



National Alumni Career Mobility Annual Report

Transforming Career Practices to Increase ROI and Equitable Career Success

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NATIONAL ALUMNI CAREER MOBILITY SURVEY

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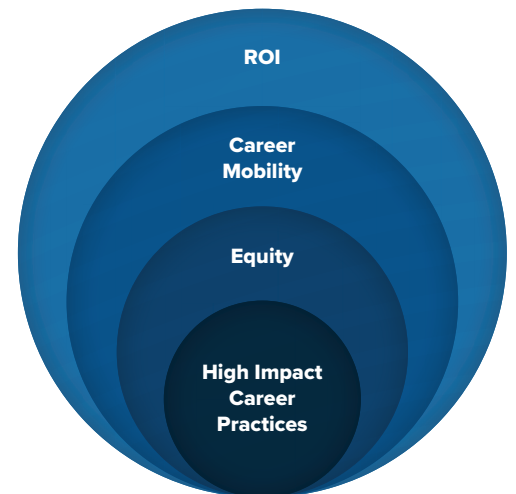
Introduction

As higher education recovers from effects of the COVID pandemic, continues to address barriers to equity, and prepares for the [projected enrollment cliff](#), it is essential that institutions use data to define career mobility, articulate the value of their degrees and demonstrate how they are preparing students for success after graduation. At the intersection of career mobility, return on investment, and equity is how institutions are transforming practice to ensure alum success.

The findings in this report shed light on a few practical questions being asked by colleges and universities today:

1. What career practices should higher education institutions focus on if they are going to strategically invest in career readiness practices that will significantly benefit their graduates as alums?
2. Which of these high impact career practices are more likely to close equity gaps?
3. How can an institutional investment in high impact career practices influence return on investment (ROI)?

The National Alumni Career Mobility (NACM) research has identified six High Impact Career Practices that influence return on investment, career mobility and equity, while at the same time provide clarity on how to integrate career preparation into the student experience. This report explores the results of the 2021 NACM Undergraduate Cohort as it relates to these four concepts.



Who is this report for?

The NACM research is focused specifically on helping higher education leaders to strategically adapt their career development practices and to equitably guide students toward more fulfilling careers and lives. By going beyond the first job and focusing on five- and ten-year alums' pathways, NACM data provides a robust set of insights on career preparation, satisfaction, and economic mobility to assist the higher education community.

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

These highlights from the NACM 2022 undergraduate survey report can direct campuses in their pursuit to transform career development practices.

- ✔ **Alums' Motivations to Obtain a Degree:** Respondents selected career success, intellectual development, financial gain, and career aspiration requirement as the top four motivations for pursuing a college education. Combining career and intellectual development shifts the conversation from the assumption that students obtain a degree for either intellectual pursuits OR career to students obtaining a degree for intellectual AND career, with respondents wanting both while earning their degree.
- ✔ **Career Decision Making:** 82% of respondents decided on their career during college or after graduating. Yet only 47% agreed that their institution helped prepare them for their career and only 21% agreed that their institution invested in their career. This data indicates a disconnect between respondents' career decision making processes, and the availability and utilization of campus resources to assist with career decision making and preparation.
- ✔ **Return on Investment:** More than half (57%) of respondents indicated that their degree was worth the tuition they paid. Those who agreed were more likely to say that their institution helped them prepare for their career and their institution invested in their career. They also scored higher on the career mobility index. Increasing institutional investment in universal career development is related to increased perceptions of degree value.
- ✔ **High Impact Career Practices:** Six High Impact Career Practices were found to significantly impact career mobility and return on investment:
 1. Understanding career opportunities
 2. Creating a career plan
 3. Networking with employers
 4. Having an internship related to their current career
 5. Receiving helpful career advice (in general, from faculty, or from employers)
 6. Learning critical thinking

Respondents engaged in the High Impact Career Practices are more likely to:

 1. Have more positive success with career preparation, career satisfaction, and economic mobility.
 2. Decide on their career prior to graduating with their degree.
 3. Perceive their degree to be worth the tuition they paid.
- ✔ **Additional Career Mobility Influencers:** The Career Mobility Index measures alum success through the interaction of three factors: Career Preparation, Career Satisfaction and Economic Mobility. Just 42% of respondents scored high on the Career Mobility Index, indicating there is work to be done to ensure alum success. High mobility scores were related to three overall themes. Institutions seeking to increase alum career mobility should focus on these areas: 1) Transforming career preparation using the High Impact Career Practices. 2) Developing key influential skills and 3) Decreasing student loan debt.
- ✔ **Equity:** Significant career mobility equity gaps were identified in the categories of race, gender, first-generation and age. To address equity gaps, particular attention should be paid, ensuring access for historically marginalized groups to three of the High Impact Career Practices: 1) networking with employers 2) career planning 3) understanding career opportunities. In addition, institutions need to address student loan debt, particularly for these populations.

Key Concepts

Defining Career Mobility

The High Impact Career Mobility Index™ (CMI) was created from NACM data to provide a more nuanced understanding of alum success beyond salary. Defining career mobility led to a better understanding of the connections between career mobility, return on investment, and the campus practices that influence both. Career mobility is defined as a combination of career pathway preparation, career satisfaction, and economic mobility.



- **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, which 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

The 2021 national data once again identified the same high impact career mobility practices found in 2019 and 2020 with one addition: Helpful career advice from career services. These six practices are:

1. Understanding career opportunities
2. Creating a career plan
3. Networking with employers
4. Having an internship related to their current career
5. Receiving helpful career advice
 - a. Helpful career advice in general
 - b. Helpful career advice from faculty
 - c. Helpful career advice from employers
 - d. Helpful career advice from career services
6. Learning critical thinking

Return On Investment (ROI)

An understanding of why students attend college is essential when trying to articulate higher education's value in terms of return on investment. One way of defining ROI is to explore the connections between inputs in the form of motivations for obtaining a degree, throughputs in the form of types of experiences during the degree and finally how these align with the output of finding value in the degree they obtained.



