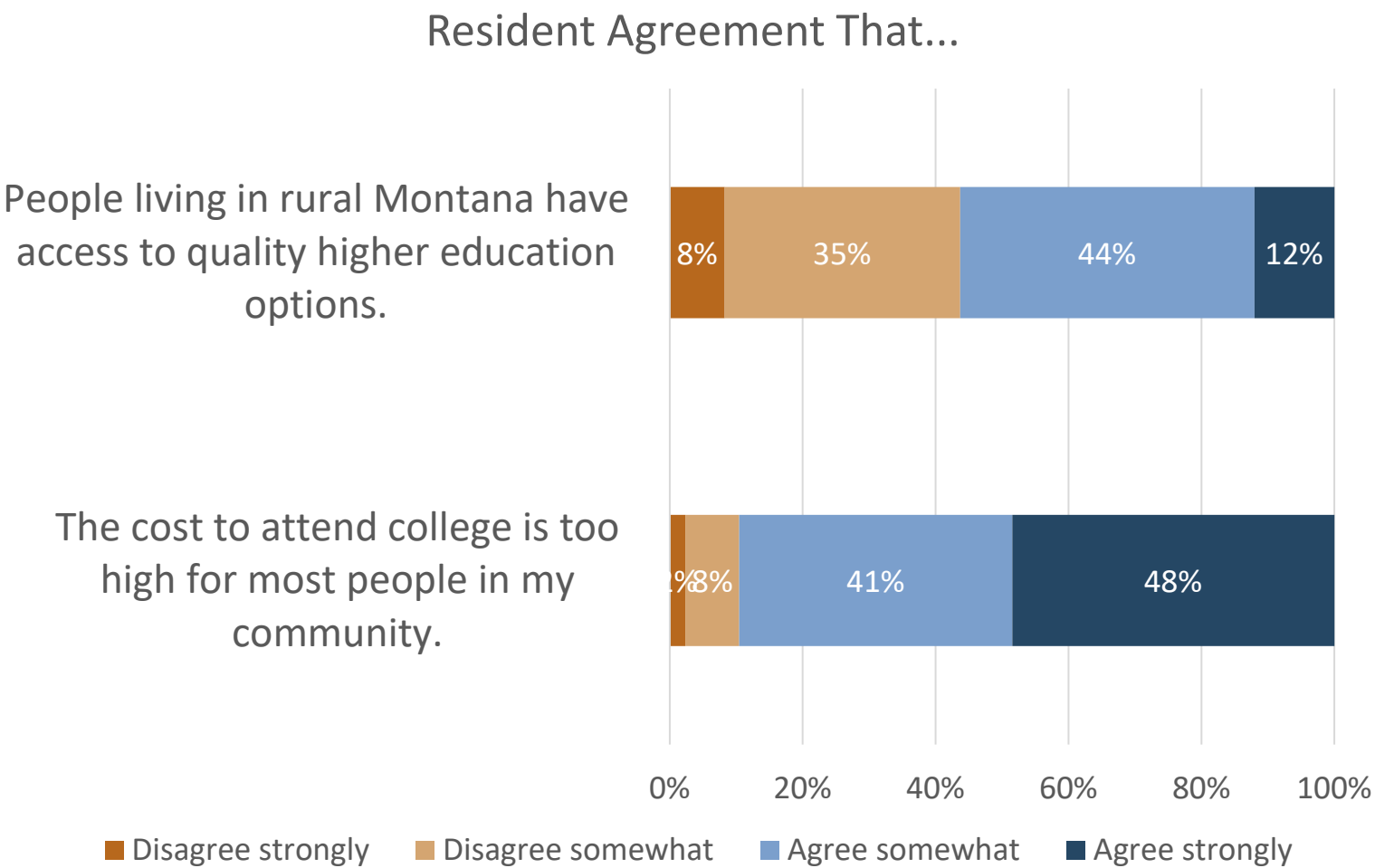
In 2021, 1,095 completed surveys were weighted to represent Montana by region, gender, age, and educational attainment. Adjusted margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the 2021 sample is $\pm 4.8\%$. In 2023, 1,028 completed surveys were weighted by the same demographic variables. Adjusted margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the 2023 sample is $\pm 4.5\%$. Weighted percentages exclude non-response.

Montanans perceive college as good for individuals and society.

