

GALLUP®



Alumni Perspectives on Higher Education Experiences, Outcomes and Value



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Introduction

Since 2013, Gallup has surveyed over 100,000 college alumni to understand which higher education experiences are most impactful for learners and how those experiences translate into outcomes upon completion. By gathering perspectives from alumni who completed their degrees over the past 30+ years, the research captures both immediate reflections and longer-term assessments of how higher education has shaped these graduates' careers and lives.

This research is grounded in the belief that learners themselves are essential sources of insight for improving higher education. By elevating alumni feedback on what supported them, and what would have made their experience more positive, Gallup provides leaders and policymakers with practical guidance for designing learning environments that foster positive outcomes.

The views reflected in this report represent insights gathered among 5,934 two-year and four-year degree holders surveyed via the Gallup Panel Nov. 14–Dec. 1, 2025, in partnership with Lumina Foundation. Results are disaggregated by degree type, institutional control and graduate demographics to better inform leaders about the similarities and differences of experiences and outcomes among learners in different settings and from different backgrounds.

Key Findings

SECTION ONE

Student Experiences



Eighty-one percent of alumni say they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning, and 57% say their professors cared about them as a person.



Two-thirds of bachelor's graduates (66%) say they felt they belonged at their institution while enrolled.



Experiential learning opportunities are more common at four-year institutions. **Fifty-six percent of four-year alumni** say they held a job or internship that applied what they were learning in the classroom, compared with 43% of two-year alumni.

SECTION TWO

Post-Graduation Outcomes



Fifty-eight percent of alumni say their institution prepared them well for life outside of college.



Most alumni say their education was worth the cost. **Seventy-one percent** strongly agree or agree their education was worth what they paid.



Half of student loan borrowers (52%) say they have delayed one or more major life events because of their debt.

SECTION THREE

Perspectives of Higher Education



Most alumni believe a college degree is at least as important today as it was 20 years ago. **About seven in 10** say a degree is either *equally or more important* today as it was two decades ago.



Few bachelor's graduates (11%) believe colleges charge fair prices for what they offer, similar to rates among those who have not completed a four-year degree.

SECTION ONE

Student Experiences

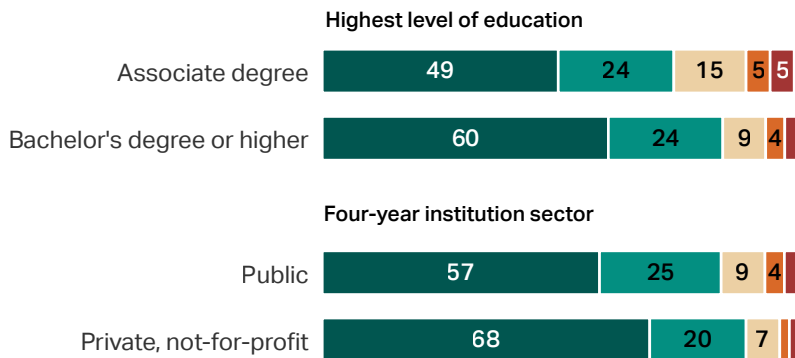


Student Support

1 Four in five (81%) alumni agree that they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning.

I had at least one professor at [Institution] who made me excited about learning.

■ %5 - Strongly agree ■ %4 ■ %3 ■ %2 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.

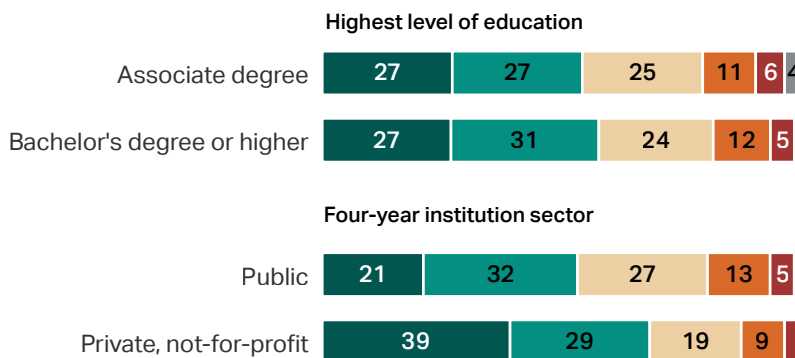


Alumni with a bachelor's degree or higher (60%) are more likely than associate degree holders (49%) to strongly agree.

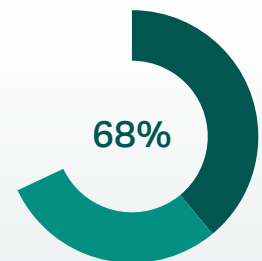
2 A majority of alumni feel their professors cared about them as a person.

My professors at [Institution] cared about me as a person.

■ %5 - Strongly agree ■ %4 ■ %3 ■ %2 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.

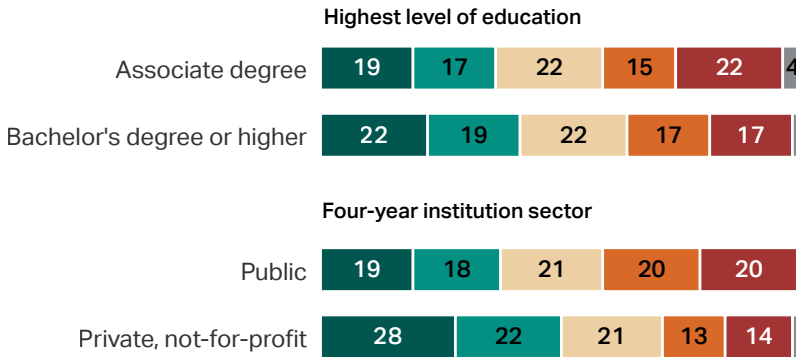


Agreement is highest among bachelor's graduates who attended private, not-for-profit institutions.

