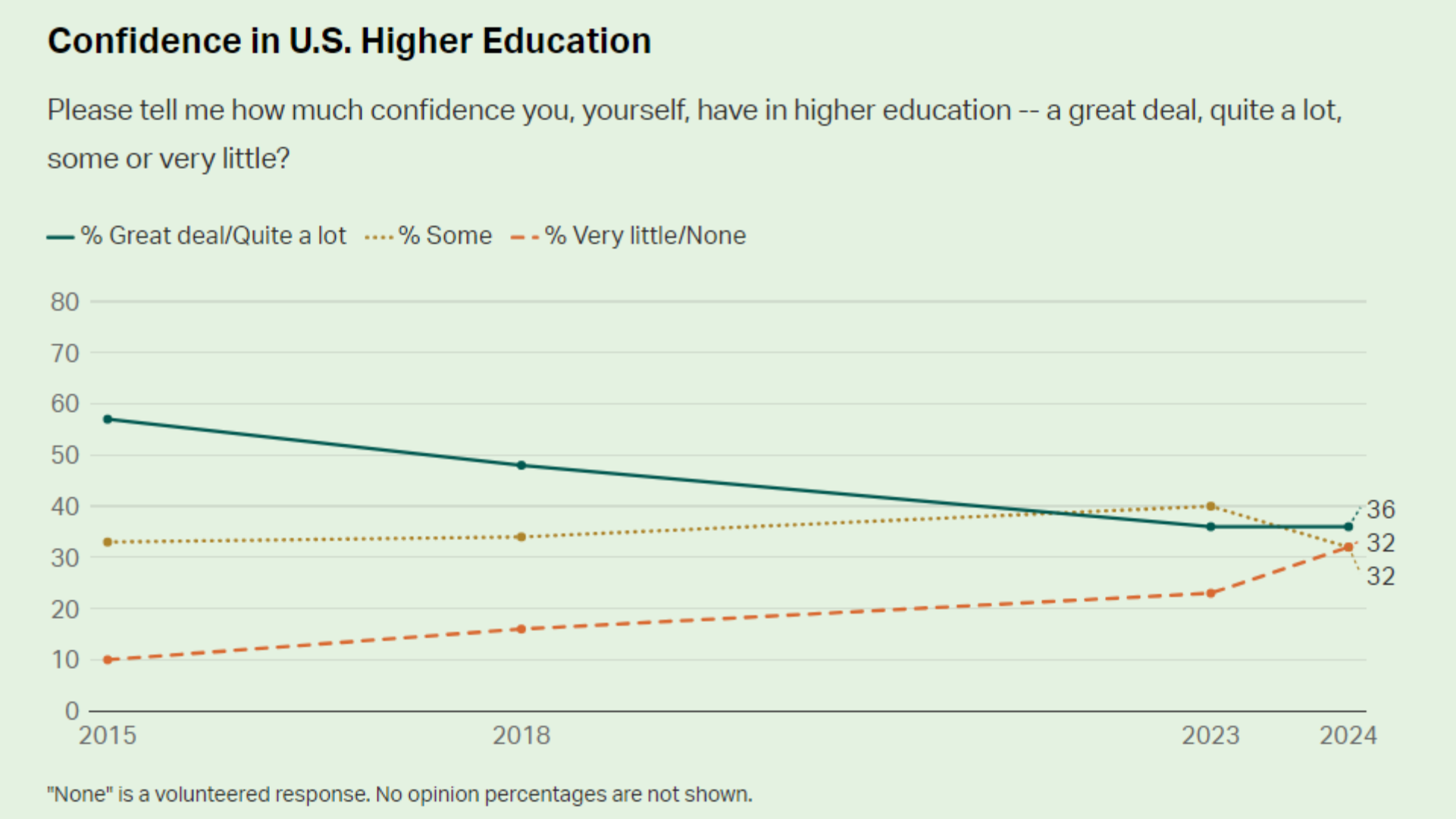


# State of Higher Education

October 2024

# Confidence in Higher Education Now More Closely Divided



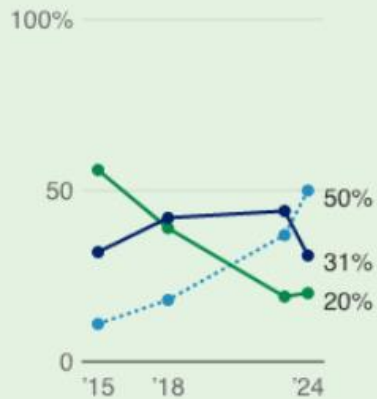
# Decline is Greatest Among Republicans

## Trends in Confidence in Higher Education, by Political Party

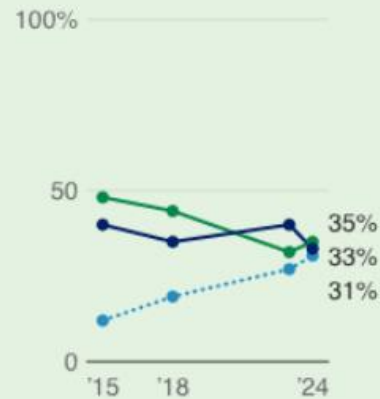
Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in higher education — a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?

