



COVID-19: Return to Campus

Findings
June, 2020

Research Team

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welcome to brighter



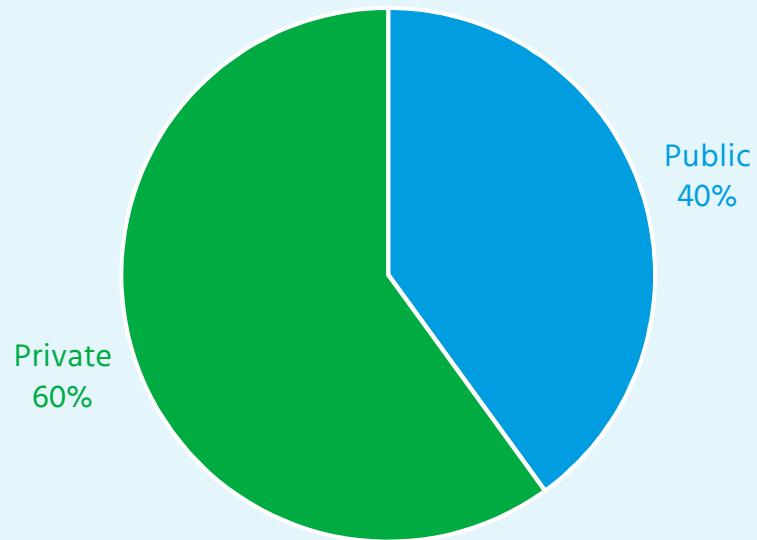
Introduction

- Mercer is pleased to present the results of our third research study focused on higher education's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and plans for return to campus. The survey was conducted between June 9th and June 16th.
- The first survey was conducted in mid-March, when the harsh reality of the pandemic was just setting in. Our second survey focused on the immediate steps institutions took. The academic year is over and institutions are deep in the planning for the fall semester with a host of new and unknown challenges ahead.
- Things have been changing quickly, and we've included results from the prior survey whenever possible as a point of comparison. When responses differ by funding type or Carnegie classification, we described those differences under a "Segmentation" text box.

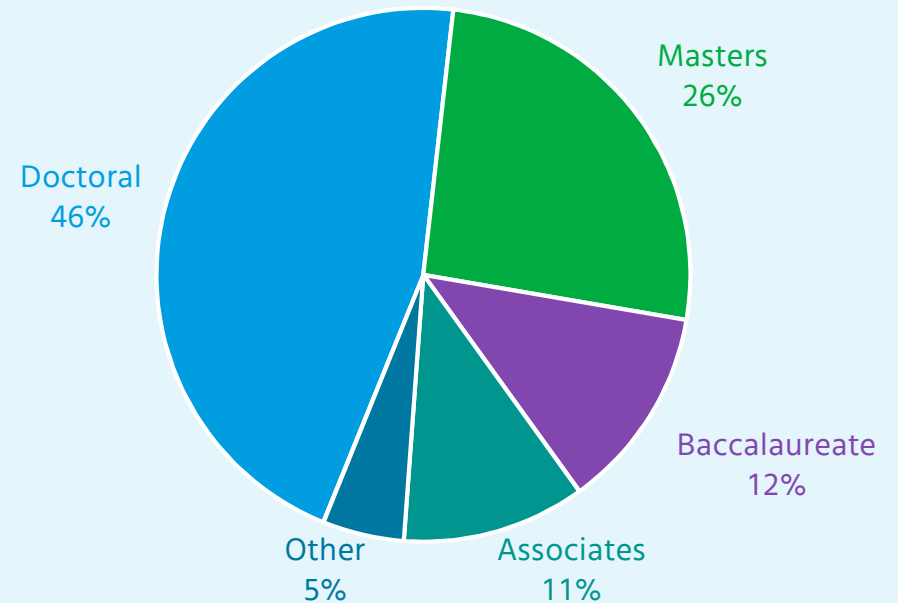
Participant Overview

Total Participants: 80+

Institution Funding



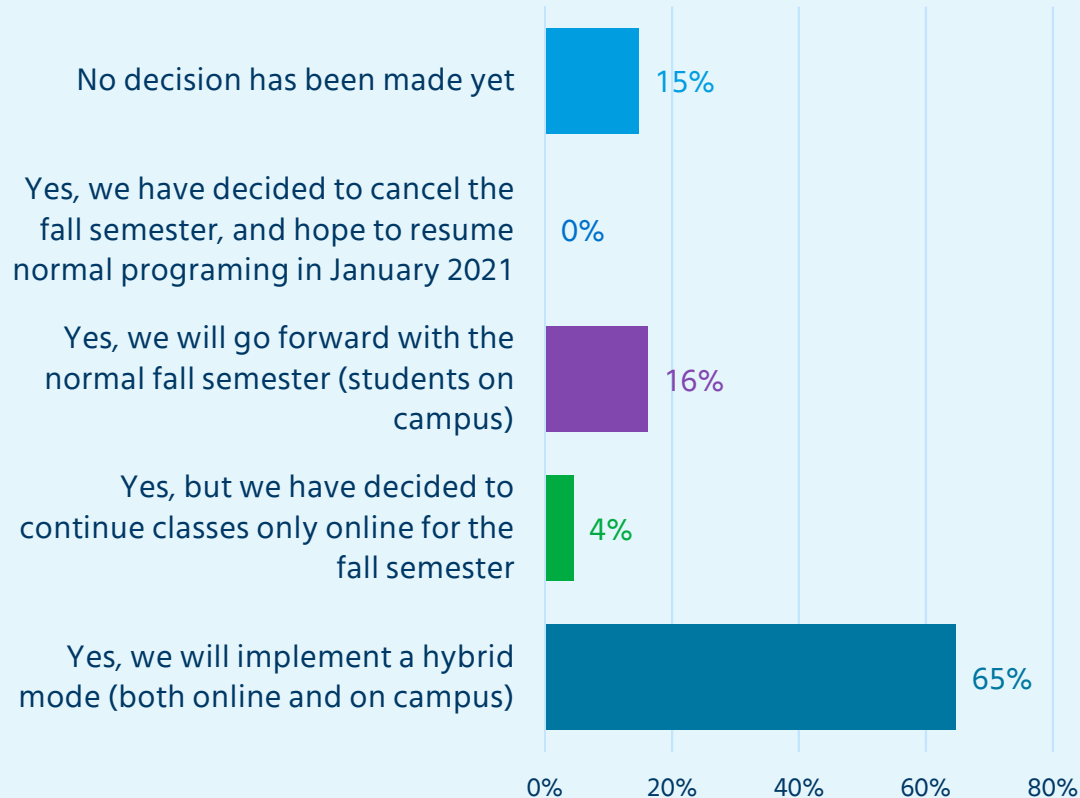
Carnegie Classification



The distribution of institutions remains consistent with the prior survey. Most of the Masters and Baccalaureate institutions are private.

Fall Semester

Q: Has your institution made a decision about the fall semester?



Prior Survey Results

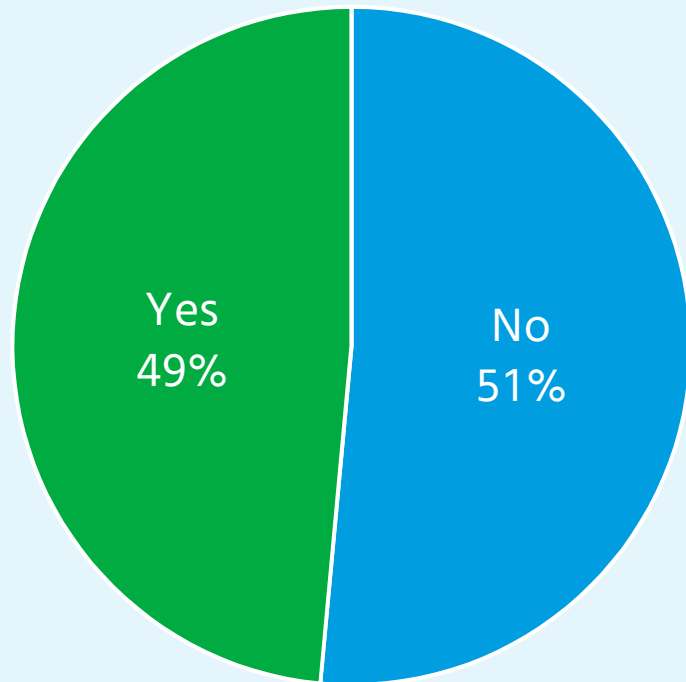
Many decisions about the fall semester were made in the last 4-6 weeks. In our prior survey, released May 1, 2020, 92% of the survey participants had not made a decision about the fall.

