

PROFESSOR PULSE 2017

Results point to the biggest challenges facing higher education today

Educators at colleges and universities are in a nervous mood. The 5,000 respondents to this year's Professor Pulse Survey are worried about the direction universities are going (downhill), the value students are getting from their education (shrinking), the job market (tenure is elusive) and the negative impact of a highly politicized environment (Trump, in particular). But they haven't given up: they feel personal responsibility to make education better by taking advantage of technology and prioritizing teaching over research.

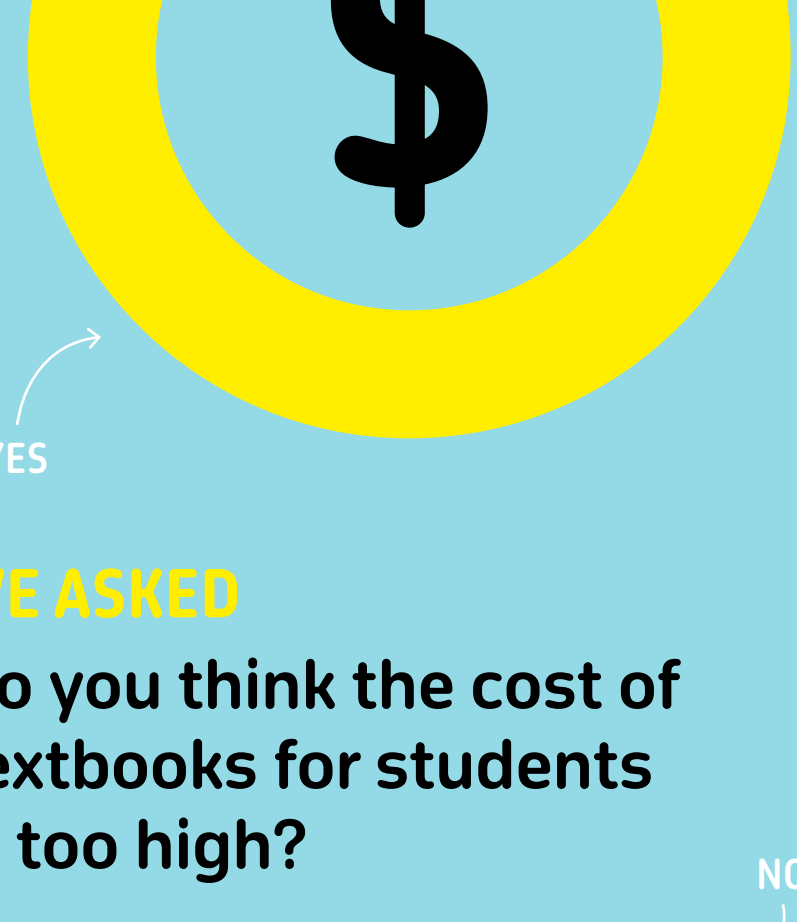
BIG WORRIES

High costs, flailing school administrations and Trump

An overwhelming majority of educators agree that tuition and textbook costs are too high