— % Great deal/Quite a lot — % Some ... % Very little/None

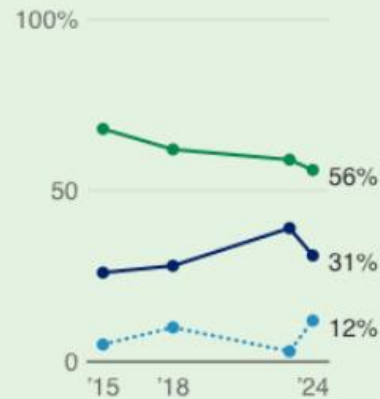
### Republicans



### Independents



### Democrats



"None" is a volunteered response. No opinion percentages are not shown.

Decline has occurred across all groups, but **greatest decline is among Republicans.**

Americans with **training/ed beyond high school** are still more confident.

# Concerns About Political Agenda, Focus and Cost Negatively Impacting Confidence

## Reasons Americans Are Not Confident in Higher Education

Based on those who say they have very little confidence in higher education.

Bold entries are larger themes; parenthesized responses are the categories that make up the theme.

	%
<b>Political agendas</b>	<b>41</b>
(Indoctrination/Brainwashing/Propaganda)	25
(Too liberal/political)	17
(Not allowing students to think for themselves/Pushing their own agenda)	5
(Too much concentration on diversity, equity and inclusion)	3
(Too socialist)	1
<b>Wrong focus/Don't teach right things</b>	<b>37</b>
(Students not properly educated/Don't teach relevant skills)	30
(Didn't get much out of college/Degree doesn't mean much)	7
(Graduates unable to find employment)	3
(Too much focus on sports)	1
<b>Cost/Expenses</b>	<b>28</b>
(Too expensive)	25
(Loan debt)	5
(Underfunding/Not enough resources)	1
(Professors/Instructors/Administration paid too much)	1

Quality, political unrest, inequality, free speech concerns and poor leadership cited by **<10% of Americans.**

# Perceived Value is Key Driver of High Confidence in Higher Education

## Reasons Americans Are Confident in Higher Education

Based on those who say they have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in higher education.

Bold entries are larger themes; parenthesized responses are the categories that make up the theme.

	%
<b>Value of being educated</b>	<b>27</b>
(Good for young people to be informed/Education is important/Purpose)	21
(Educated populace benefits society/economy)	6
(Higher education is essential to the country)	3
<b>Fosters opportunities</b>	<b>24</b>
(Need a degree to get better jobs/better opportunities/make more money)	18
(Prepares students to get ahead in life, have success)	10
<b>Provides good training</b>	<b>19</b>
(Trains students to think for themselves)	9
(Does good job of training students (general))	8
(Teaches people to have an open mind, appreciate different points of view)	7
<b>Quality of education</b>	<b>13</b>
(Good professors, instructors, administrators)	7
(U.S. colleges are some of the best in world)	7

Personal experiences with higher education, innovation and access were mentioned by **<10% of Americans.**

# Confidence Higher in 2-Year Institutions

## Americans More Confident in Community Colleges Than Four-Year Universities

Please indicate how much confidence you have in ...

■ % A great deal ■ % Quite a lot ■ % Some ■ % Very little ■ % No answer

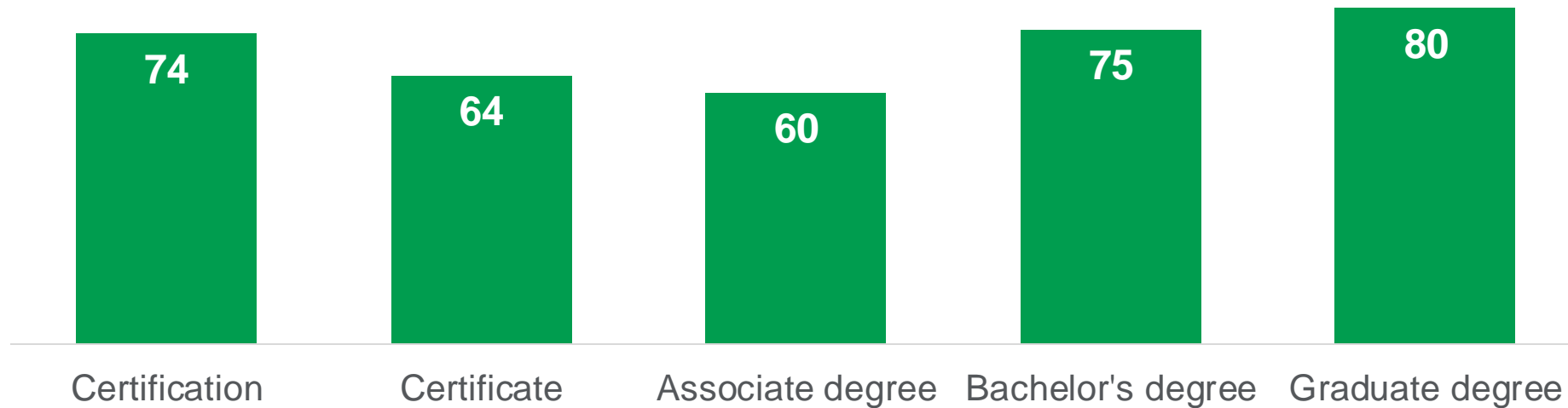


Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Lumina Foundation-Gallup Confidence in Higher Education survey, June 3-18, 2024