Segmentation

- There was virtually no difference in responses by institutional funding type or Carnegie Classification.

Academic Calendar

Q: Have you modified your academic calendar?



Nearly half of the participants have decided to modify the academic calendar.

Examples of modifications include:

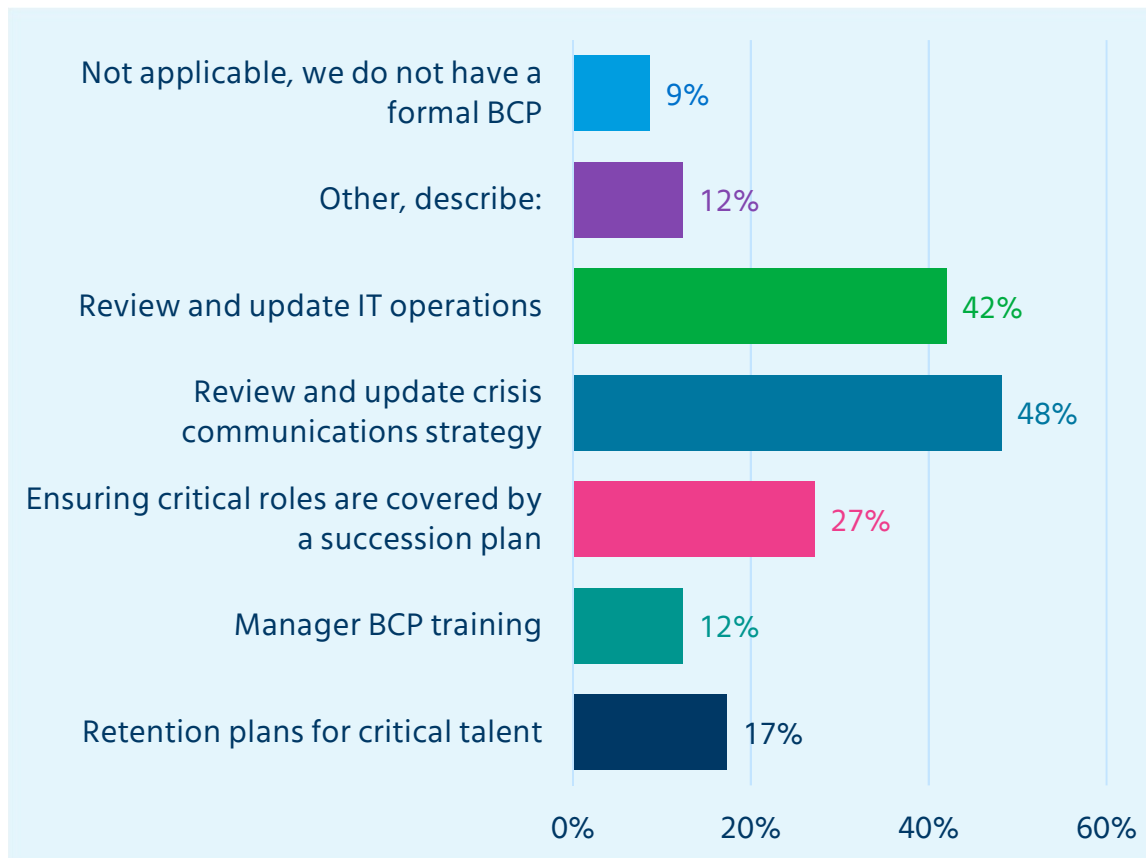
- Change in start date or staggered start dates
- Elimination of the fall break
- Ending semester (or on-campus activities) prior to Thanksgiving
- Fall semester is completed fully online after Thanksgiving
- Delayed start of Spring semester

Segmentation

- Responding Baccalaureate institutions are more likely to have modified their academic calendar (75%) than Doctoral institutions (57%).

Business Continuity Planning

Q: Many institutions are reviewing their business continuity planning (BCP) strategies. Which of the following does your institution intend to review in the next academic year? (check all that apply)



The most pressing initiatives for business continuity include addressing crisis communications as well as IT operations.

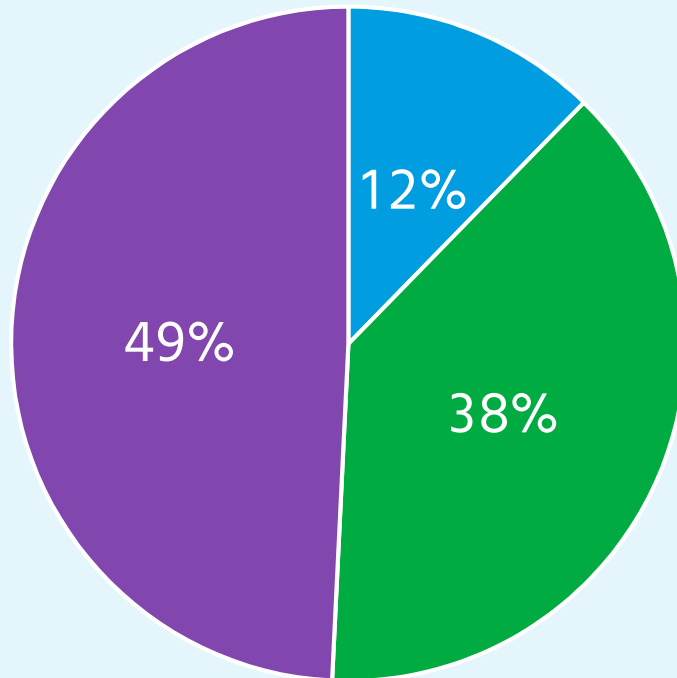
One institution mentioned Instructional Continuity as a priority for review.

Segmentation

- 32% of Doctoral institutions and 44% of Associates institutions will be addressing succession of critical roles.
- 16% of private institutions do not have a formal business continuity plan

Budget

Q: What is the estimated impact of COVID-19 on your institution's operating budget projections for FY 2021?



- Expect to be on or close to budget
- Expect to be up to 10% below prior year
- Expect to be greater than 10% below prior year

Not surprisingly, the impact of the pandemic is expected to significantly affect operating budgets for the upcoming fiscal year, but the magnitude of impact varies.

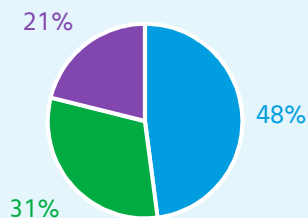
Segmentation

- 60% of responding Baccalaureate institutions are currently projecting to be close to budget

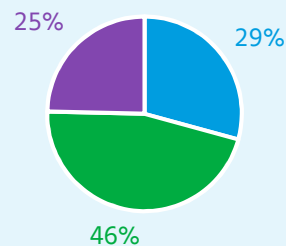
Remote Working

Q: Remote working on a regular basis has not been common in higher education until the pandemic forced it. What outcomes has your institution experienced with remote working?