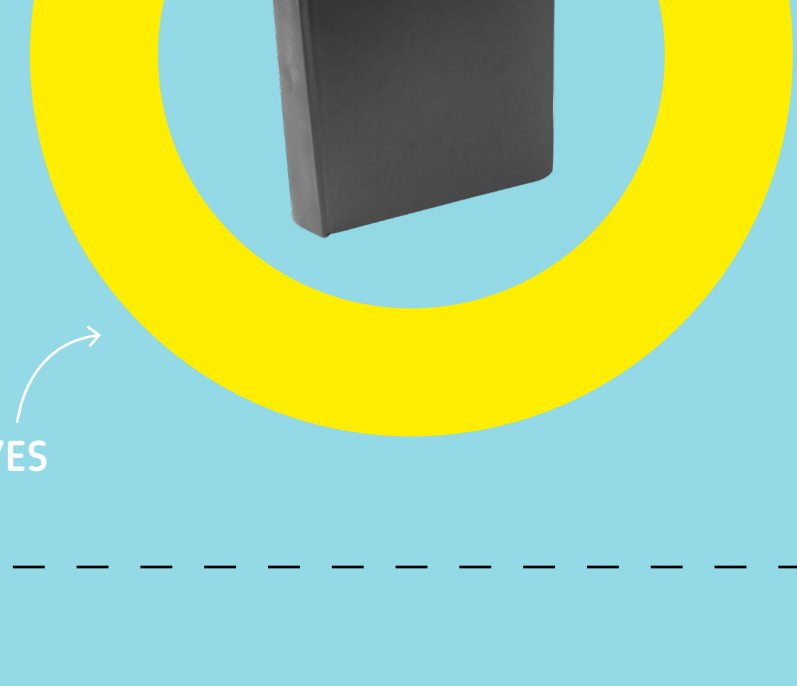
WE ASKED

Do you think the cost of tuition is too high?



WE ASKED

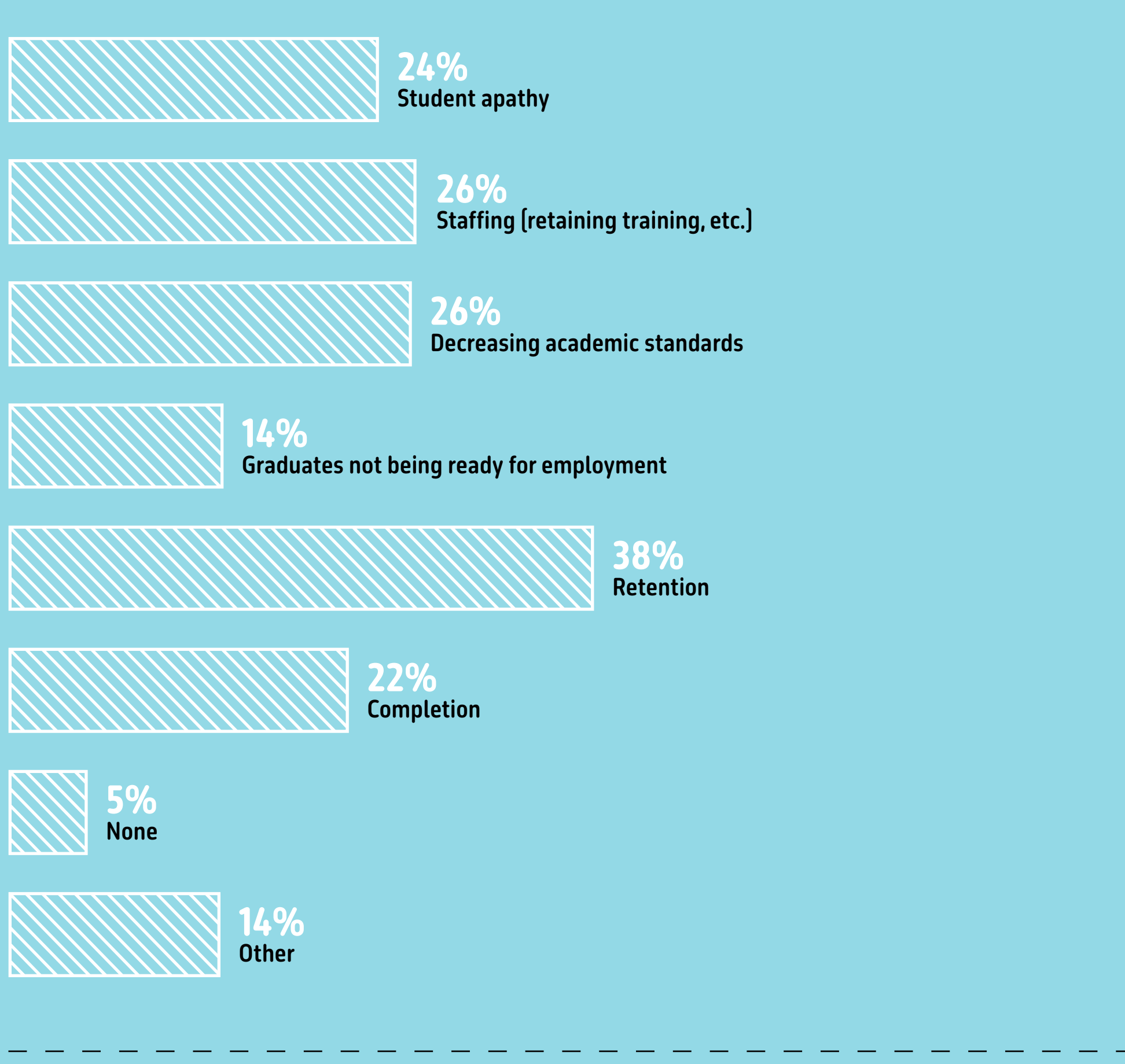
Do you think the cost of textbooks for students is too high?