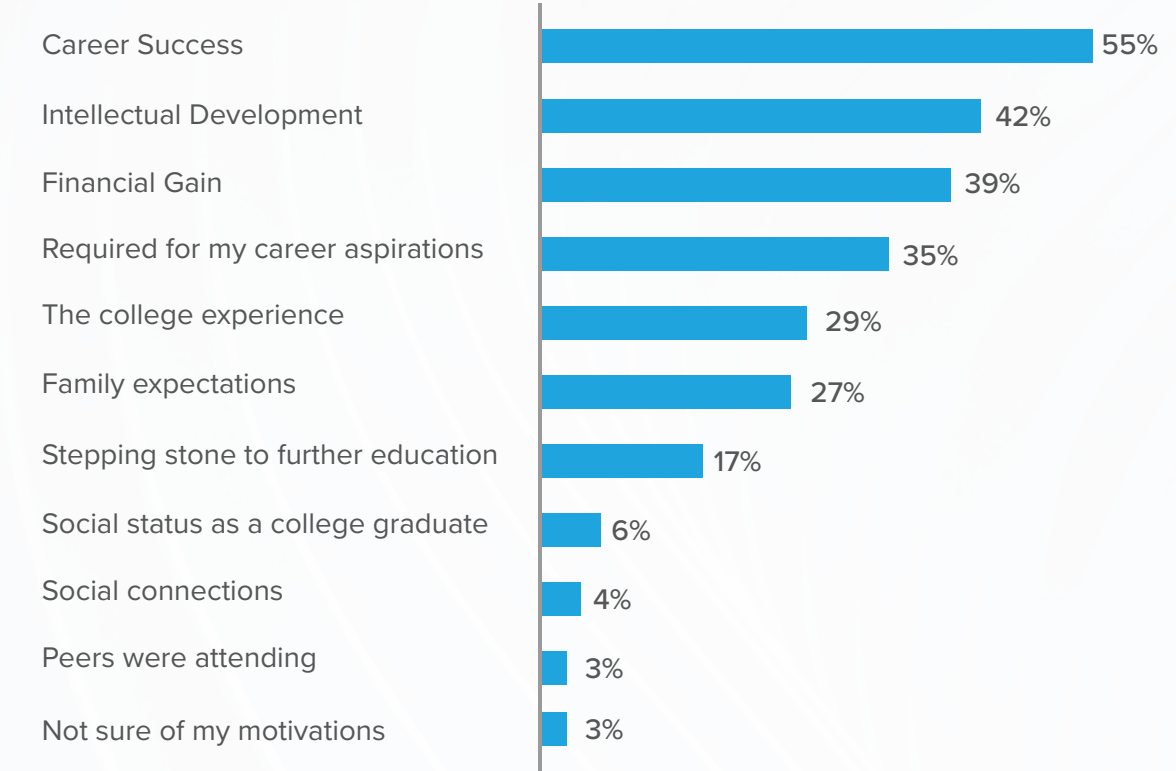
Key Takeaways

- Respondents selected career success (55%), intellectual development (42%), financial gain (39%), and career aspiration requirement (35%) as the top four motivations for pursuing a college education.
- 82% decided on their career during college or after graduating, however only:
 - 47% agreed they their institution helped prepare them for their career
 - 21% agreed that their institution invested in their career
- 57% of respondents agreed that their degree was worth the tuition, of those...
 - 74% agreed their institution helped prepare them for their career
 - 70% of alum who agreed their institution invested in their career
- Alums with high Career Mobility scores are 7.5 times more likely to agree that their degree was worth their tuition.
- High mobility scores were related to three overall themes.
 1. Engagement in High Impact Career Practices.
 2. More positive alum perceptions of value of degree, institutional career investment and satisfaction with their educational experience.
 3. Institutional impact on some learning competencies.

Motivations for Obtaining a Degree

Three of the top four motivations for obtaining a degree are career success, financial gain, and requirements for career aspirations. In addition, intellectual development is the second highest motivation, indicating a shift from students thinking about a degree as career OR academic pursuits to career AND academics.

Alumni report career and academics as primary motivations for obtaining a degree

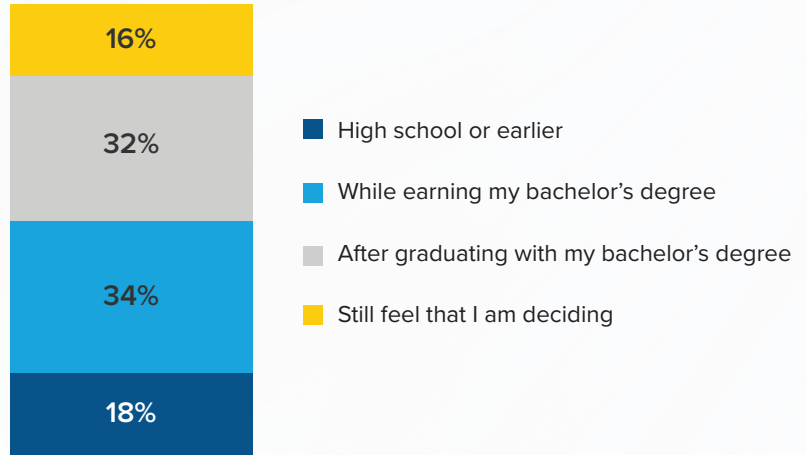


Salient Alum Perceptions

Career decision making

If top motivators for obtaining a degree are linked to career, providing tools for deciding on and pursuing a career during the college experience becomes an important focus for students. A small percent (18%) of respondents indicated that they had decided on their career prior to entering college. The remaining 82% attend college needing guidance to decide on career.

82% of undergraduates decided on their career during or after getting their degree



Institutional Career Investment and Career Preparation

Given graduates' motivations for attending and need for assistance with career decision making, how well are institutions meeting these needs? Career pathway preparation and institutional career investment are two ways to measure the connection between experiences during college and career. Scores on both factors indicate gaps between student needs and experiences as it relates to career preparation during the degree. Does the gap in alums' expectations of career preparation and what they are receiving make a difference in ROI?

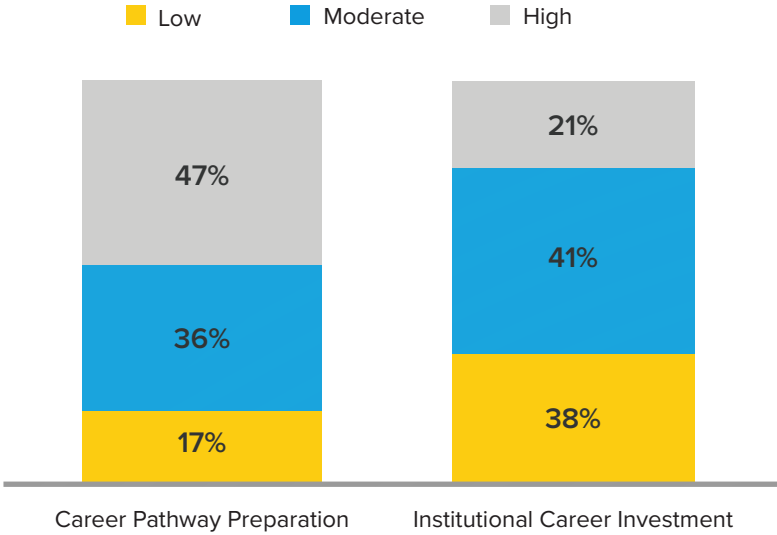
Institutional Career Investment ($\alpha = .90$)

- 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.

Career Pathway Preparation ($\alpha = .85$)

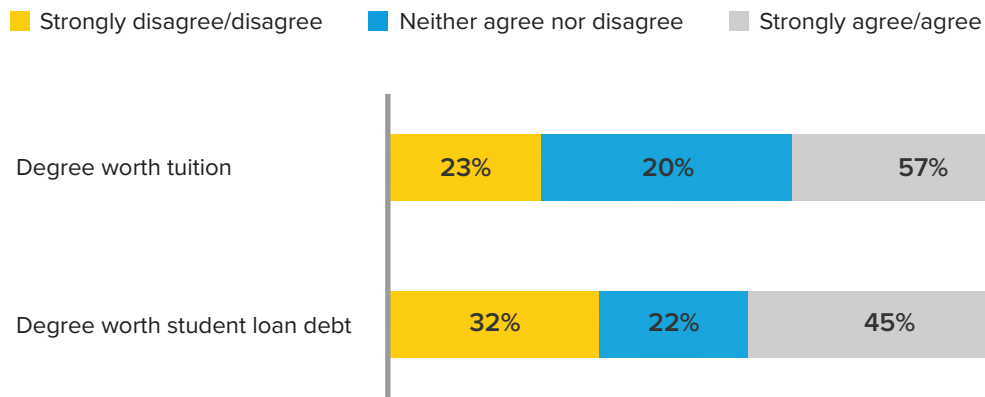
- My bachelor's degree helped prepare me for my career.
- I was well prepared to begin my career when I graduated.
- My bachelor's degree helped me get started in my career.
- I am satisfied with my bachelor's degree educational experience.
- My bachelor's degree is worth the tuition I paid.

47% of alum agreed that they were prepared for their career
21% agreed that their institution invested in their career



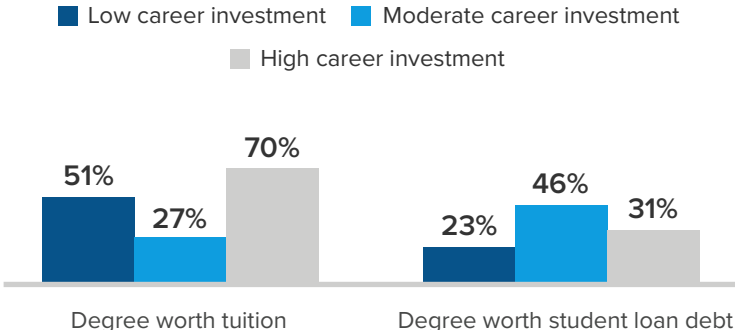
Value of Degree

One way to measure ROI is to gather information on perceptions of the value of a college degree in relation to the cost of tuition, student loan debt and overall satisfaction with the educational experience. Overall, 57% of respondents agreed that their tuition was worth the cost of their degree, 45% of respondents agreed that their degree was worth the cost of their student loans, and 82% were satisfied with their educational experience.