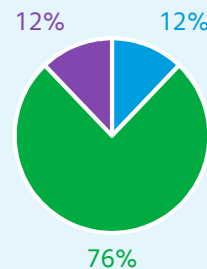
Manager's ability to oversee teams and work



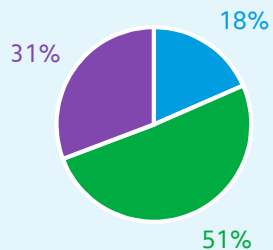
Work Productivity



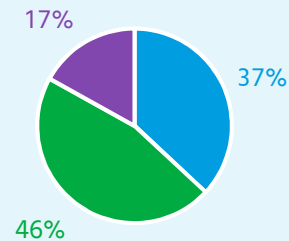
Dealing with home life during the work day



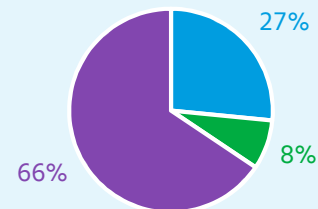
Work/Life Balance



Communication and collaboration



Mental Health



■ No Change

■ Positive Outcome

■ Negative Outcome

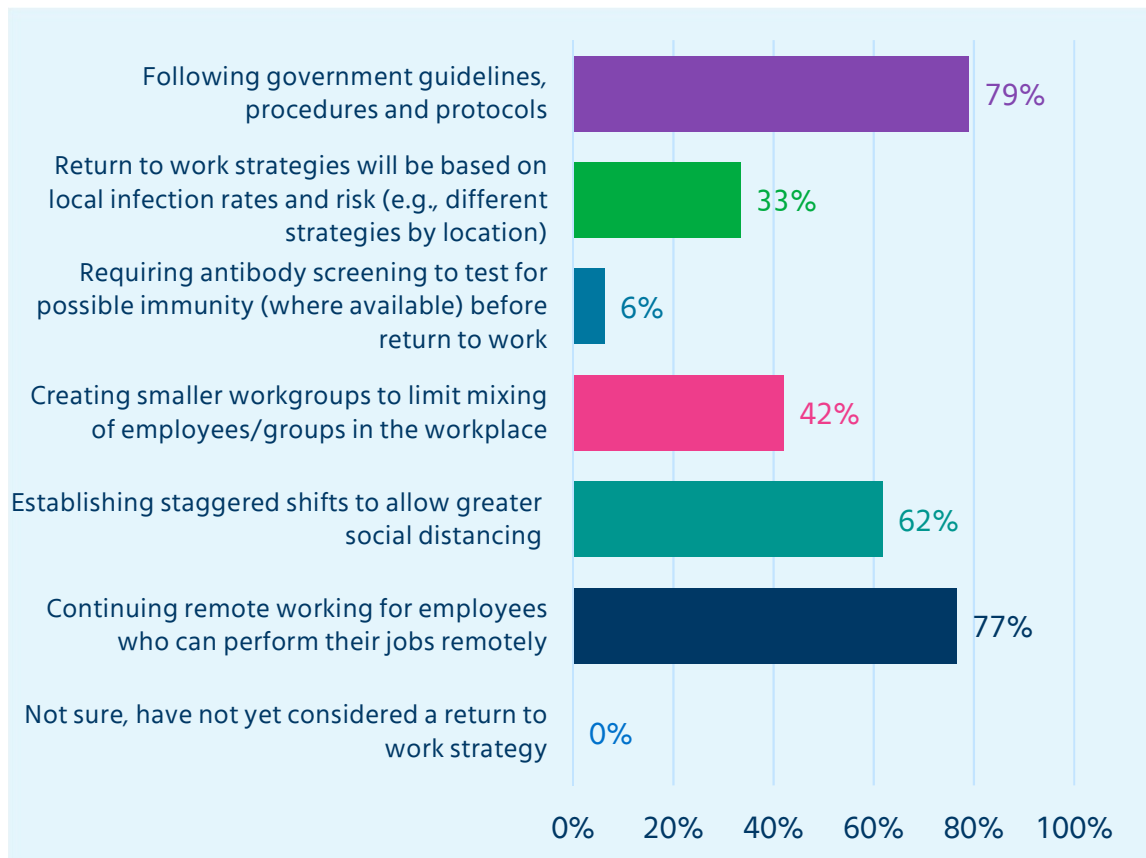
- Institutions are seeing a positive outcome in the ability of employees to deal with home life
- Nearly half of institutions have seen no change in manager's ability to oversee teams and work (48%) or work productivity (46%)
- The most significant negative outcome is related to mental health

Segmentation

- Masters institutions report more negative outcomes for the manager's ability to oversee work and work productivity than other institutional types.

Bringing Employees Back

Q: Which of the following workforce strategies are you considering in your effort to bring employees back to work? (check all that apply)



77% of institutions plan to continue the practice of remote working for those employees who can perform their jobs

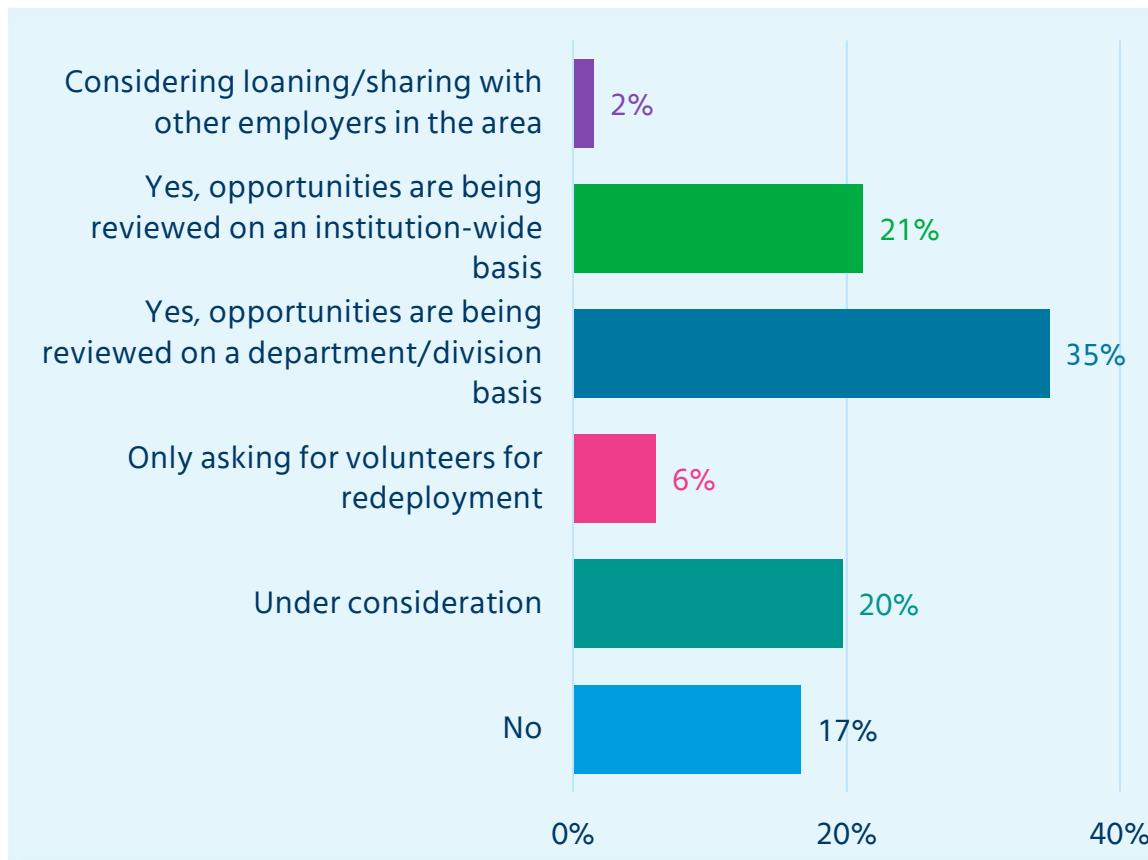
Social distancing through staggered shifts is being considered by 62% of responding institutions

Segmentation

- 82% of Private institutions and 81% of Doctoral Institutions will continue to allow remote working for employees who can perform their jobs remotely

Redeploying Staff

Q: Is your institution redeploying staff who are in jobs that cannot be performed remotely?