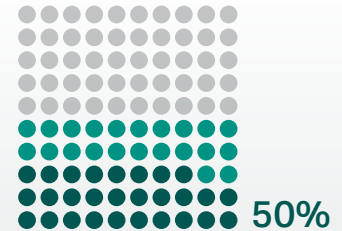
3 About four in 10 alumni overall say they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams.

While attending [Institution], I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.

■ %5 - Strongly agree ■ %4 ■ %3 ■ %2 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.

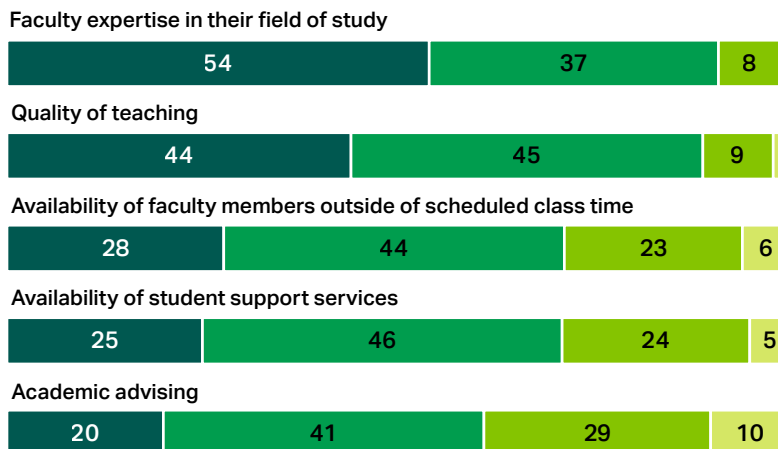


Bachelor's graduates who attended private, not-for-profit institutions are the most likely to agree.

4 While instructional quality is a clear strength, advising and the availability of faculty and student services are viewed somewhat less positively.

Please rate the quality of each of the following while obtaining your degree at [Institution].

■ % Excellent ■ % Good ■ % Fair ■ % Poor



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.

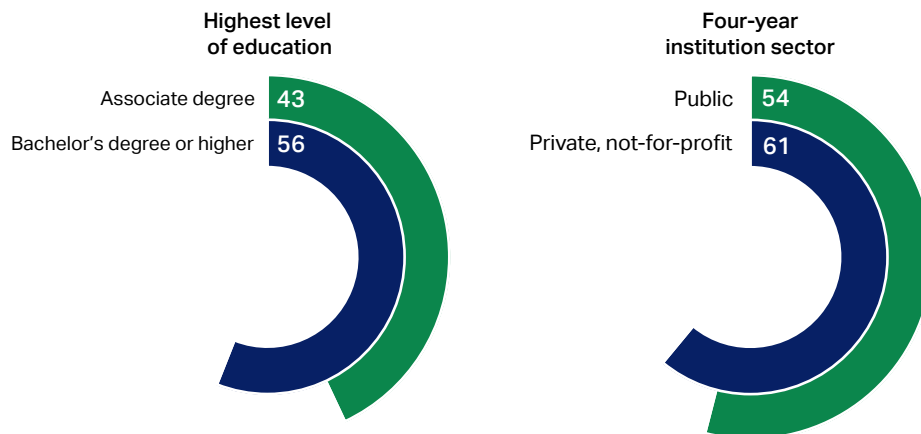


Experiential Learning

1 **Four-year alumni (56%) are more likely than two-year alumni (43%)** to indicate they held a job or internship that allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom.

While attending [Institution], did you have a job or internship that allowed you to apply what you were learning in the classroom?

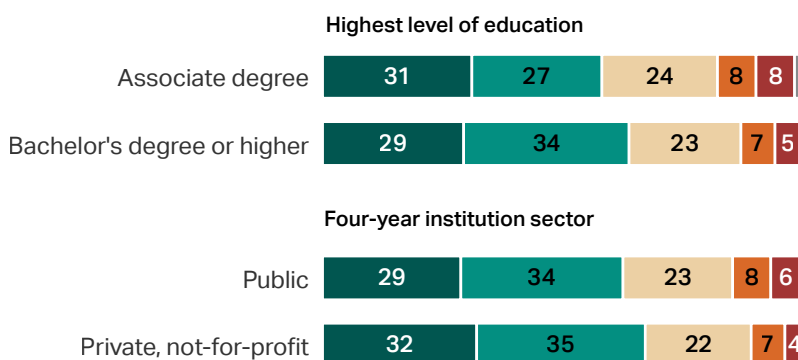
% Yes



2 **Sixty-three percent of bachelor's graduates** agree they gained important job-related skills at their institution.

I gained important job-related skills while completing my degree at [Institution].