# Majorities Of Those Without A Degree/Credential Value All Higher Ed Levels

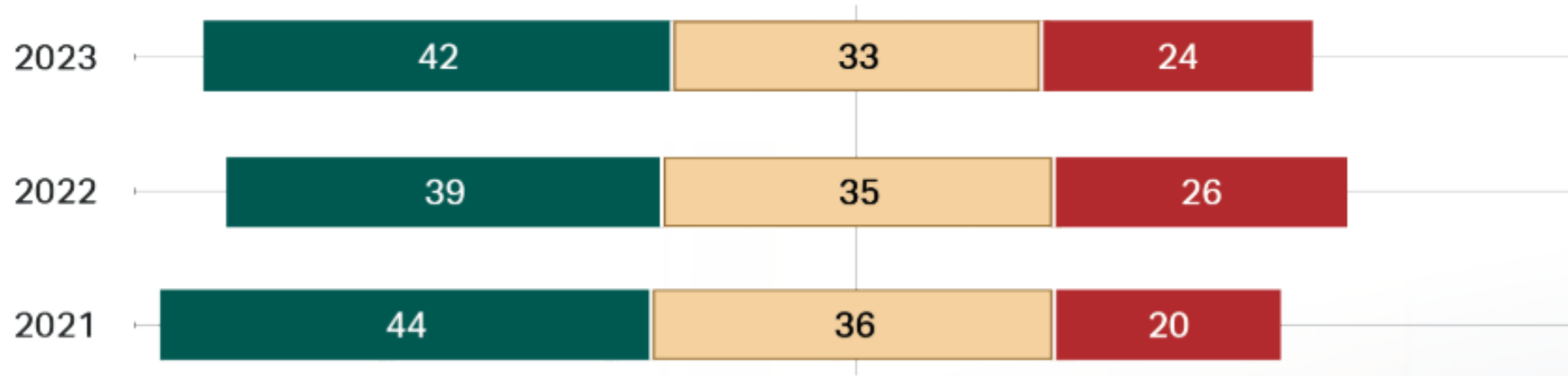
In general, how valuable are each of the following types of degrees/credentials?  
(% Extremely/Very Valuable)



# Majority Believe Two Or Four-year Degree is *as or More* Important Than 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?

■ % More important   ■ % Equally important   ■ % Less important



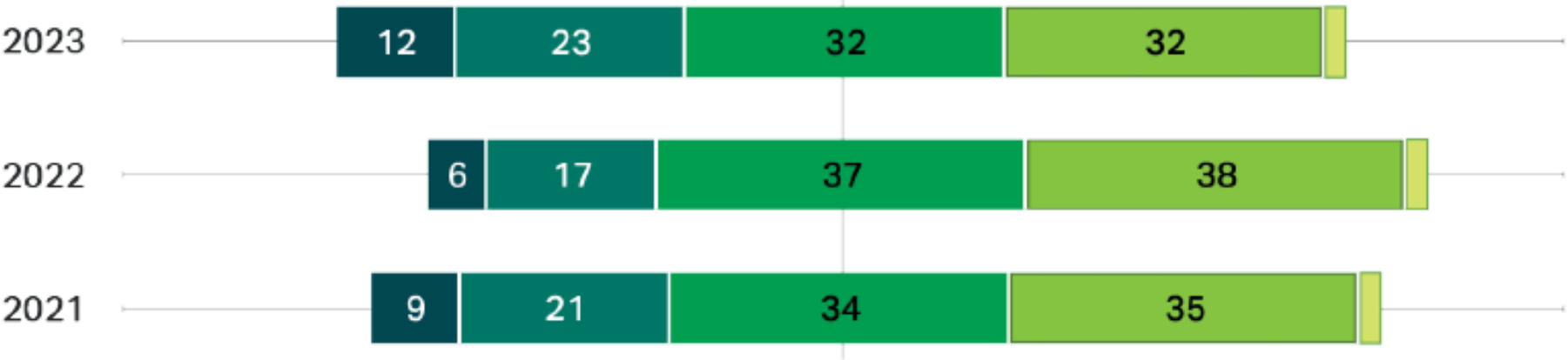
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.



# Only About a Third Believe Most/All Have Access to Quality Affordable Education Post High School

In your view, how many people in the U.S. have access to a quality, affordable education after high school if they want it?

