



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Office of Assessment
and Accreditation Support

2021 Admitted Graduate Student Survey Report

April 2022

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General Information about the Survey

PURPOSE

The purpose of this survey was to learn how applicants admitted to USF graduate programs perceive USF and the areas that influenced their decisions to attend, or not attend.

ORIGINATORS

The survey was developed by the Office of Assessment & Accreditation Support in collaboration with the Office of Graduate Enrollment.

DATA COLLECTION

Survey Population: The survey was sent to 3146 people who were admitted in Summer and Fall 2021 to graduate programs in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Management, School of Nursing & Health Professions, and the School of Education. The School of Law did not participate.

Instrument: Qualtrics

Period: November 9, 2021 – December 3, 2020

Response Rate: 20% (635 responses)

Executive Summary

The Admitted Graduate Student Survey, sent to Summer and Fall 2021 graduate applicants who were admitted, including those who accepted and then enrolled or did not enroll, *and* those who declined the offer, was carried out to learn how applicants perceive USF and areas that influenced their decisions to attend or not to attend. The survey was developed by the Office of Assessment & Accreditation Support in collaboration with the Office of Graduate Enrollment. Four of the five schools and the college participated: the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, the School of Management, and the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

The Qualtrics survey was sent November 9, 2021 and gathered responses until December 3, 2021. There was a 20% response rate, with 635 of 3,146 applicants queried participating. Of all participants, 77%, or 468 participants, accepted their admission offer, but notably, 143 participants, or 23% of participants *did not*, providing valuable insights on their decisions. 11% of those who accepted their offers, or 50 applicants, ultimately did not enroll.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of participants (32%) indicated that they were admitted to the College of Arts & Sciences. 27% were admitted to the School of Education, 24% were admitted to the School of Management, and 17% were admitted to the School of Nursing and Health Professions.

32% of participants were international students.

DECISION TO ATTEND/NOT ATTEND

77% of participants accepted their admission to USF. Of these, 89% began attending USF and 88% agreed or strongly agreed that they made the right decision to attend USF; whereas, only 49% of those who were accepted, but did not begin attending agreed or strongly agreed that they made the right decision not to attend USF.

Of those who did not accept their offer of admission to USF or did not begin attending, the majority (65%) are attending another college or university.

THE DECISION TO ENROLL OR NOT TO ENROLL

Of the participants who accepted and enrolled at USF, 88% agreed or strongly agreed that they made the right decision. 49% of those who were admitted, but *did not* begin attending agreed or strongly agreed that they made the right decision *not* to attend USF. 16% who did not attend disagreed or strongly disagreed that they made the right decision not to attend.

Of non-matriculants, the highest percentage (55%) indicated that financial cost was a factor that influenced their decision not to attend USF, followed by affordability of the Bay Area, and availability of scholarships.

Of those who did not accept their admission offer, or did not begin attending, 35% are not attending any college or university at this time, the primary reason (52%) being financial followed by difficulty obtaining a visa.

32% of participants applied only to USF. 67% of all participants indicated that USF was their first choice, and of those who accepted their offer, 78% indicated that USF was their first choice. The majority of participants were accepted to all of the institutions to which they applied.

INSTITUTIONS TO WHICH APPLICANTS ENROLLED INSTEAD OF USF

Those who did not choose USF were asked to name the college or university they began attending. The highest percentage of participants (9%) indicated they began attending San Francisco State University. This group also rated as excellent or good the college they attended for academic rigor 89% of the time and job outcomes/career opportunities 84% of the time.

Of those who told us the institutions they chose rather than USF, 56 attended private institutions, and 43 attended public universities. Only 12 chose California institutions, 3 chose Jesuit institutions (Santa Clara, Boston College and Georgetown), and 5 chose Bay Area institutions. Three respondents chose international institutions. Among our competitors are Harvard, Cornell, Columbia, NYU, USC, Georgia Tech, Emory, RIT, Washington University, Boston College, UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Riverside, UC Davis, SFSU, SJSU, CSU Northridge, and CSU Sacramento, and Pepperdine.

Respondents were also asked to list the top three colleges/university choices to which they were admitted, and the responses show even broader competition, including Stanford, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Tufts, Carnegie Mellon, Boston University, and others.

COST, FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID, INSTITUTIONAL AID

Of 30 possible factors, the highest percentage (55%) of those who did not accept USF's admission offer or did not begin attending rated financial cost as a factor that influenced their decision. 57% of participants who did not accept USF's admission offer or did not begin attending (and were not international students) indicated that they applied for federal financial aid at USF. Of those who began attending USF (and were not international students), the highest proportion (64%) applied for federal financial aid. The majority (84%) of those who applied for federal financial aid received aid.

70% of those who chose to attend another college or university indicated that the cost of attendance at USF is higher than the institution they are attending. 58% of all participants received a scholarship from USF; however, 77% of participants who began attending another institution indicated they received more financial assistance from the institution they are attending than offered by USF, with 88% indicating they received a scholarship.

Scholarships were almost the sole source of institutional aid at USF. Of those who received more financial assistance at the institution they attended, in addition to scholarships, 38% received grants, 12% received assistantships, 15% fellowships, and 4% "other."

INFLUENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

All participants most highly rated the majority of characteristics related to USF as Excellent or Good. 80% of participants rated location as excellent or good, and 57% of participants who began attending USF indicated that location influenced their decision to attend.

79% of all participants rated academic rigor at USF as excellent or good, 77% rated both commitment to racial justice and commitment to social justice as excellent or good and 76% rated both diversity of students and class size as excellent or good. Diversity of faculty/staff was rated excellent or good by 71% of participants. 67% rated availability of online/hybrid or hyflex courses as excellent or good. Financial cost was rated excellent or good by only 29% of participants and availability of scholarships was rated excellent or good by 44%.

89% of all participants indicated that job outcomes/career opportunities were Extremely or Very Important when choosing a college or university. Of these, 91% began attending USF. For those who did not accept their offer of admission the average rating for job outcomes/career opportunities was 4.53 (very important or extremely important). That same group rated USF as 3.00 (average) for job outcomes/career opportunities. Further, 63% of all participants rated USF's job outcomes/career opportunities as excellent or good whereas 84% of those who attended another institution rated the job outcomes/career opportunities of the institution they attended as excellent or good.

Commitment to social justice and racial justice were important or extremely important in choosing a college or university. Athletics and religious affiliation were not important in the college choice.

Key Findings

APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The highest proportion (32%) of participants applied only to USF. The majority of participants were accepted to all of the institutions they applied to.

67% of all participants indicated that USF was their first choice. Of those who began attending USF, 78% indicated that USF was their first choice.

COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS

The top three characteristics that participants indicated were Extremely or Very Important when choosing a college or university were job outcomes/career opportunities (89%), academic rigor (87%), and financial cost (83%). When asked to rate characteristics of USF, 80% rated the location as Excellent or Good and 79% rated academic rigor as Excellent or Good.