■ %5 - Strongly agree
 ■ %4
 ■ %3
 ■ %2
 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know

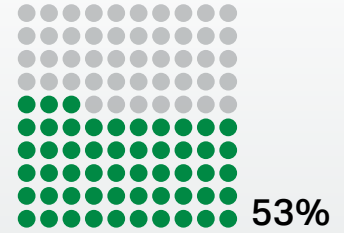
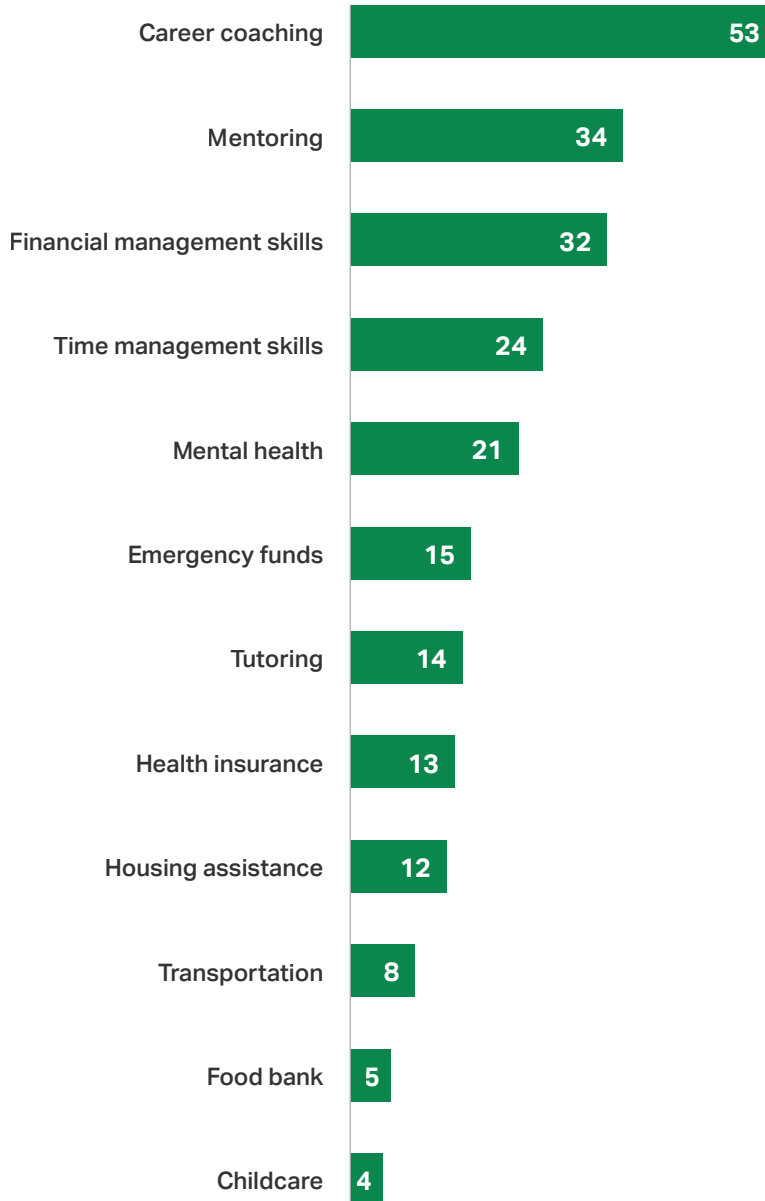


Note: Percentages may total 100% +/- due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.



3 Consistent across degree level and institution type, **career-related support** stands out as the resource alumni wish they had more of.

What resources, if any, do you most wish you had access to while completing your degree at [Institution]?



More than half of alumni (53%) say they wish they had access to career coaching while completing their degree.

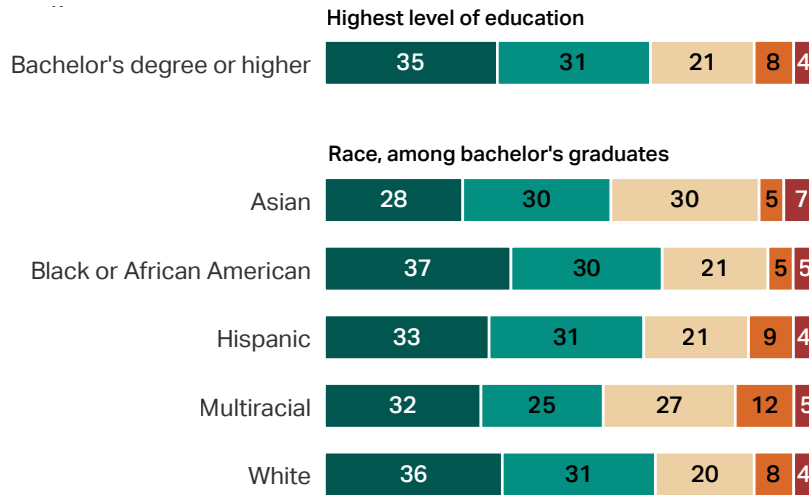


Campus Culture

1 **Two-thirds (66%) of bachelor's graduates** say they felt as if they belonged at their institution.

I felt as if I belonged at [Institution].

■ %5 - Strongly agree ■ %4 ■ %3 ■ %2 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
 ■ % Don't know



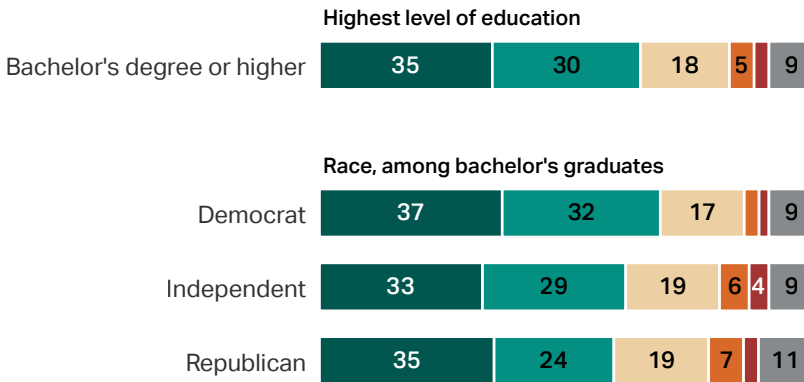
Note: Responses are consistent across male and female alumni. Results by race are shown among bachelor's graduates only. Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.