Prior Survey Results

Results for this question are similar to the prior survey with two variations:

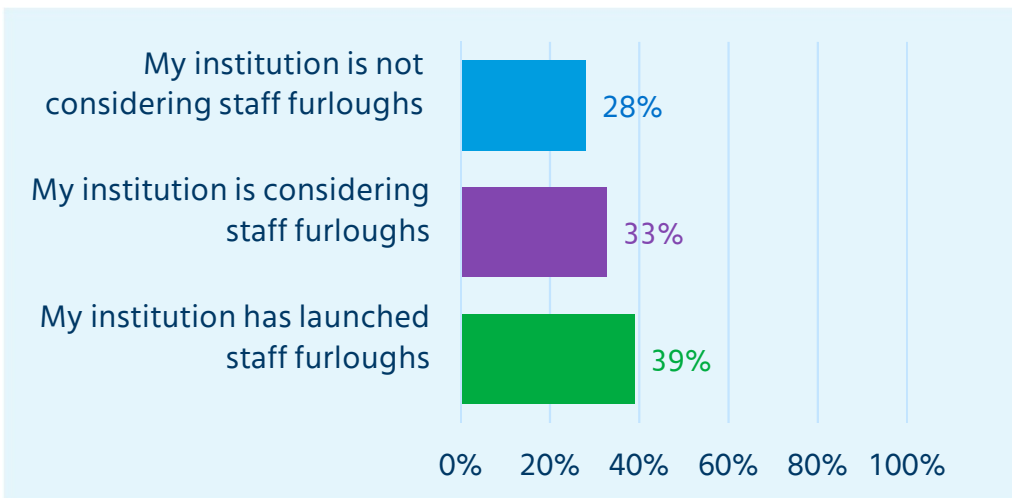
Respondents are more likely to be reviewing redeployment opportunities on an institution wide basis now (30%) vs. the prior survey (21%)

In the prior survey, one-third indicated they were not considering any redeployment of staff (compared to 17% now)

Segmentation

- Baccalaureate institutions are most often reviewing on an institution-wide basis (40%)
- 44% of Public institutions and 40% of Doctoral institutions are reviewing on a departmental/division basis

Furloughs - Staff



Prior Survey Results

In the prior survey almost half of the respondents were considering staff furloughs and only 13% had already launched furloughs.

Segmentation

Private institutions are more likely than publics to have considered or launched furloughs for full time staff.

Only 16% of public institutions have launched staff furloughs

Only 11% of Associates institutions have launched staff furloughs

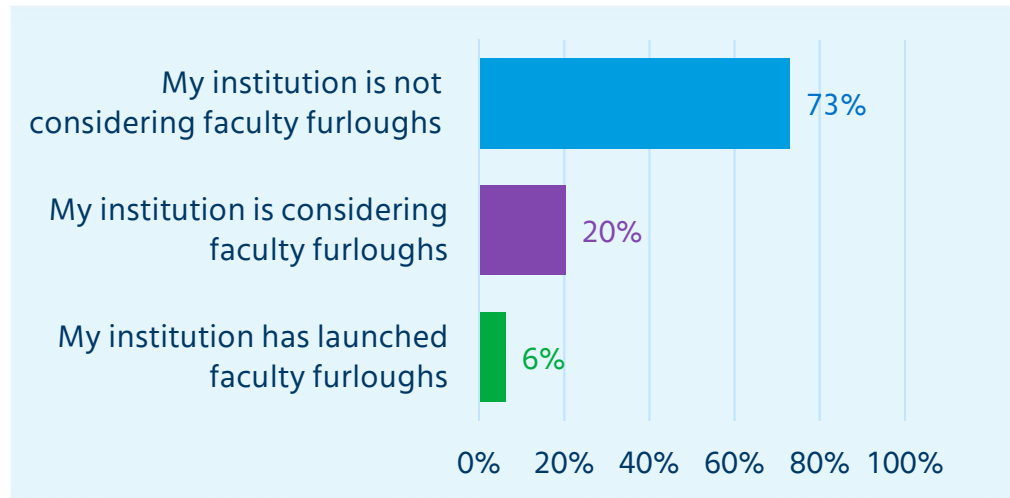
Of the institutions *considering* furloughs



Of the institutions *launching* furloughs



Furloughs - Faculty



Prior Survey Results

Faculty furloughs continue to be less contemplated than stall furloughs, however, in the prior survey 83% indicated they were not considering faculty furloughs

Segmentation

- There was virtually no difference in responses by institutional funding type or Carnegie Classification.

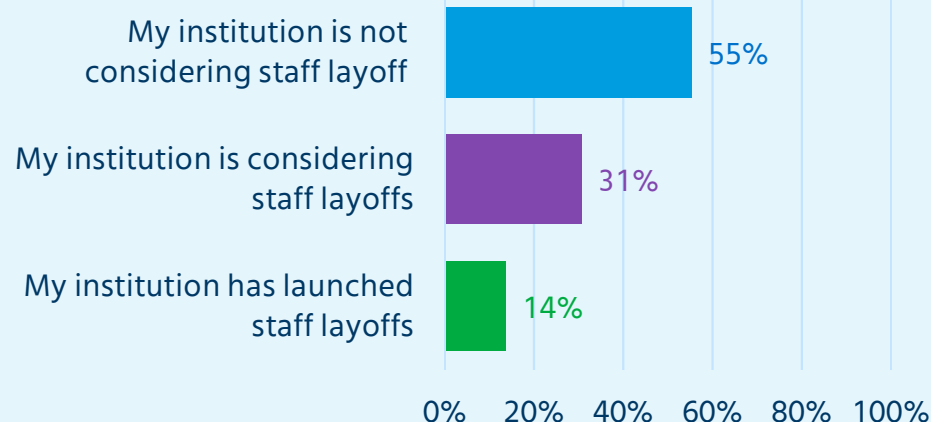
Of the institutions considering furloughs



Of the institutions launching furloughs



Layoffs - Staff



Of the institutions considering layoffs



Of the institutions launching layoff



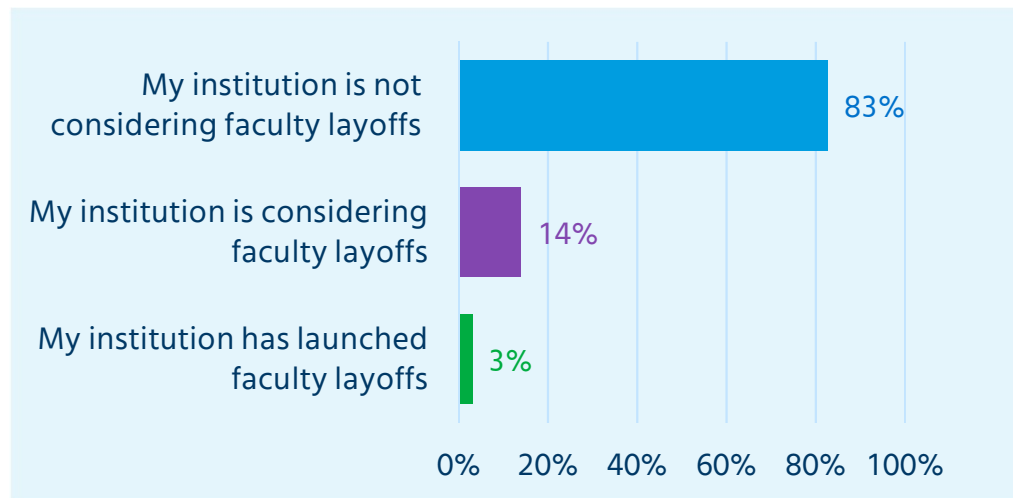
Prior Survey Results

The prior survey results are similar to the current results, however, somewhat more institutions have launched staff layoffs currently (14%) than in the prior survey (7%)

Segmentation

- There was virtually no difference in responses by institutional funding type or Carnegie Classification.