Out of 29 factors to select from, the highest percentage (55%) of those who did not accept their offer of admission or did not begin attending USF rated financial cost as a factor that influenced their decision not to attend USF. However, only 53% of those who did not accept their offer of admission or did not begin attending USF applied for Financial Aid.

Those who began attending another college or university rated all characteristics of the college they are attending higher than they rated the same characteristics of USF, with the exception of religious affiliation. The highest percentage (89%) of participants rating academic rigor at the institution they began attending as Excellent or Good.

The highest percentage (70%) of participants who began attending USF indicated that academic rigor influenced their decision to attend USF and 57% indicated that location influenced their decision.

FINANCIAL FACTORS

62% of participants indicated that they applied for federal financial aid at USF and the majority (84%) of those who applied for federal financial aid received aid.

Of those who began attending USF, the highest proportion (64%) applied for federal financial aid at USF.

58% of all participants received a scholarship from USF; however, 77% of participants who began attending another institution indicated they received more financial assistance from the institution they are attending than offered by USF, with 88% indicating they received a scholarship.

COST OF ATTENDANCE

70% of those who chose to attend another college or university indicated that the cost of attendance at USF is higher than the institution they are attending.

Demographics

SCHOOL/COLLEGE

Participants indicated what school or college they were admitted to from the following response options: College of Arts & Sciences; School of Education; School of Management; and School of Nursing & Health Professions.

The below data indicate the proportion of participants who selected each response option:

- College of Arts & Sciences = **32%**
- School of Education = **27%**
- School of Management = **24%**
- School of Nursing & Health Professions = **17%**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Participants indicated whether or not they were an international student and, if so, if they were living outside the US when they applied to USF.

- **32% of participants were international students.**
- Of those, **80%** indicated they were **living outside the US when they applied to USF.**

Admission/Acceptance

DECISION TO ATTEND/NOT ATTEND

Participants were asked to indicate whether or not they accepted their offer of admission.

The below data indicate the proportion of participants who selected each response option:

- Accepted their offer of admission = **77%**
- Did not accept their offer of admission = **23%**

Those who indicated that they accepted their offer of admission were then asked whether or not they began attending USF. Of those who accepted their offer of admission (and responded to this question):

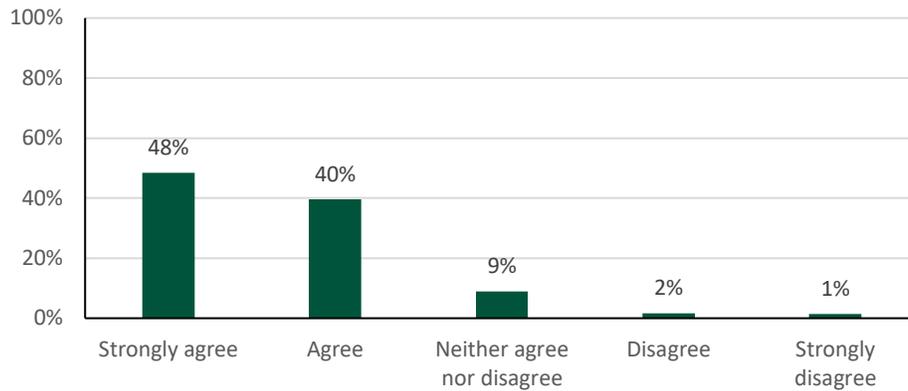
- **89% began attending USF.**
- **11% did not begin attending USF**, representing a 11% melt among survey respondents compared to overall melt for the three schools and college, which was 28.3%.

Participants Who Began Attending USF

Participants who indicated they began attending USF were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statement using a 5-pt. scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree*): I made the right decision to attend USF.

- The highest proportion of participants (**88%**) **Agreed or Strongly Agreed** that they made the right decision to attend USF.

The figure below details the proportion of participants who selected each response option.

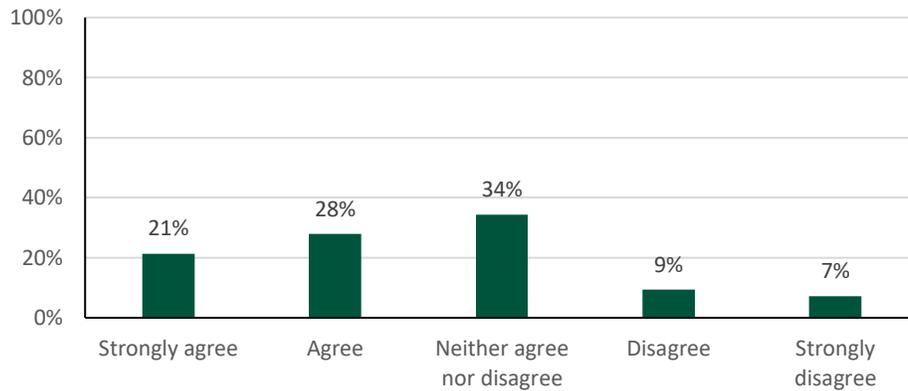


Participants Who Did Not Begin Attending USF

Participants who indicated they did not begin attending USF were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statement using a 5-pt. scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*): I made the right decision not to attend USF.

- The highest proportion (**49%**) **Agreed** or **Strongly Agreed** that they made the right decision not to attend USF.
- **16%** of those who did not attend **Disagreed** or **Strongly Disagreed** that they made the right decision not to attend.

The figure below details the proportion of participants who selected each response option.