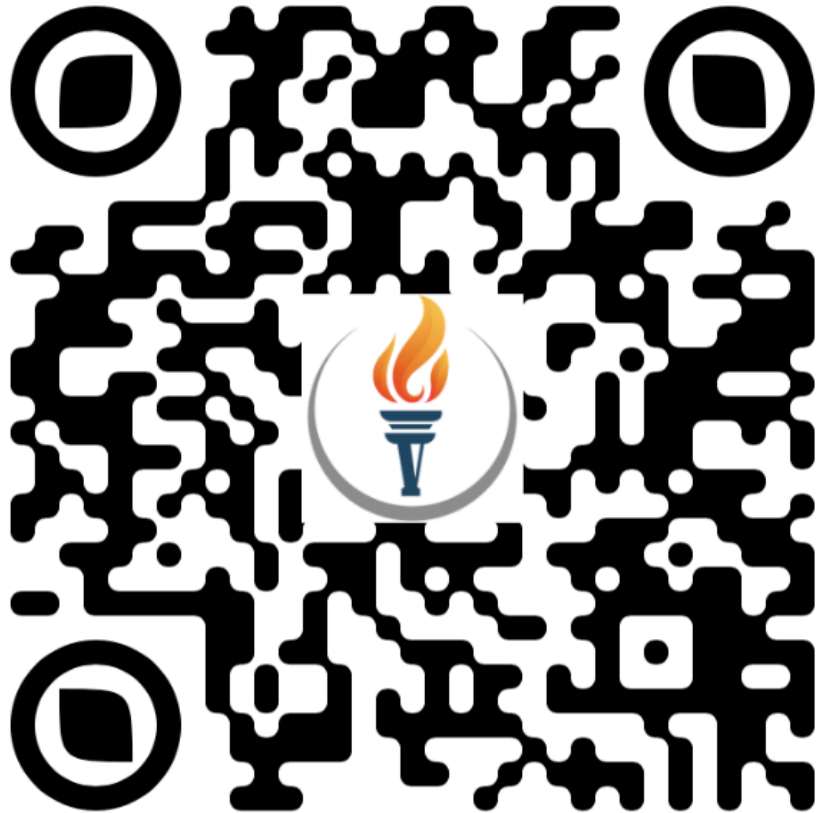
Resident Agreement That...



However, barriers to value persist.



Please do read the full report



PERCEPTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MONTANA

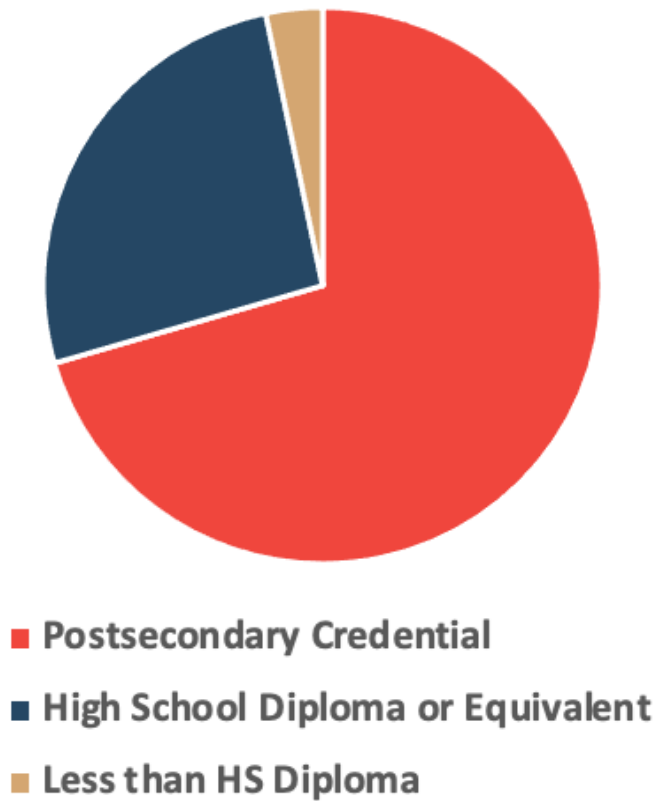
2024



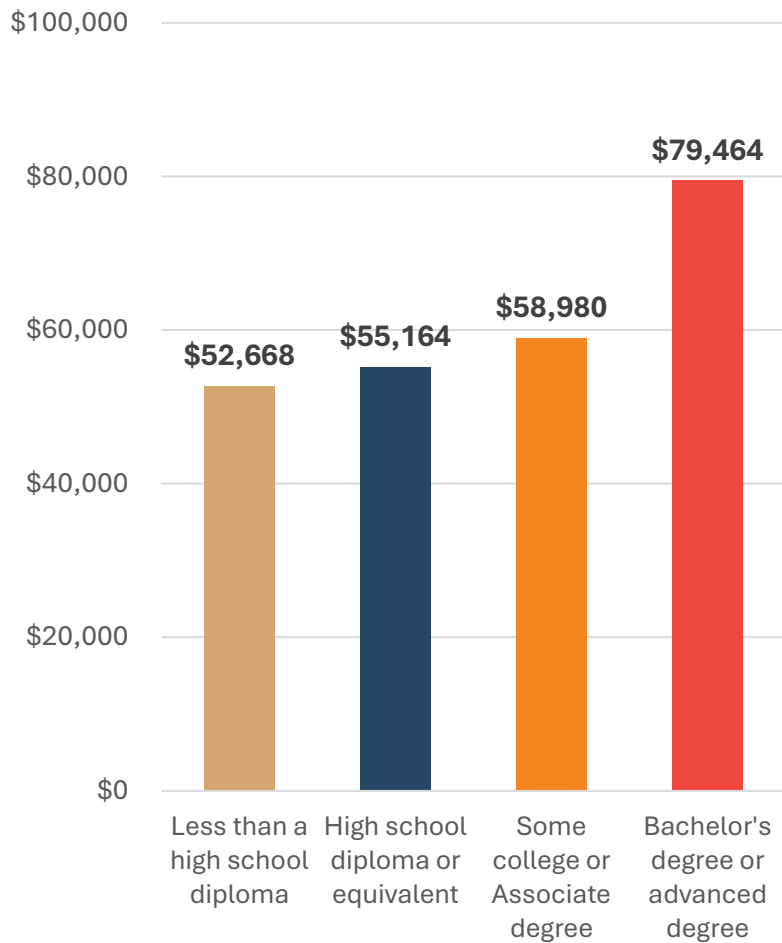
Crystine Miller, Director of Student Affairs & Student Engagement, cmiller@montana.edu
Ciera Franks-Ongoy, Perkins Equity & Compliance Manager, cfranksongoy@montana.edu

Postsecondary education will provide the training Montana needs to meet workforce demand (and good wages to match).