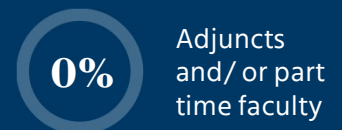
Layoffs - Faculty



Of the institutions considering layoffs



Of the institutions launching layoffs



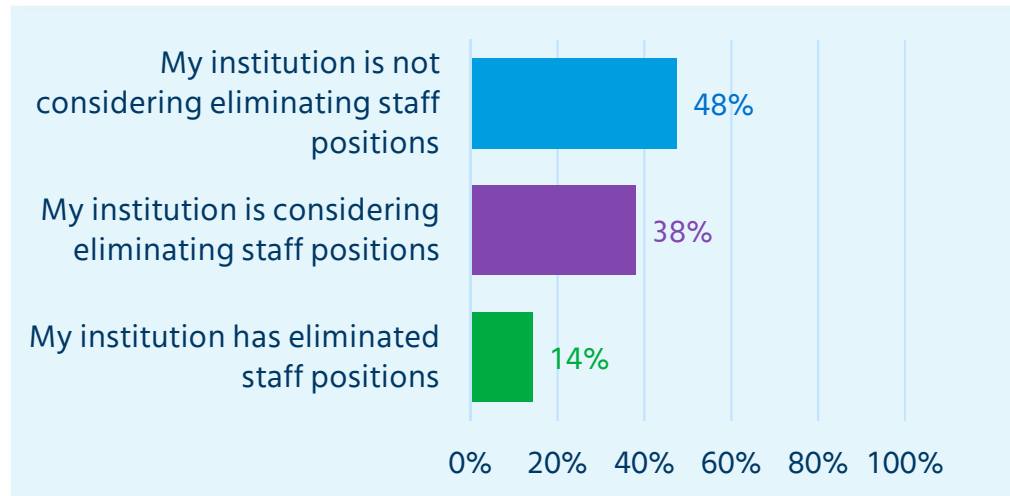
Prior Survey Results

The prior survey results are virtually identical to current results.

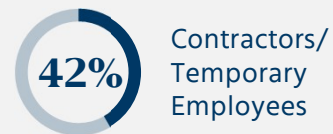
Segmentation

- There was virtually no difference in responses by institutional funding type or Carnegie Classification.

Reductions in Force - Staff



Of the institutions considering RIFs



Of the institutions launching RIFs



Prior Survey Results

Not Considering: 52%

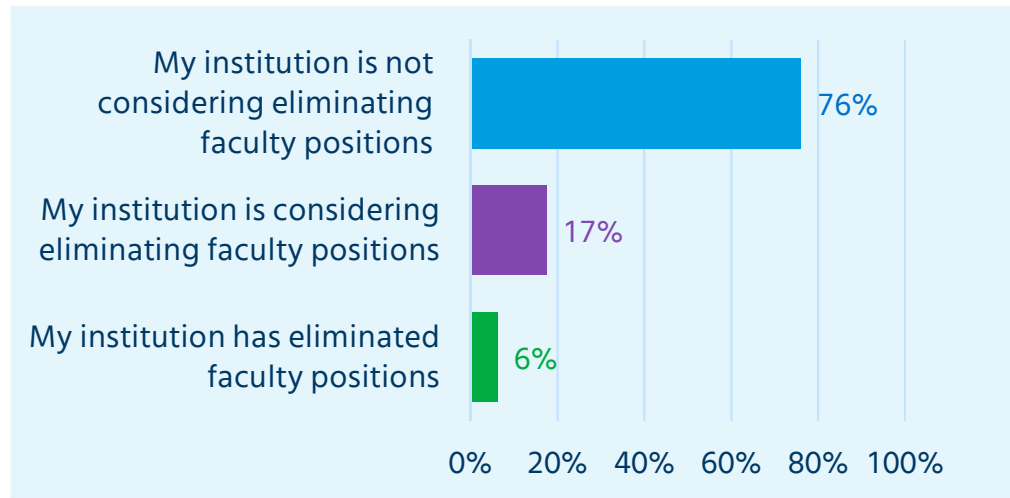
Considering: 43%

Launched: 5%

Segmentation

- There was virtually no difference in responses by institutional funding type or Carnegie Classification.

Reductions in Force - Faculty



Of the institutions considering RIFs



Of the institutions launching RIFs



Prior Survey Results

Not Considering: 80%

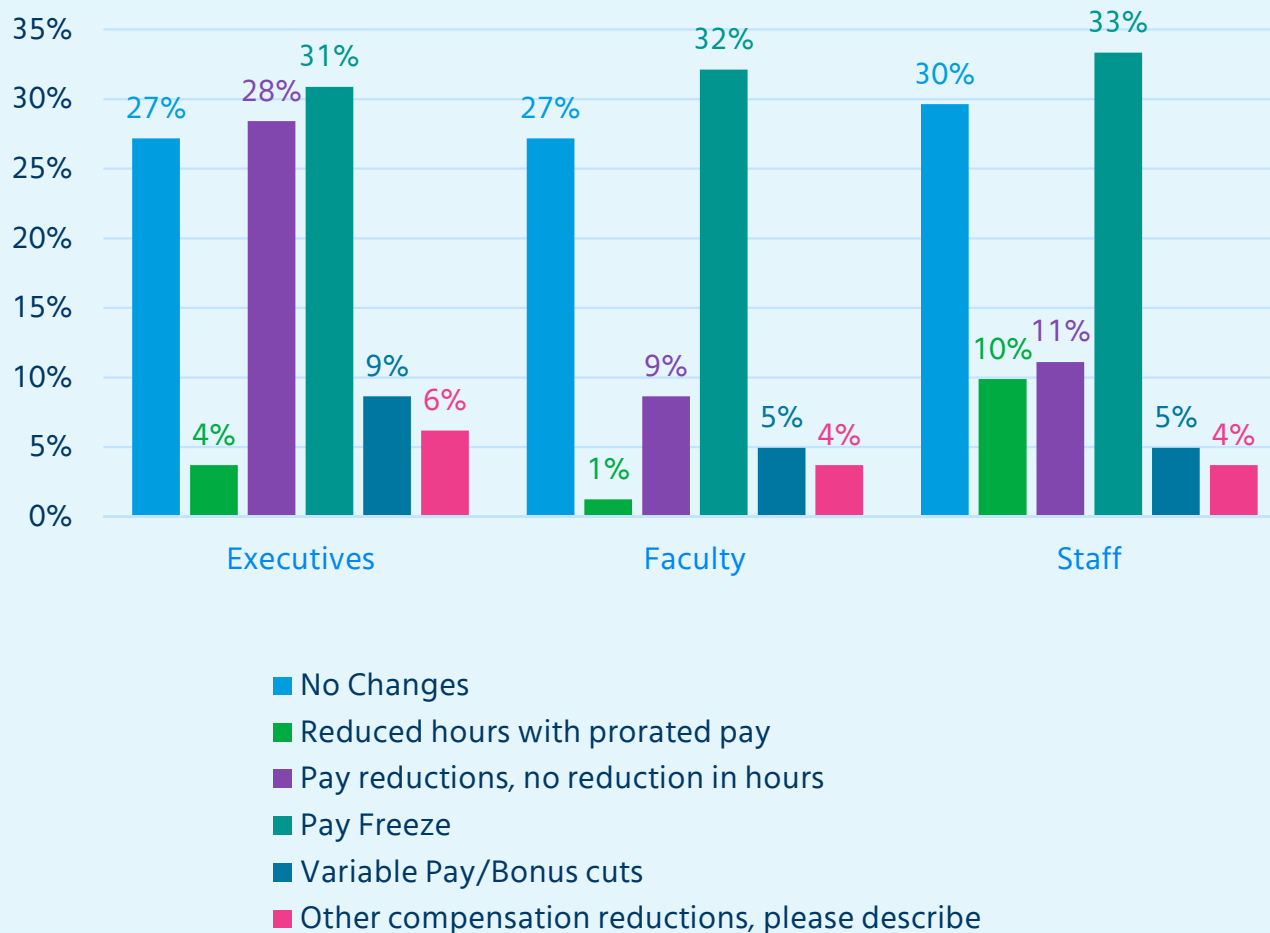
Considering: 18%

Launched: 2%

Segmentation

- There was virtually no difference in responses by institutional funding type or Carnegie Classification.