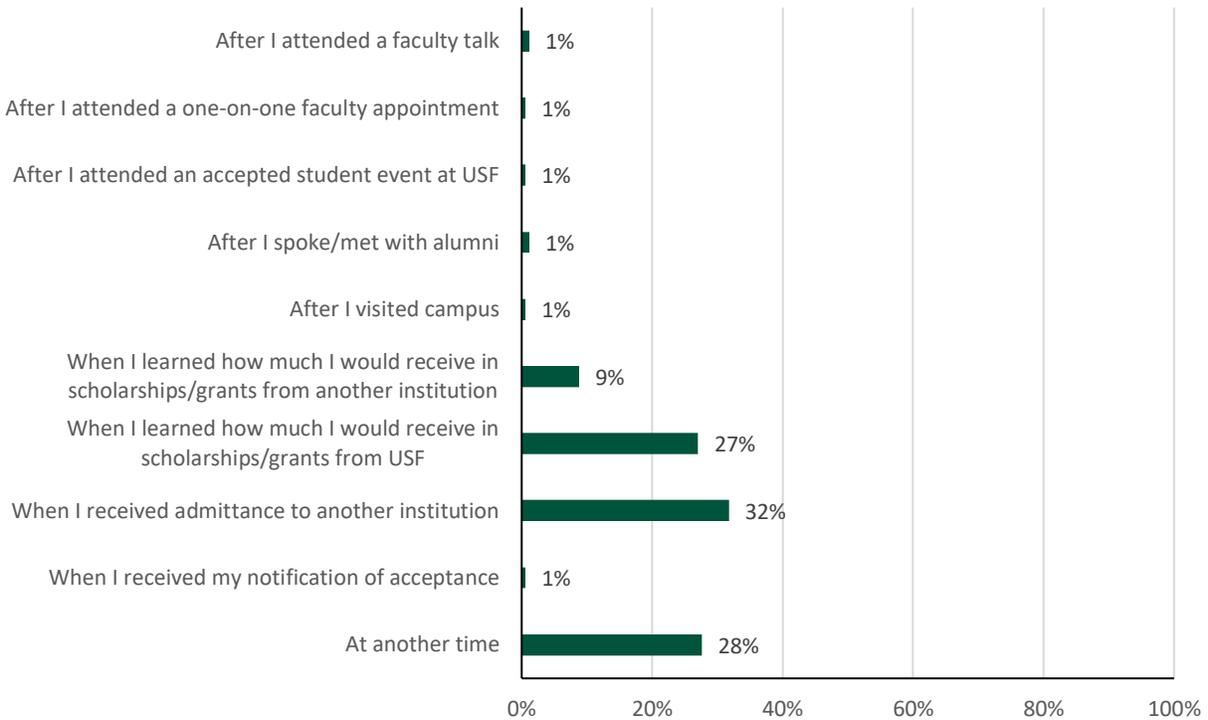


At what point decided not to attend

Participants who did not accept their offer of admission or accepted their offer, but did not begin attending USF, were asked to indicate at what point they decided not to attend USF from the following response options: After I attended a faculty talk; After I attended a one-on-one faculty appointment; After I attended an accepted student event at USF; After I spoke/met with alumni; After I visited campus; When I learned how much I would receive in scholarships/grants from another institution; When I learned how much I would receive in scholarships/grants from USF; When I received admittance to another institution; When I received my notification of acceptance; and At another time. Participants' responses to *At another time* can be found in **Appendix A, 1.1**.

- The highest proportion (**32%**) of participants selected **When I received admittance to another institution.**

The figure below details the proportion of participants who selected each response option.



Attending another college or university

Those who did not accept their offer of admission or accepted their offer, but did not begin attending USF were asked to indicate if they chose to attend a college or university other than USF or if they are not attending any college or university at this time.

The below data indicate the proportion of participants who selected each response option:

- Not attending any college or university at this time = **35%**
- Chose to attend a college or university other than USF = **65%**

Participants who indicated that they chose to attend a college or university other than USF were asked to indicate in an open text field the name of the college or university they began attending. Participants' responses can be found in **Appendix A, 1.2.**

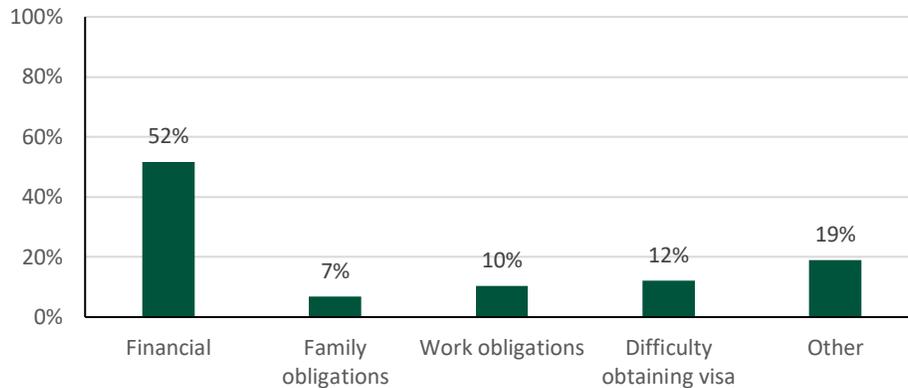
- The highest percentage (**9%**) of participants indicated they **began attending San Francisco State University.**

Primary reason for not attending any college or university

Those who indicated they are not attending *any* college or university at this time were asked to indicate the primary reason for that decision using the following response options: Financial; Family obligations; Time commitment; Work obligations; Difficulty obtaining a visa; and Other. Participants' responses to *Other* can be found in **Appendix A, 1.3.**

- The highest percentage (**52%**) of participants indicated the primary reason they are not attending any college or university at this time is **financial**.

The figure below details the proportion of participants who selected each response option.

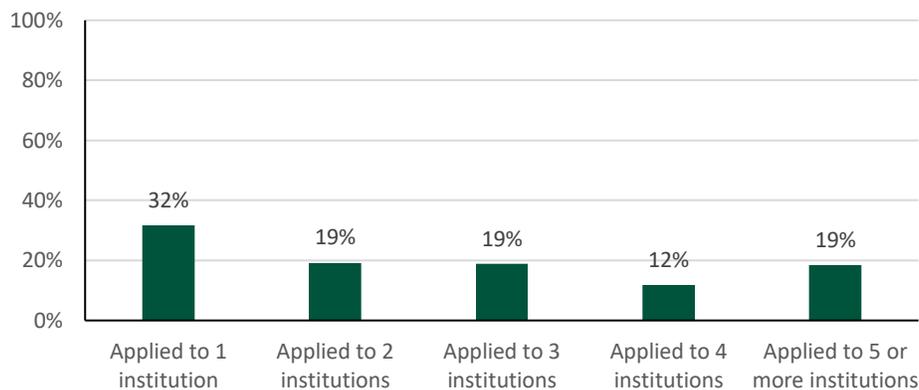


APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Participants indicated how many institutions, including USF, they applied to from the following response options: 1; 2; 3; 4; and 5 or more.

- The highest proportion (**32%**) of participants indicated that **they only applied to USF**. Of these, 87% began attending USF.

The figure below details the proportion of participants who selected each response option.



Those who indicated they applied to more than one institution were asked to indicate how many they were admitted to from the following response options: 1; 2; 3; 4; and 5 or more.

- Of those who indicated they **applied to two institutions**; the highest proportion (**68%**) were **admitted to both** institutions.
- Of those who indicated they **applied to three institutions**; the highest proportion (**46%**) were **admitted to all three** institutions.
- Of those who indicated they **applied to four institutions**; the highest proportion (**41%**) were **admitted to all four** institutions.

- Of those who indicated they **applied to five or more institutions**, the highest proportion (**41%**) were **admitted to five or more institutions**.

Participants indicated whether or not USF was their first choice.

