

# MVC Fall 2021 Webinar: Findings from the 2021 AO Survey

October 25, 2021



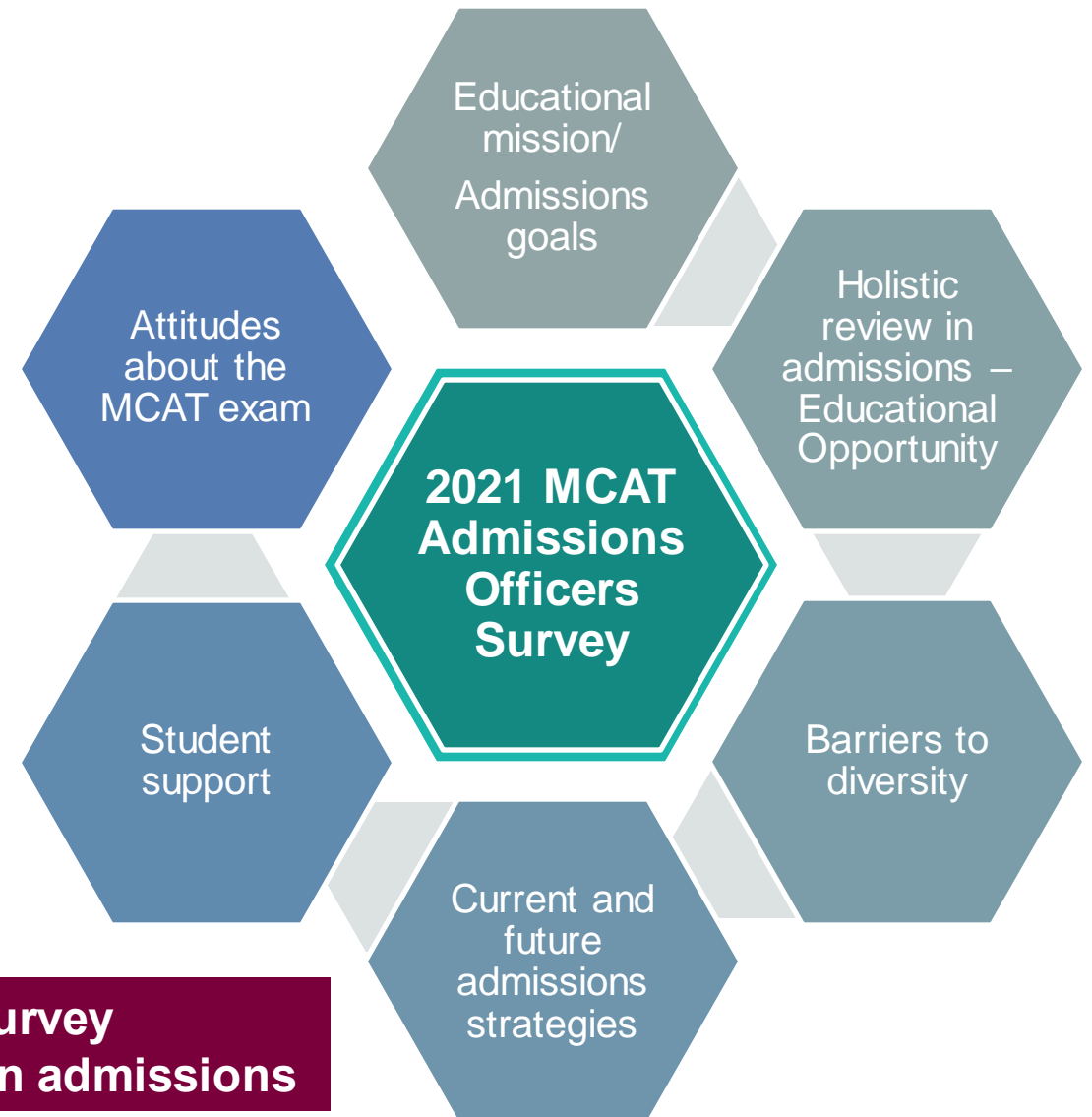
# Agenda

- ❑ Purpose of this session: review survey results
  - Important findings
  - Additional analysis/research questions
  - Ideas for the admissions manuscript
- ❑ Part I: Review synthesis of survey findings
- ❑ Part II: Preview upcoming LSL session
- ❑ Next steps

# Part I: 2021 MCAT admissions survey results

# About the MCAT Admissions Officers Survey 2021

- ✓ What are schools trying to accomplish?
- ✓ What gets in the way?
- ✓ How are they currently doing it?
- ✓ Where are the opportunities for improvement?



**Today's call focuses on a few highlights from the survey about schools' needs for and use of MCAT scores in admissions**

# Bottom line up front

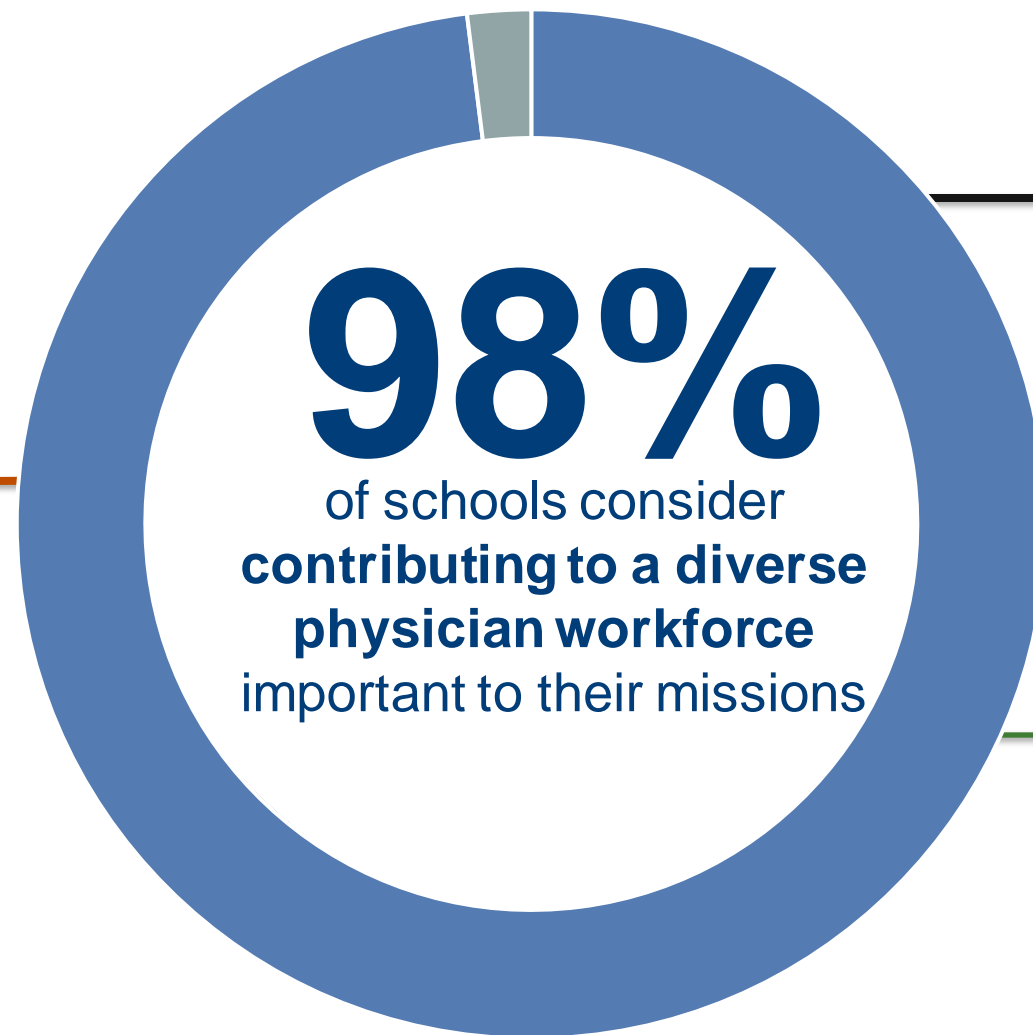
- ❑ Diversity is a common focus across schools
  - School mission and context drive their focus
- ❑ The top 5 barriers to diversity include some factors external to admissions, including finances and student/faculty diversity
  - For some students, these are important factors
- ❑ Schools put MCAT scores/UGPAs in the context of opportunity
  - Data about applicants' college, high school, and community would add value
- ❑ Internal pressures about student success drive focus on higher MCAT scores
  - Feedback loops with student performance data could help alleviate pressure
- ❑ Schools have different needs from MCAT scores and UGPAs
  - And they tailor student support to their local context
- ❑ Most are not interested in alterations to the MCAT score scale



# Diversity is a common focus across schools

## Geographic location

- 83% Medically underserved areas
- 72% In-state
- 70% Rural
- 62% Tribal
- 48% Urban



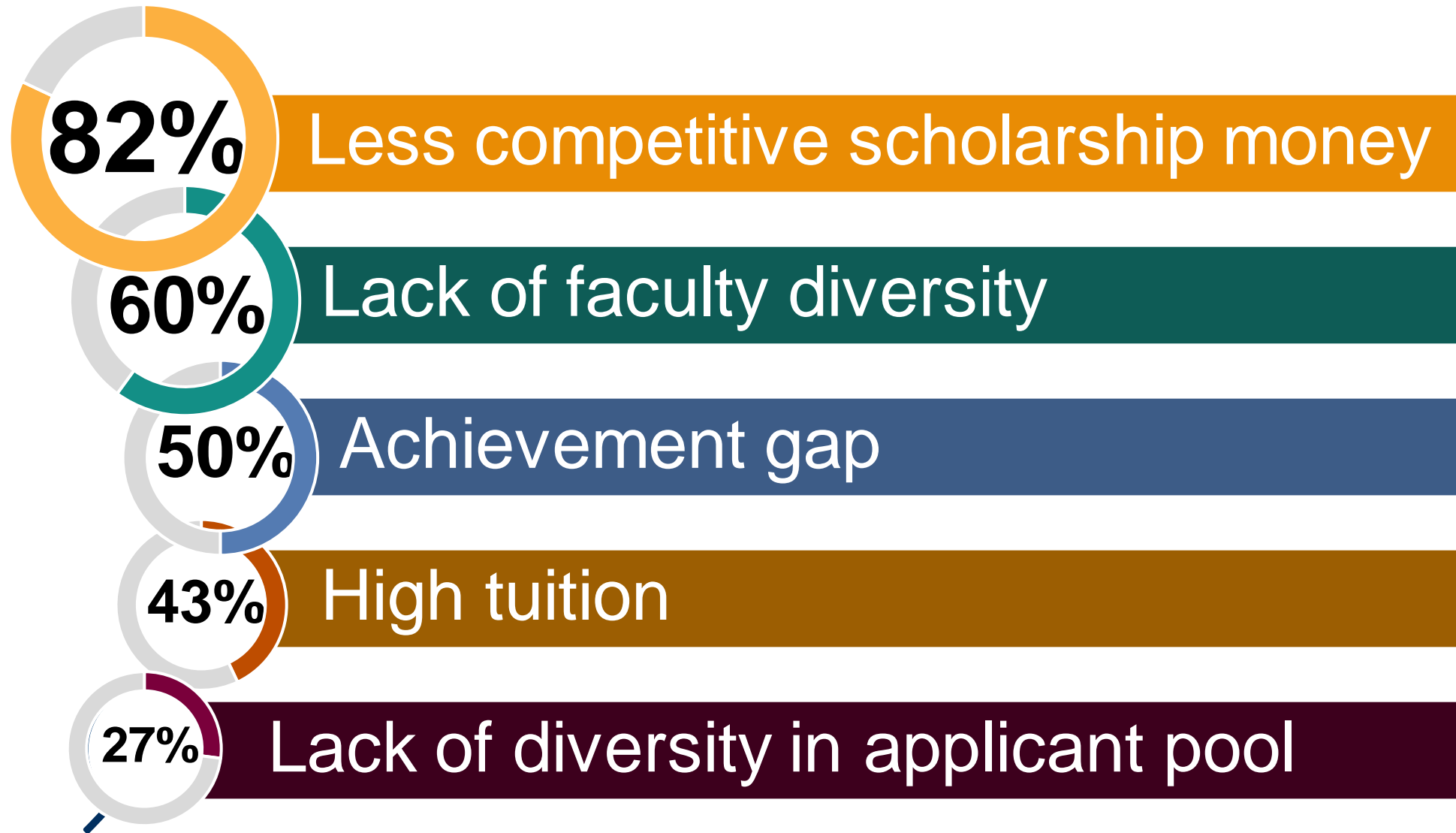
## Individual characteristics

- 99% URM
- 97% Experienced disadvantage
- 96% Low-SES
- 92% 1st Gen
- 47% Multilingual