Forecast Share of 2031 Jobs by Education Level



Average Annual Earnings (2022)



The majority of jobs (69%) in Montana will be available to those with postsecondary credentials by 2031.

Nearly **75%** of graduates from Montana postsecondary institutions work in Montana at some point in the ten years following graduation (MT DLI).

Montana Higher Education is Historically Affordable

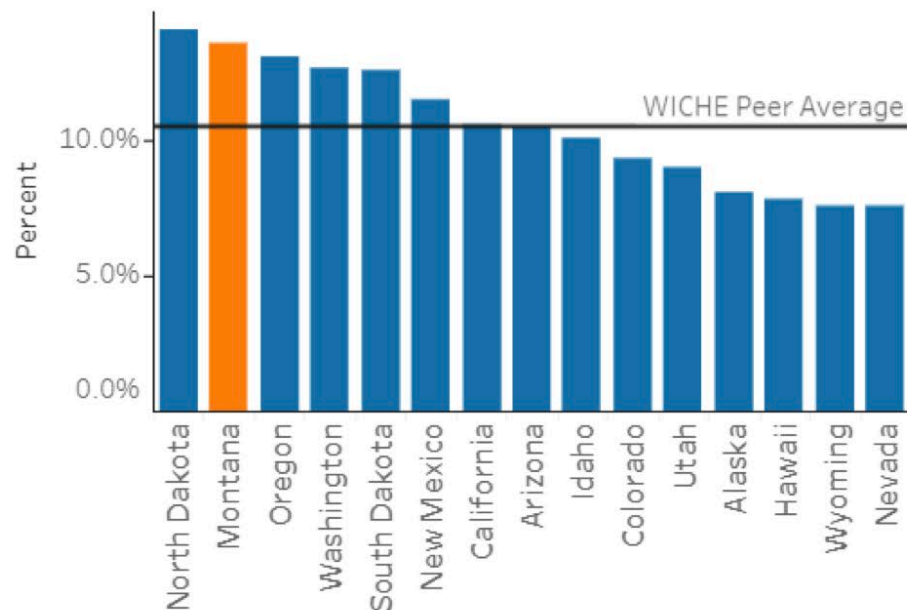
Tuition & Fees as a Percent of Household Income