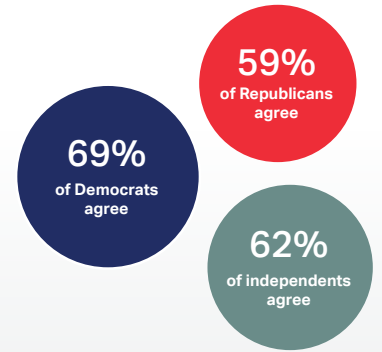
2 Two-thirds (65%) of bachelor's graduates agree that free speech was valued at their institution.

Free speech was valued at [Institution].

■ %5 - Strongly agree ■ %4 ■ %3 ■ %2 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know



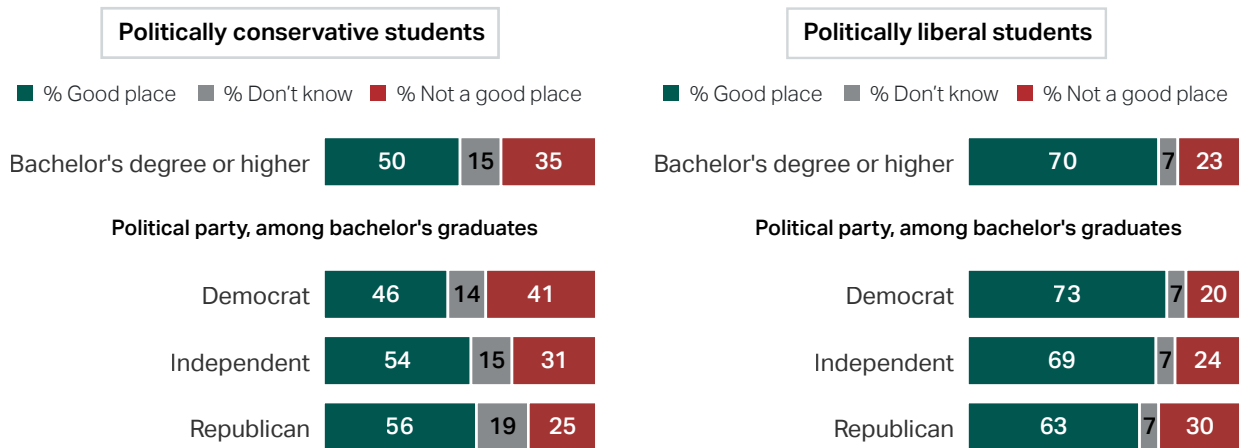
Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown. Results are shown among bachelor's graduates only.



Democrats are more likely than independents and Republicans to agree, though majorities across party identification express agreement overall.

3 Bachelor's graduates from all political identities are more likely to say their institution was a good place for politically liberal students than for politically conservative students.

Was [Institution] a good place or not a good place for:



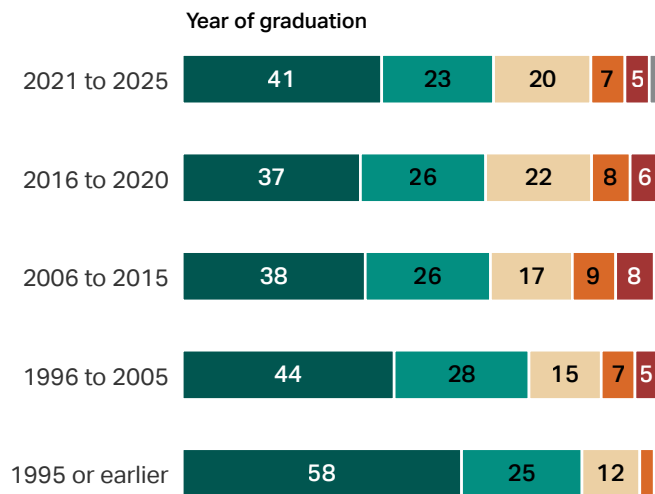
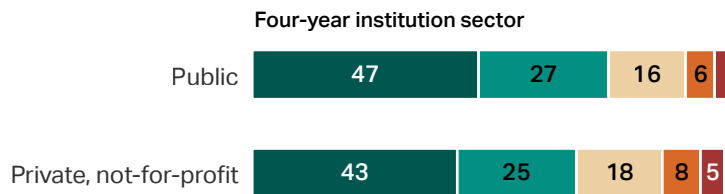
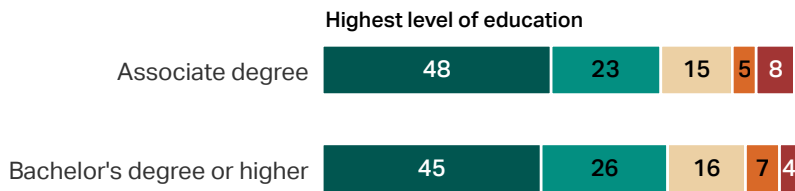
Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Results are shown among bachelor's graduates only.

Degree Value

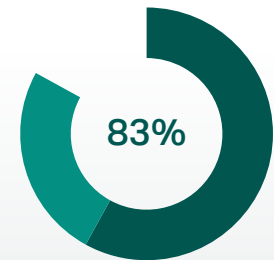
1 The majority (71%) of alumni strongly agree or agree that their education was worth the cost.