Compensation Strategies

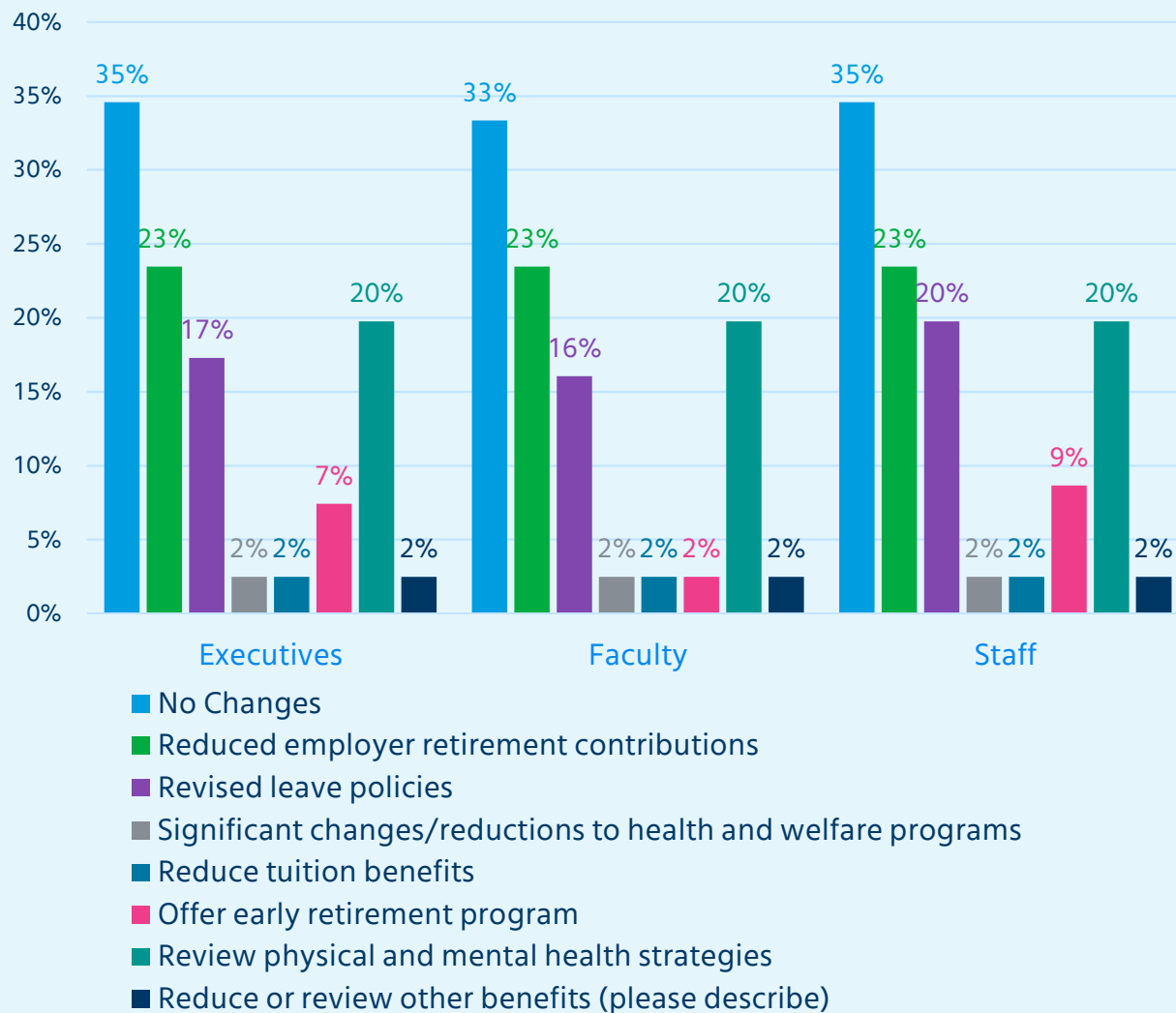


Executive pay cut percentage at the mean is 10%
Executive bonus/variable pay reduction is 80%

Segmentation

- 62% of public institutions have instituted changes to compensation and were less likely to reduce executive pay (19%) or staff pay (6%)
- 80% of private institutions have instituted pay actions for executives and faculty, and about 85% have instituted pay actions for staff compensation
- Similarly, 81% of doctoral institutions have instituted pay actions for executives; about half frozen pay for faculty and staff.
- About two-thirds of masters institutions have instituted pay changes for executives, faculty and staff.
- Less than a quarter of Masters institutions (24%) and only 20% of Baccalaureate institutions have frozen staff pay
- Only 44% of Associates institutions have made pay changes.

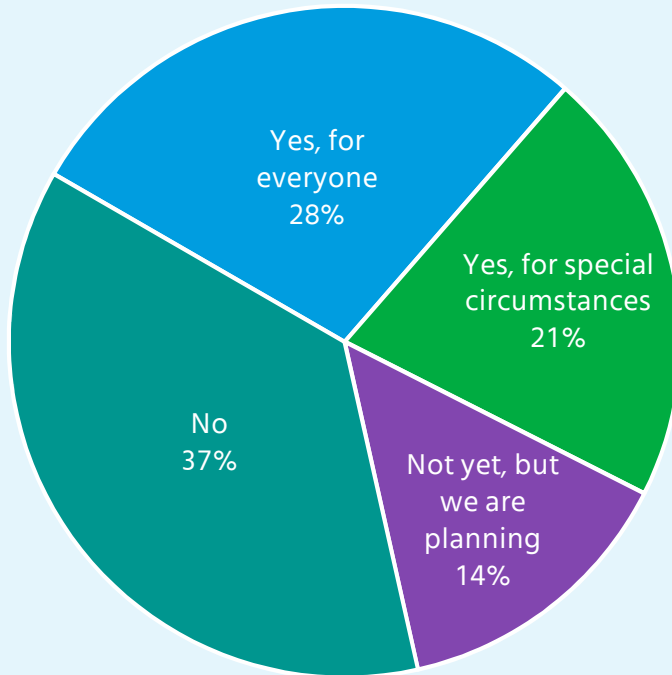
Benefits Strategies



- Most institutions have not yet reduced benefit programs – however we anticipate we will see changes in the near future as colleges and universities plan for year 2021.
- Of those that have made changes, we see popularity in reducing institution contribution to retirement programs. This approach is generally easiest to implement and has an immediate impact on institutional finances.
- There is some continued movement to modify leave policies and offer early retirement programs. Some institutions have even reduced popular tuition benefits.
- Mercer's perspective is that all institutions will be under pressure to reduce benefit spend in the near future.

Leave Policies

Q: Have you adjusted your leave policies as a result of COVID-19



Segmentation

- 38% of public institutions and doctoral institutions have adjusted their leave policy for everyone
- 53% of Masters institutions and 57% of Baccalaureate institutions have adjusted their leave policies

Under which circumstances have you adjusted your leave policy?