## Undergraduate experience

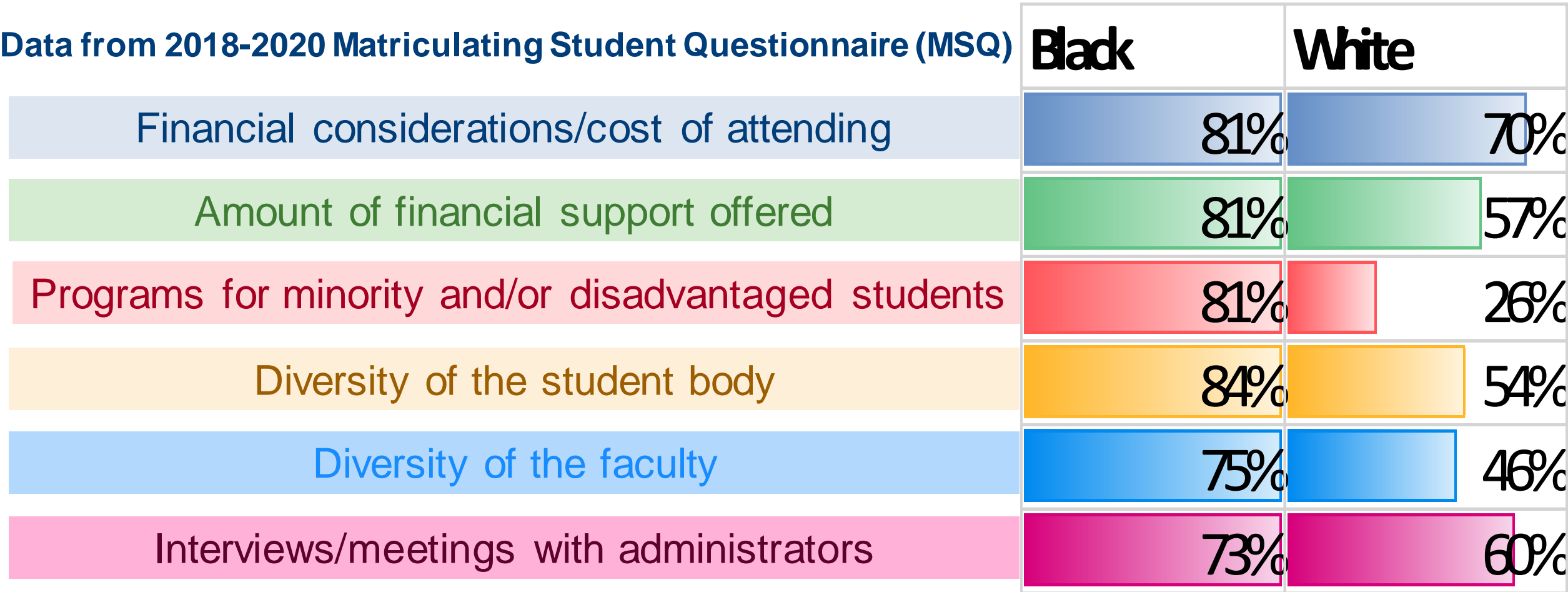
- 35% Under-resourced university
- 21% Non-science major
- 19% Community college

## Top 5 barriers to diversity



# Factors students consider important in choosing the medical school to attend (for those with >1 offer)

Data from 2018-2020 Matriculating Student Questionnaire (MSQ)





# Schools put MCAT Scores/UGPAs in context (but could do more)

Most used data

## Educational data

Upward/downward college grade trends (95%)  
BCPM coursework/ grades (87%)  
Post-college coursework/degrees ( $\geq 81\%$ )  
Letters of recommendation (81%)  
Required coursework (77%)

## Background/experience data

Evidence of grit (98%)  
1<sup>st</sup> gen, lower-SES, URM ( $\geq 94\%$ )  
Work experience (93%)  
Essays/personal statements (91%)

## College data

Prehealth advisor (29%)  
Average MCAT/UGPA (29%)  
% graduates who continue education (29%)  
Graduation rate (29%)

## High school data

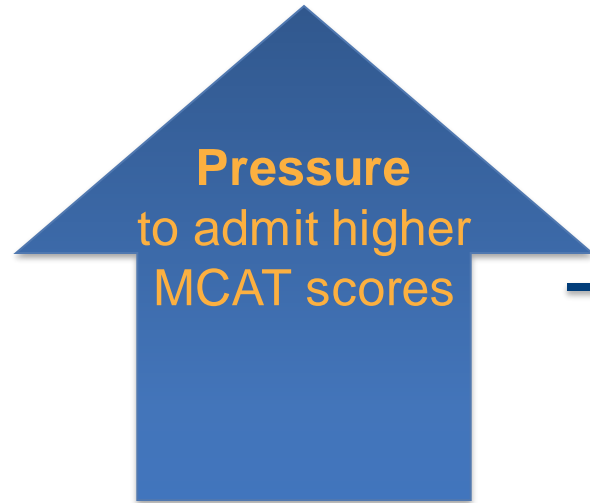
% who go to college (35%)  
Average SAT/ACT score (20%)  
Graduation rate (25%)

## Community data

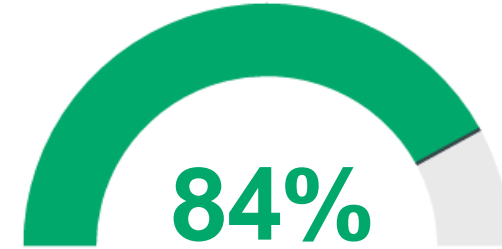
Poverty rate (33%)  
Housing stability (36%)  
% single-parent households (38%)  
Crime rate (28%)

Most interest in using

# Concerns about student outcomes are a top driver for higher MCAT scores in admissions



- 63%** Passing licensure exams
- 60%** Matching to residency
- 58%** Graduating on time/+1
- 52%** Financial & social risks with not graduating
- 31%** USNWR ranking
- 30%** Expectations from administration/ board



of schools provide info  
about students' success  
to admissions

## Use of performance data by MCAT/GPA

- 71%** 1st time pass rates on licensure exams
- 58%** Graduation rates
- 38%** Match rates

**14%-29%** would use these data if available

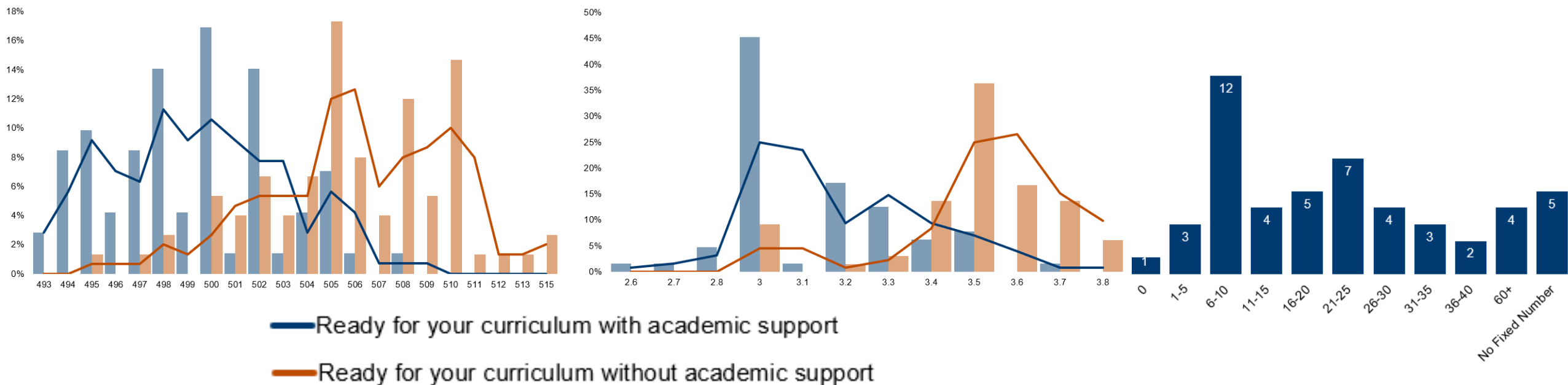
**At the validity schools, the “minimum” MCAT score varies widely so a survey would help us understand the variability.**