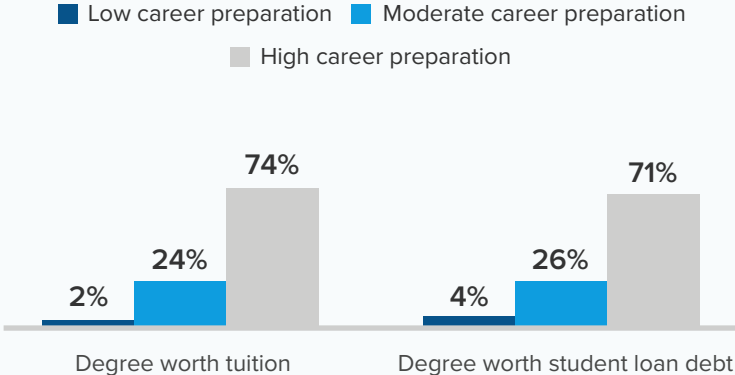


Exploring further the connection between worth of degree, institutional career investment, and career preparation, those who agree that their institution helped prepare them for a career and were invested in their career were far more likely to agree that their degree was worth the cost.

High career investment linked with agreement that degree is worth the tuition

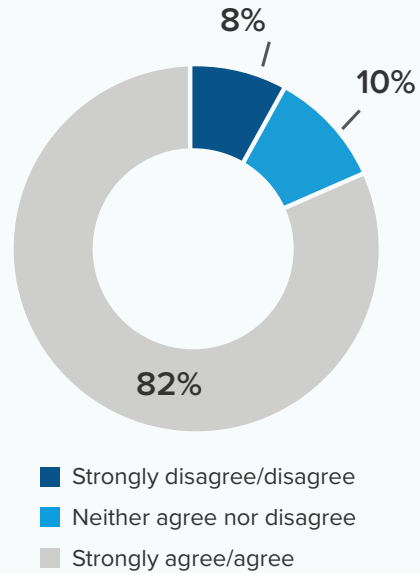


High career preparation linked with agreement that degree is worth the tuition and student loan debt

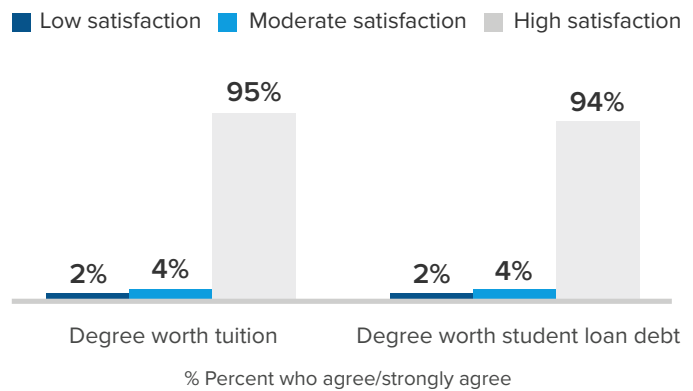


While only 57% of respondents agreed that their degree was worth the tuition, far more (82%) indicated that they were satisfied with their educational experience.

In addition, those satisfied with their educational experience also agreed that their degree was worth the tuition and student loan debt.



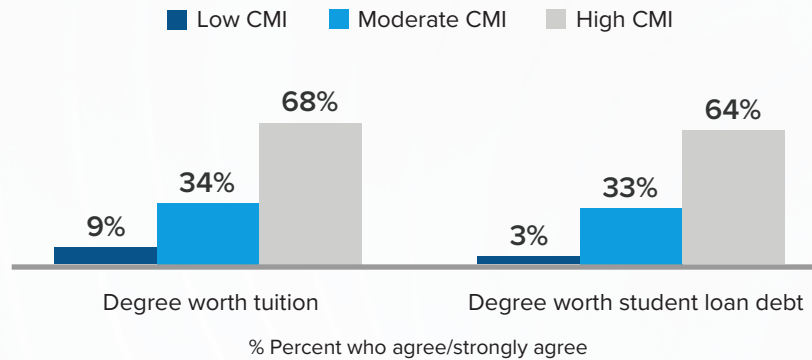
High satisfaction with educational experience aligns with high value of degree



Career Mobility and Return on Investment

Looking beyond motivation and experiences during college, one additional measure of ROI is the alum success as measured by the Career Mobility Index (CMI). The link between career mobility and the value of degree is very clear: Respondents scoring high on the CMI are far more likely to agree that their degree was worth the tuition (68%) and student loan debt (64%).

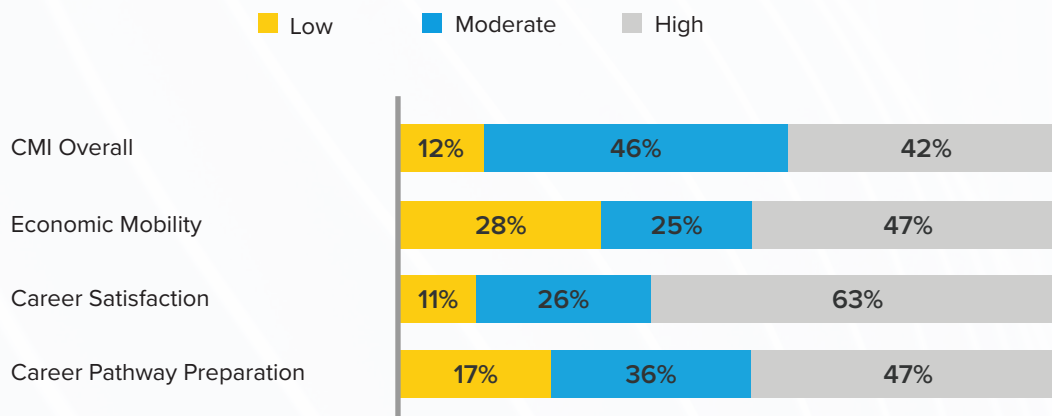
High Career Mobility linked with degree worth tuition and degree worth student loan debt



Overall Career Mobility

Overall, 42% of the national sample scored high on the Career Mobility Index (CMI). The most respondents (63%) scored higher in Career Satisfaction compared to Career Pathway Preparation (47%) and Economic Mobility (47%).

42% of the national sample scored high on the Career Mobility Index (CMI)





Return On Investment (ROI) Recommended Actions

1.

Connect intellectual development with career preparation: Use the High Impact Career Practices to integrate career preparation into the academic experience while also providing alums with tools for career decision making during and after their degree.

2.

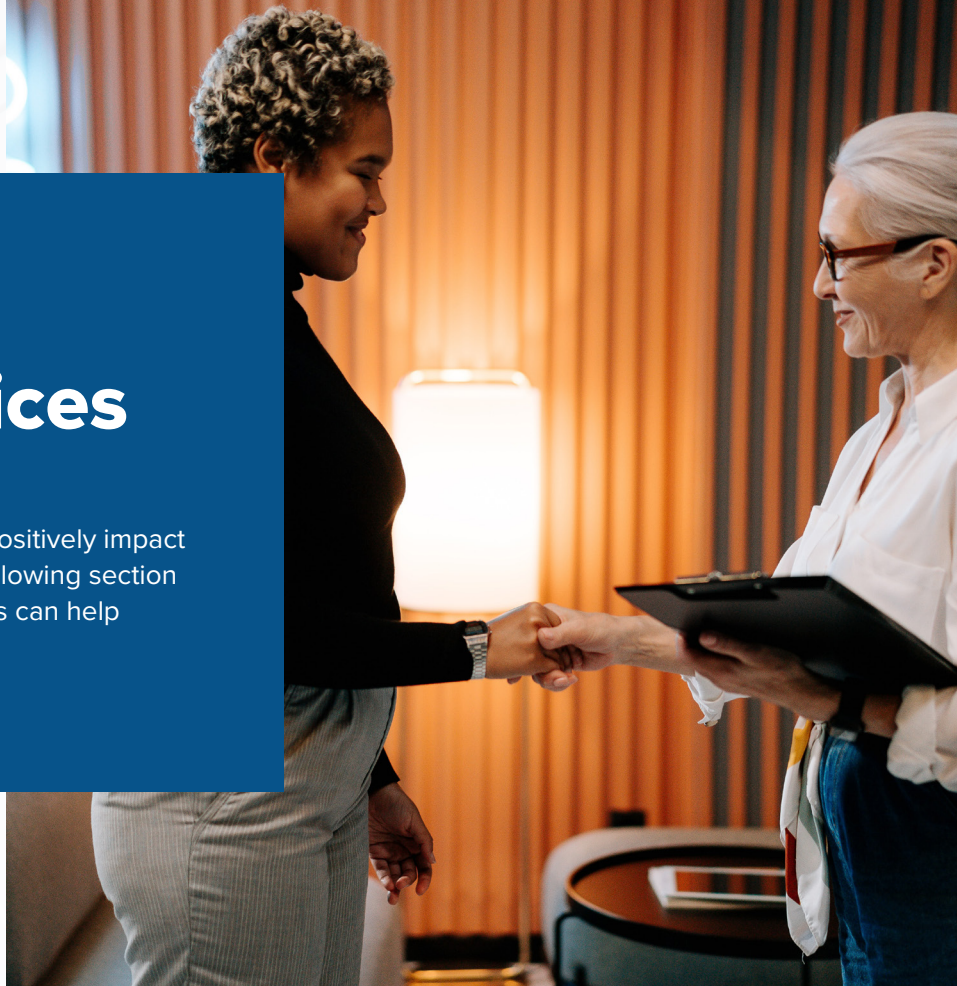
Focus on gains in Career Mobility: The connection between ROI and career mobility is a key for campuses, by taking steps to improve career mobility they not only improve alum success but also see larger gains in return on investment.