My education from [Institution] was worth the cost.

■ %5 - Strongly agree
 ■ %4
 ■ %3
 ■ %2
 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.



Agreement is highest among those who graduated in 1995 or earlier.



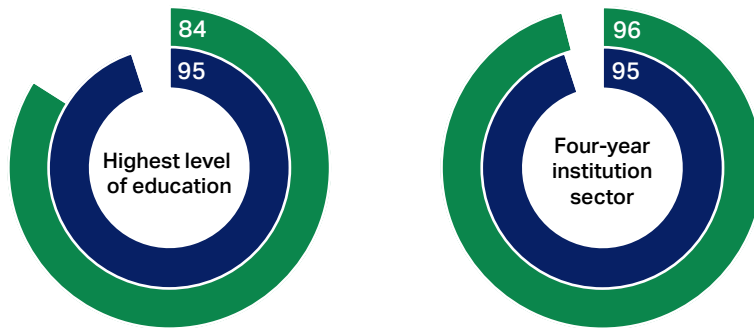
2 **Ninety-three percent of alumni** overall say that if they had to do it all over again, they would still obtain an undergraduate or associate degree.

If you had to do it all over again, would you:

% Yes

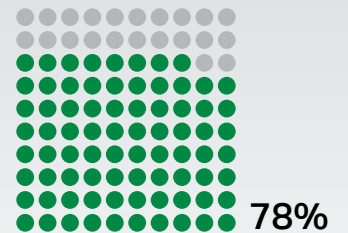
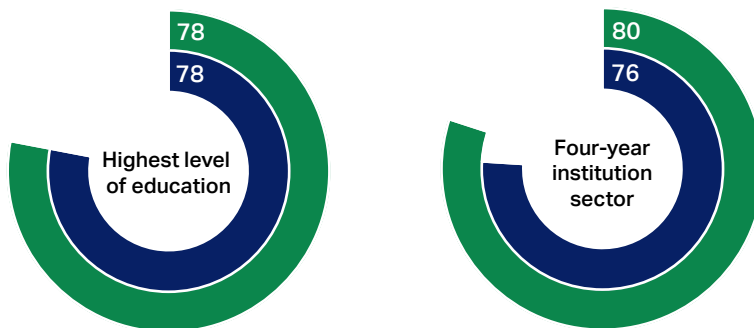
Obtain an undergraduate or associate degree

- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree or higher
- Public
- Private, not-for-profit



Attend [Institution]

- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree or higher
- Public
- Private, not-for-profit



Most alumni also say they would attend the same institution again.

SECTION TWO

Post-Graduation Outcomes



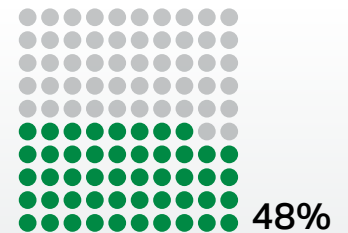
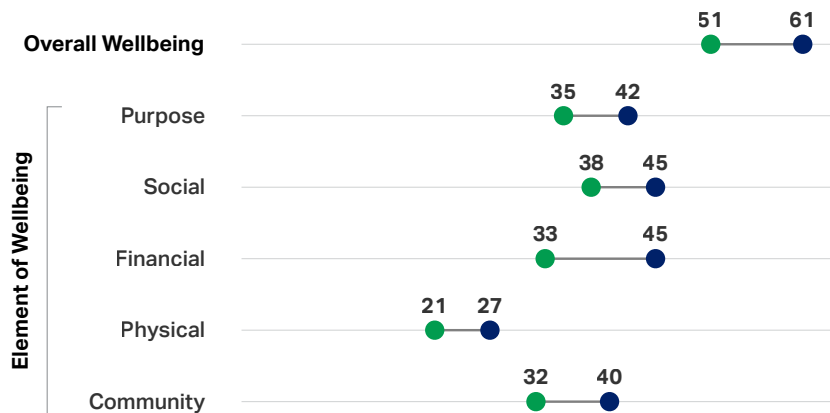
Life Evaluation and Preparedness

1 Sixty-one percent of bachelor's graduates and 51% of associate graduates are **thriving in life**.

Alumni Wellbeing

(% Thriving)

● Associate degree ● Bachelor's degree or higher

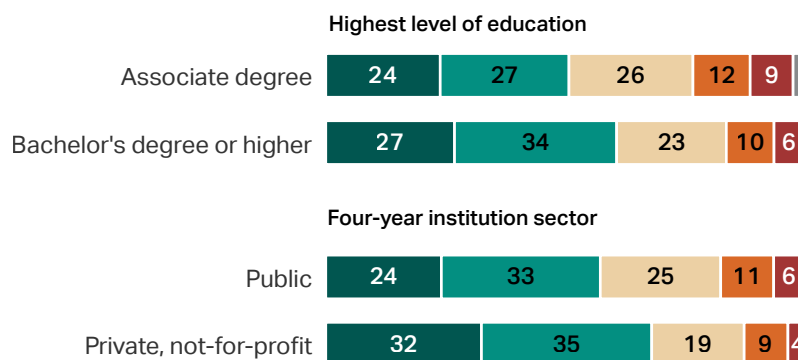


Gallup data show 48% of all U.S. adults are thriving.

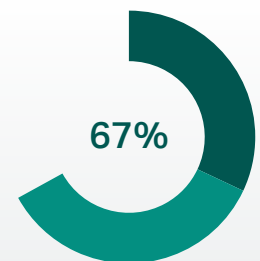
2 Fifty-eight percent of alumni strongly agree or agree that their institution prepared them well for life outside of college.