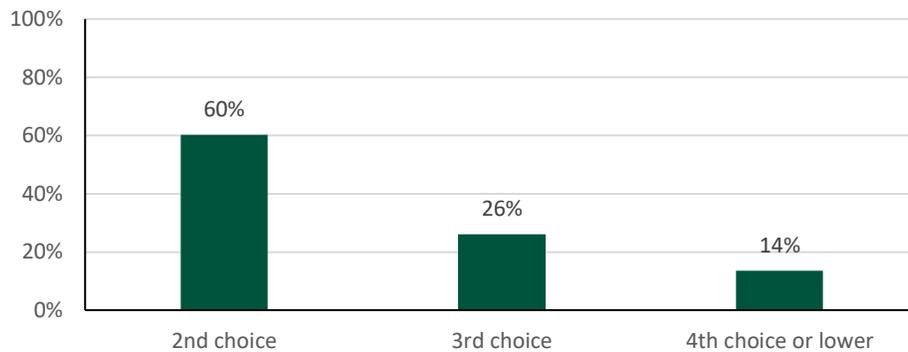
The data below indicate the percentage of participants who indicated that USF was their first choice:

- All participants = **67%**
- Participants who accepted their offer of admission = **78%**
- Participants who began attending USF = **78%**
- Participants who chose to attend another college or university = **26%**

Those who indicated USF was not their first choice were asked to indicate if it was their 2nd choice, 3rd choice or 4th choice or lower.

- Of the 33% who indicated that USF was not their first choice, the majority (**60%**) indicated it was their **2nd choice**.

The figure below details the proportion of participants who indicated that USF was their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th choice or lower.



Participants who indicated that USF was not their first choice were asked to indicate their top 3 choices to which they were admitted using an open text field. Participants' responses can be found in **Appendix A, 1.4**.

- The most common responses for 1st top choice were San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley.

College Characteristics

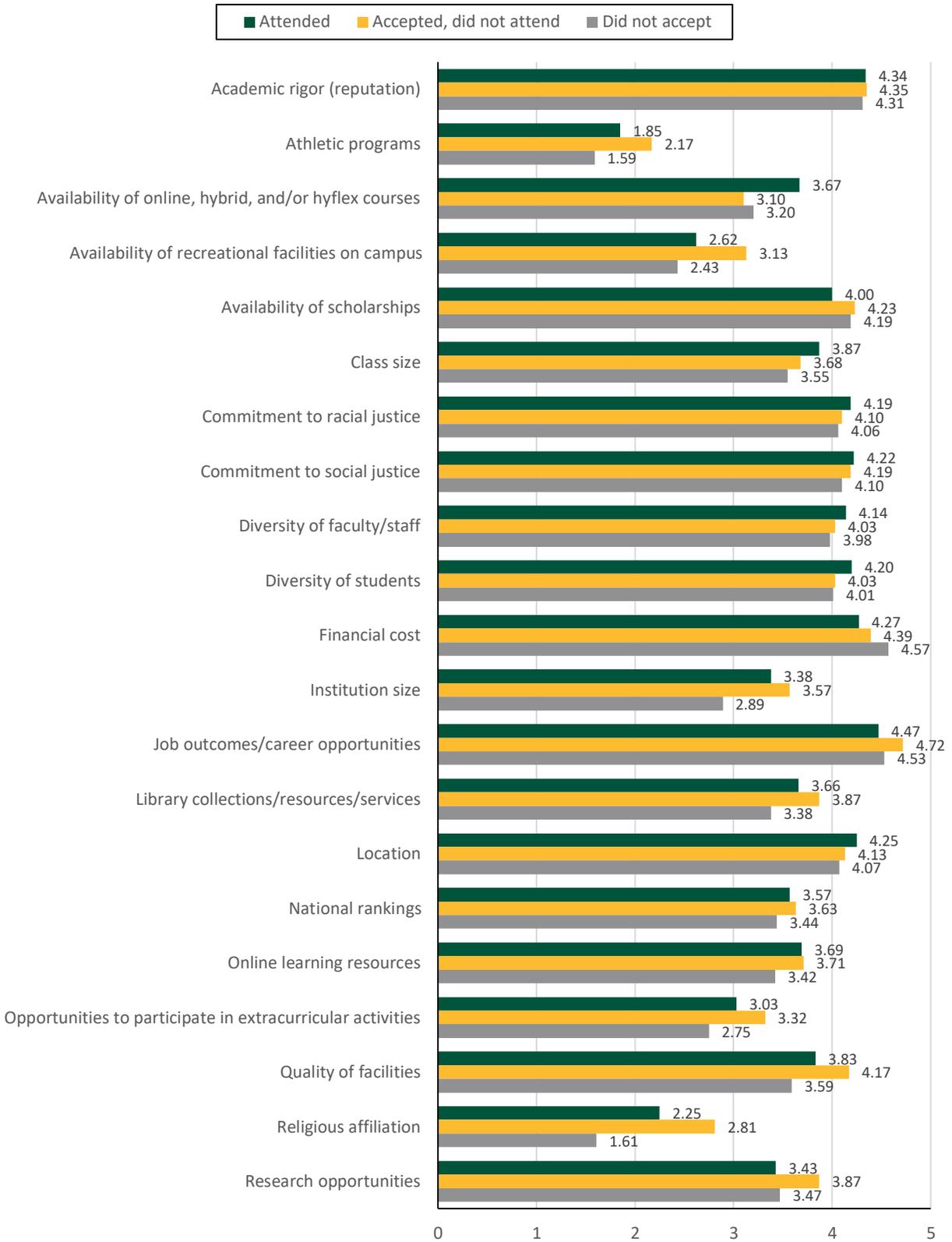
ALL PARTICIPANTS

Level of Importance of Characteristics in Choosing College or University

All participants indicated the level of importance each of the following characteristics had in choosing a college or university using a 5-pt. scale (*1 = Not at all important, 5 = Extremely Important*): Academic rigor (reputation); Athletic programs; Availability of online, hybrid, and/or hyflex courses; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Availability of scholarships; Class size; Commitment to racial justice; Commitment to social justice; Diversity of faculty/staff; Diversity of students; Financial cost; Institution size; Job outcomes/career opportunities; Library collections/resources/services; Location; National rankings; Online learning resources; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; Quality of facilities; Religious affiliation; and Research opportunities.

- The highest percentage (**89%**) of participants indicated that **Job outcomes/career opportunities** were **Extremely** or **Very Important** in choosing a college or university. Of these:
 - **70%** began attending USF.
 - **23%** did not accept their offer of admission.
 - **7%** accepted their offer of admission, but did not begin attending.

The figure on the following page details participants' average level of importance of each characteristic, disaggregated by those who began attending; those who did not accept their offer of admission; and those who accepted their offer of admission, but did not begin attending.