3.

Integrate High Impact Career Practices: Respondents engaged in the High Impact Career Practices are more likely to have higher levels of career mobility, decided on their career in high school or during their degree and perceive the degree to be worth the tuition they paid.

High Impact Career Practices

The six High Impact Career Practices positively impact ROI, Career Mobility and Equity. The following section provides details on how these practices can help transform student success.

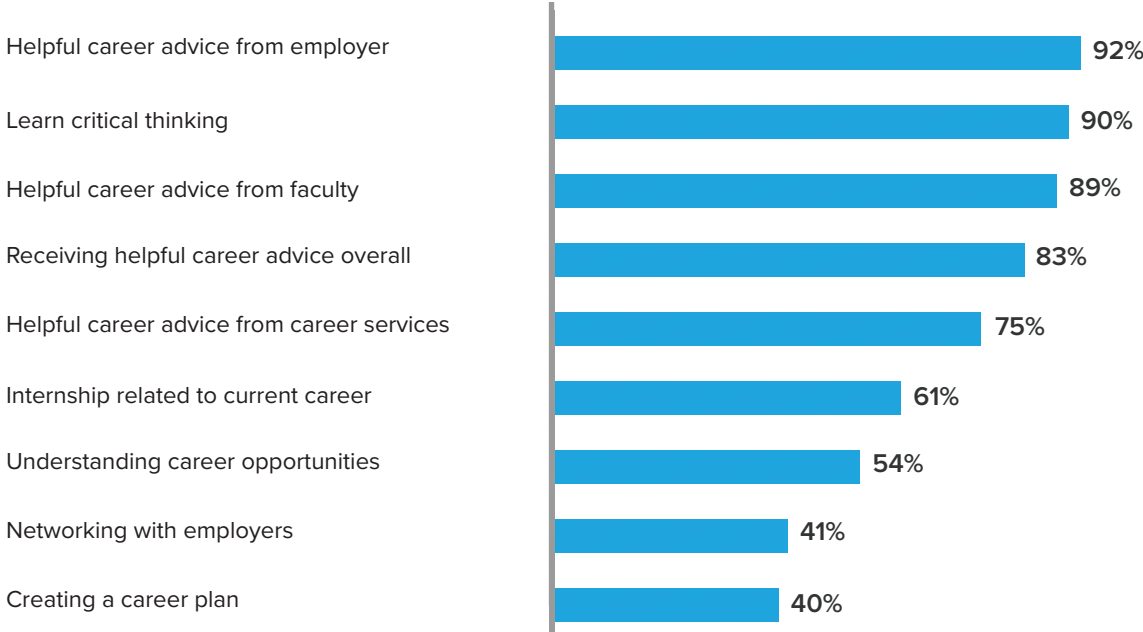


Key Takeaways

- Critical thinking (90%) and career advice (92%) continue to be the most frequently engaged in High Impact Career Practices.
- Networking with employers (41%) and creating a career plan (40%) continue to be the least frequently engaged in High Impact Career Practices.
- Those who scored on High Career Mobility were...
 - **5.5 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them **understand career opportunities**
 - **7.7 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them **create a plan for their career**
 - **5.5 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them **network with employers**
 - **2.1 times** more likely to agree that their **internship was related to their current career**
 - **1.3 times** more likely to agree that their degree helped them **gain critical thinking skills**
 - **2.2 times** more likely to agree that they **received helpful career advice**
- Agreeing that their degree was worth the tuition was positively associated with engagement in all High Impact Career Practices.

Overall engagement in these practices is strongest in relation to receiving helpful career advice and critical thinking, but are lower for internship, understanding career opportunities, networking with employers and creating a career plan.

Critical thinking and career advice continue to be most frequently engaged in high impact career practices

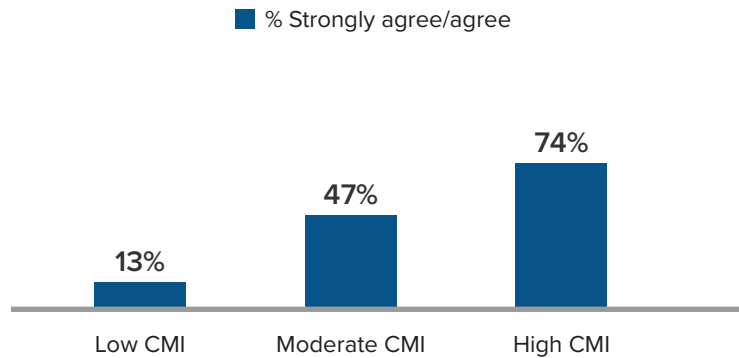


Relationship Between High Impact Career Practices and Career Mobility

Statistical models have shown that these practices influence career mobility. Respondents who scored high on the CMI (4.0-5.0) were more likely to have received or participated in the high impact career practices.

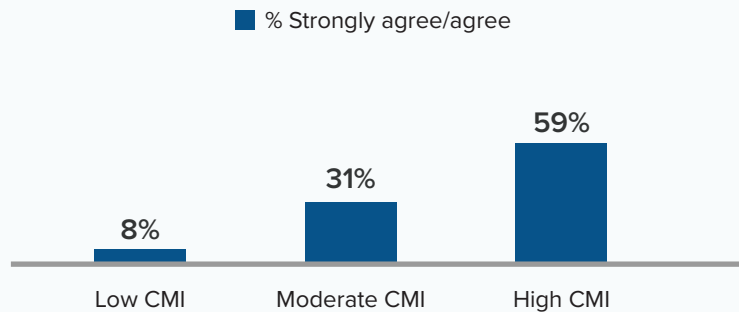
Understanding Career Opportunities:

Alum scoring high on the CMI were **5.5 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them understand career opportunities.



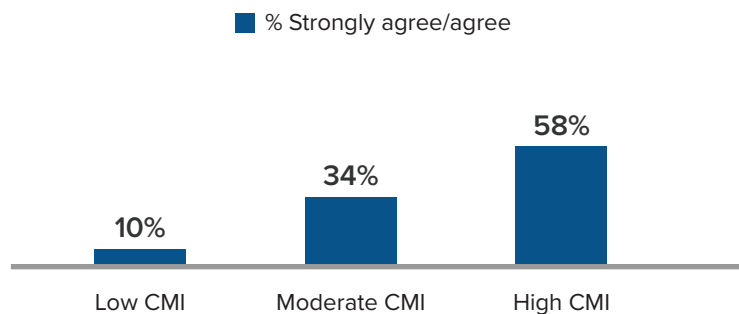
Create a plan for their career:

Alum scoring high on the CMI were **7.7 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them create a plan for their career.