■ % All ■ % Most ■ % About half ■ % Not too many ■ % None

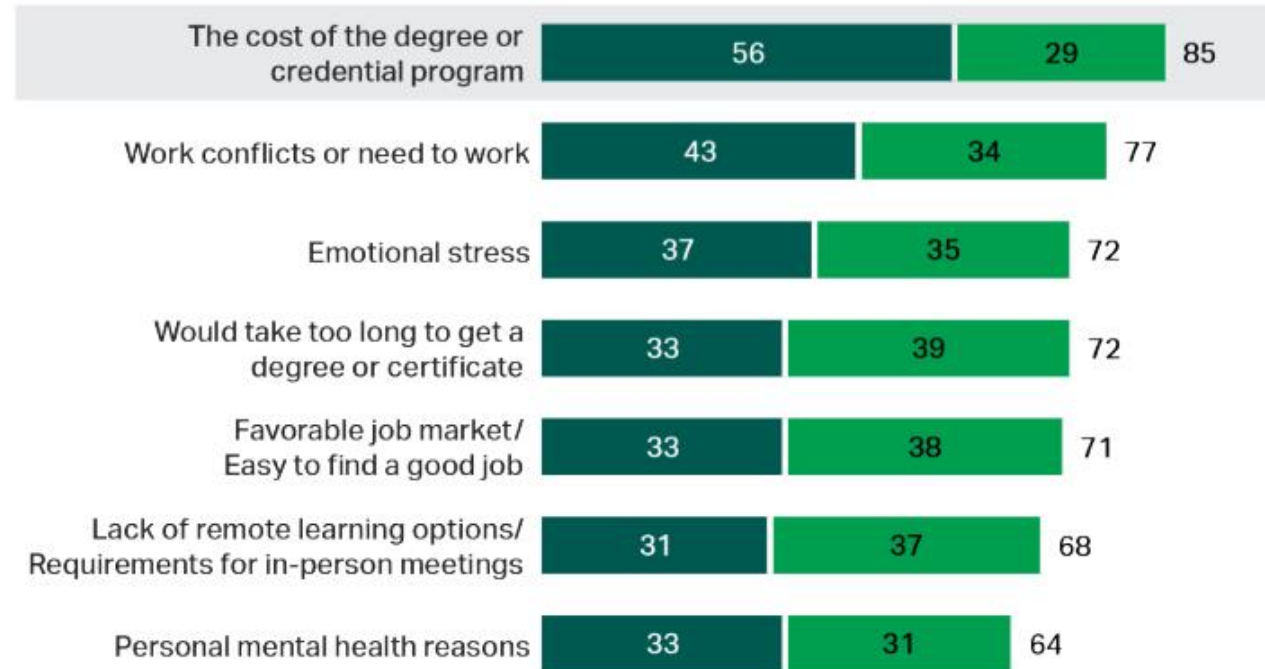


Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100% or may sum to  $\pm 1\%$ ; numerical values shown when 5% or higher.

# Cost, Work and Emotional Stress Greatest Barriers to Enrollment

How important are each of the following as reasons why you are not currently enrolled?