Rating of Characteristics of USF

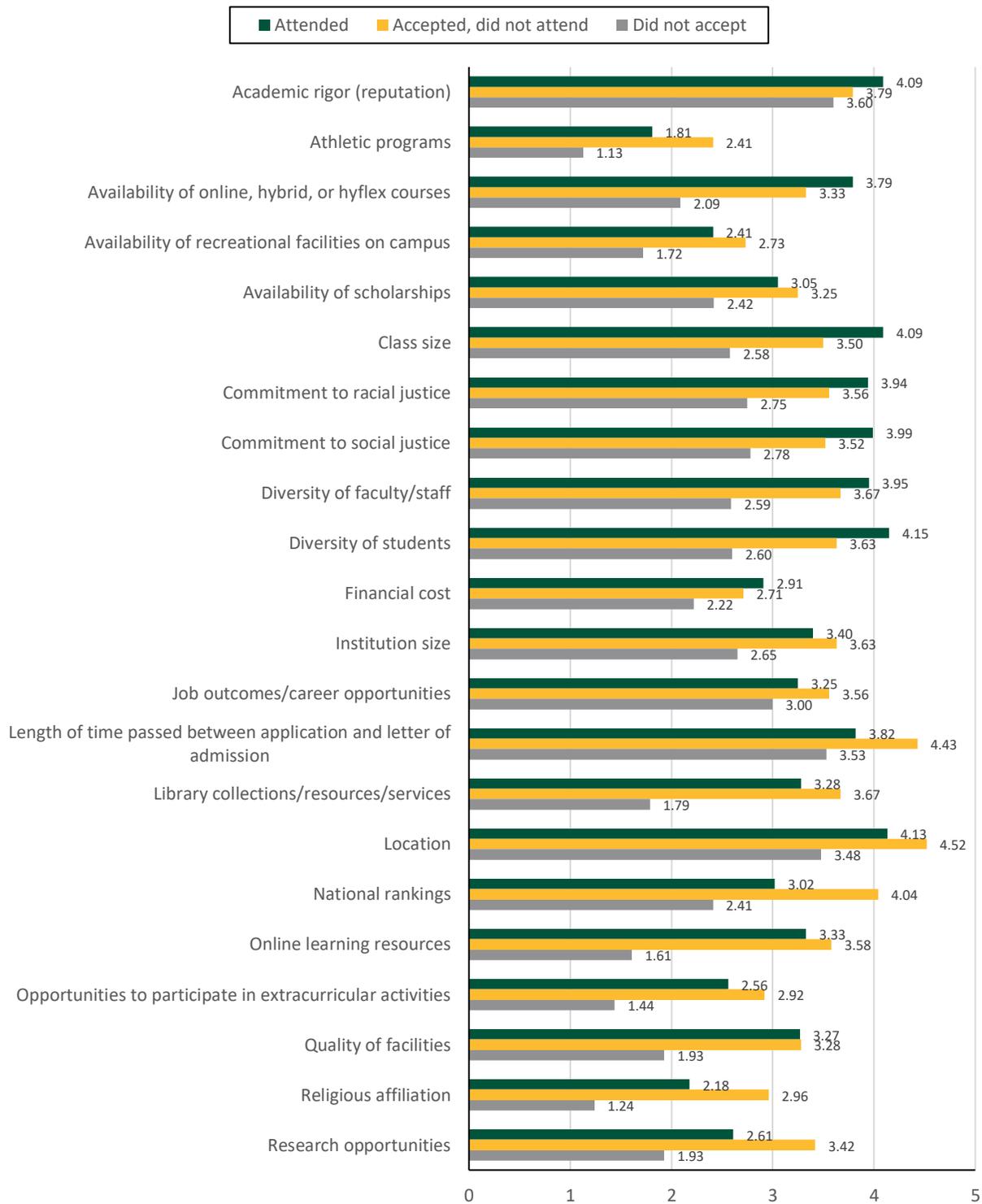
All participants (whether they began attending USF or not) were asked to rate the following characteristics of USF using a 6-pt scale (0 = *No opinion*, 5 = *Excellent*): Academic rigor (reputation); Athletic programs; Availability of online, hybrid, or hyflex courses; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Availability of scholarships; Class size; Commitment to racial justice; Commitment to social justice; Diversity of faculty/staff; Diversity of students; Financial cost; Institution size; Job outcomes/career opportunities; Length of time passed between application and letter of admission; Library collections/resources/services; Location; National rankings; Online learning resources; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; Quality of facilities; Religious affiliation; and Research opportunities. This rating gauges participants' perception of USF.

The below data indicate the percentage of participants who rated each characteristic as **Excellent** or **Good**:

- Academic rigor (reputation) = **79%**
- Athletic programs = **31%**
- Availability of online, hybrid, or hyflex courses = **67%**
- Availability of recreational facilities on campus = **42%**
- Availability of scholarships = **43%**
- Class size = **76%**
- Commitment to racial justice = **77%**
- Commitment to social justice = **77%**
- Diversity of faculty/staff = **71%**
- Diversity of students = **76%**
- Financial cost = **29%**
- Institution size = **71%**
- Job outcomes/career opportunities = **63%**
- Length of time passed between application and letter of admission = **75%**
- Library collections/resources/services = **59%**
- Location = **80%**
- National rankings = **52%**
- Online learning resources = **57%**
- Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities = **41%**
- Quality of facilities = **57%**
- Religious affiliation = **39%**
- Research opportunities = **47%**

The **majority of characteristics** (15 out of 22) were rated by the highest percentage of participants as either **Excellent** or **Good** with the exception of Athletic programs; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; Religious affiliation; and Research opportunities, which the highest percentage of participants rated as No Opinion and **Financial cost** which the highest percentage of participants rated as **Average**.

The below figure details all participants' average rating of each characteristic of USF, disaggregated by those who began attending; those who did not accept their offer of admission; and those who accepted their offer of admission, but did not begin attending. This rating gauges participants' perception of USF.