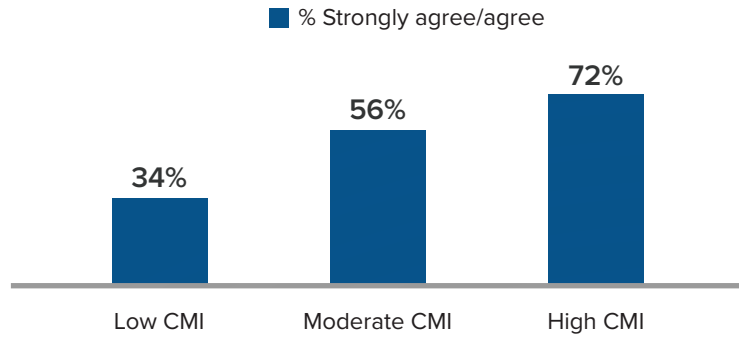
Networking with employers:

Alum scoring high on the CMI were **5.5 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them network with employers.



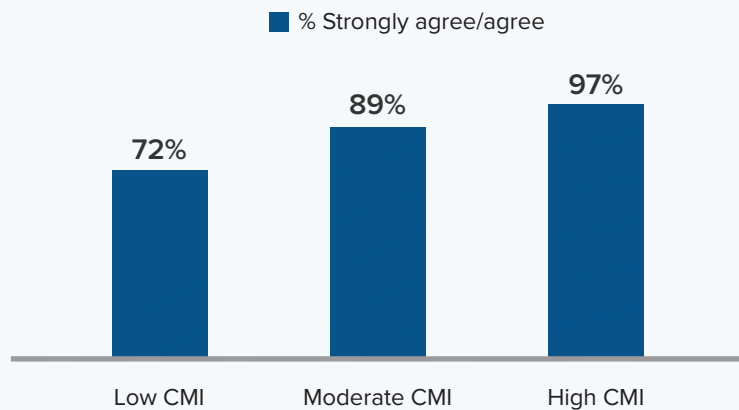
Internship related to current career:

Alum scoring high on the CMI were **2.1 times** more likely to agree that they had an internship related to their current career.

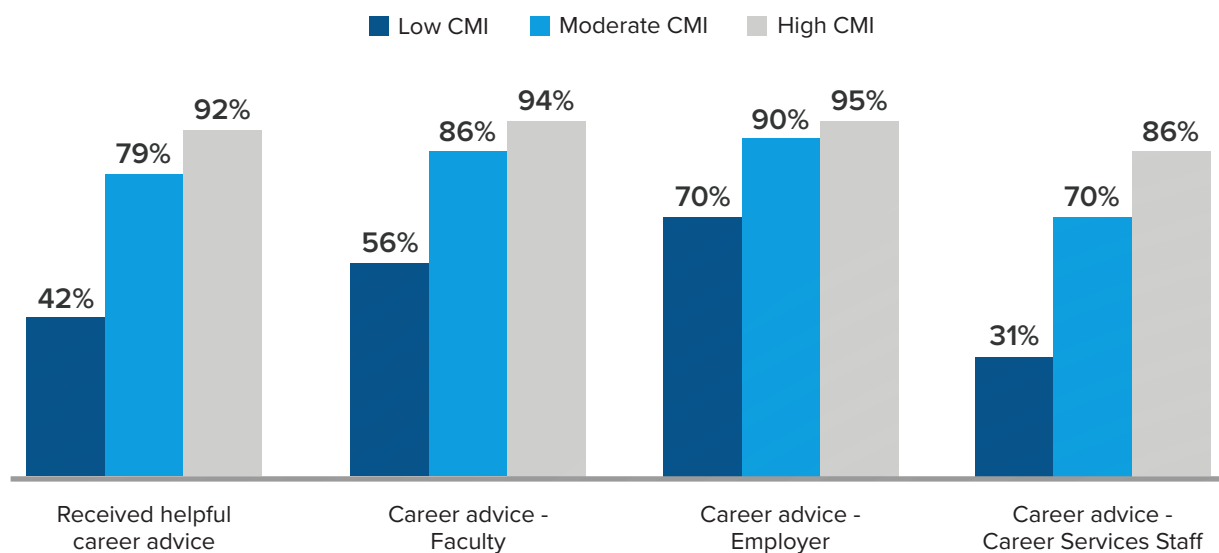


Gain critical thinking skills:

Alum scoring high on the CMI were **1.3 times** more likely to agree that their institution helped them gain critical thinking skills.



Alum with high CMI were **2.2 times** more likely to agree that they received helpful career advice



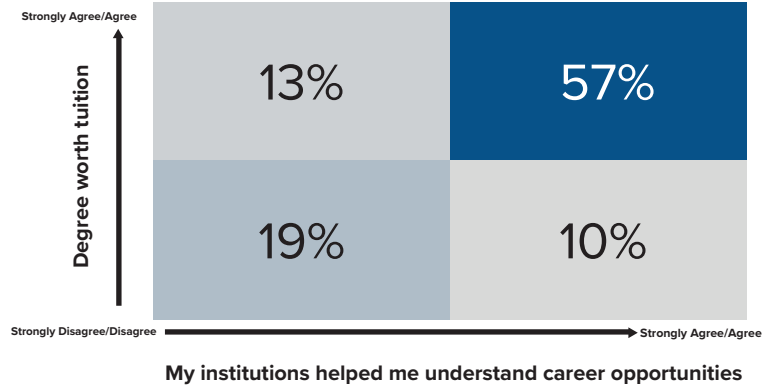
Relationship Between High Impact Career Practices and Return on Investment

Engagement in High Impact Career Practices is connected to Career Mobility, but does engagement in these practices also impact ROI?

Engaging in every High Impact Career Practice is associated with agreeing that the degree was worth the tuition paid.

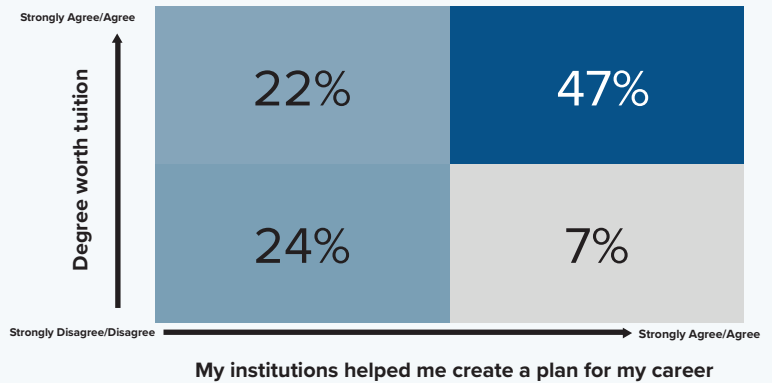
Career Opportunities:

Alums who agreed that their institution helped them understand career opportunities were **3.0 times more likely** to agree that their degree was worth their tuition than those who disagree with both.



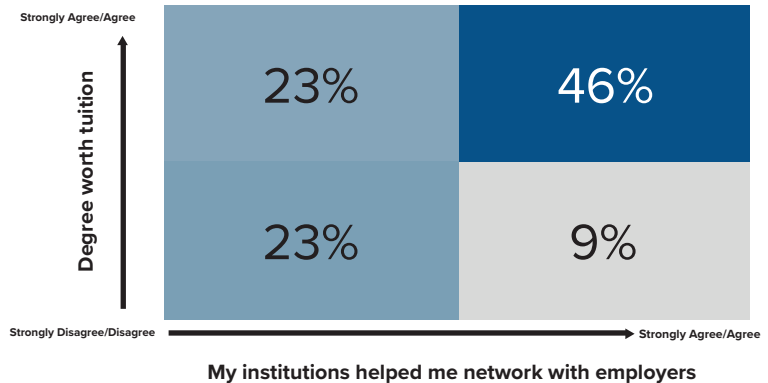
Create a career plan:

Alums who agreed that their institution helped them create a plan for their career were **2.0 times more likely** to agree that their degree was worth their tuition than those who disagree with both.



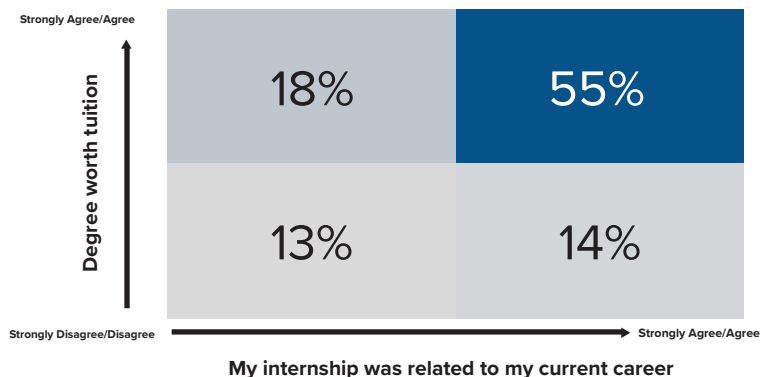
Network with employers:

Alums who agreed that their institution helped them network with employers were **2.0 times more likely** to agree that their degree was worth their tuition than those who disagree with both.