■ % Very important ■ % Moderately important

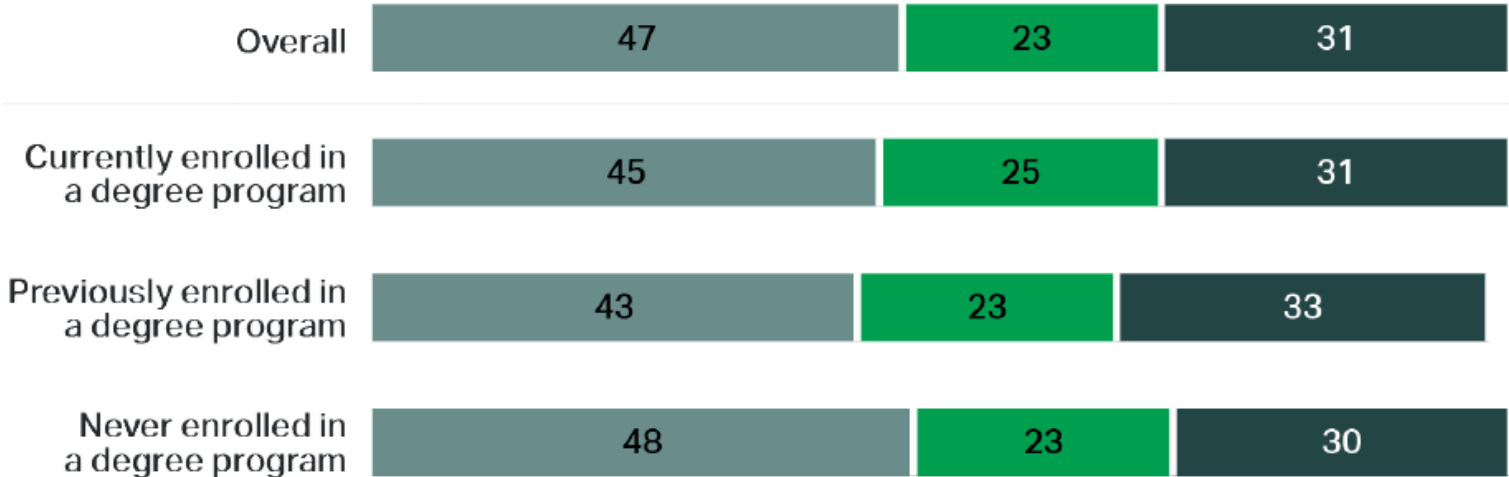


Cost is greatest barrier for **all groups** regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, or first-gen student status

# Perceived Cost is also Major Barrier to Access

How much do you think the average in-state student at a public college actually pays per year, after grants and scholarships they receive from the college?

■ % Underestimates cost by \$5,000 or more   ■ % Estimates within \$5,000 of actual cost  
■ % Overestimates cost by \$5,000 or more



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

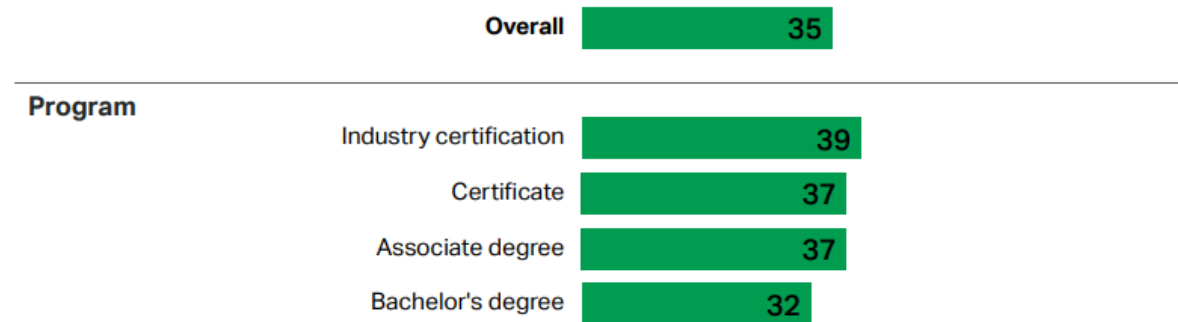
**Female, Black, Hispanic, first-generation and younger (18-25) adults more likely to underestimate.**

# About a Third are Considering Stopping Out

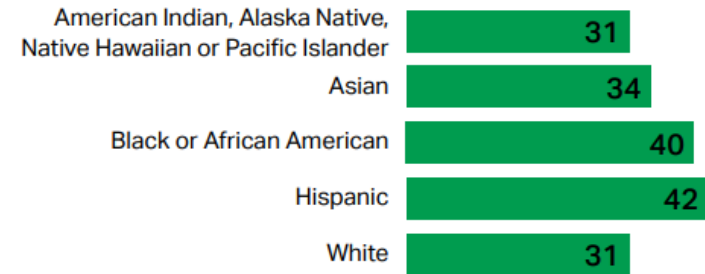
Among currently enrolled adults pursuing a certificate, certification, associate or bachelor's degree

**In the past six months, have you considered stopping your coursework?**

(% Yes)



**Race**



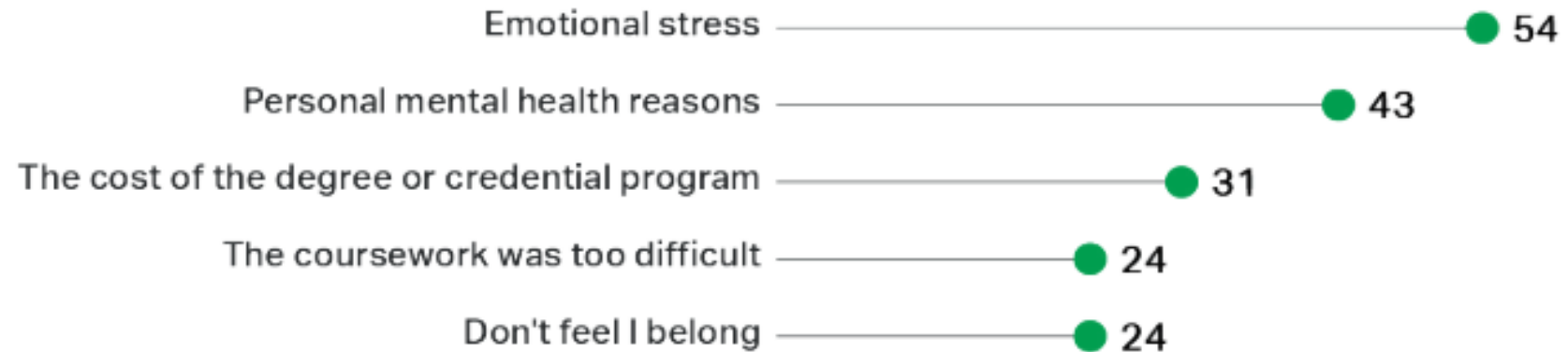
**Caretaker Status**



# Emotional Stress, Mental Health and Cost Also Lead as Reasons Students are Stopping Out

Which of the following describes why you considered stopping your coursework?  
Select all that apply.