They're also concerned about underfunding, decreased enrollment and student retention

WE ASKED

What is/are the biggest issue(s) currently facing your school?



Only half believe that a post-secondary education is necessary to a student's success in life



They're not satisfied by the solutions coming from school administration

WE ASKED

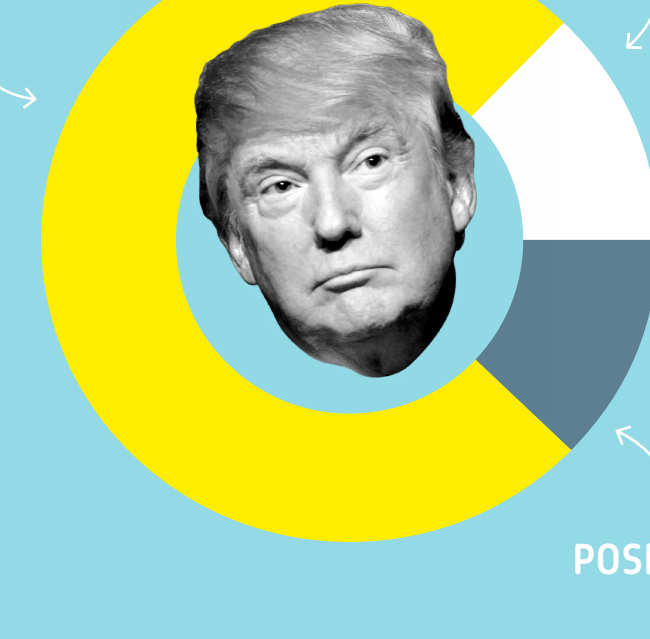
On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not at all and 10 being extremely, how satisfied are you with your school's current administration?



An overwhelming majority believe the Trump administration is having a negative impact on higher education

WE ASKED

What kind of impact do you think the current U.S. federal administration will have on the future of higher education?



We asked for their ideas to fix their schools. Some notable responses:

"Hire more full-time instructors. Bring adjunct instructor pay closer to parity with full-time instructors. Compensate more fully adjunct instructors for out-of-classroom work hours (planning, grading, developing curriculum, office hours.)"

"The biggest disconnect is that the school values small class sizes, yet all of my classes are too large for me to get to know the students."

"The administration protects and rewards those in the STEM areas more than in the humanities. Service and good teaching are not as important as bringing in money, mainly via research."

"Administration should also not be spending so much on their own salaries and staff while shorting the money that is spent on faculty and staff. There is an overuse of underpaid adjuncts to teach introductory classes."