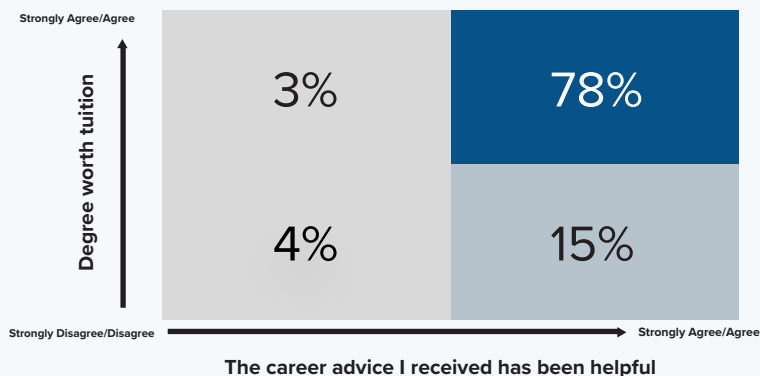
Internship related to current career:

Alums who agreed that their internship was related to their current career were **4.2 times more likely** to agree that their degree was worth their tuition than those who disagree with both.



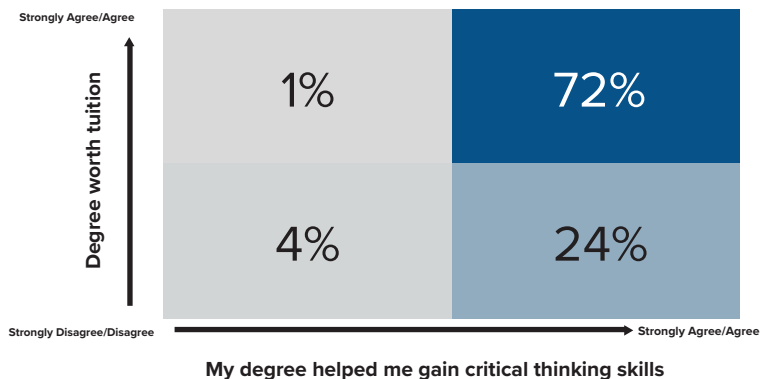
Helpful Career Advice:

Alums who agreed that they received helpful career advice were **20 times more likely** to agree that their degree was worth their tuition than those who disagree with both.



Critical Thinking:

Alums who agreed that their degree helped them gain critical thinking skills were **18 times more likely** to agree that their degree was worth their tuition than those who disagree with both.



Equitable Access to High Impact Career Practices

From a broad perspective, there are statistical differences between various groups accessing High Impact Career Practices. The table below provides an initial overview of these differences, with the next section taking a deeper, more nuanced look at equity gaps from both a statistical and practical perspective. In general, students who identify as white, male, or female are more likely to participate in or have access to the Higher Impact Career Practices.

	Male	Female	Hispanic	Black/African	Asian	White	First Gen.	Traditional Age	Adult Students
Career Opportunities	✓	✓	✗		✗	✓	✗		✗
Career Plan	✓	✓			✗	✓			✗
Networking with Employers	✓	✓	✗	✗		✓	✗	✓	
Internship Related to Current Career					✗	✓			
Helpful Career Advice					✗	✓	✓		
Career Advice Faculty					✗	✓	✓		
Career Advice Employers	✓	✓							
Career Advice Career Services									
Critical Thinking	✓	✓			✗	✓	✗	✓	

✓ Statistically more likely to access practice

✗ Statistically less likely to access practice



High Impact Career Practices Recommended Actions

1.

Use as Strategic Priorities: The High Impact Career Practices guide campuses to focus on the most strategic career practices and consider how they might better embed them into the life cycle of instruction, curriculum, the co-curricular, and advising practices on campus.

2.

Share your Success: Campus-specific successes, offerings, and commitments to career mobility should be showcased to internal and external audiences.

3.

Ensure equitable Access to Career Preparation: Addressing equity gaps in accessing these practices must be a top priority for institutions that seek to improve Career Mobility and/or ROI.

Equity And Career Mobility

If equitable success of all students is a goal of higher education, then identifying and addressing equity gaps in access to career development opportunities throughout higher education is essential. This section explores the key elements of ROI, Career Mobility and High Impact Career Practices through disaggregating data by four key demographic variables: Gender, Race, First-generation and Age.

The goal in disaggregating the data is to provide a better understanding of equity gaps and the strategies that can be employed to close these gaps. Further exploration is needed for alum categories not provided in this report such as those who identify as a person with a disability, veteran students, and sexual orientation.



Key Takeaways

- Historically marginalized communities:
 - Score higher in economic mobility
 - Score higher in incurring debt to pay for degree, still paying off student loan and finding their student loan debt unmanageable
 - Score lower in career preparation and career satisfaction as well as engagement in High Impact Career Practices
- White, male, not-first-generation and under the age of 35 have statistically higher scores in many or most of the areas
- Women see statistically higher scores compared to Nonbinary/ Genderqueer/ Genderfluid and Identity not listed but lower scores compared to men

Sample Size Information

Before exploring the data it's important to draw attention to the various sample sizes for each of the groups highlighted. As with all statistical analysis, when comparing groups of varying sizes there are nuances to the statistics being provided and, while statistical significance is one indicator, practical significance in the form of seeing a difference that is determined by institutional priorities, culture, or focus must also be considered.

For each demographic category, there is a summary of which groups within that category have larger sample sizes and which have smaller sample sizes. When exploring the data in each section, note:

- Some groups have much larger sample sizes (150 responses or more) and therefore statistical significance may be the result of a larger sample being compared to a smaller sample.
- Some groups have smaller sample sizes (150 or less) and therefore a statistical significance may not appear, but a practical significance may still be important to note. One thing to keep in mind is that, in some cases, even the smaller groups have sample sizes larger than what one would find on any individual campus



Gender

Sample Sizes:

Larger groups in this Category (150 or more responses)

Woman
Man
No response

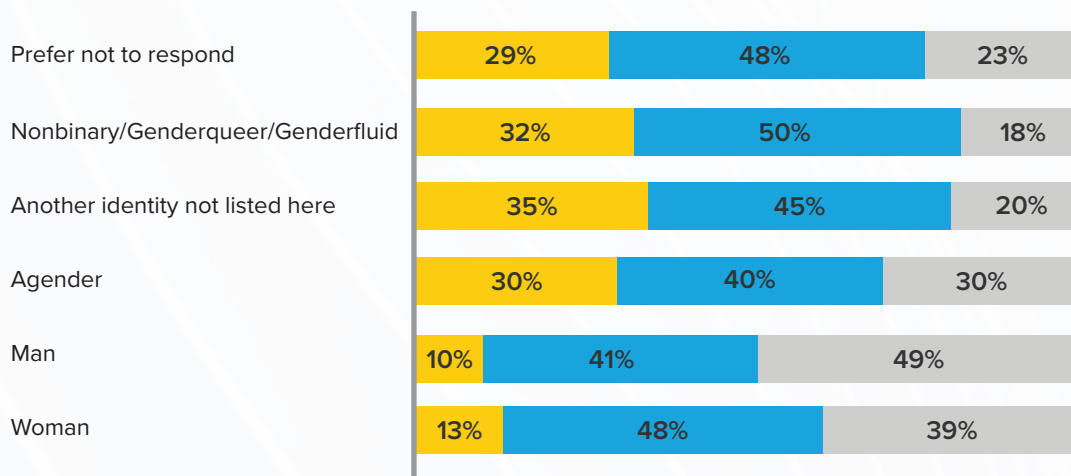
Smaller groups in this category (150 or less responses)

Prefer not to respond
Nonbinary/Genderqueer/Genderfluid
Another identity not listed here
Agender

Individuals were asked their gender identity as part of the survey. All differences noted below were shown to be statistically significant.