% Selected

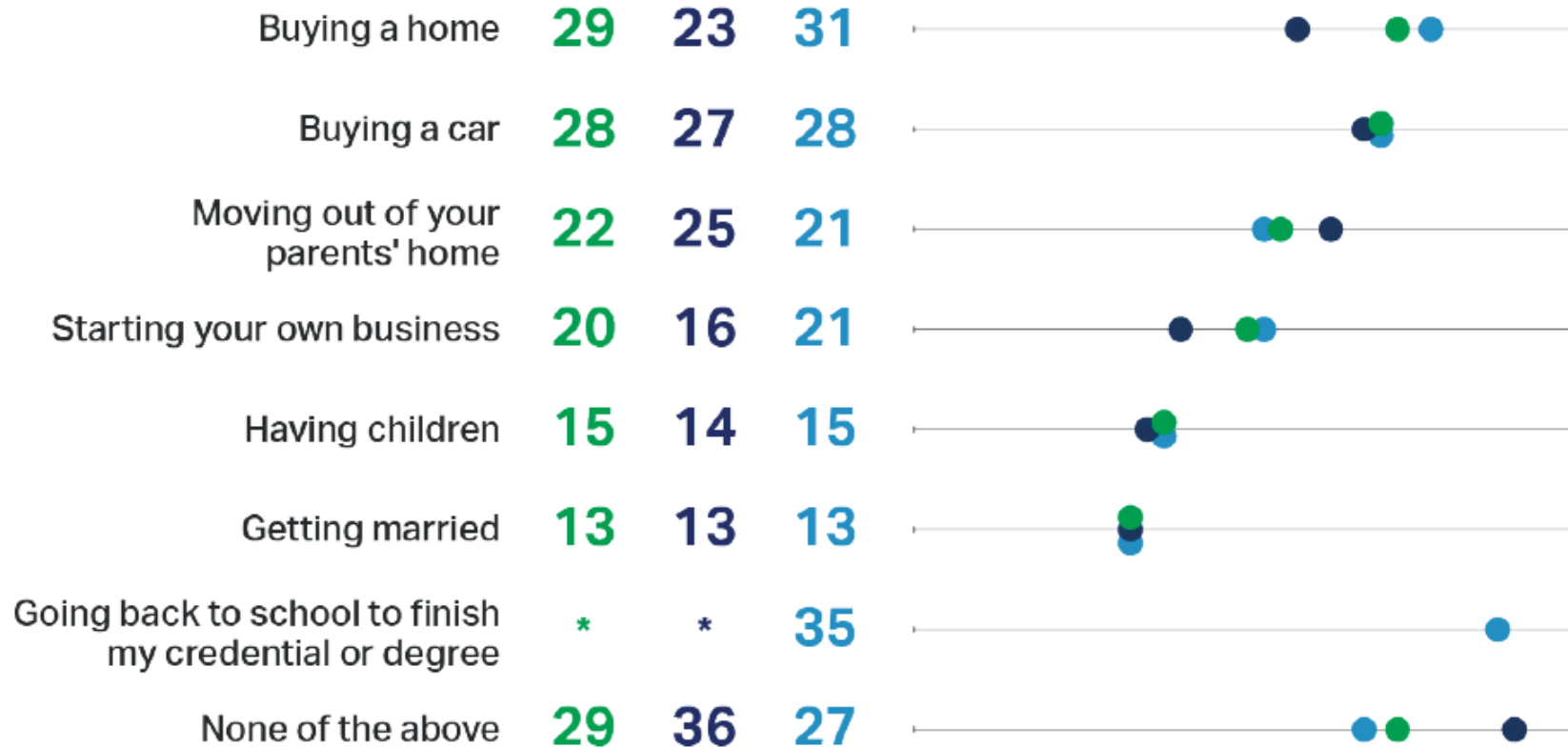


# 71% of Borrowers Have Delayed at Least One Major Life Event due to Loans

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

% Yes

● Overall ● Currently enrolled borrowers ● Previously enrolled borrowers

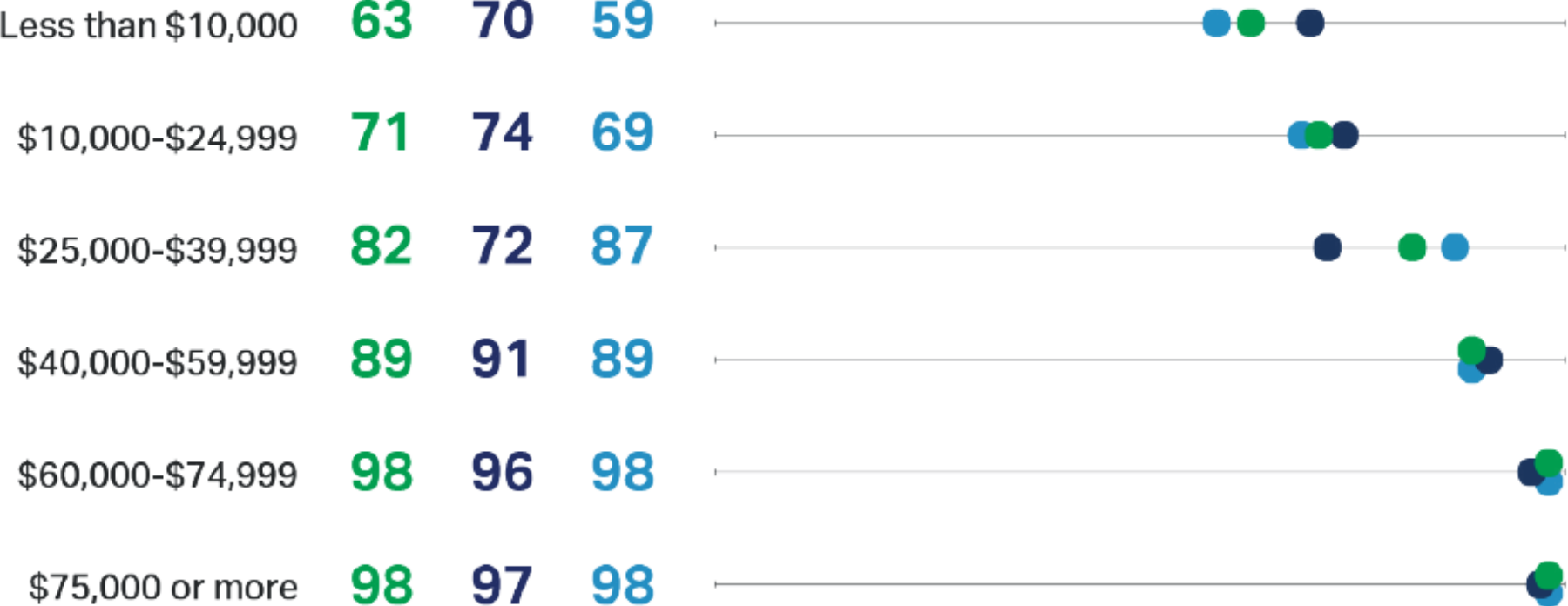


# Delays Set-in at Relatively Low Borrowing Amounts

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

% Delayed at least one life event

● Overall ● Currently enrolled borrowers ● Previously enrolled borrowers

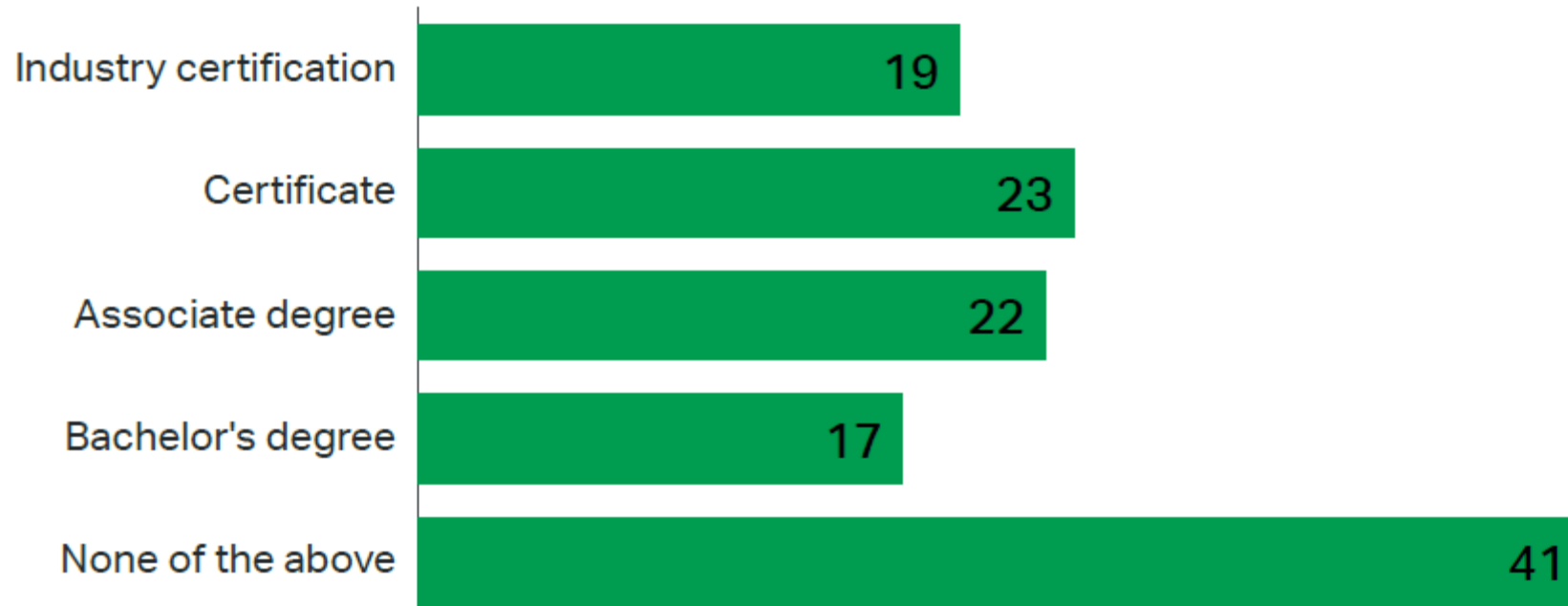