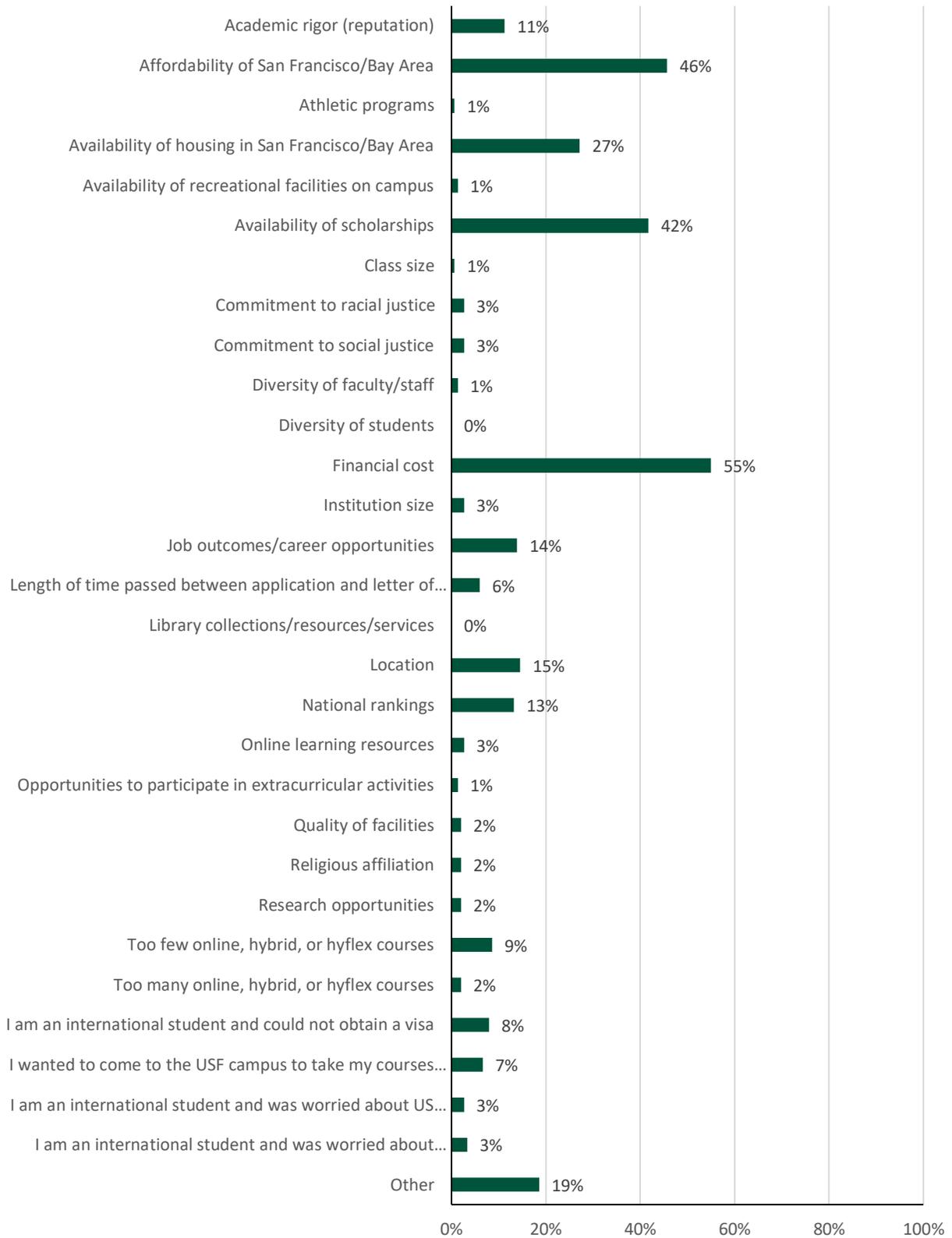
THOSE WHO DID NOT ATTEND USF

Factors that influenced decision not to attend USF

Those who did not accept their offer of admission or did not begin attending USF were asked to indicate the factors that influenced their decision not to attend USF from the following response options: Academic rigor (reputation); Affordability of San Francisco/Bay Area; Athletic programs; Availability of housing in San Francisco/Bay Area; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Availability of scholarships; Class size; Commitment to racial justice; Commitment to social justice; Diversity of faculty/staff; Diversity of students; Financial cost; Institution size; Job outcomes/career opportunities; Length of time passed between application and letter of admission; Location; National rankings; Online learning resources; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; Quality of facilities; Religious affiliation; Research opportunities; Too few online, hybrid, or hyflex courses; Too many online, hybrid, or hyflex courses; I am an international student and could not obtain a visa; I wanted to come to the USF campus to take my courses and was unable to due to COVID-19; I am an international student and was worried about US immigration policy; I am an international student and was worried about anti-immigrant hostilities/violence in the US; and Other. Participants could select all that apply. Participants' responses to Other can be found in **Appendix A, 2.1**.

- Of participants that did not accept their offer of admission or accepted their offer, but did not begin attending USF, the highest percentage (**55%**) indicated that **financial cost** was a factor that **influenced their decision not to attend USF**.

The figure on the following page details the percentage of participants that selected each response option.



Rating of institution they are attending

Those who indicated that they began attending a college or university other than USF were asked to rate the following characteristics of the institution they are attending using a 6-pt. scale (0 = *No opinion*, 5 = *Excellent*): Academic rigor (reputation), Athletic programs; Availability of online, hybrid, or hyflex courses; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Availability of scholarships; Class size; Commitment to racial justice; Commitment to social justice; Diversity of faculty/staff; Diversity of students; Financial cost; Institution size; Job outcomes/career opportunities; Length of time passed between application and letter of admission; Library collections/resources/services; Location; National rankings; Online learning resources; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; Quality of facilities; Religious affiliation; and Research opportunities.

The below data indicate the percentage of participants who rated the below characteristics as **Excellent** or **Good**:

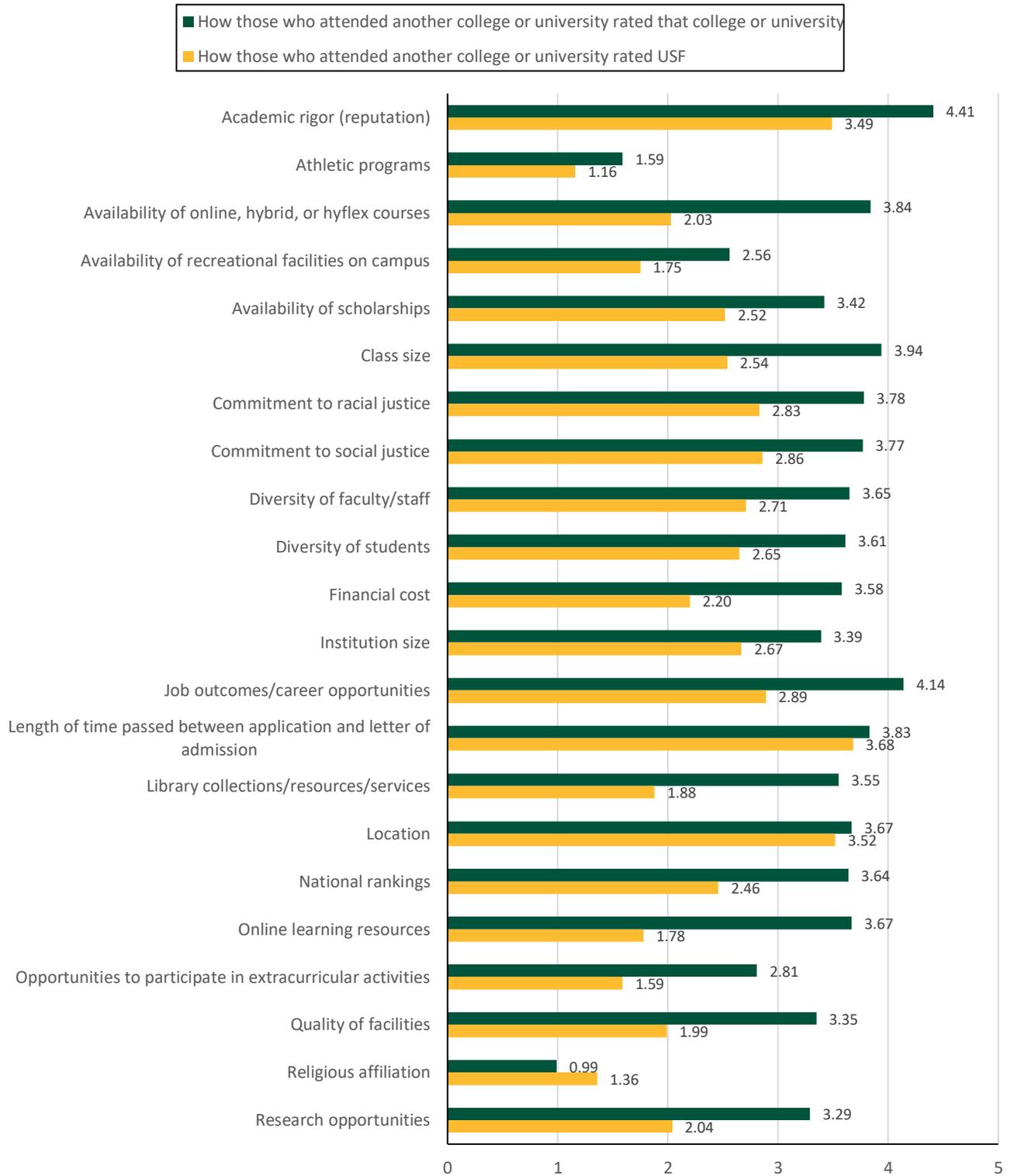
- Academic rigor (reputation) = **89%**
- Athletic programs = **27%**
- Availability of online, hybrid, or hyflex courses = **72%**
- Availability of recreational facilities on campus = **48%**
- Availability of scholarships = **62%**
- Class size = **78%**
- Commitment to racial justice = **74%**
- Commitment to social justice = **74%**
- Diversity of faculty/staff = **65%**
- Diversity of students = **66%**
- Financial cost = **55%**
- Institution size = **57%**
- Job outcomes/career opportunities = **84%**
- Length of time passed between application and letter of admission = **73%**
- Library collections/resources/services = **72%**
- Location = **69%**
- National rankings = **77%**
- Online learning resources = **76%**
- Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities = **51%**
- Quality of facilities = **63%**
- Religious affiliation = **17%**
- Research opportunities = **65%**

The **majority of characteristics** (17 out of 22) were rated by the highest percentage of participants as either **Excellent** or **Good** with the exception of Athletic programs; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; and Religious Affiliation, which the highest percentage of participants rated as No Opinion.

Rating of institution they are attending vs. ratings of USF

On average, participants who attended another college or university rated the characteristics of the college or university they are attending higher than they rated the same characteristics of USF with the exception of Religious Affiliation.

The below figure details participants' average rating of each characteristic of the college or university they are attending and compares it to the ratings they gave USF.



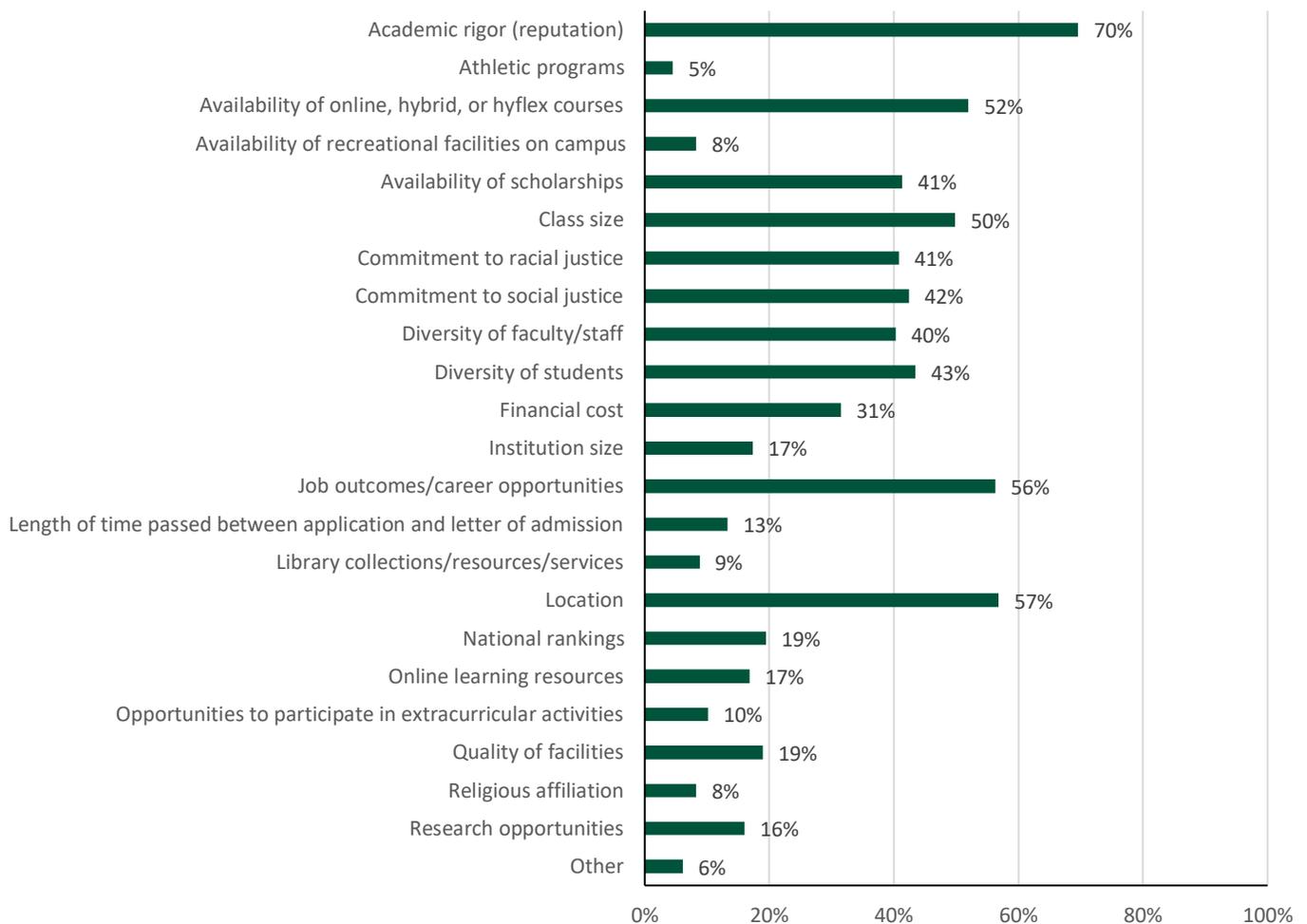
THOSE WHO BEGAN ATTENDING USF

Factors that influenced decision to attend USF

Participants who indicated that they began attending USF were asked to select the factors that influenced their decision to attend USF from the following response options: Academic rigor (reputation); Athletic programs; Availability of online, hybrid, or hyflex courses; Availability of recreational facilities on campus; Availability of scholarships; Class size; Commitment to racial justice; Commitment to social justice; Diversity of faculty/staff; Diversity of students; Financial cost; Institution size; Job outcomes/career opportunities; Length of time passed between application and letter of admission; Library collections/resources/services; Location; National rankings; Online learning resources; Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities; Quality of facilities; Religious affiliation; Research opportunities; and Other. Participants could select all that apply. Participants' responses to Other can be found in **Appendix A, 2.2**.