[Institution] prepared me well for life outside of college.

■ %5 - Strongly agree ■ %4 ■ %3 ■ %2 ■ %1 - Strongly disagree
■ % Don't know



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Percentages < 4% not shown.



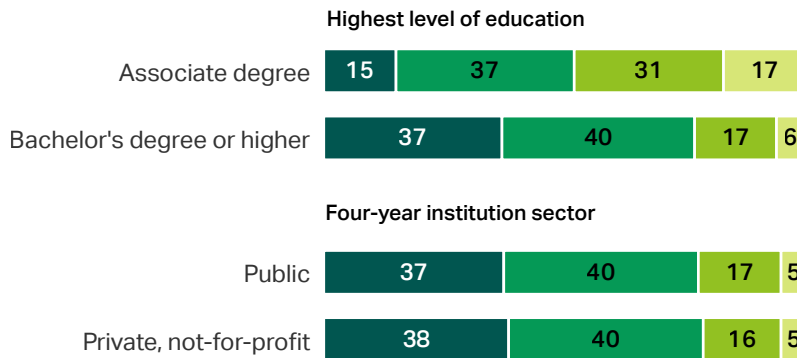
Agreement is highest among bachelor's graduates who attended private, not-for-profit institutions.

Career Preparedness

1 Most alumni say their degree has been important for both their financial and career progress.

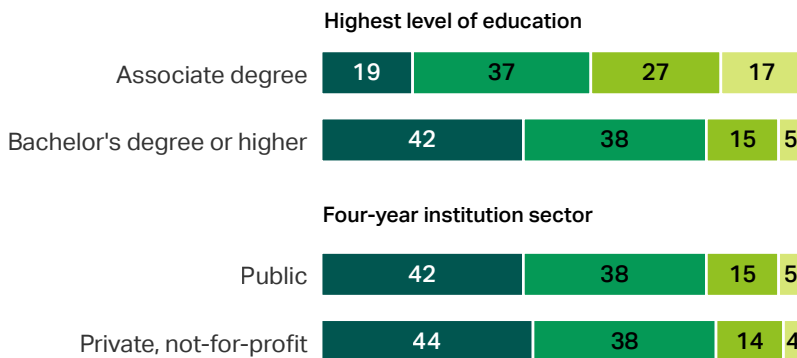
How important has your degree been to reaching your financial goals?

■ % Critical ■ % Important ■ % Not very important ■ % Not important at all/Unnecessary



How important has your degree been to reaching your career goals?

■ % Critical ■ % Important ■ % Not very important ■ % Not important at all/Unnecessary



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding.

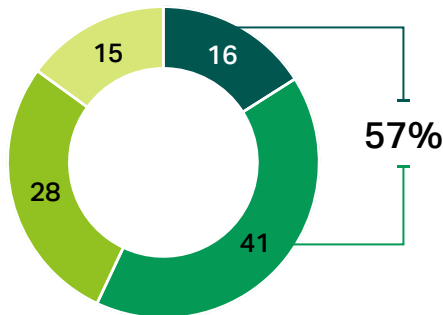


Bachelor's graduates are significantly more likely to say their degree has been "important" or "critical."

2 **Fifty-seven percent of alumni** say they feel “very” or “somewhat” prepared to compete in the job market as AI becomes more prevalent.

How prepared do you feel to compete in the job market as artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more common in the workplace?

■ % Very prepared ■ % Somewhat prepared ■ % Not too prepared ■ % Not at all prepared



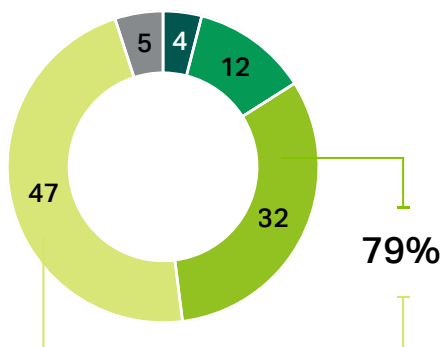
Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding.



3 **Most alumni** say it is “not too likely” (32%) or “not at all likely” (47%) that their job will be eliminated in the next five years because of AI.

How likely is it that the job you have now will be eliminated within the next five years as a result of artificial intelligence (AI)?

■ % Very likely ■ % Somewhat likely ■ % Not too likely ■ % Not at all likely
■ % Don't know



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding.

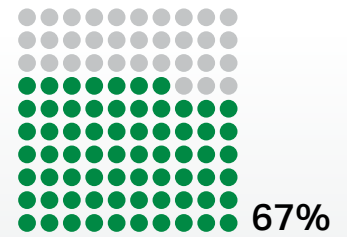
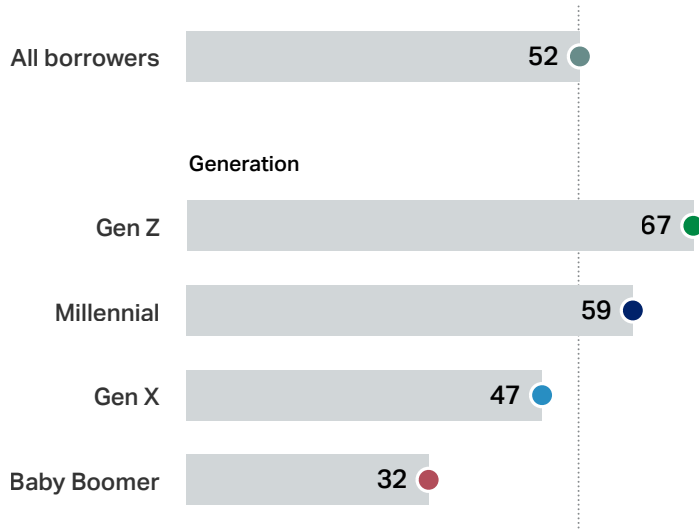
The majority of alumni feel confident that they are prepared to compete in the job market and that their jobs are safe.