Doctoral/Flagship

Academic Year Rates for Resident Undergraduate Full-time Students

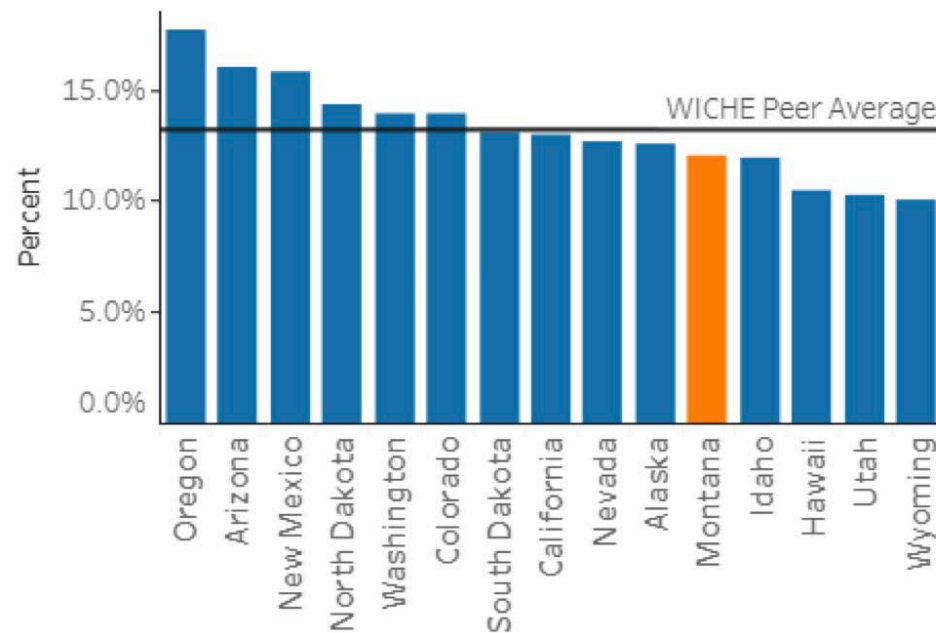
2006

State Comparison of Tuition & Fees as a Percent of Household Income



2025

State Comparison of Tuition & Fees as a Percent of Household Income

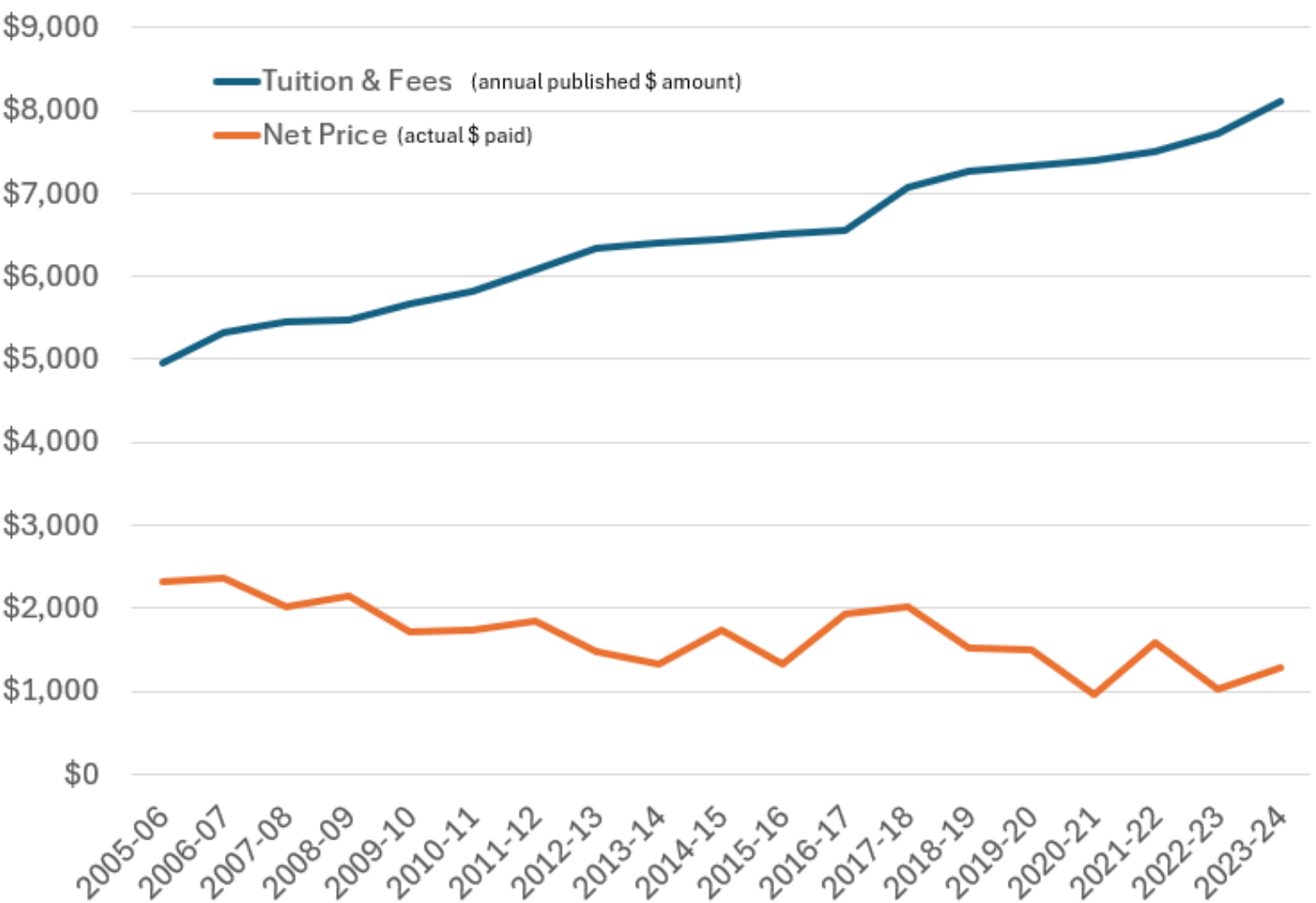


Montana Higher Education is Historically Affordable

FLAGSHIPS

Published Rate vs. Paid Amount

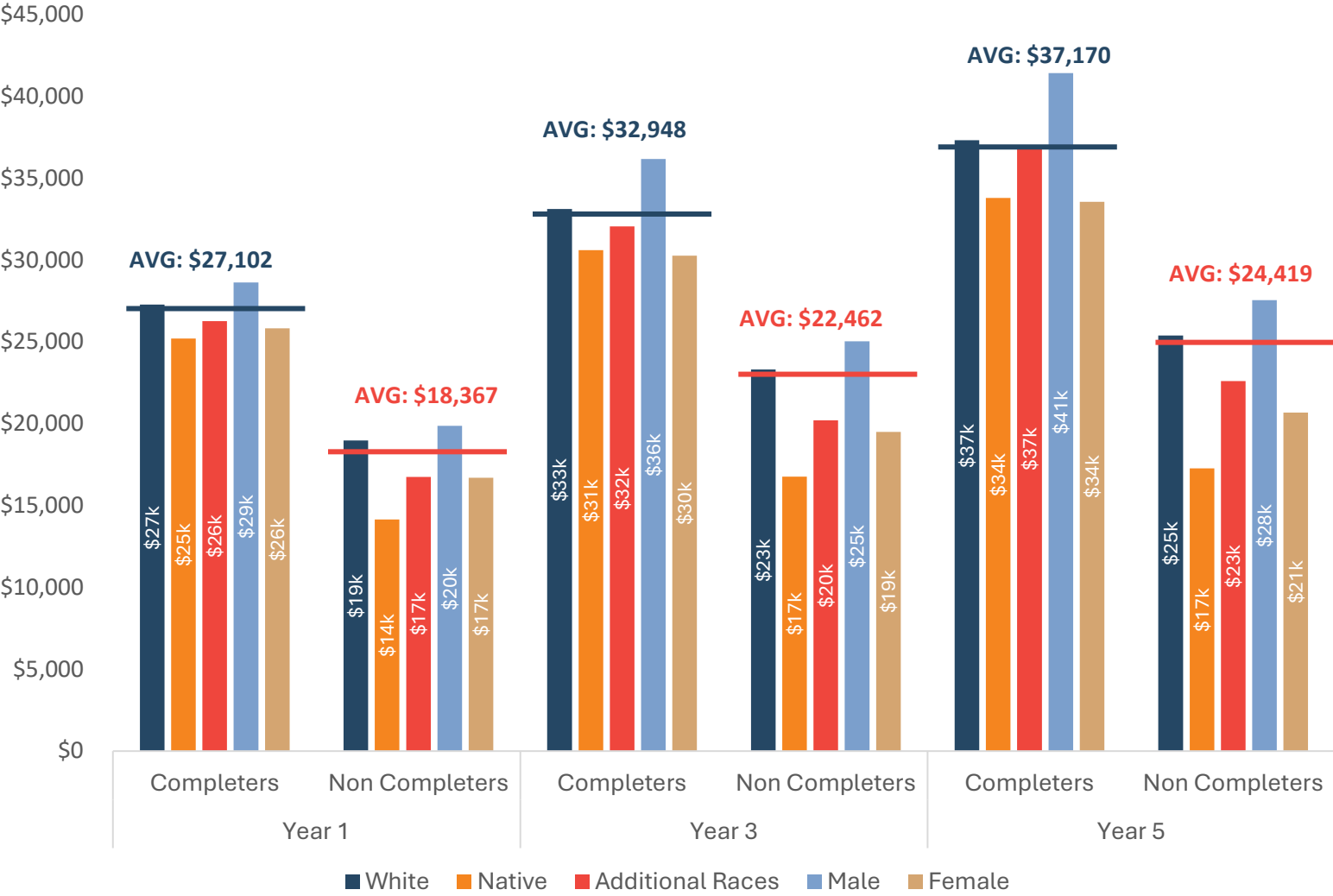
1st-time, Full-time, Resident Students



Size and sources of aid

- \$89.5m in institutional aid (51.1%)
- \$43.3m in federal grant aid, mostly Pell (24.7%)
- \$38.4m in private grant aid (21.9%)
- \$4.1m in state aid (2.1%)

College completion matters for return on investment.



Increased wage outcomes for college graduates suggest that earning a degree has a positive ROI for individuals.

Yet, that positive return on investment is dramatically curtailed for those who do not complete degrees.

Furthermore, respondents who don't have college experience are significantly more likely to **disagree** that a college degree leads to better career (37%) compared to those with an AA or BA (31% and 18%).

Data source: Wage outcomes 1-, 3- and 5-years after departure from MUS enrollment for completers and non-completers. Wage data sourced from MT DLI unemployment insurance programs. Figures report outcomes for Montana residents who are employed in-state for at least one quarter during the reported year. All wages expressed in constant 2019 dollars. Year 1 reports students departing 2010-2016. Year 3 students departing 2010 -2014. Year 5 students departing 2010-2012.

Drivers of Value

Completion is a linchpin for ROI. MUS institutions graduate students at or just below national averages for on-time 2- and 4-year programs. Some credit, no degree, and debt mean low ROI for students and stranded investment for the state. Montanans earning the state's median income—about \$56k—experience more barriers to access and are less likely to complete without additional supports.

Affordability matters. Affordability continues to be the most significant barrier in enhancing higher education's value for individuals and the state. Policy should consider options to enhance affordability including FAFSA completion.

Barriers to access are real (and perceived). The MUS must address both. Affordability impacts access for many Montanans, especially those from rural areas and those in Montana's middle-income bracket and below. Yet, given that most Montanans form opinions about higher education based on the experience of friends and family, the MUS can continue to increase value by undertaking initiatives that promote positive experiences for more Montanans.

Legislative Partnership through Shared Policy Goals

Shared policy goals align Regents' and legislative priorities. Starting in 2002, these agreements between legislative budget committees and the university system have guided system strategic initiatives and accountability measures.