- The highest percentage (70%) of participants who began attending USF indicated that **Academic rigor (reputation)** influenced their decision to attend.

The figure below details the percentage of participants that selected each response option.



Financial Factors

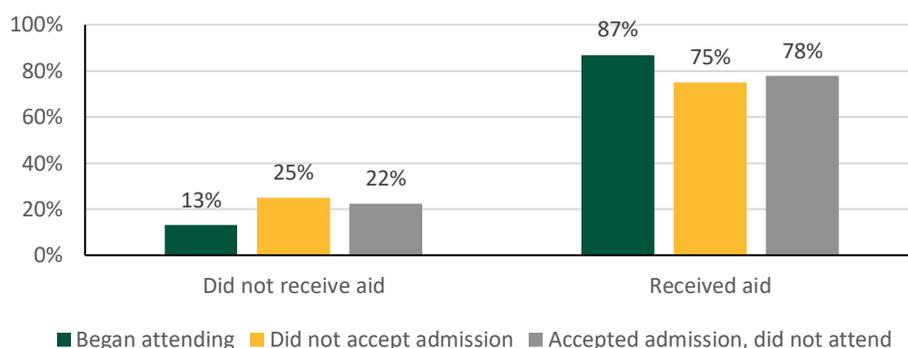
FINANCIAL AID/ASSISTANCE

Applied for federal financial aid

Participants indicated if they applied for federal financial aid (Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans and/or Direct Plus Loans) at USF and, if so, whether or not they received federal financial aid.

- **62%** of all participants indicated that they **applied for federal financial aid at USF**.
- **38%** of all participants indicated that they did not apply for federal financial aid at USF.
 - Of those who **began attending USF**, the highest proportion (**64%**) **applied for federal financial aid at USF**.
 - Of those who **did not accept their offer of admission to USF**, the highest proportion (**53%**) applied for federal financial aid at USF.
 - Of those who accepted their admission to USF, but **did not begin attending**, the highest proportion (**82%**) **applied for federal financial aid at USF**.
- Overall, the majority (**84%**) of all those who applied for federal financial aid at USF received aid.

The figure below details the proportion of participants who received aid or not, disaggregated by those who began attending; those who did not accept their offer of admission; and those who accepted their offer of admission, but did not begin attending.

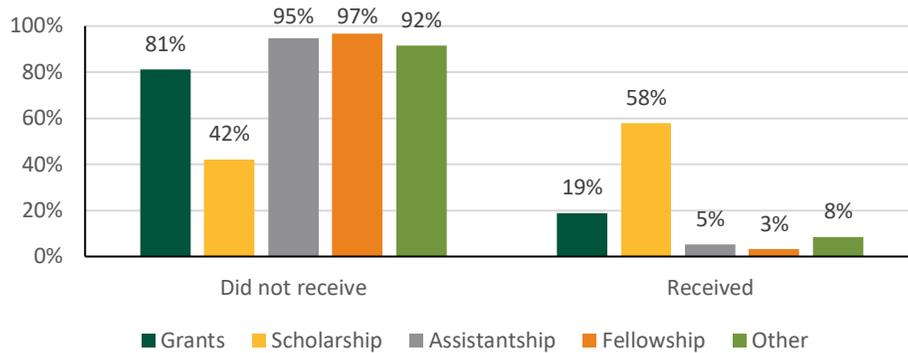


Type of aid received from USF

Participants indicated if they received any of the following from USF: Grant; Scholarship; Assistantship; Fellowship; and Other. Participants' responses to Other can be found in **Appendix A, 3.1**.

- Of those who received a grant, scholarship, assistantship, fellowship or other, the highest percentage (**58%**) of participants **received a scholarship** from USF.

The below figure details the percentage of participants that received or did not receive each kind of aid.



Aid from another college or university

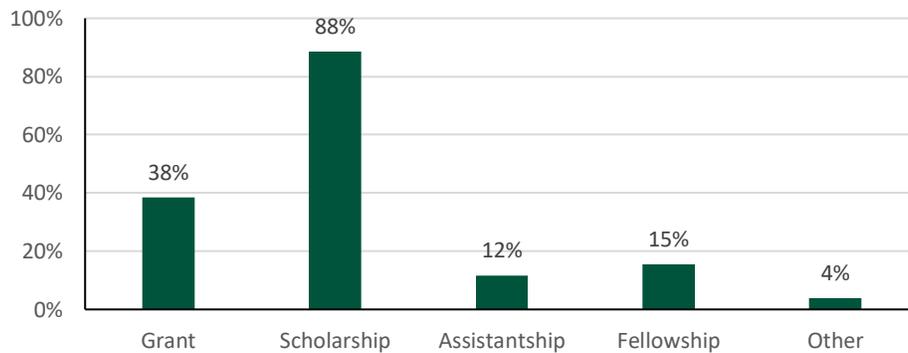
Those who indicated that they chose to attend a college or university other than USF were asked if the institution they are attending offered them more financial assistance than USF. Participants could select Yes; No; or I did not apply for financial assistance at the institution I am attending.

- The highest proportion (**77%**) of participants that attended another college or university **received more financial assistant from the institution they are attending** than from USF.

Participants who indicated that the institution they are attending offered them more financial assistance than USF were asked to indicate the kind of assistance the institution they are attending offered them from the following response options: Grant; Scholarship; Assistantship; Fellowship; and Other. Participants could select all that apply. Participants' responses to *Other* can be found in **Appendix A, 3.2**.

- The highest percentage of participants (**88%**) **received a scholarship** from the institution they are attending.

The figure below details the percentage of participants who selected each response option.



COST OF ATTENDANCE

Participants who indicated that they chose to attend a college or university other than USF were asked if the cost of attendance at USF is higher or lower than the institution they are attending.

- **70%** of participants indicated that the **cost of attendance at USF is higher** than the institution they are attending.

Additional Thoughts

Participants were asked if there was anything else they'd like to tell USF. Participants' responses can be found in *Appendix A, 4*.