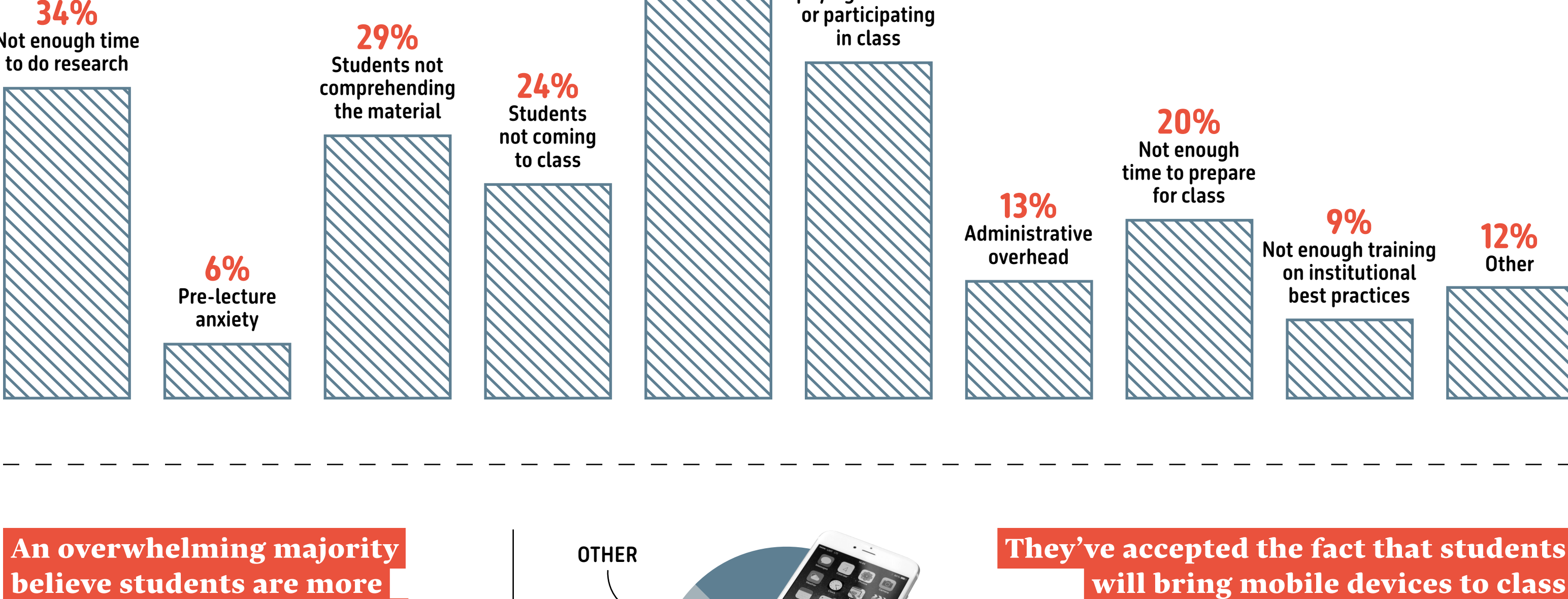
STUDENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

The good, the bad and the ugly

Educators say that students aren't coming prepared to class or paying attention during lectures

WE ASKED

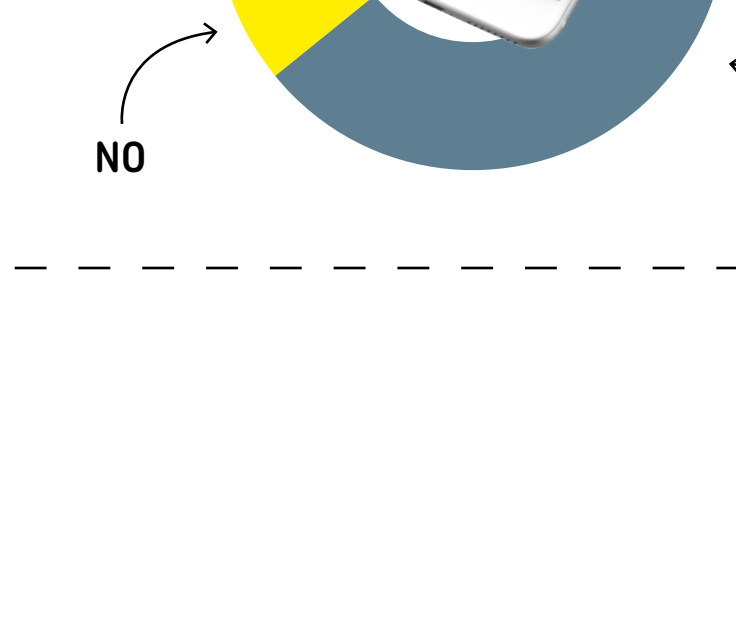
What are your biggest teaching challenges?