**What's the lowest MCAT score your school can admit WITHOUT academic support?**

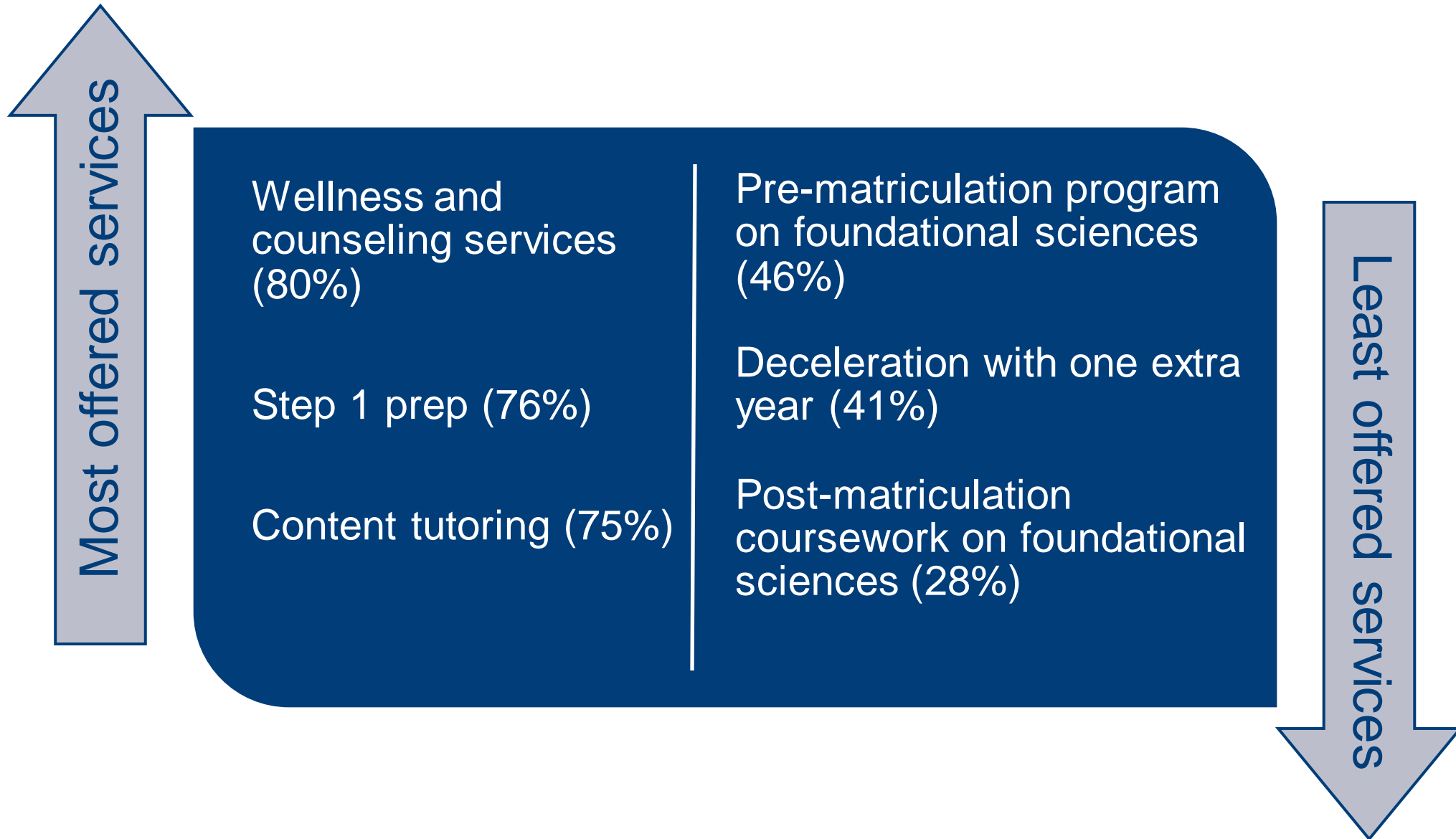


# Schools have different needs

The **MCAT/GPA thresholds** for students who can succeed with/without academic support and the **number of students supportable** in each entering class are **wide-ranging** across schools.



# Schools support their students in different ways



# Little interest on test optional; low interest on alternative MCAT score scales

- One medical school implemented a limited test-optional policy for the 2022 application cycle

## MCAT 2021

For the Fall 2022 application cycle, the MCAT exam will be optional for those who have not yet taken the exam. We will consider and accept applicants without MCAT scores. If an applicant already has a MCAT score, or has a pending MCAT score, it will be considered by the Admissions Committee. The current deadline to take the MCAT is September 30, 2021 for those choosing to take the MCAT in the 2022 application cycle.

The decision to take the MCAT will depend on individual circumstances. Applicants should seriously evaluate the benefit and risk of taking the exam for themselves and their immediate contacts such as family members and roommates. Additionally, consideration of test availability and accessibility may be important. Without an MCAT score, the Admissions Committee will rely more on grades and science GPA to evaluate an applicant's academic preparation for medical school. Applicants with an inconsistent academic record, or a previous low MCAT score, should strongly consider taking the MCAT or delay application until they feel they can do so with less risk or delay. This will provide the Committee an additional metric to consider with their grades and/or previous MCAT score.

When the application has been received by the UWSOM, applicants without a score and test date will be asked to declare if they intend to take the MCAT within two weeks of receiving the request. Given the linear nature of the admissions process, applicants cannot change their mind once they have declared they are not taking the exam. If an applicant declares that they are not taking the MCAT but decide to register or take the exam, their application will be immediately withdrawn from consideration.

## 4% of schools currently convert MCAT scores

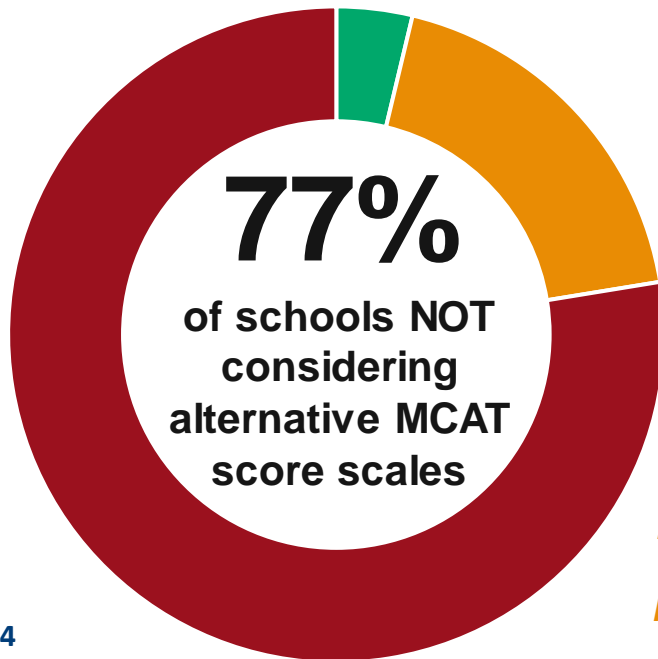
*“MCAT scores are part of a academic assessment formula that also includes BCPM GPA and individual coursework.”*

*“We currently take the percentile and divide it by .50 and then add to GPA score.”*

## 19% of schools are interested in options

*“Our school is interested in moving to a threshold or a tiered system.”*

*“A conversion score where it takes GPA and MCAT score and converts into score to indicate likelihood of passing USMLE and unimpeded progress in medical school.”*



# Schools need MORE information not less to inform their admissions decisions

## Test optional

- Only one school offered a limited test optional policy for the 2022 cycle

## Pass/fail or categorical scoring

- Less than a handful of schools currently convert MCAT scores into other scales (half of them use formulas that include MCAT scores rather than converting to P/F or tiers)
- Less than 20% of schools are interested in options (less than 10 schools are specifically interested in P/F or tiers)

## Putting MCAT scores in context

- Data about applicants' college, high school, and community would add value

## Feedback loops with performance data

- Internal pressures about student success drive focus on higher MCAT scores
- Schools are interested in data to predict likelihood of success

## Tailoring student support to local context

- Schools have different needs from MCAT scores and UGPAs

Low interest

High interest

## Group discussion





# Group discussion

- ☐ What additional analyses would you like to see?
- ☐ What are the most important topics/insights schools would want to learn from the survey?
- ☐ Which survey results surprised you the most?

# Group exercise with “sticky notes”:

<https://ideaboardz.com/for/AO%20Survey%20/3985194>

AO Survey

**Step 1: Access the “idea board” through the link above**



Additional analysis/research questions +

Type in ideas for additional analysis/research questions

+ 0

Important findings to share with schools +

Type in findings important to share with schools

Findings that surprise you the most +

Type in findings that surprise you the most

**Step 2: Click on the green “+” sign to create a new “sticky note” in any category**

**Step 4: Click on any existing sticky note others have created to give it a “thumbs-up”**

Type in ideas for additional analysis/research questions

**Step 3: Type in your idea and hit the return key to post it on the board**

👍 + 0



# Part II: LSL session



## Admitting Diverse Classes: Strategies, Barriers, and Possibilities for Using MCAT Scores in Context



**Leila Amiri**

Assistant Dean for  
Admissions and  
Recruitment  
University of Illinois  
College of Medicine



**Ngozi Anachebe**

Associate Professor  
of Obstetrics,  
Gynecology &  
Associate Dean for  
Admissions and  
Student Affairs  
Morehouse School of  
Medicine



**Kristen Goodell**

Associate Dean for  
Admissions and  
Assistant Professor of  
Family Medicine  
Boston University  
School of Medicine



**Catherine Lucey**

Executive Vice Dean,  
Vice Dean for  
Education  
University of  
California, San  
Francisco School of  
Medicine