Student Loan Experiences

1 Half of all student loan borrowers say they have delayed one or more life events because of their student loan debt.

Have you delayed any of the following because of your student loans?

% Delayed one or more life events



Gen Z borrowers are the most likely to have delayed one or more life events because of student loan debt.

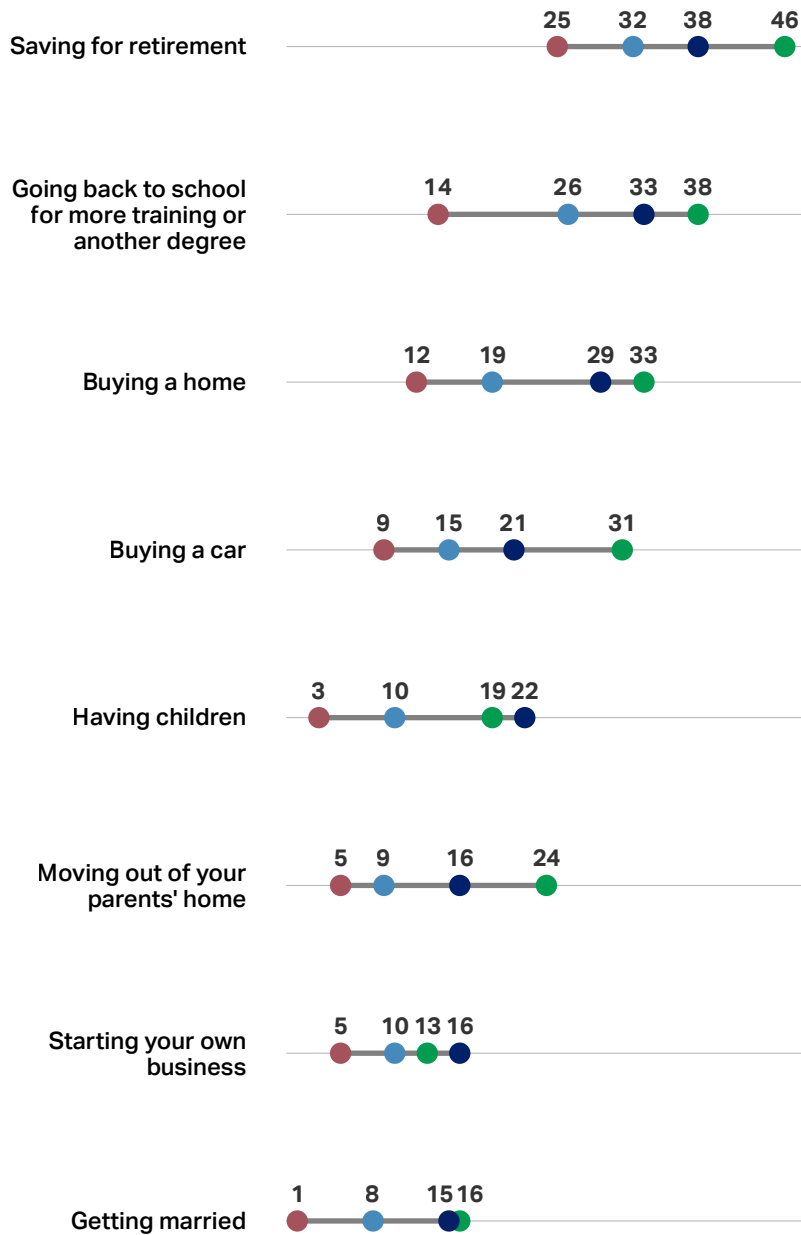


2 Younger borrowers are more likely to say they have delayed major life events because of student loans.


Have you delayed any of the following because of your student loans?

% Yes

● Gen Z ● Millennial ● Gen X ● Baby Boomer



Saving for retirement and the pursuit of additional education are the most commonly delayed events.

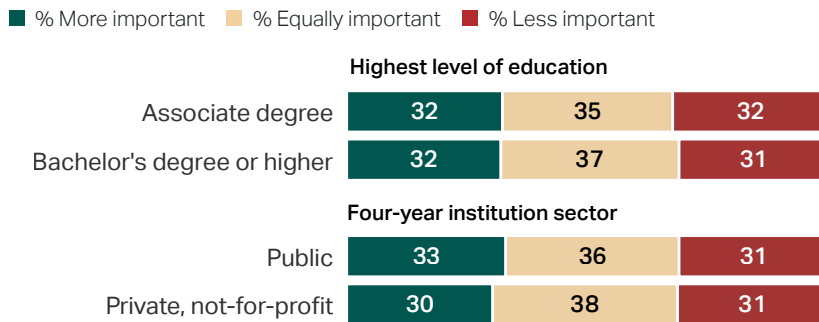
A man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a white t-shirt and khaki pants, is walking on a paved path. He is carrying a black bag over his shoulder and holding a laptop in his left hand. The background shows a modern building with large glass windows and a clear sky.