An overwhelming majority believe students are more distracted than ever before

WE ASKED

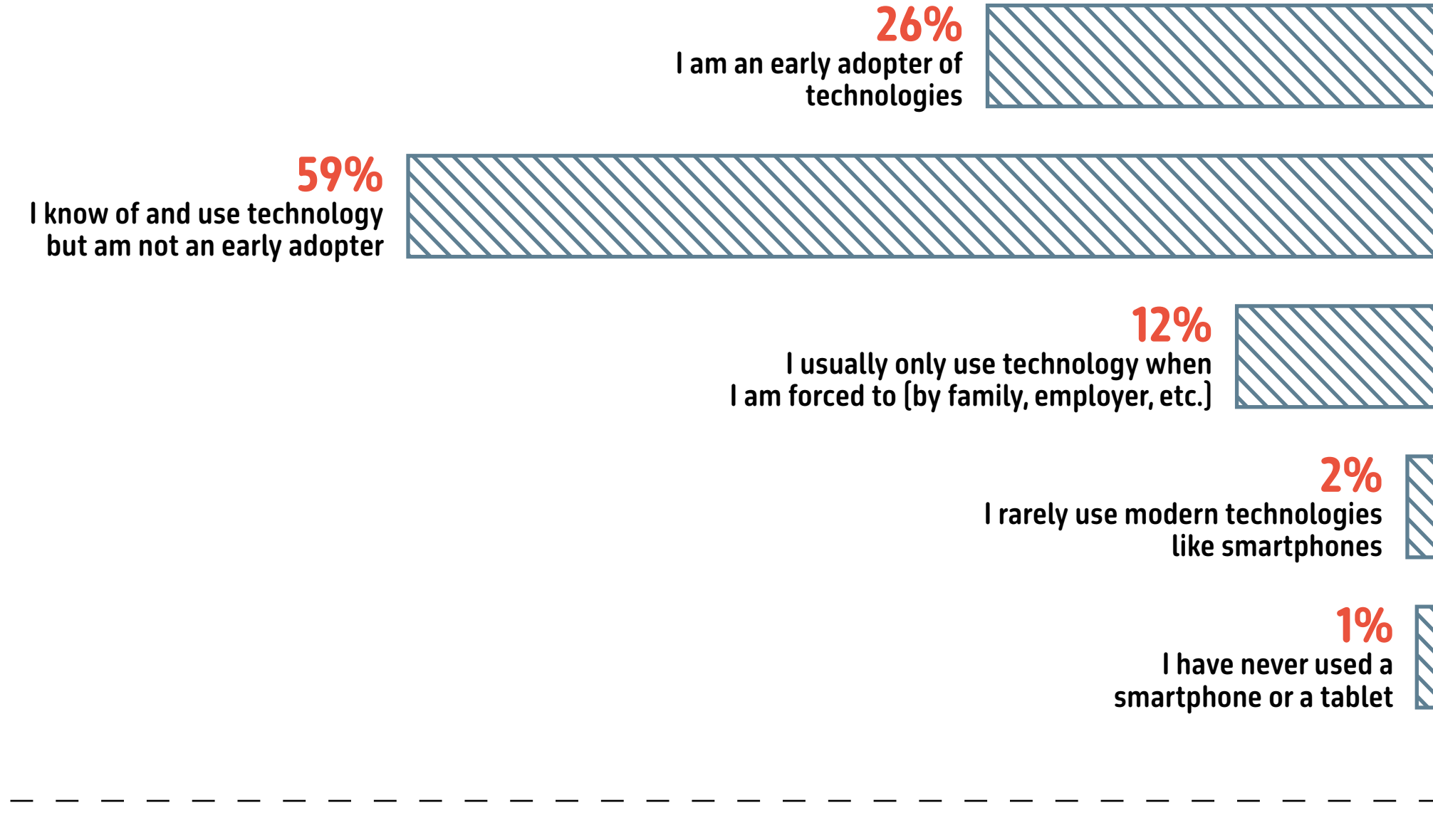
Do you allow personal devices in your classroom?