# About a Quarter of Unenrolled Adults Have Recently Considered Associate Program

*Among adults not enrolled in a certificate, certification, associate or bachelor's degree program*

**Which of the following, if any, have you considered pursuing in the past two years?**

(% Selected)

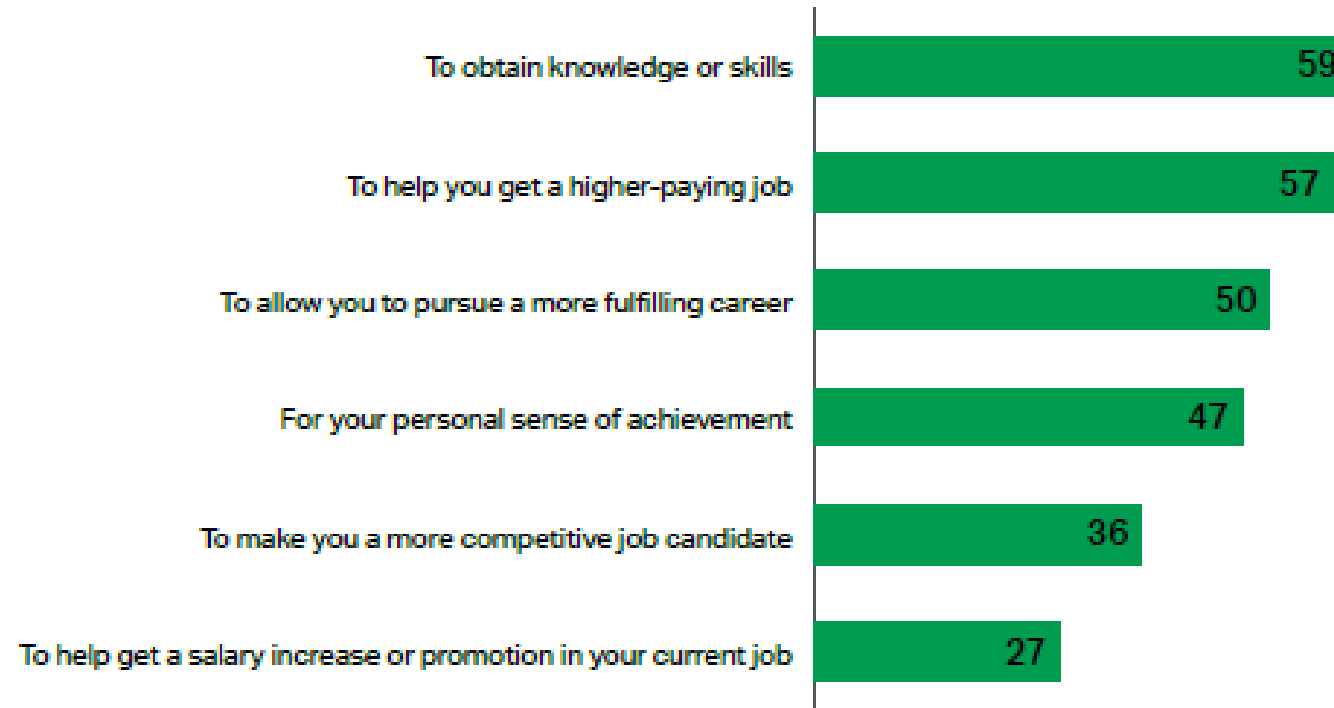




# Job-related Reasons are *Main* Reasons Prospective Students Consider Higher Ed

Which of the following are important reasons why you are considering enrolling and obtaining a degree or credential?

(% Selected)



# ...And Those With Education And Training Beyond High School See Greater Alignment Between Their Job And Their Talents And Interests

## Work fits with talents and interests

58%

NO POSTSECONDARY  
EDUCATION

71%

ASSOCIATE  
DEGREE

87%

GRADUATE  
DEGREE

*Fifty-eight percent of workers with no postsecondary education say their job is a good fit for their talents and interests, well below the figures for workers with at least some postsecondary education.*

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# Questions?

<http://www.news.gallup.com>  
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