Those who identify as man or woman see higher levels of Career Mobility than other gender identities

Low CMI Medium CMI High CMI



Significance testing reveals the following equity gaps:

- Men scoring higher than Women in almost all categories
- Women scoring higher than Another Identity not listed
- Nonbinary/ Genderqueer/ Genderfluid scoring lower than Women

Significantly Higher Scores: The following table shows areas where one gender identity was found to have significantly higher scores compared to another gender identity.		Significantly Lower Scores: The following table shows areas where one gender identity was found to have significantly lower scores compared to another gender identity.	
Men score higher than Women in the following areas:	Overall Career Mobility Career preparation Career satisfaction Economic mobility Networking with employers Salary high enough to pay bills No longer pay student loan debt Student loan debt manageable Degree was worth the student loan debt	Nonbinary/ Genderqueer/ Genderfluid score lower than Women AND Men in the following areas:	Overall Career Mobility Career preparation Career satisfaction Economic mobility Understanding career opportunities Networking with employers Student loan debt is manageable Salary high enough to pay bills
Women score higher than Another Identity not listed here in the following areas:	Career preparation Understanding career opportunities Creating a career plan Networking with employers		
Nonbinary/ Genderqueer/ Genderfluid score higher than Another Identity not listed here in the following areas:	Career Preparation Critical thinking		
Men score higher than another Identity not listed here in the following areas:	Understanding career opportunities Degree was worth the student loan debt		

Race

Sample Sizes:

Larger groups in this Category (150 or more responses)

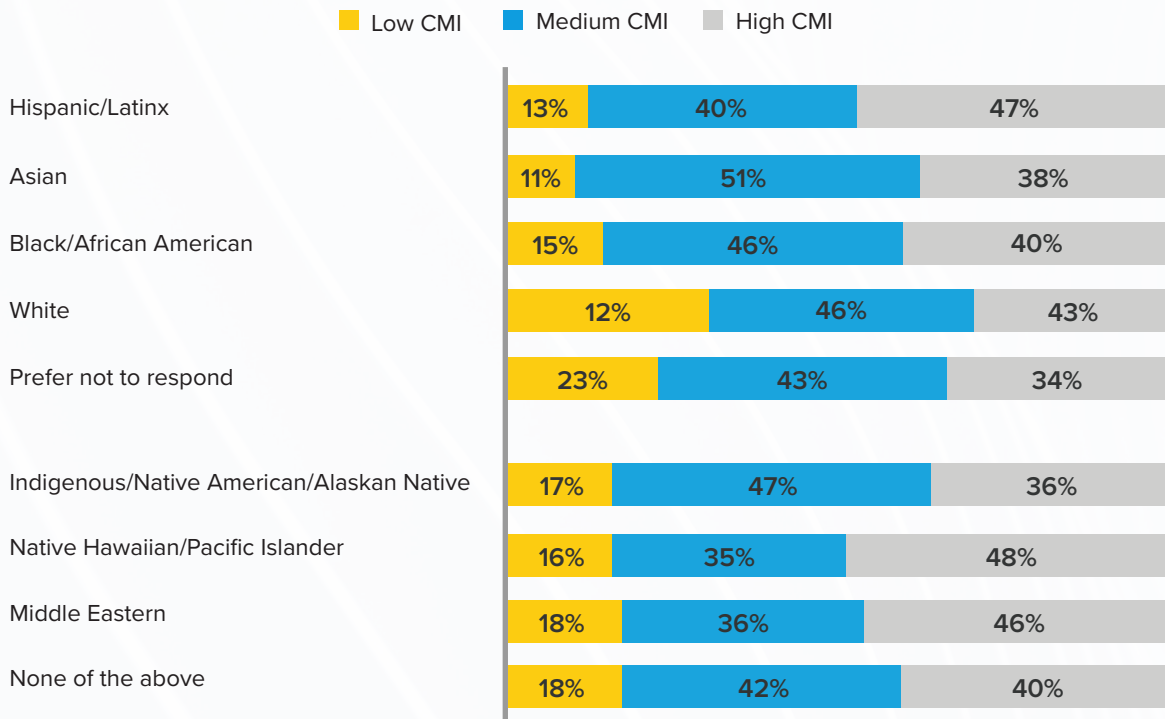
Hispanic/Latinx
Asian
Black/African American
White
Prefer not to respond

Smaller groups in this category (150 or less responses)

Indigenous/Native American/Alaskan Native
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
Middle Eastern
None of the above

Individuals were asked their racial identity as part of the survey as a check all that apply. Analysis was completed comparing each individual group with those who do not identify with that group. All differences noted below were shown to be statistically significant.

Career Mobility between racial identities with the largest gaps appearing for people identifying as Asian, Black/African American, Indigenous



Significance testing reveals the following equity gaps:

- Whites score higher than those not identifying as White in almost every area
- Economic mobility is the one area where the results are flipped. Those identifying as White scored lower while most other race/ethnicities scored significantly higher. This could be a result of how that factor is structured, with economic mobility measured in relation to the household in which someone grew up
- Overall gaps exist for historically marginalized groups in accessing high impact career practices as well as incurring debt and paying off student loan debt

Significantly Higher Scores:		Significantly Lower Scores:	
The following table shows areas where one identity was found to have significantly higher scores compared to those who do not identify with that identity.		The following table shows areas where one identity was found to have significantly lower scores compared to those who do not identify with that identity.	
White identity scored higher than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career mobility overall Career preparation Career satisfaction Understanding career opportunities Creating a career plan Networking with employers Internship related to career Helpful career advice Critical thinking Salary high enough to pay bills No longer paying student loan debt Student loan debt is manageable Degree was worth the student loan debt 	White identity scored lower than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:	Economic
Hispanic/Latinx identity scored higher than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic mobility Incurring debt to obtain degree Still paying student loan debt 	Hispanic/Latinx identity scored lower than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career preparation Understanding career opportunities Networking with employers Salary high enough to pay bills Student loan debt is manageable

<p>Asian identity scored higher than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Economic mobility Not incurring debt to obtain degree No longer paying student loan debt</p>	<p>Asian identity scored lower than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Career preparation Career satisfaction Understand career opportunities Creating career plans Internship related to current career Career advice Critical thinking Salary high enough to pay bills Degree worth student loan debt</p>
<p>Black/African American scored higher than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Economic mobility Incurring debt to obtain degree Still paying student loan debt</p>	<p>Black/African American scored lower than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Career preparation Career satisfaction Networking with employers Salary high enough to pay the bills Student loan debt is manageable</p>
<p>Indigenous/Native American/Alaskan Native scored higher than not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Economic mobility Incurring debt to obtain degree Still paying student loan debt</p>	<p>Indigenous/Native American/Alaskan Native scored lower than not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Career preparation Career satisfaction Understand career opportunities Create career plan</p>
<p>Middle Eastern scored higher than not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Middle Eastern scored lower than not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Salary high enough to pay bills Degree was worth the student loan debt Understanding career opportunities</p>
<p>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander scored higher than not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>Incurring debt to obtain degree</p>	<p>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander scored lower than not identifying with this group in the following areas:</p>	<p>N/A</p>

First Generation

Sample Sizes:

Larger groups in this Category (150 or more responses)

Yes – first-generation
No – not first-generation

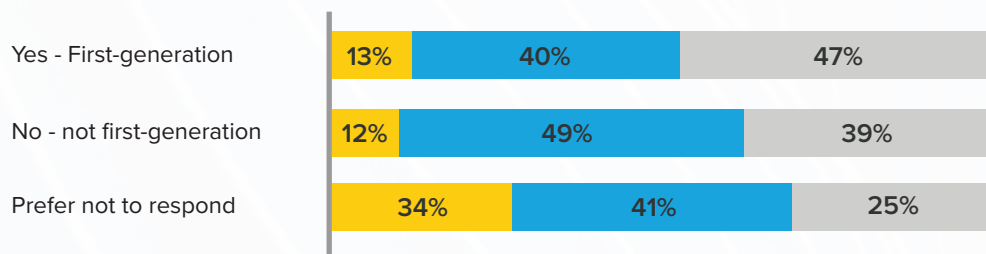
Smaller groups in this category (150 or less responses)

Prefer not to respond

Individuals were asked if they identify as a first-generation college student. Analysis was completed comparing those who indicated yes, first-generation to those who responded no, not first-generation. All differences noted below were shown to be statistically significant.