They've accepted the fact that students will bring mobile devices to class

WE ASKED

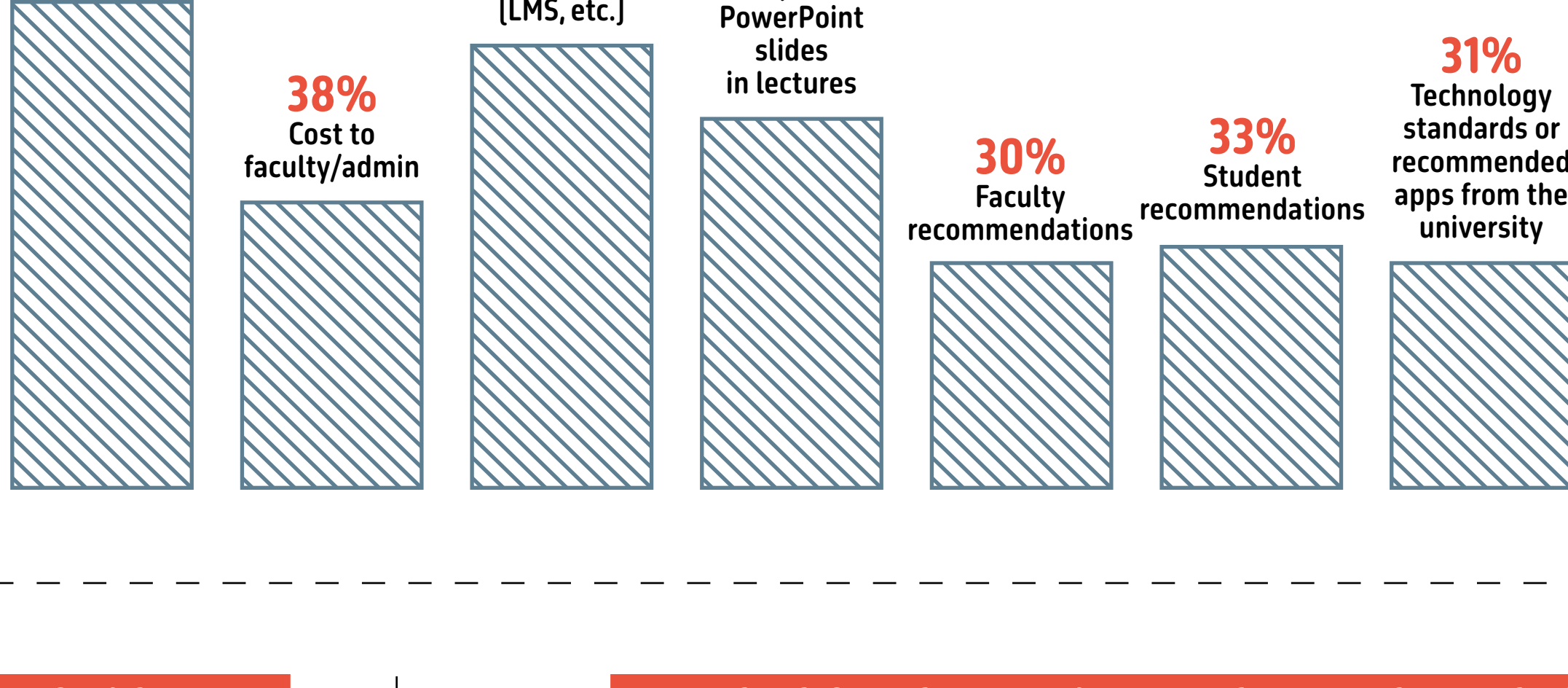
How tech-savvy do you consider yourself?



Educators' top concerns about technology: the cost to students and the ability to integrate with existing tech

WE ASKED

If you make the choice about which technology to use in the classroom, which of the following are factors in your decision making?



Still, they're not afraid to use tech in the classroom

WE ASKED

On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not at all and 10 being extremely, how useful do you think technology is in a lecture environment?