**Join us at  
Learn Serve Lead  
2021**

**November 9  
12:45 PM-1:45 PM ET**

# Q&A



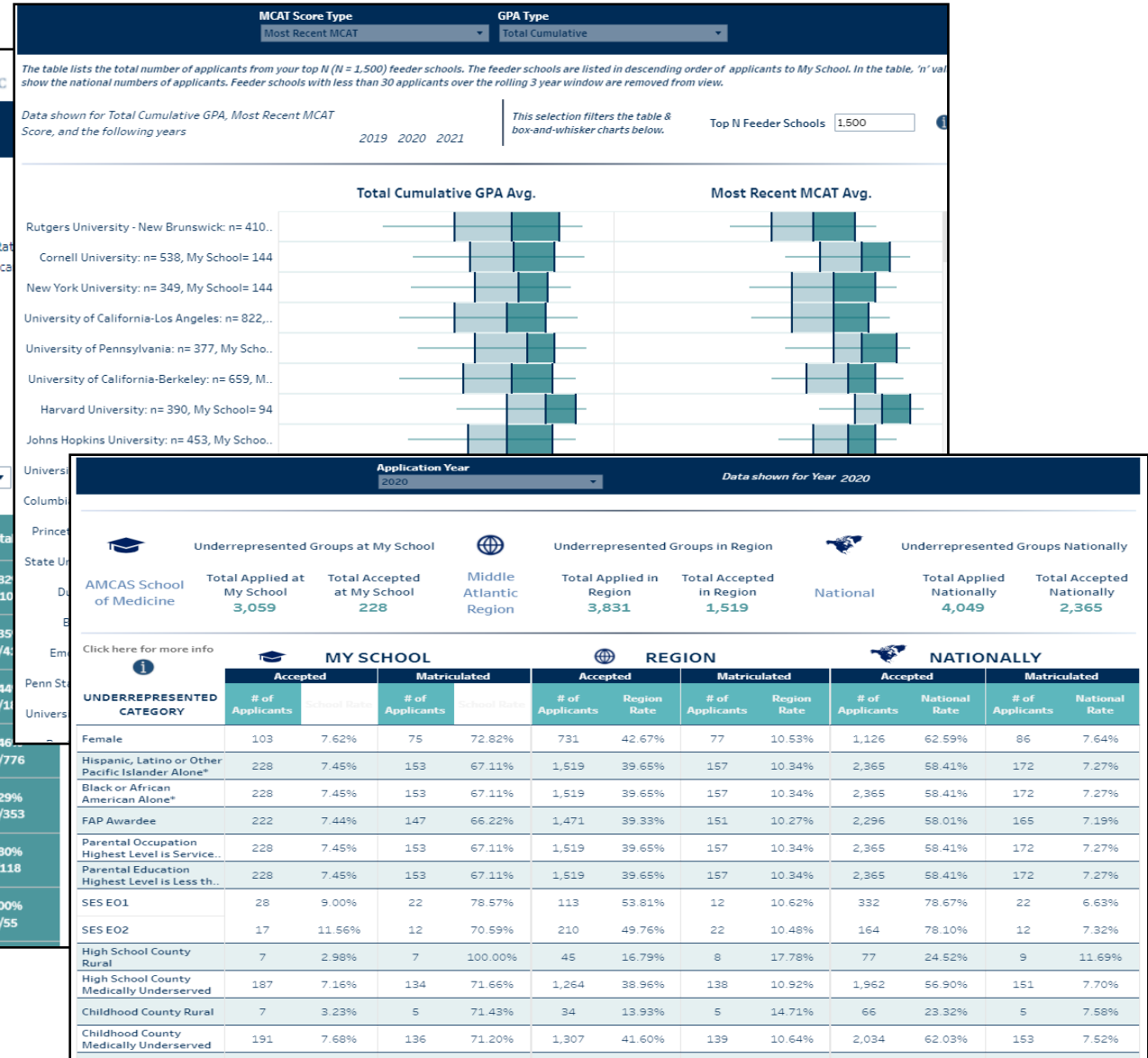
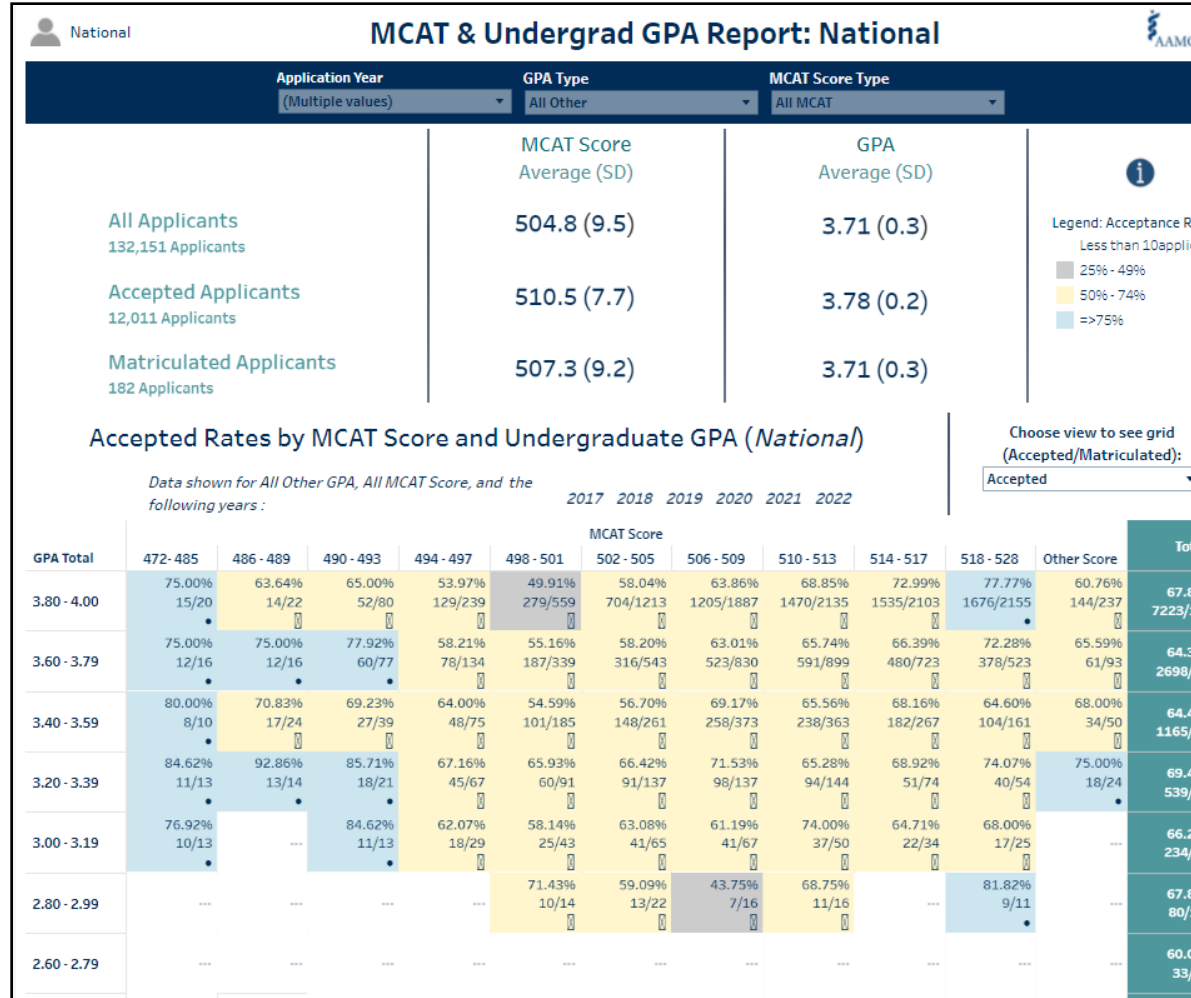
# Sharing innovative/promising practices

- ☐ Pipeline/pathway programs
- ☐ Admissions
- ☐ Student support

**We will follow up after the webinar to invite you to share your school's promising practices in these (or other) areas**

# Next Steps

# AMCAS/MCAT Integrated Reports



Available this fall



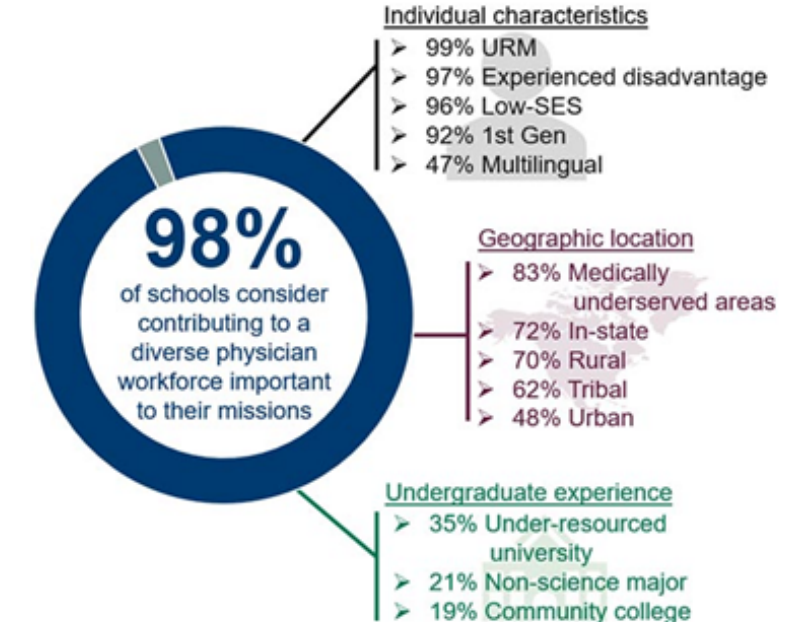
# MCAT Admissions Insights Series

- ❑ Focus on supporting admissions on the use of MCAT scores in ways that align with school missions
  - Provide evidence-based insights/tidbits for quick consumption
  - Connect to additional tools, resources, and related content
  - Opportunities for continuous conversations with the admissions community with open questions/ feedback/ comments

## Admissions Officers' Survey Data Snapshot

As we shared with the admissions community last month, this new *MCAT Admissions Insights* email series will deliver evidence-based insights, resources, and tools to help you use MCAT scores in ways that align with your schools' missions and contexts. [We invite you to join the conversation and share your reactions, comments, and insights with us.](#)

At [Learn Serve Lead 2021: The Virtual Experience](#), members of the AAMC MCAT Validity Committee will bring the findings of the 2021 MCAT Admissions Officers Survey to life with promising practices at their schools. In the weeks leading up to the meeting, we will highlight key results from the survey. This week, we will share data about schools' focuses on diversity in admissions. Next week, we will take a deeper dive into data that admissions officers use to contextualize MCAT scores in holistic review.




**Note:** A total of 116 schools responded to the survey (76% response rate). Percentages shown represent responses of "important" and "very important" to the survey questions: "How important is it for your school to select students for your 2021 entering class who are likely to contribute to the following educational mission areas?" and "Among the


# Modulated training videos

*Sample topics:*

- ❑ Interpreting repeater scores
- ❑ Using percentile scores
- ❑ Understanding confidence bands
- ❑ Examining MCAT score profiles
- ❑ Triangulating academic metrics



Using MCAT® Data in 2022  
Medical Student Selection



MCAT® is a program of the  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
[www.aamc.org/mcat](http://www.aamc.org/mcat)

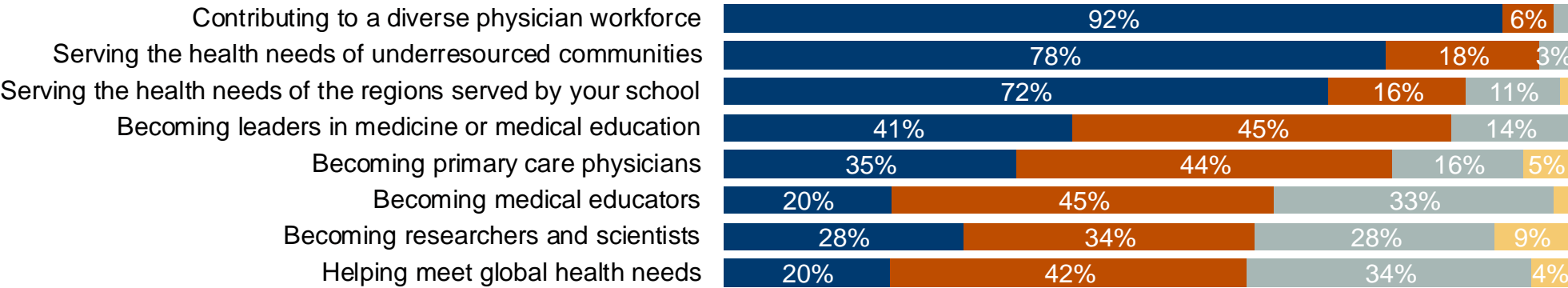
# Next steps

- ❑ Learn Serve Lead live Q&A
- ❑ Admissions manuscript
  - Working group focus in upcoming months
- ❑ AAMC-wide activities/analysis in progress
  - Data from the 2021 admission cycle
  - Follow-on interviews to learn about promising practices in diversifying classes (partnership with AP4)
  - Reimagining admissions/application modernization