Those who identify as First-generation have a higher career mobility score than those who do not identify

■ Low CMI ■ Medium CMI ■ High CMI



Significance testing reveals the following equity gaps:

- First-generation respondents scored higher than non-first-generation in overall career mobility as well as economic mobility but lower in many other areas. Economic mobility is measured in relationship to the household in which they grew up, therefore it may align more with the first-generation population.
- First-generation respondents were significantly more likely to take on student loan debt, still be paying that debt, and not feel like that debt is manageable.
- First-generation respondents were significantly less engaged in high impact career practices

Significantly Higher Scores:

The following table shows areas where one identity was found to have significantly higher scores compared to those who do not identify with that identity.

Significantly Lower Scores:

The following table shows areas where one identity was found to have significantly lower scores compared to those who do not identify with that identity.

First-generation identity scored higher than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:

Career mobility overall
Economic mobility
Helpful career advice
Incurring debt to obtain degree
Still paying student loan debt

First-generation identity scored lower than those not identifying with this group in the following areas:

Career preparation
Career satisfaction
Understanding career opportunities
Creating a career plan
Networking with employers
Critical thinking
Salary higher enough to pay bills
Student loan debt is manageable
Degree was worth student loan debt

Age

Sample Sizes:

Larger groups in this Category (150 or more responses)

Under the age of 35
Over the age of 35

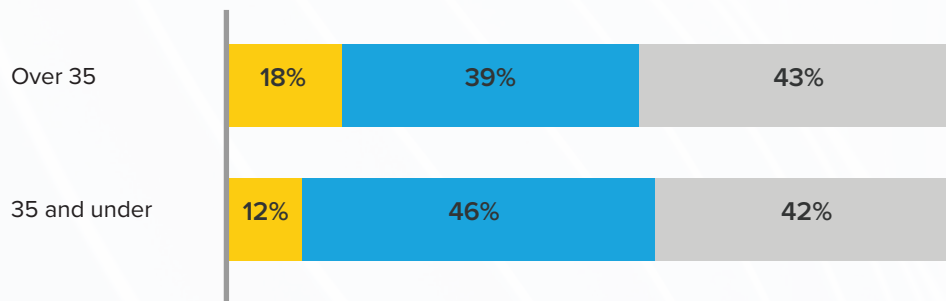
Smaller groups in this category (150 or less responses)

Prefer not to respond

Individuals were asked the year they were born. Based on their response they were grouped into the two age groups. While there may be individual exceptions, an assumption can be made overall that alum under the age of 35 were most likely traditional-aged college students and those over 35 were adult students while obtaining their degree. All differences noted below were shown to be statistically significant.

More respondents over the age of 35 scored in the Low Career Mobility category

Low CMI Medium CMI High CMI



Significance testing reveals the following equity gaps:

- Respondents over the age of 35 scored higher than those under 35 in economic mobility but lower in many other areas. Economic mobility is measured in relationship to the household in which they grew up, therefore it may be a result of having more time (older age) to gain economic stability.
- Respondents over the age of 35 were significantly more likely to take on student loan debt, still be paying that debt and not feel like that debt is manageable.
- Respondents over the age of 35 had significantly less engagement in high impact career practices

Significantly Higher Scores:

The following table shows areas where one identity was found to have significantly higher scores compared to those who do not identify with that identity.

Those over the age of 35 scored higher than those under the age of 35 in the following areas:

Economic mobility
 Incurring debt to pay for degree
 Still paying for student loan debt

Significantly Lower Scores:

The following table shows areas where one identity was found to have significantly lower scores compared to those who do not identify with that identity.

Those over the age of 35 scored lower than those under the age of 35 in the following areas:

Career mobility overall
 Career preparation
 Career satisfaction
 Understand career opportunities
 Creating a career plan
 Networking with employers
 Critical thinking
 Degree was worth the student loan debt
 Student loan debt is manageable
 Salary high enough to pay bills



Equity And Career Mobility Recommended Actions

1.

Strategically address equity gaps: To address equity gaps particular attention should be paid to ensure engagement for historically marginalized groups to three of the High Impact Career Practices:

- a. networking with employers
- b. career planning
- c. understanding career opportunities

2.

Address student loan debt: In addition, institutions need to address student loan debt, particularly for these populations.

Recommendations for Higher Education

01

Ensure collection of robust alum data on your campus

Most campuses around the country lack alum 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 overall career mobility of your alums in accordance with your institutional mission.

02

Connect intellectual development with career preparation

Use the High Impact Career Practices to integrate career preparation into the academic experience while also providing alums with tools for career decision making during and after their degree.

03

Focus on gains in Career Mobility

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

04

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 allow for a campus to focus on the most strategic career practices 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.

05

Strategically address equity gaps

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



Demographic Overview

The respondents represented in this report are undergraduate alums who graduated in the calendar years 2011 and 2016. This sample represents 9,919 unique undergraduate respondents from over 50 public and private institutions of various sizes and Carnegie classifications.

Graduation Year

- 44.6% 2011
- 55.4% 2016

What is your current age?

- < 0.1% 18-24
- 91.0% 25-35
- 5.6% 36-45
- 1.9% 46-55
- 0.9% 56-65
- 0.2% 66+
- 0.5% Prefer not to respond

What is your current gender identity?

- 59.7% Female
- 37.3% Male
- 0.9% Non-binary
- 0.1% Agender
- 0.2% Other / Chose not to identify
- 1.7% Prefer not to respond

Do you identify as cisgender or transgender?

- 93.0% Cisgender
- 0.7% Transgender
- 6.3% Prefer not to respond

What is your sexual identity?

- 80.9% Straight/heterosexual
- 5.0% Bisexual
- 3.4% Gay or lesbian
- 2.1% Asexual
- 1.4% Queer
- 0.9% Pansexual
- 0.5% Another identity not listed here
- 5.6% Prefer not to respond

What was your status while earning your bachelor's degree?

- 73.0% In-state student
- 1.7% International student
- 22.3% Out-of-state domestic student

Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- 5.0% Yes
- 92.3% No
- 2.7% Prefer not to respond

Were you a first-generation college student during your bachelor's degree?

- 34.1% Yes
- 65.4% No
- 0.5% Prefer not to respond

Do you self-identify as Hispanic/Latinx?

- 5.1% Yes
- 94.9% No

With which race(s) do you self-identify?

- 6.7% Asian
- 4.4% Black/African American
- 1.4% Middle Eastern
- 1.4% Native American/Alaskan Native
- 0.4% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 84.2% White
- 1.8% None of the above
- 3.9% Prefer not to respond

Since graduating with your bachelor's degree, how many years have you lived in the same state where your institution is located?

- 12.0% 1-2 years
- 42.9% 3-5 years
- 2.9% 6-7 years
- 17.4% 8-10 years
- 24.7% I have not lived in that state

Major Clusters

- 3.3% Agricultural & Natural Resources
- 0.2% Architecture & Construction
- 20.3% Business
- 5.5% Communication, Journalism & Related Programs
- 4.3% Education
- 8.8% Engineering & Technology
- 5.0% Fine Arts
- 5.8% Health Professions
- 13.7% Liberal Arts & Sciences
- 15.8% Natural & Physical Science
- 14.8% Psychology & Social Sciences
- 2.4% Professional Service
- <1% No Major Identified

About The Career Leadership Collective

The Career Leadership Collective is a thought partner and consulting group for colleges and universities that assists senior campus leaders and career services leaders with systemically weaving career and future preparation into the fabric of the campus experience. They have done business with over 1,000 colleges and universities since 2017 and provide strategic growth consulting, training, DEI analysis services, conferences, online content, and are the home of the National Alumni Career Mobility survey.

In addition to the National Alumni Career Mobility survey for 5- and 10- year alumni, The Career Leadership Collective offers NACM Complete for all campus alumni, NACM Select for select class years, and EMBARK First Destination Survey (FDS) services for collecting data about recent graduates.

The Collective regularly provides data consulting, systemic change consulting, executive search for career services leaders, and has a robust partnership with the Career Launch Academy, the content leader in teaching students to build social capital at scale.

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