We asked for observations on how tech can help, or not help, teaching. Some notable responses:

"There has to be a balance between cost and usefulness. Technology cannot be a decision by a group of one. Teaching technology needs to be part of the curriculum committee discussions."

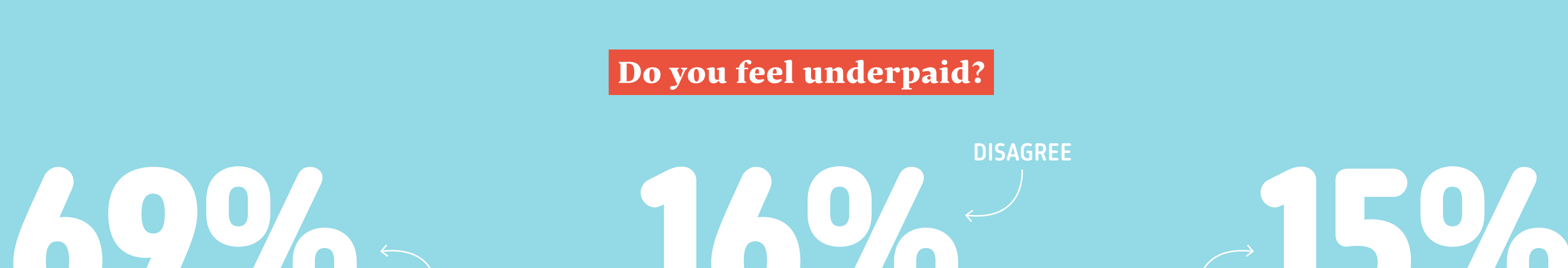
"More modeling and exposure to socially responsible technology use during class for students will drastically change the perspective that technology use is bad. I'm tired of hearing policies banning mobile device or laptop use when it's against the forward progression of society."

"Technology is an integral part of my teaching style, and so many of our students are so tech savvy, that without integrating technology into the classroom, I think we are doing our students a disservice because they will be using some form of tech in the working world, regardless of the field they go into."

CAREERS

Overworked and underpaid? You bet.

Do you feel overworked?



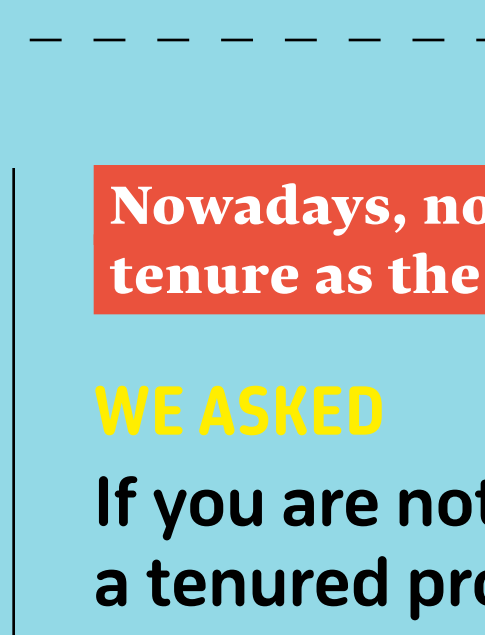
Do you feel underpaid?



Most professors wish they had more guidance to become impactful educators

WE ASKED

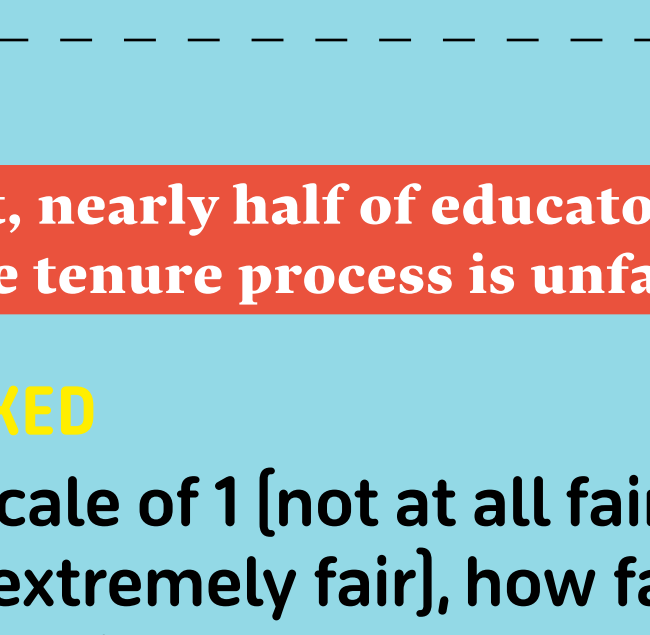
On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all and 10 being extremely, how well do you think your education prepared you for teaching?