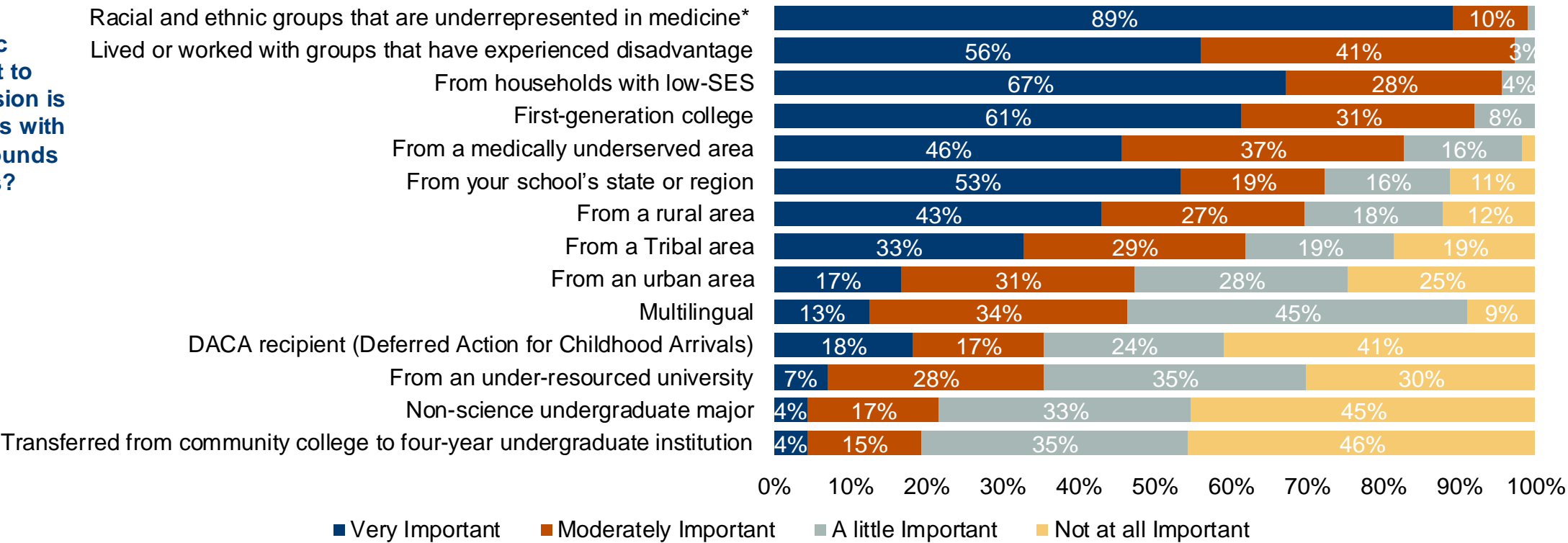
# Appendix: Full Survey Results

# Admissions Goals and Educational Missions

Q1) How important is it for your school to select students for your 2021 entering class who are likely to contribute to the following educational mission areas?

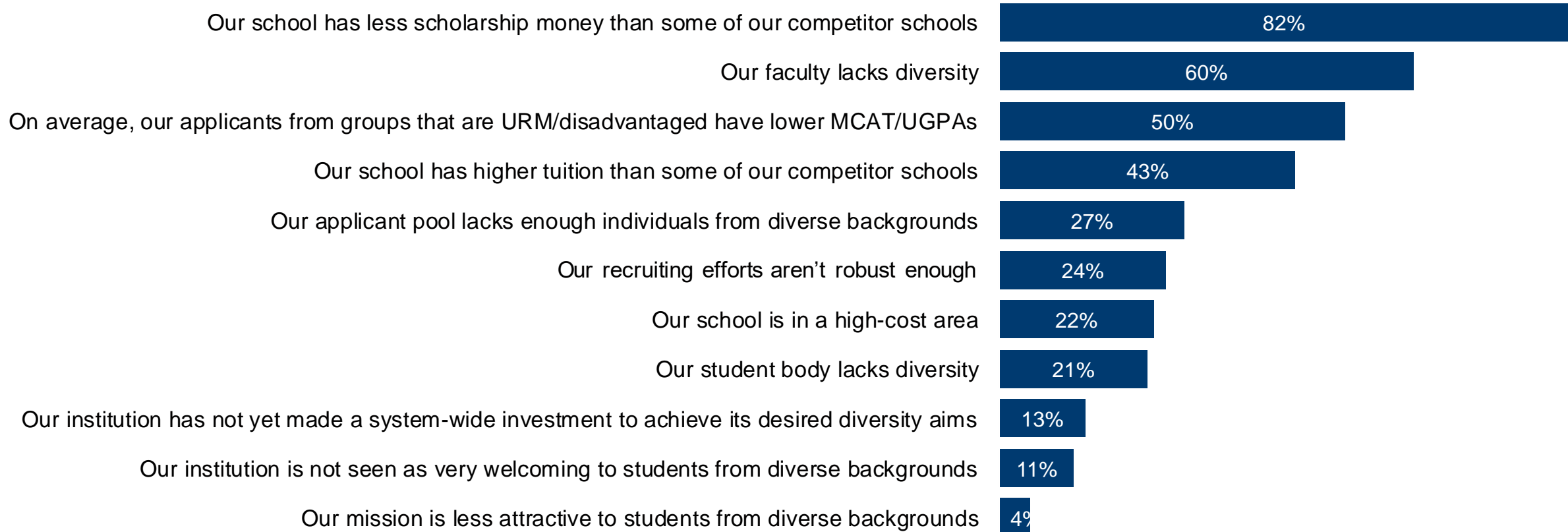


Q2) Among the many factors in your holistic review, how important to your educational mission is considering applicants with the following backgrounds and lived experiences?



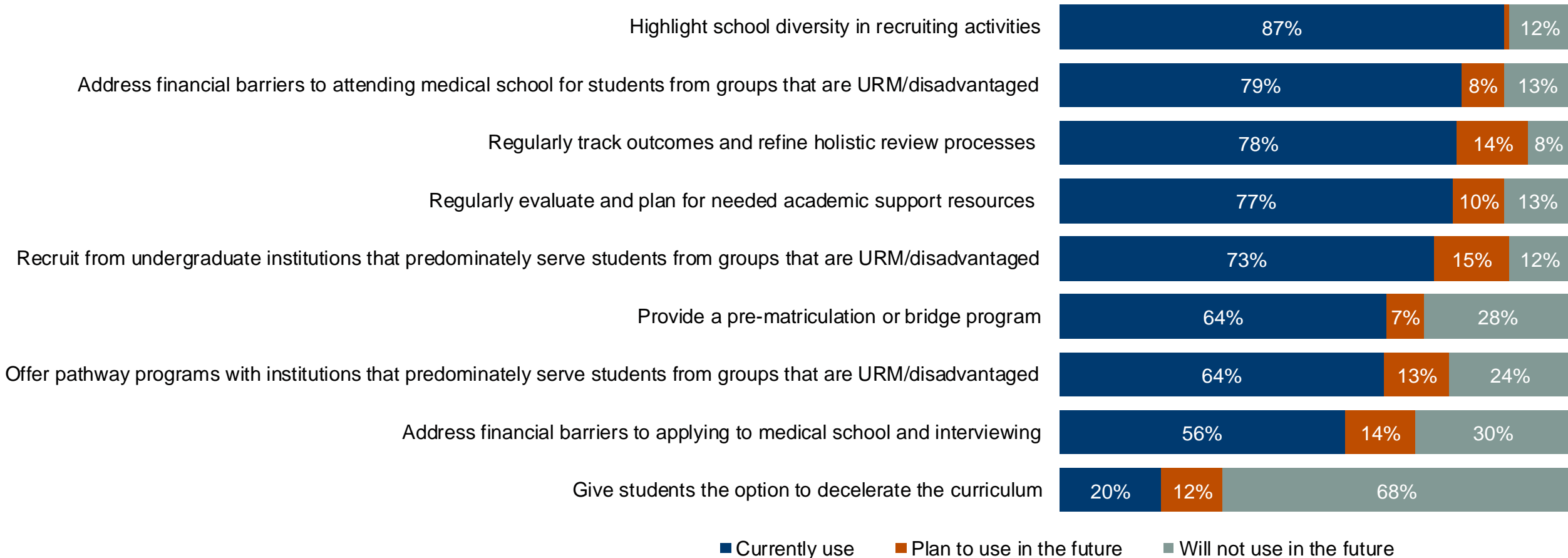
# Barriers to Diversity

Q16) Which of the following barriers does your school face in diversifying its entering class?



# Strategies for Diversifying

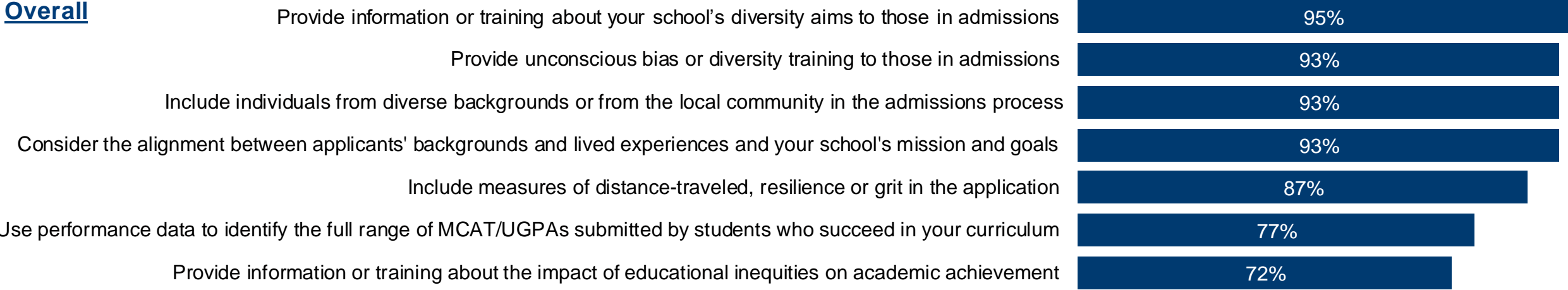
**Q20) Which of the following strategies does your school currently use to help you increase the diversity of your applicant and accepted pools?**



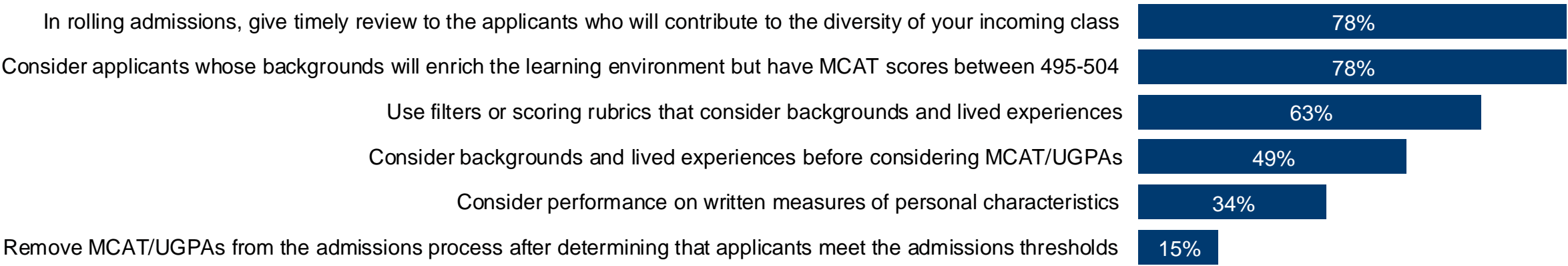
# Use of Holistic Review

**Q4) Which of the following strategies does your school use as part of the holistic admissions process, during application review and in making interview invitations, during interviews and in making acceptance offers, and in accepting applicants from the waitlist?**