For those who are currently ill with COVID (confirmed or presumed)



For those who have been exposed to someone who has contracted the virus, or who are caring for someone who is ill with COVID

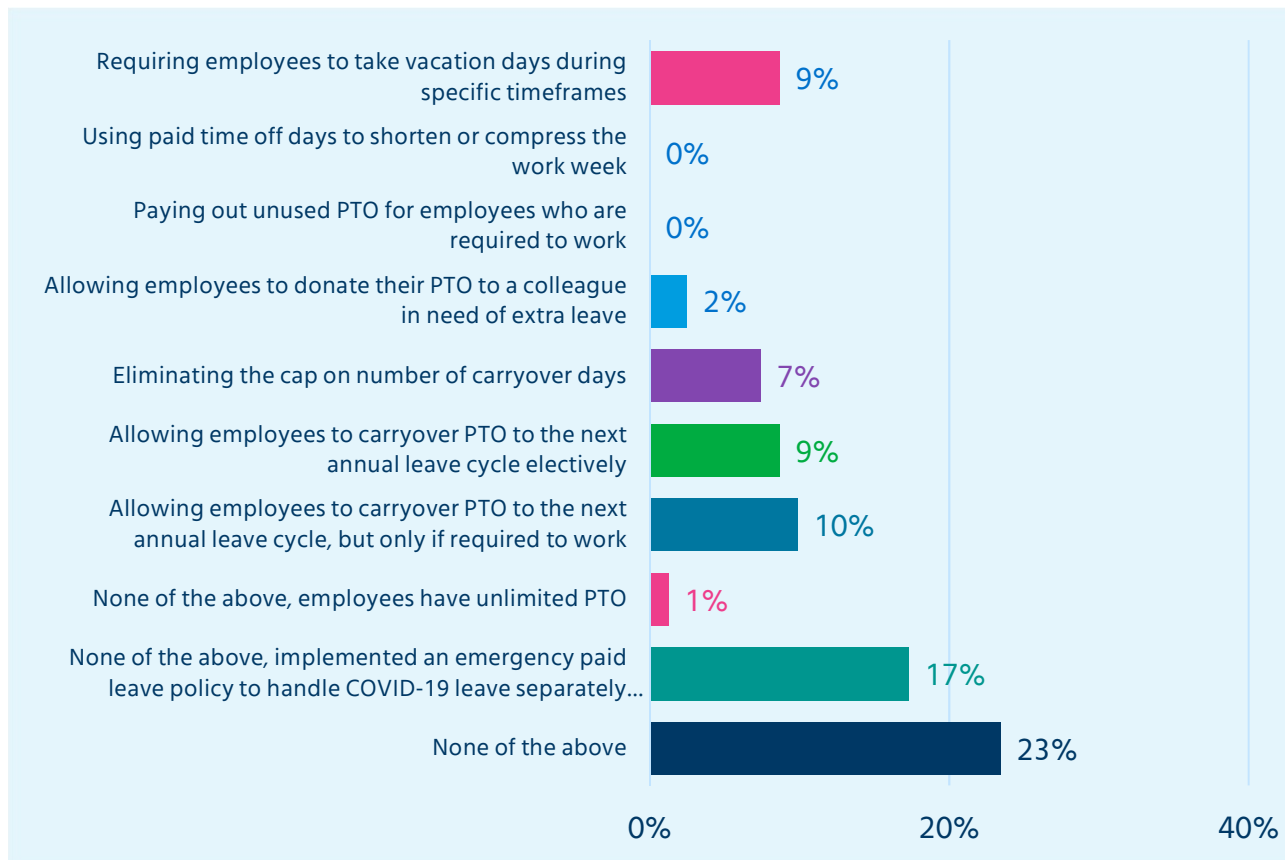


For those who are at high risk (or are caring for someone at a high risk) and concerned about returning to campus

Many institutions have revised leave and PTO policies to reflect the issues related to COVID-19. Generally these changes offer more flexibility in the administration of these policies.

Paid Time Off Policies

Q: Which of the following changes has your institution made to your paid time off (PTO) policies for staff specifically as a result of COVID-19's impact? (check all that apply)



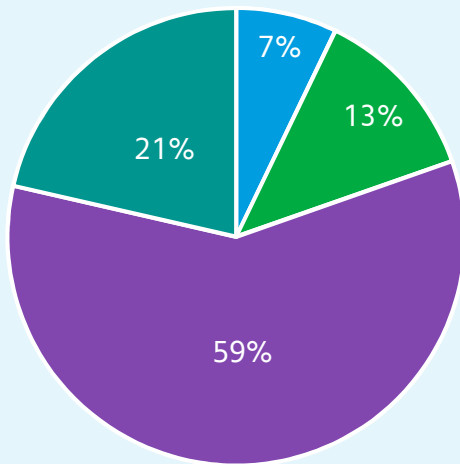
Not all participants answered this question, and we provided the option for selecting multiple answers.

There is a wide variety of approaches to modifying leave policies.

Employees Declining to Work On-Site

Q: How is your institution handling pay for healthy employees who are required to work on-site but decline to work?

Staff



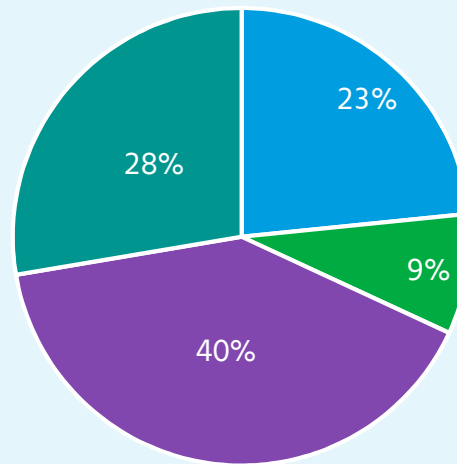
■ Paid in full, no paid time off is required

■ Can use accrued paid time off plus borrow time if not yet accrued

■ Can use accrued paid time off if available, if not available, employee is not paid

■ Not an option, if employees are required to work on-site they must return to remain employed