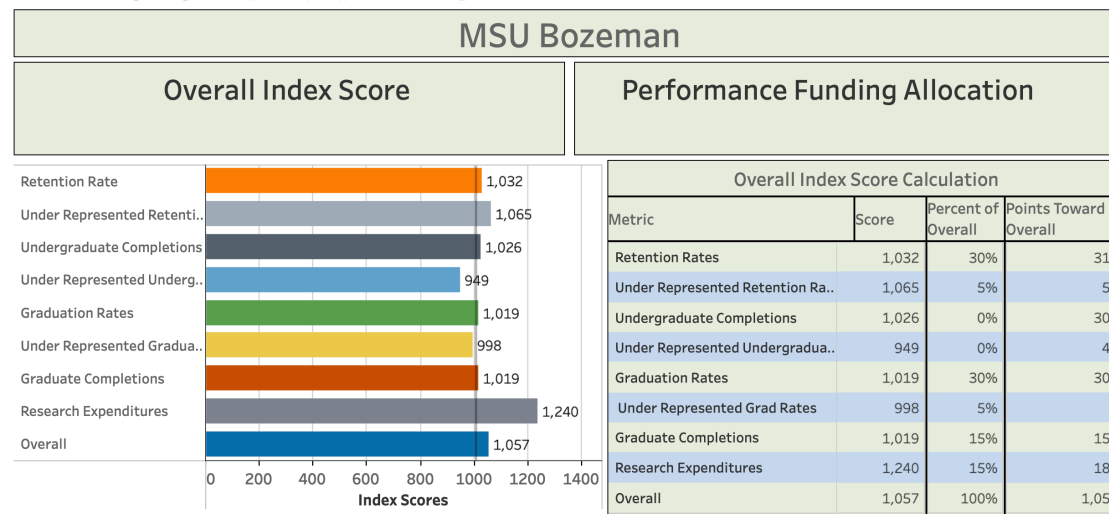
2007 – 2019 → Performance Funding, Accountability, Affordability

MUS Performance Funding - FY 2026 Allocations

Use the drop down to select the school to see Performance Funding metrics and allocations for that school. Click on the Index Score to change the Historical Line graph to that Index Score. For more information on the Performance Funding model go to <https://mus.edu/data/performancefunding/>.

School Selector

MSU Bozeman



- ❖ Tuition freezes in 9 of 13 years.
- ❖ Performance funding of ~8% of state appropriations
- ❖ Efficiency benchmarks

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2017 – 2025 → Resident Student Access



- ❖ Single portal for Montana students to learn about college and career opportunities
- ❖ Single, free application to all Montana public institutions

Legislative Partnership through Shared Policy Goals

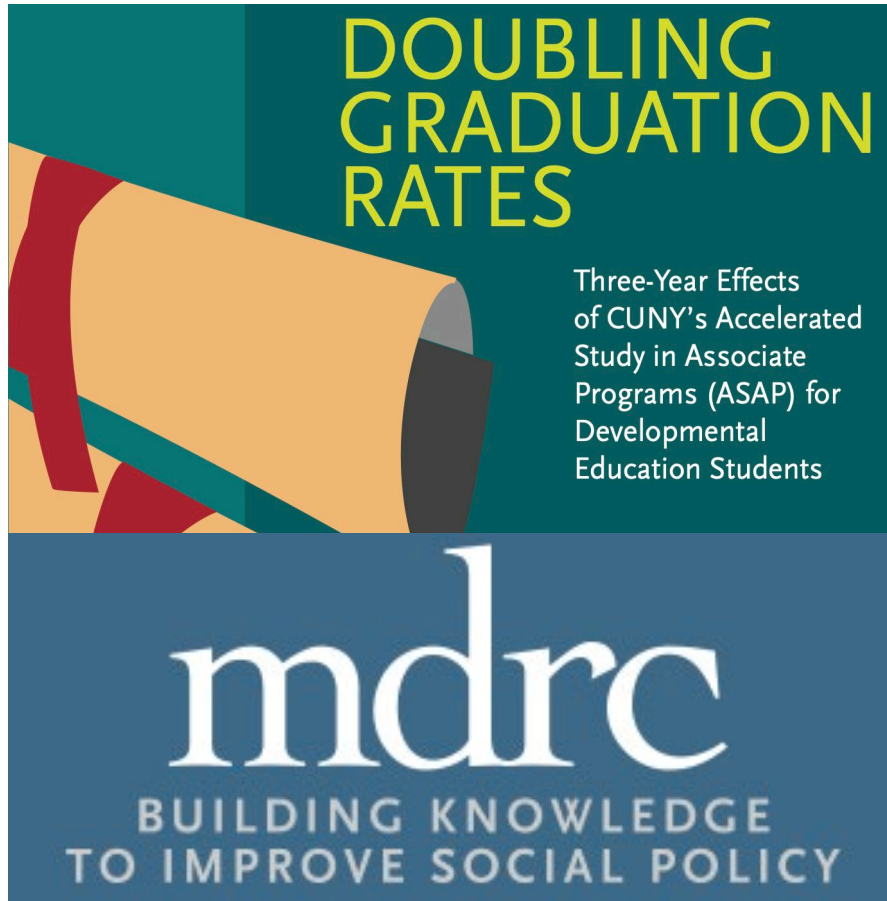
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2021 – 2025 → Student Success



- ❖ Expand dual enrollment through One-Two-Free, Montana's program to provide each Montana student with up to two free courses.
- ❖ Enhance partnerships with Montana Tribal Colleges
- ❖ Test and expand evidence-based student success interventions like Montana 10