## Overall



## During application review and in making interview invitations

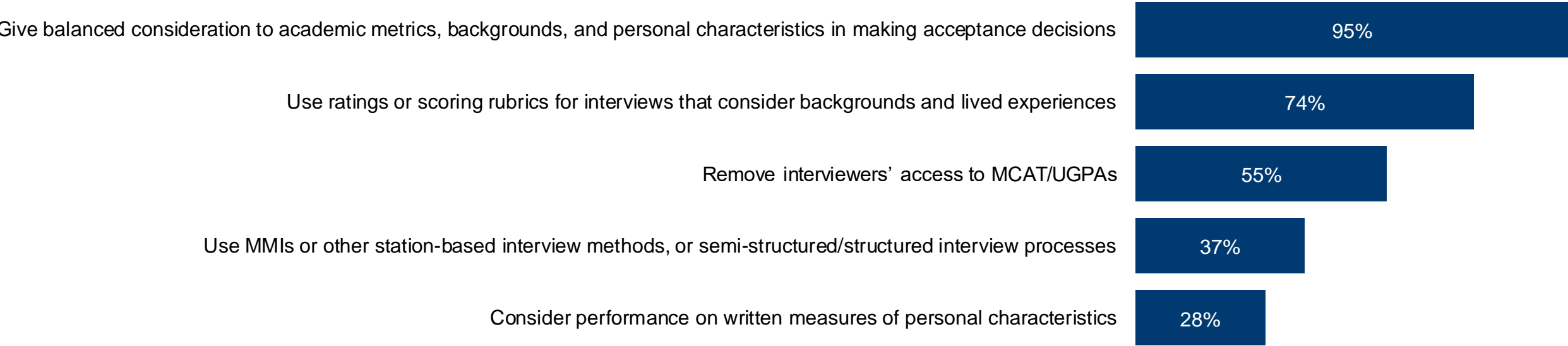




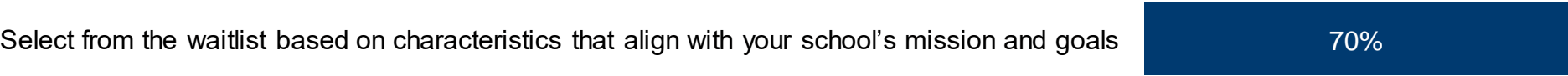
# Use of Holistic Review

**Q4) Which of the following strategies does your school use as part of the holistic admissions process, during application review and in making interview invitations, during interviews and in making acceptance offers, and in accepting applicants from the waitlist?**

## During interviews and in making acceptance offers



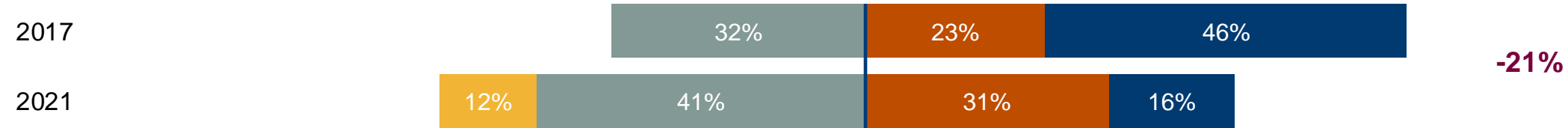
## In accepting applicants from the waitlist



# ← Importance of MCAT Scores/UGPAs

Q5) How important are MCAT scores and UGPAs relative to other criteria in reviewing applications, deciding which applicants to interview, and deciding which applicants to admit for your 2021 entering class?

## Reviewing Applications



## Selecting Interviewees

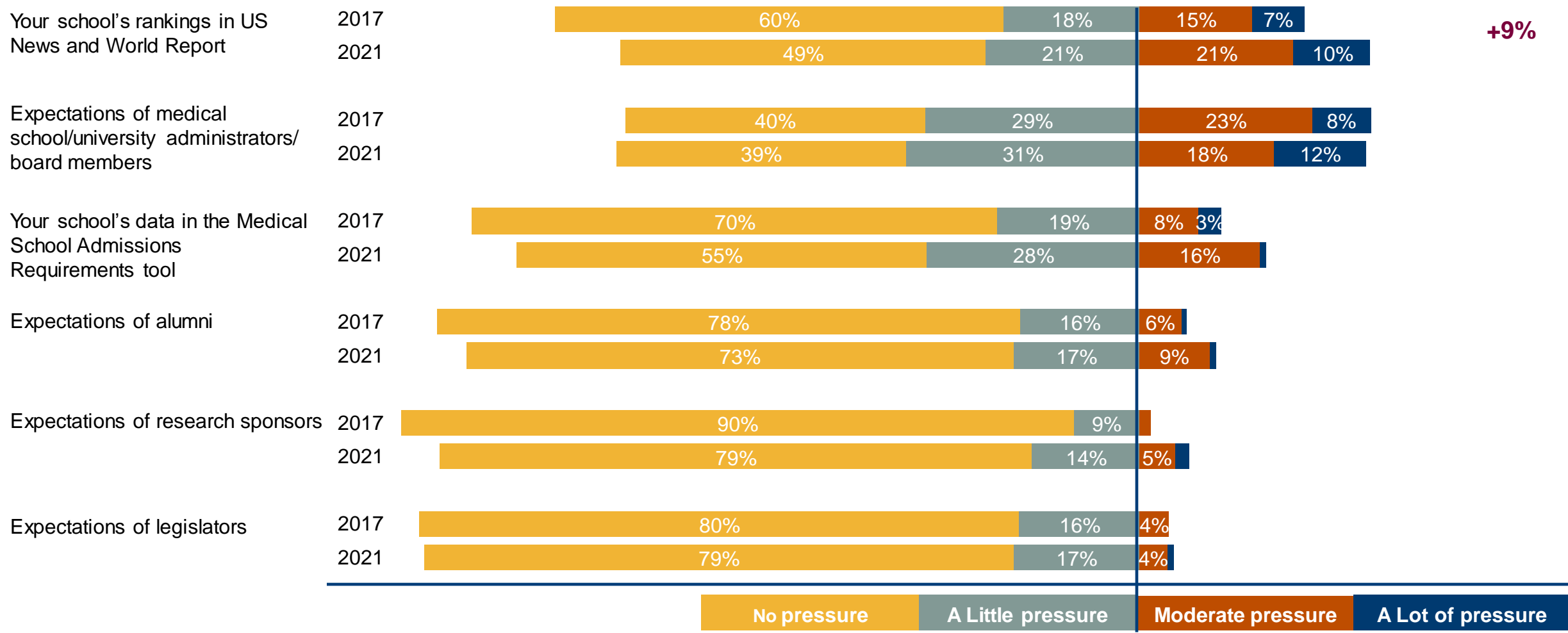


## Making Acceptances



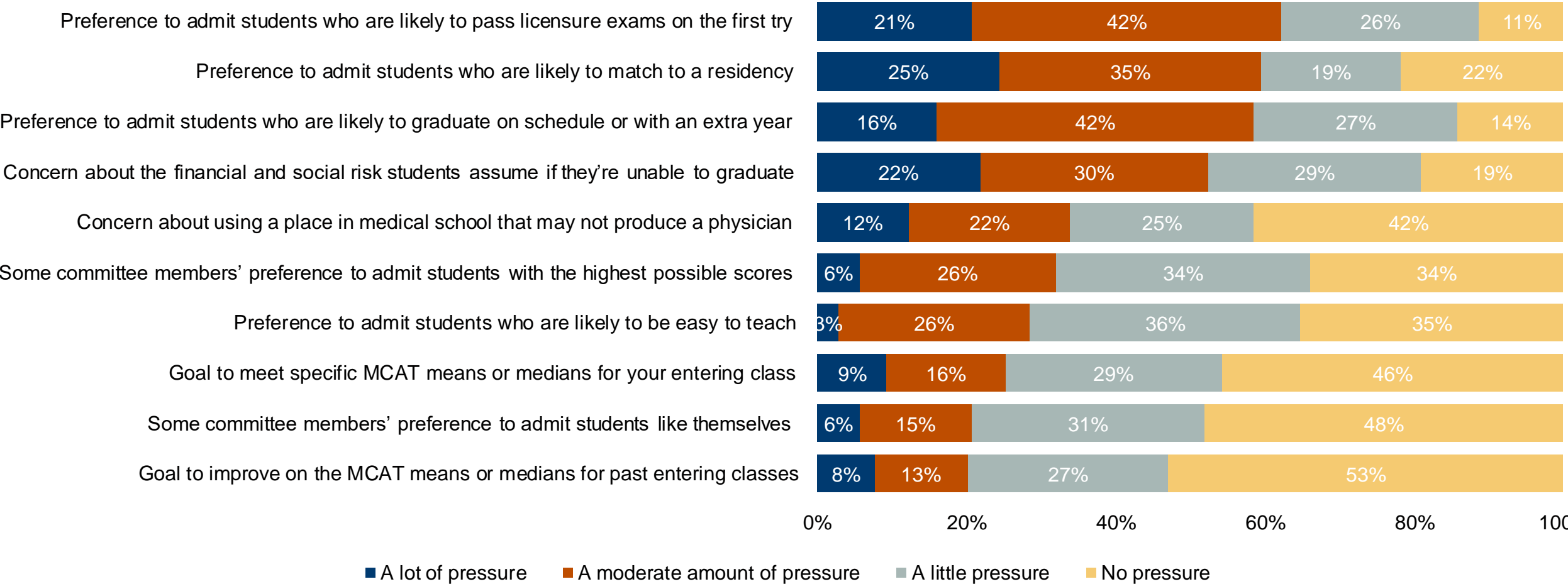
# External Pressures to Admit Higher MCAT Scores

Q17) From each of the following external factors, how much pressure does your school face to accept applicants with high MCAT scores?



# Internal Pressures to Admit Higher MCAT Scores

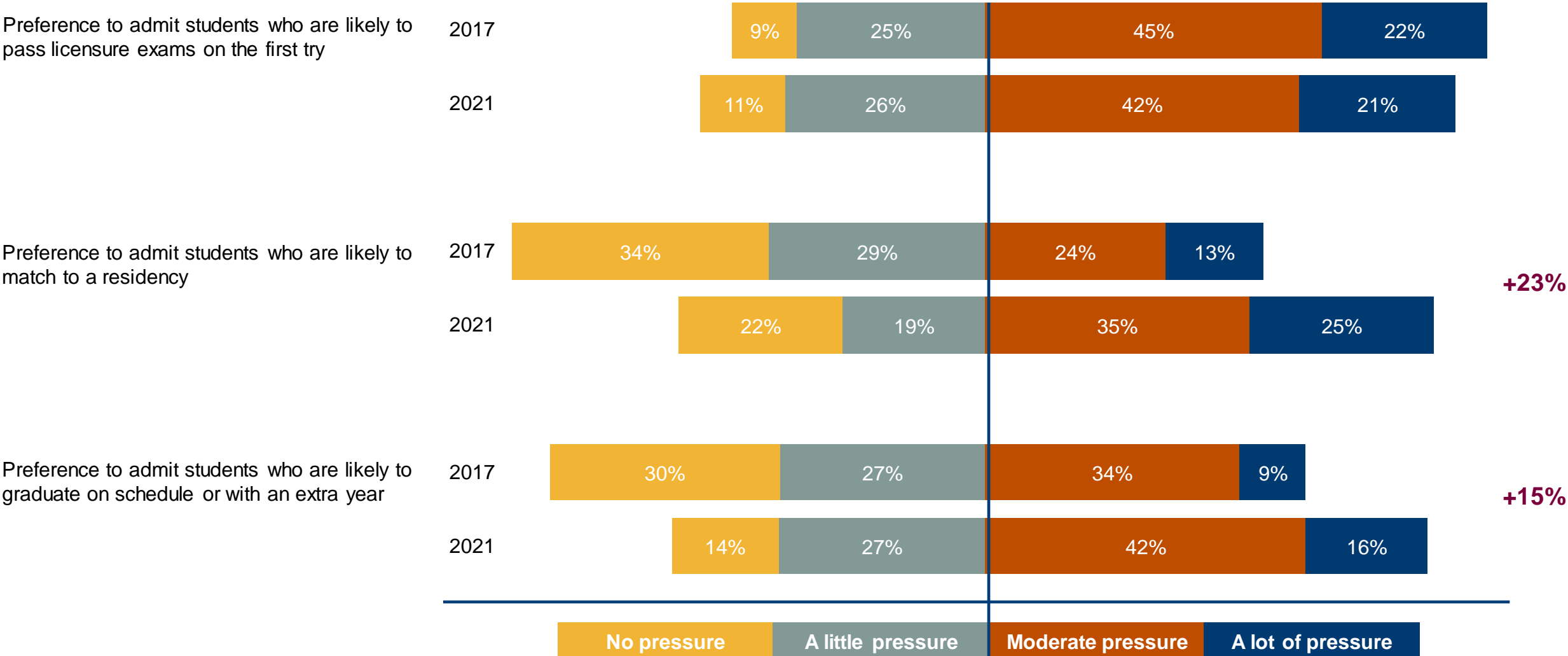
Q18) From each of the following internal factors, how much pressure does your school face to accept applicants with high MCAT scores?