SECTION THREE

Perspectives on Higher Education

1 Most alumni believe having a college degree is *equally or more important* than it was 20 years ago.

Compared to 20 years ago, how important is it for people today to have a two-year or four-year college degree in order for them to have a successful career?



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding.

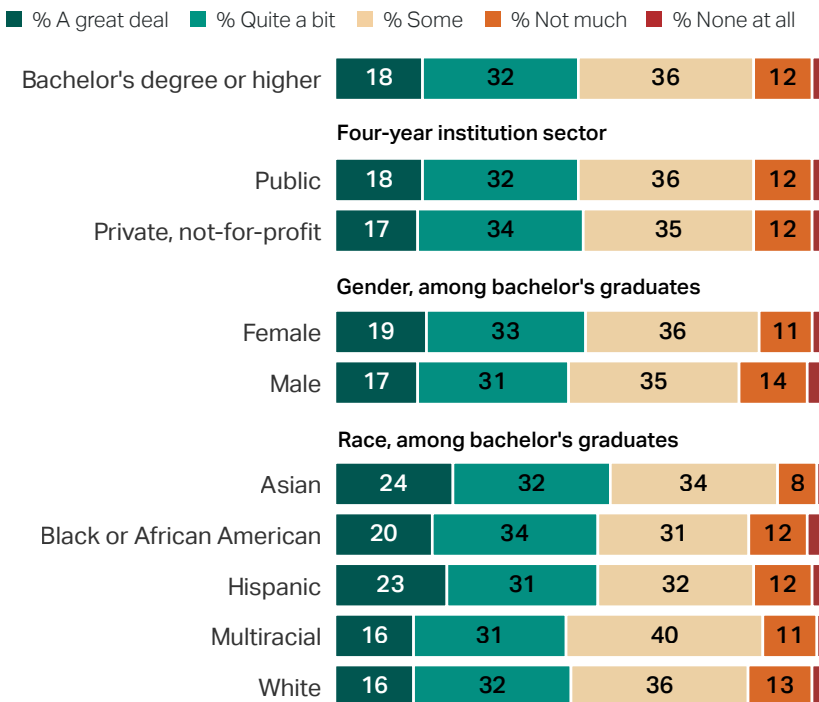


About seven in 10

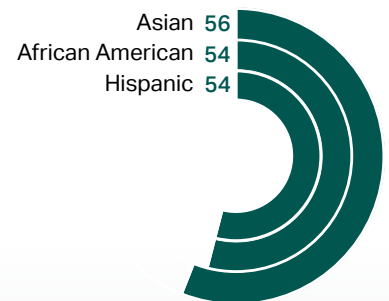
alumni believe that having a college degree is equally or more important than it was 20 years ago.

2 Most bachelor's graduates have at least some confidence in the value of a bachelor's degree.

How much confidence, if at all, do you have in the value of a bachelor's degree in general?



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Results are shown among bachelor's graduates only. Percentages < 4% not shown.

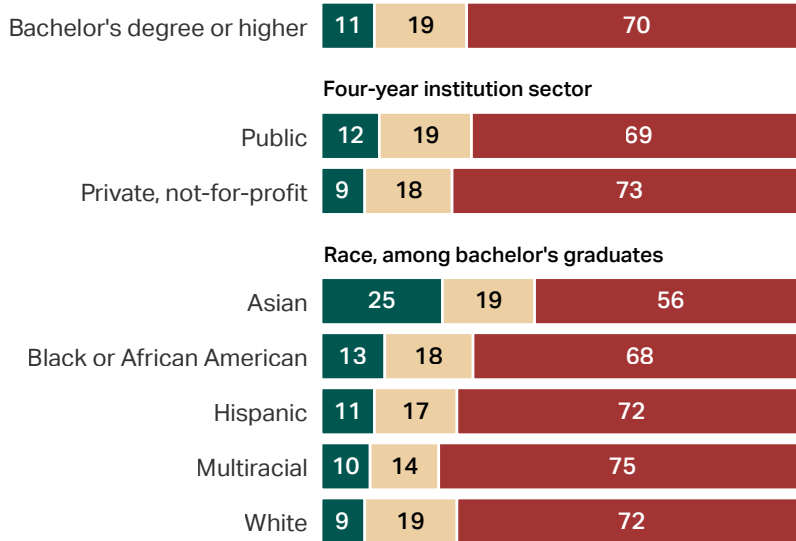


Asian, African American and Hispanic bachelor's degree holders are more likely to have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of confidence in the value of a bachelor's degree.

3 Only 11% of bachelor's graduates say four-year colleges charge fair prices for what they offer.

Do you think four-year colleges charge fair prices for what they offer students and graduates?

■ % Yes ■ % Unsure ■ % No



Note: Percentages may total 100% +/-1 due to rounding. Results are shown among bachelor's graduates only.



Methodology

Results for the Gallup Alumni Survey are based on web surveys from respondents who received an associate or bachelor's degree, are aged 18 or older, have internet access and live in one of the 50 U.S. states or the District of Columbia. Results were collected Nov. 10-Dec. 1, 2025, and include 1,266 associate degree graduates and 4,667 bachelor's degree graduates.

The Gallup Alumni Survey was conducted via web in English using the Gallup Panel[®]. The sample is weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are also weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education and region. Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures.

For the total sample of 5,933 college graduates, the margin of sampling error is ± 1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 1,266 associate degree graduates, the margin of sampling error is ± 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For the sample of 4,667 bachelor's degree graduates, the margin of sampling error is ± 1.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error for the Gallup Alumni Survey include the computed design effects for weighting. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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