National Evidence → Local Innovation



Doubling Graduation Rates in a New State

Two-Year Findings from the ASAP Ohio Demonstration



The Launch of Montana 10

- Supported through ‘innovation grants’ from unearned performance funding
- Launched in Fall 2020, the pilot served 200 students across 3 campuses

Montana 10 Program Components

Financial Support

Scholarship
Textbook Stipend
Monthly Incentives

Academic Momentum

Full time Schedule
Corequisite Math & Writing
Tutoring

Purpose & Belonging

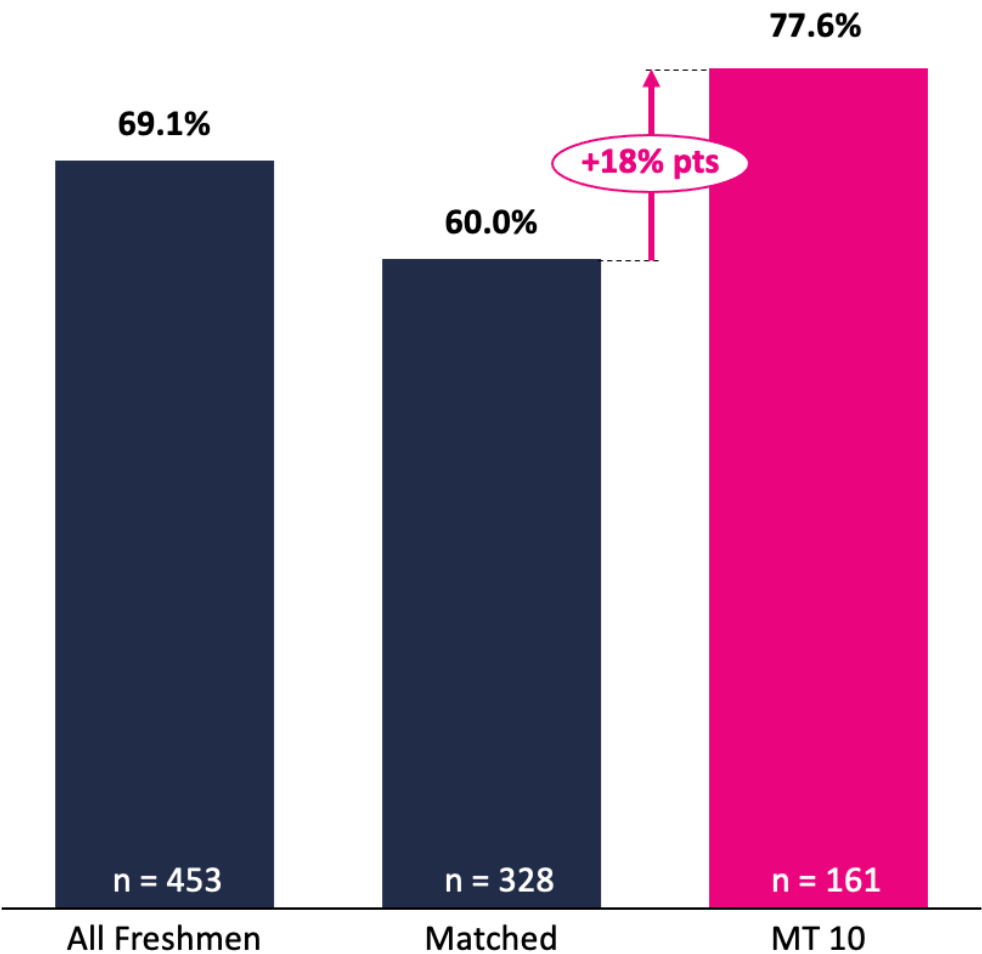
Individualized Advising
Career Development
Orientation
Freshman Seminar