Faculty

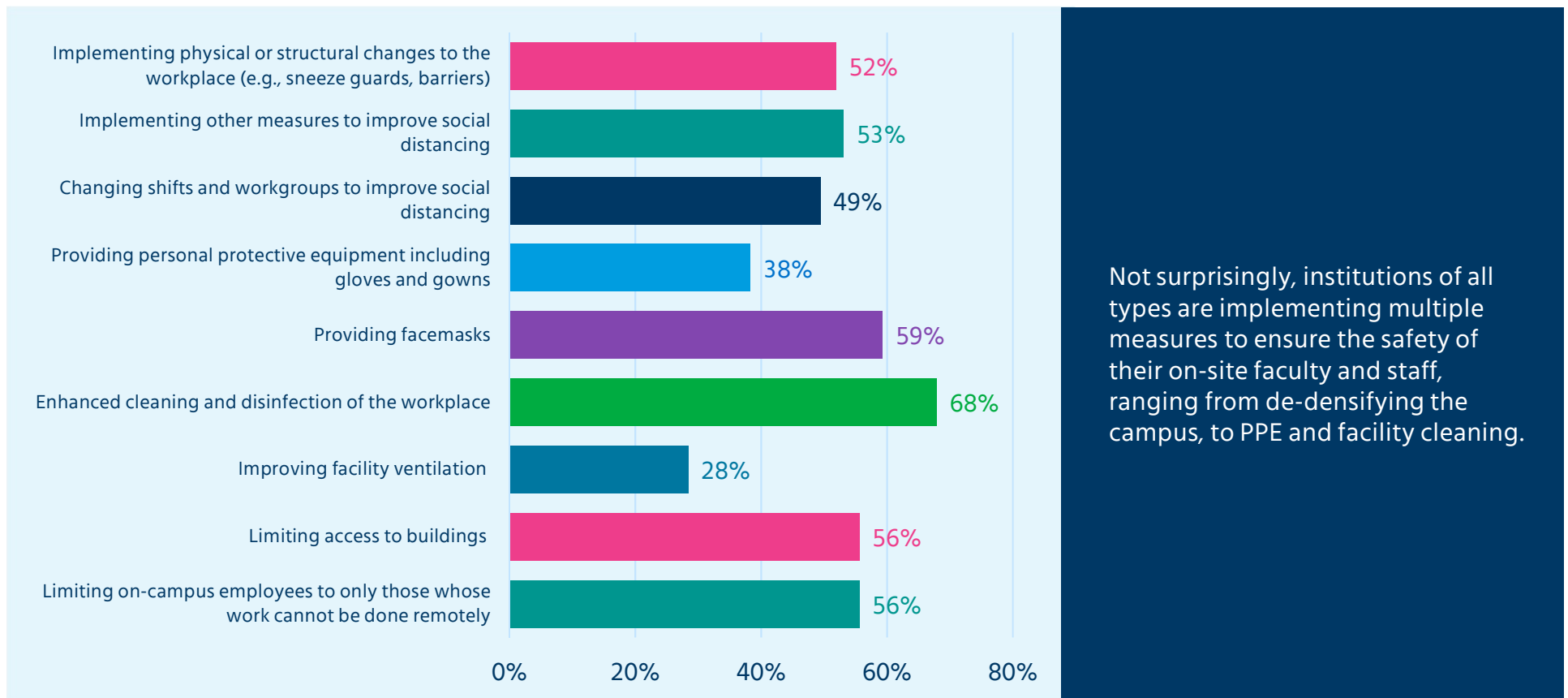


Segmentation

- 14% of public institutions report paying staff in full without being required to take paid time off
- 12% of Doctoral institutions and 14% of Baccalaureate institutions pay staff in full without paid time off
- Over a quarter of private institutions report that faculty and staff who are required to work on site must return to remain employed (26% for staff and 29% of faculty)
- Nearly half of Masters institutions report that faculty and staff who are required to work on site must return to remain employed

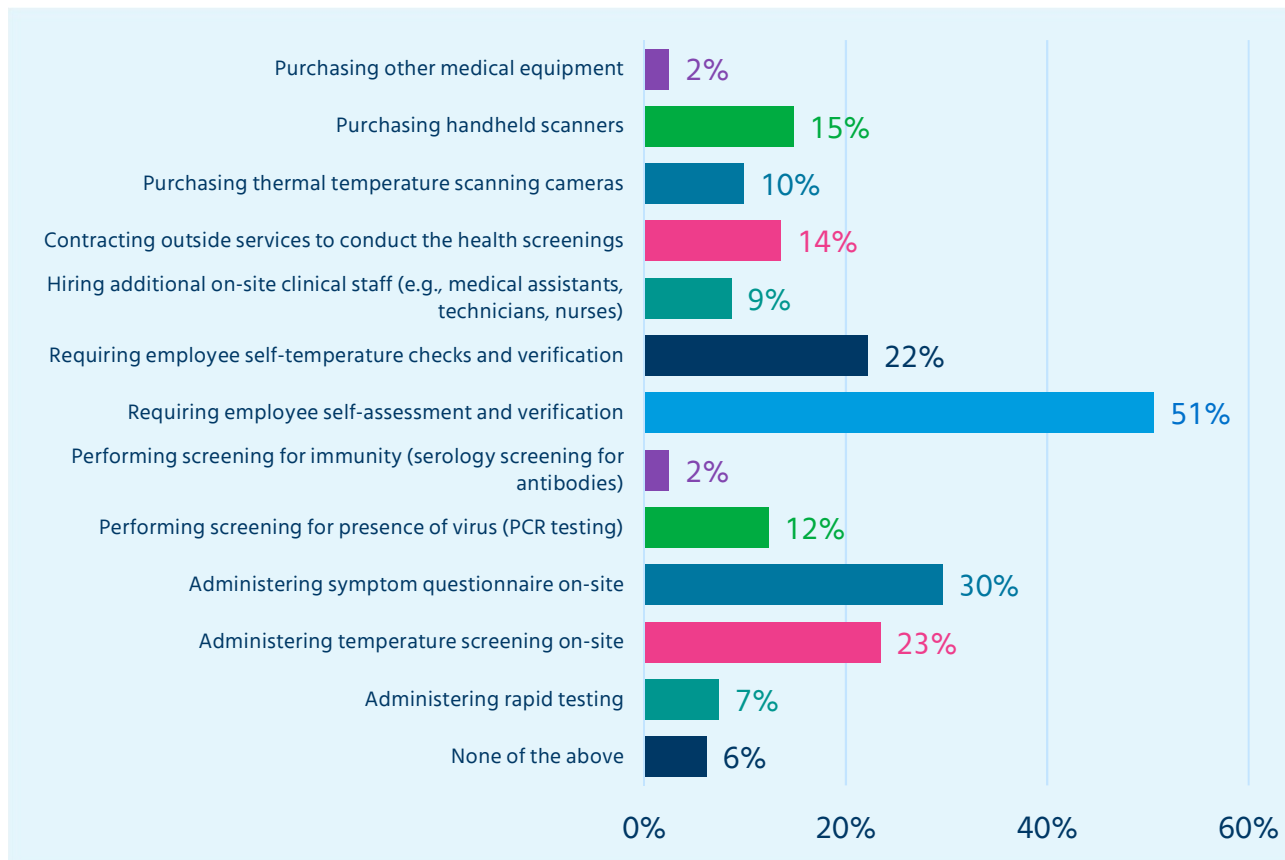
Protecting On-Site Employees

Q: Which of the following measures is your institution taking to protect the health of your on-site employees? (check all that apply)



COVID-19 Screening and Assessments

Q: Which of the following COVID-19 screening and assessment actions is your institution implementing for on-site employees? (check all that apply)



Institutions are requiring employees to take considerable responsibility for screening and assessment, including responding to health questionnaires. This may be the result of inconsistent availability, timeliness and accuracy of testing, as well as the cost.

Participating Institutions

- Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
- ACC/WCU
- American University
- American University of Antigua
- Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Arcadia University
- Aspaen Pepe Grillo
- Babson College
- Bellarmine University
- California Institute of Technology
- Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
- Columbus State Community College
- Concordia College
- Coppin State University
- Cuyahoga Community College
- DePaul University
- Dominican College
- Drew University
- Duke University
- Fairfield University
- Fordham University
- Fox Valley Technical College
- George Mason University
- Golden Gate University
- Grand Valley State University
- Howard University
- Huron University College
- Illinois Wesleyan University
- Indiana University
- Iona College
- Ithaca College
- Johnson County Community College
- Lakehead University
- Lehigh University
- Manhattan College
- Marshall University
- Michigan State University
- Milwaukee Area Technical College
- Missouri Southern State University
- Molloy College
- Moraine Park Technical College
- Moravian College
- Neumann University
- Northeast Ohio Medical University
- Northern Kentucky University
- Northland College
- Northwestern University
- Ohio University
- Point Loma Nazarene University
- Pratt Institute
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Rhode Island School of Design
- Rider University
- Robert Morris University
- Saint Joseph's University
- Stetson University
- Terra State Community College
- The Catholic University of America
- The George Washington University
- The New School
- The Ohio State University
- The University of Akron
- Thorneloe University (at Laurentian University)
- Tulane University
- University of Dayton
- University of Illinois
- University of Mary
- University of Maryland, Baltimore
- University of Notre Dame
- University of San Francisco
- University of St. Michael's College
- University of Toledo
- University of Utah
- University of Virginia
- Valencia College
- Wagner College
- Wartburg College
- Washington and Lee University
- Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Wesleyan University
- West Liberty University
- Yeshiva University
- Youngstown State University



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