# Internal Pressures to Admit Higher MCAT Scores

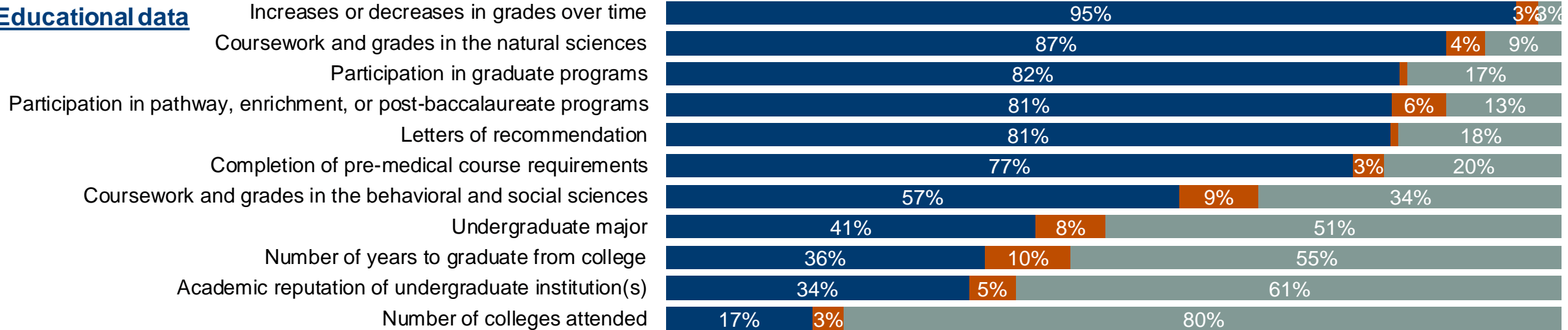
Q18) From each of the following internal factors, how much pressure does your school face to accept applicants with high MCAT scores?



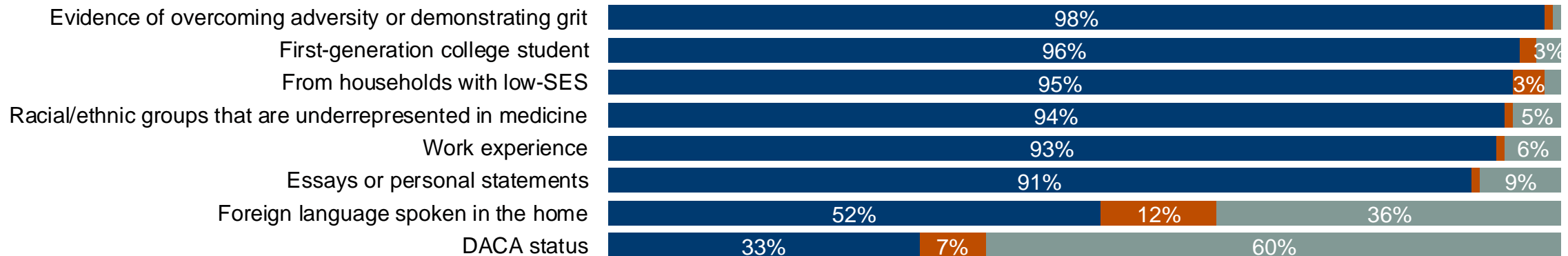
# MCAT Scores/UGPAs in Context

**Q6) Which of the following data about an applicant's educational opportunities, lived experiences, and background characteristics does your school currently consider when interpreting applicants' MCAT scores and UGPAs?**

## Educational data



## Experience and background data

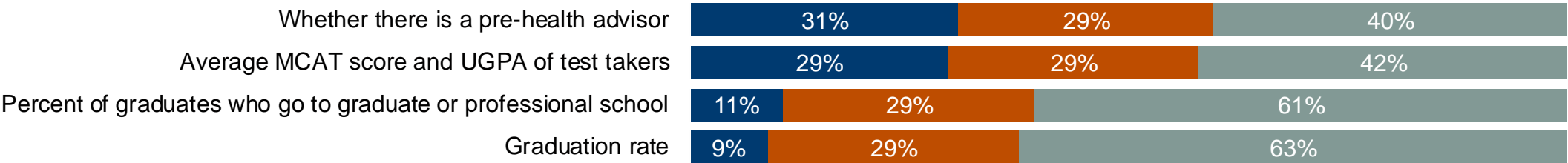


■ Currently use    ■ Will consider using if available    ■ Will not consider using if available

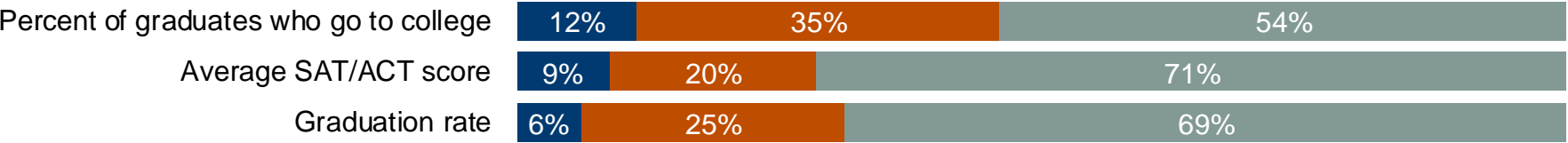
# MCAT Scores/UGPAs in Context

Q8) Which of the following data about an applicant’s educational opportunities, lived experiences, and background characteristics does your school currently consider when interpreting applicants’ MCAT scores and UGPAs?

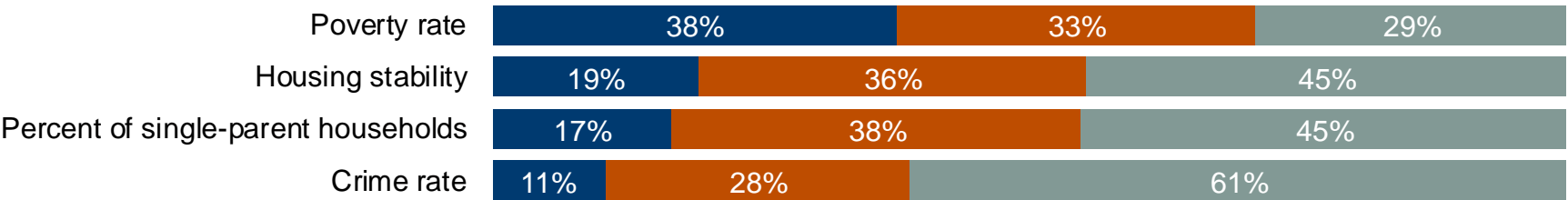
## College



## High school



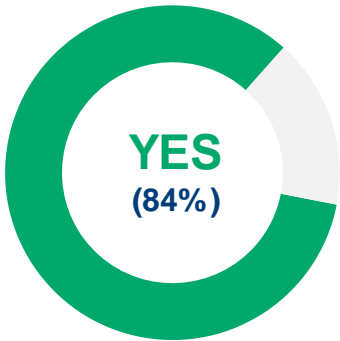
## Community



■ Currently use    ■ Will consider using if available    ■ Will not consider using if available

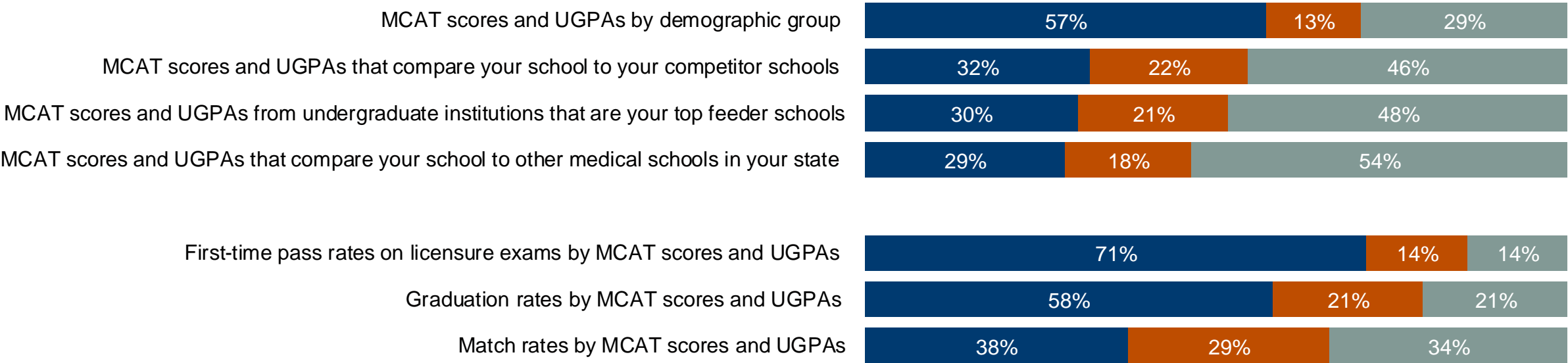
# Admissions' Use of Student Performance Data

Q33) Does your school provide information about students' success in the curriculum to the admissions office so you can use that information for future planning?



Q10) Which of the following data summaries about your school's applicants, accepted applicants, and matriculants do you currently use to contextualize applicants' MCAT scores and UGPAs?