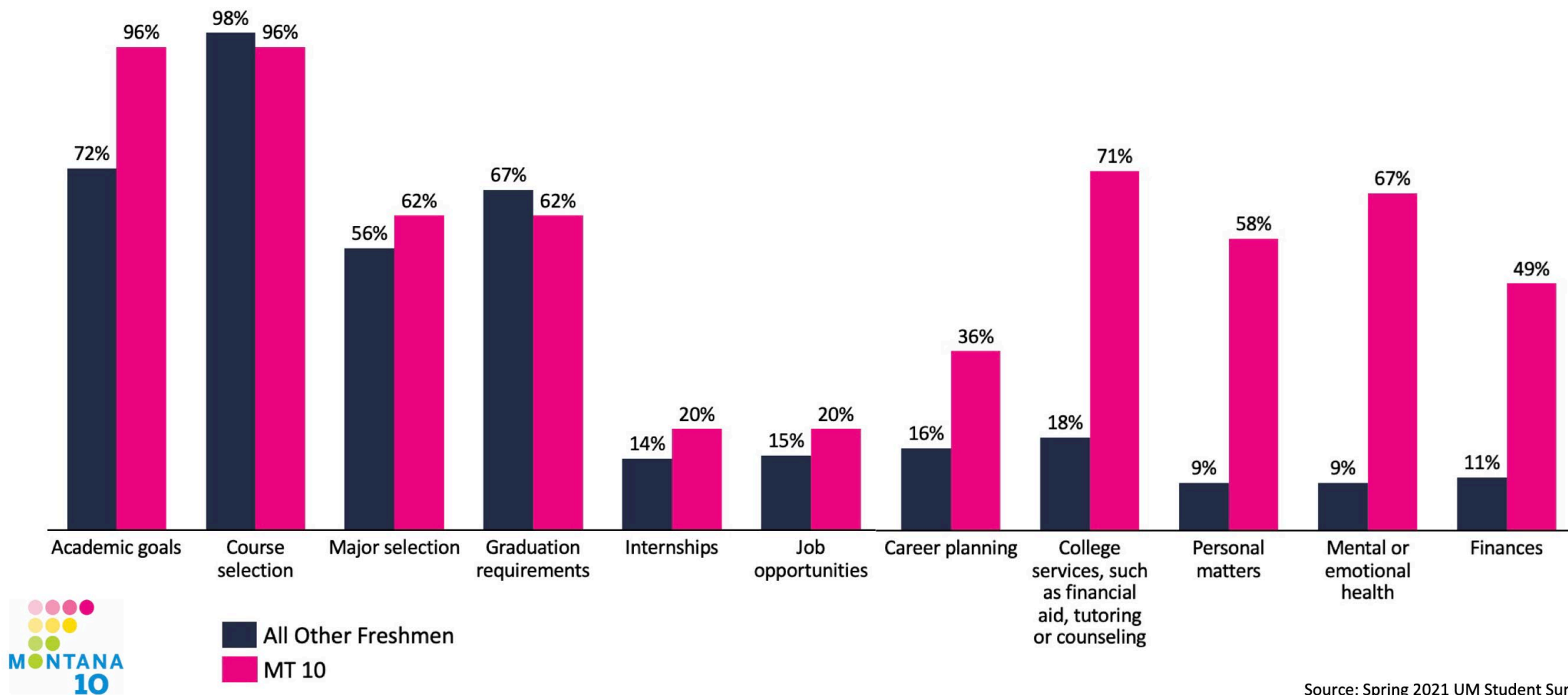
Year 1 Outcomes

RETENTION

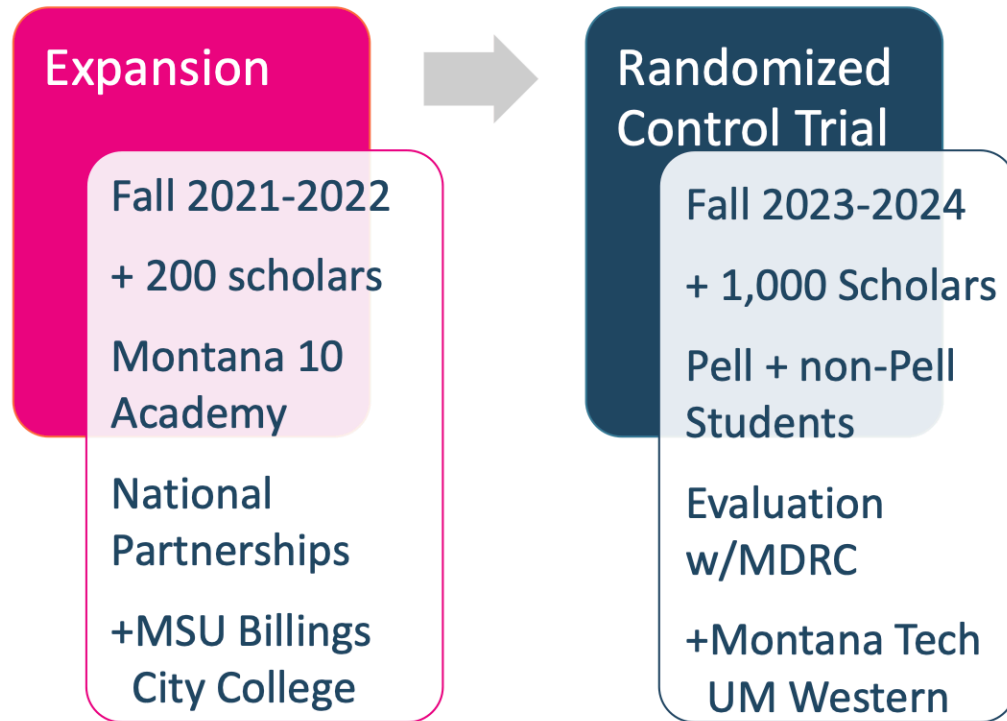
Fall 2020 to Fall 2021, UM Resident Freshmen Cohort



What topics have you discussed with an Academic Advisor at UM?



Montana 10 expansion and evaluation



*"Montana 10 [has] been the main source of me being able to get through this college career...**They didn't necessarily hold my hand, but they gave me the information I needed and made it very simple to utilize whatever source I needed in order to finish the program,** and for that I'm very grateful."*

Montana 10 Scholar

Scaling Montana 10 Insights

The 2025 Montana Legislature appropriated \$7m OTO towards Montana 10

Support Cohort Programs



- 1800 students served over the biennium.
- Campus match, building towards sustainable internal funding.

Improve Infrastructure

- Investments in campus infrastructure that aids in delivering MT10 services to all students
- October planning summit



Data at the Desktop



- Support campuses to deliver and act on real-time student data.

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THANK YOU!

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