Almost 60 percent of profs are concerned about their reputation

WE ASKED

Have you ever checked your ratings/reviews on ratemyprofessor.com?



They see themselves as teachers first, researchers second

WE ASKED

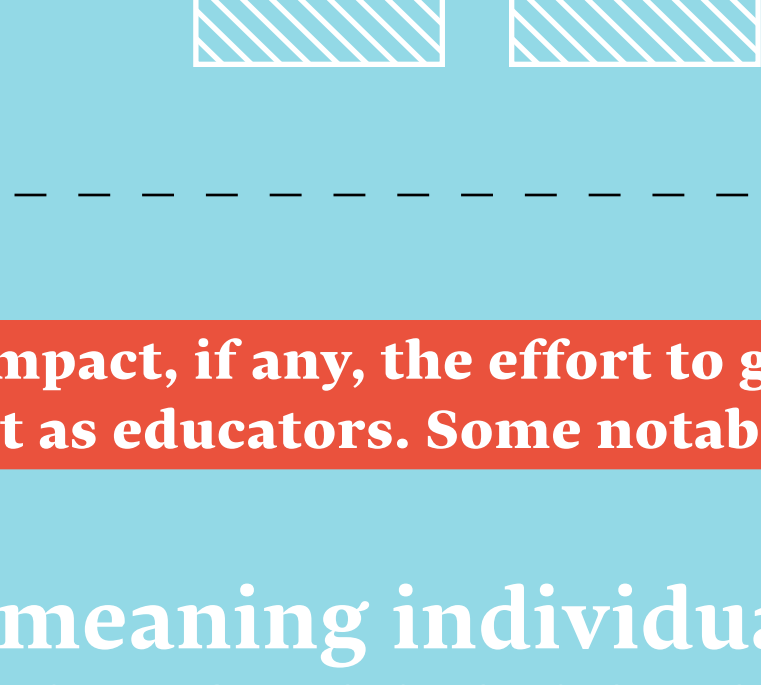
What is more important to you, researching or instructing?



Nowadays, not everyone sees tenure as the ultimate goal

WE ASKED

If you are not currently a tenured professor, do you want to be tenured?



In fact, nearly half of educators say the tenure process is unfair

WE ASKED

On a scale of 1 (not at all fair) to 10 (extremely fair), how fair do you think the tenure track process is?



We asked what impact, if any, the effort to gain tenure has on their impact as educators. Some notable responses:

"There are a lot of well-meaning individuals in this rat race, who strive for high ideals. Tenure provides the security and academic freedom to actualize this potential, but sadly is not always rewarded on the basis of merit and ideals."

"Not yet having a tenured position has added a great deal of stress to my life."

"I feel like I'm walking on eggshells until I get tenure. It seems like students can just complain and I could be fired at the drop of a hat."

About the Professor Pulse Survey

The Professor Pulse Survey is sponsored by Top Hat. The survey was conducted between July 18, 2017 and November 1, 2017. The 5,006 respondents currently teach at colleges and universities in North America. Respondents to the survey were nearly evenly split along gender lines (51 percent male, 47 percent female, 1 percent undisclosed), with the majority (66 percent) between the ages of 35 and 64. Sixty percent identified as full-time faculty and 27 percent as part-time or adjunct faculty. Fifty-eight percent teach at public universities and 30 percent at private institutions. For media inquiries about the survey, please contact press@tophat.com.

TOP HAT

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