Data summaries for your school's applicants/accepted applicants/matriculants

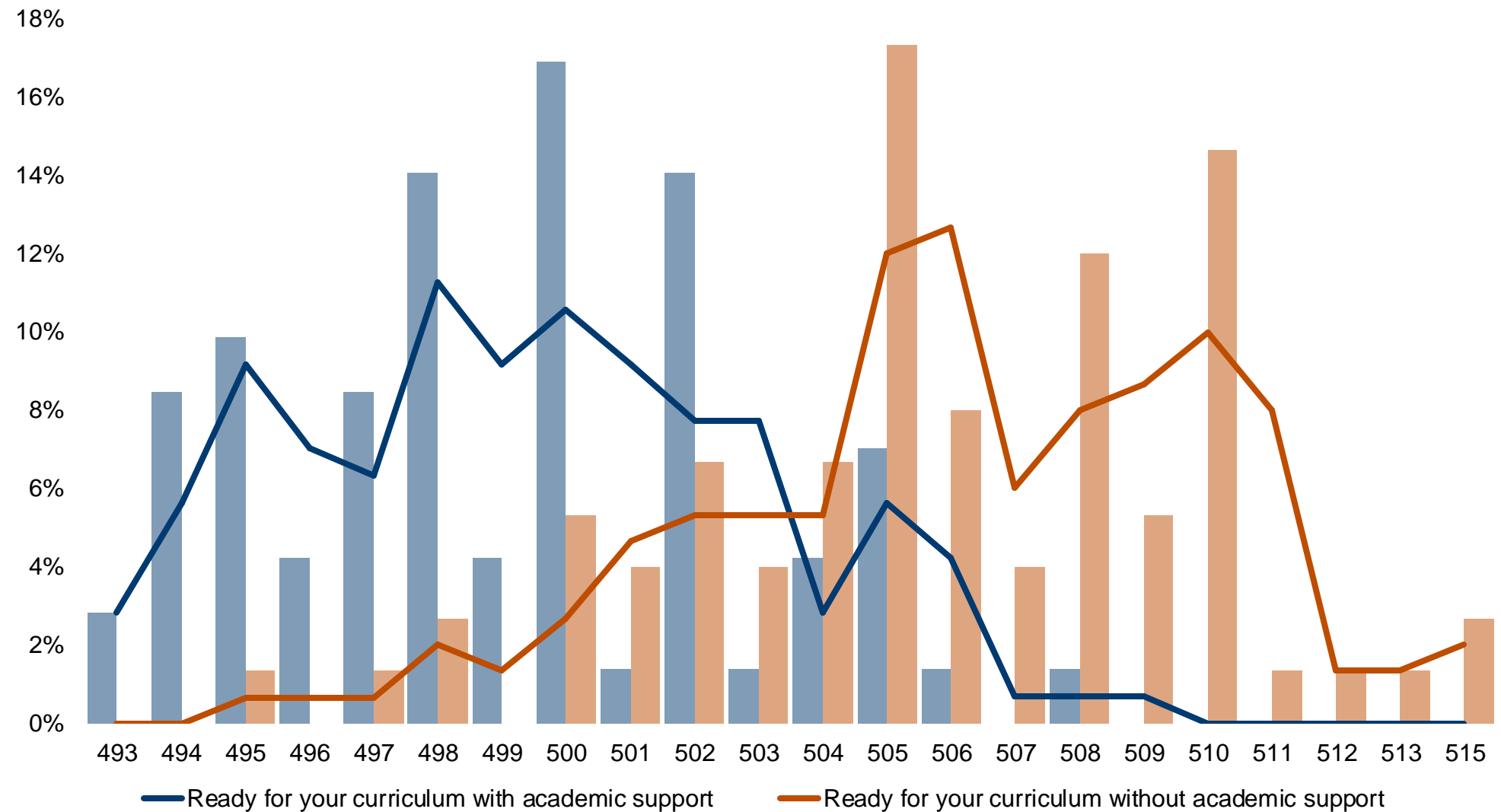


■ Currently use    ■ Will consider using if available    ■ Will not consider using if available



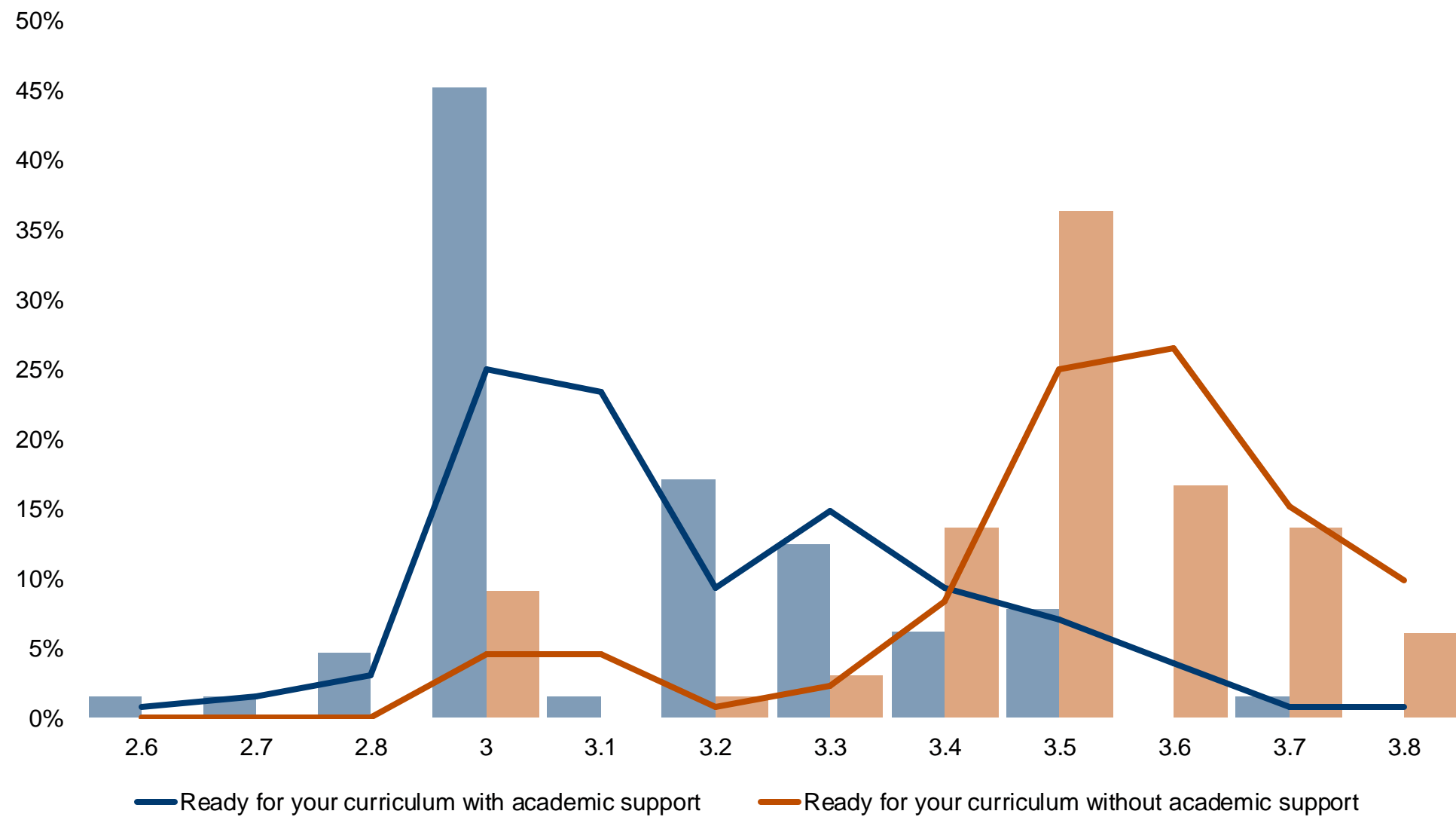
# Minimum MCAT Scores with/without Academic Support

Q30) What are the MINIMUM MCAT total scores that your committee generally believes represent readiness for your curriculum with academic support or without academic support?



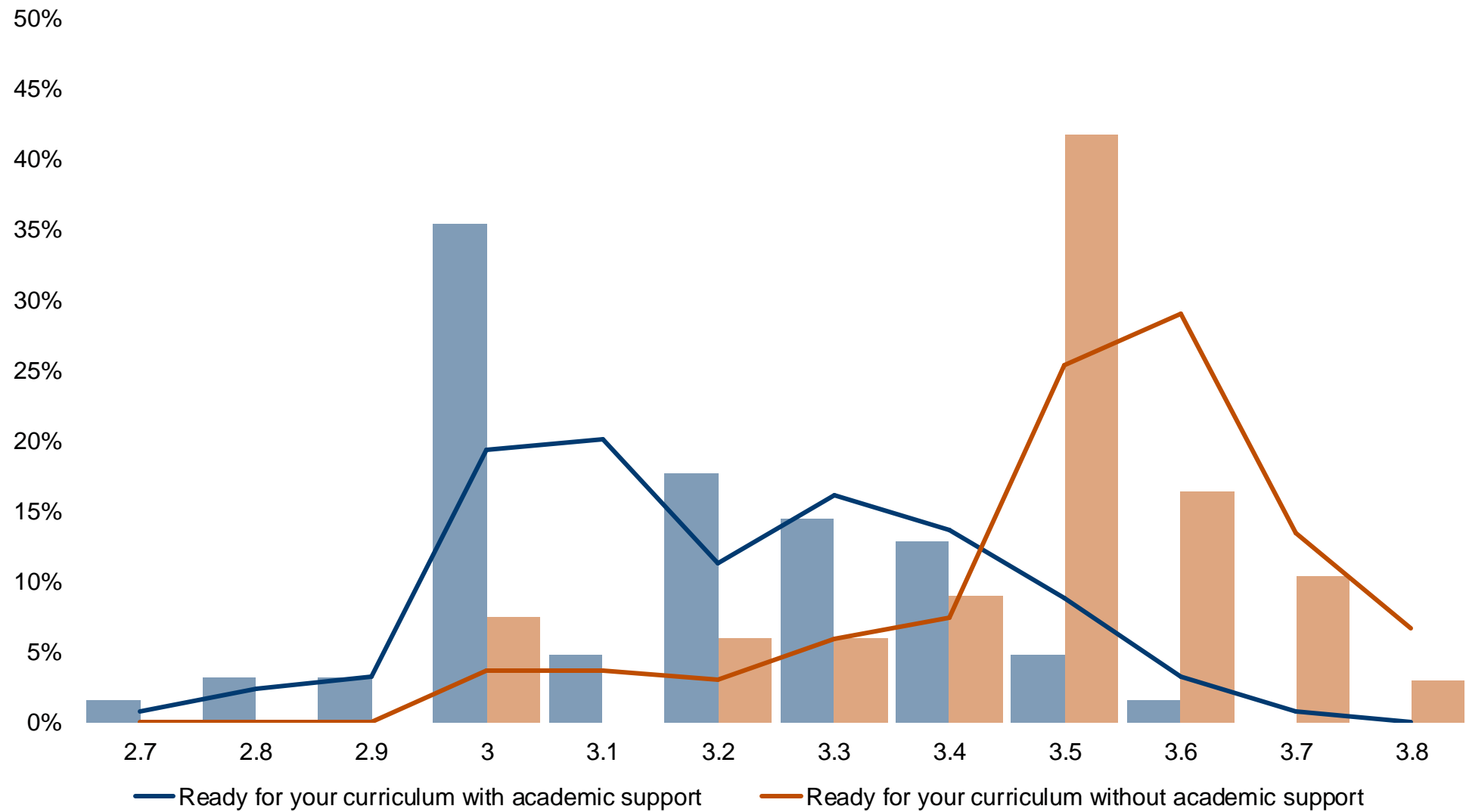
# Minimum GPAs with/without Academic Support

Q30) What are the MINIMUM total cumulative GPAs that your committee generally believes represent readiness for your curriculum with academic support or without academic support?



# Minimum BCPM GPAs with/without Academic Support

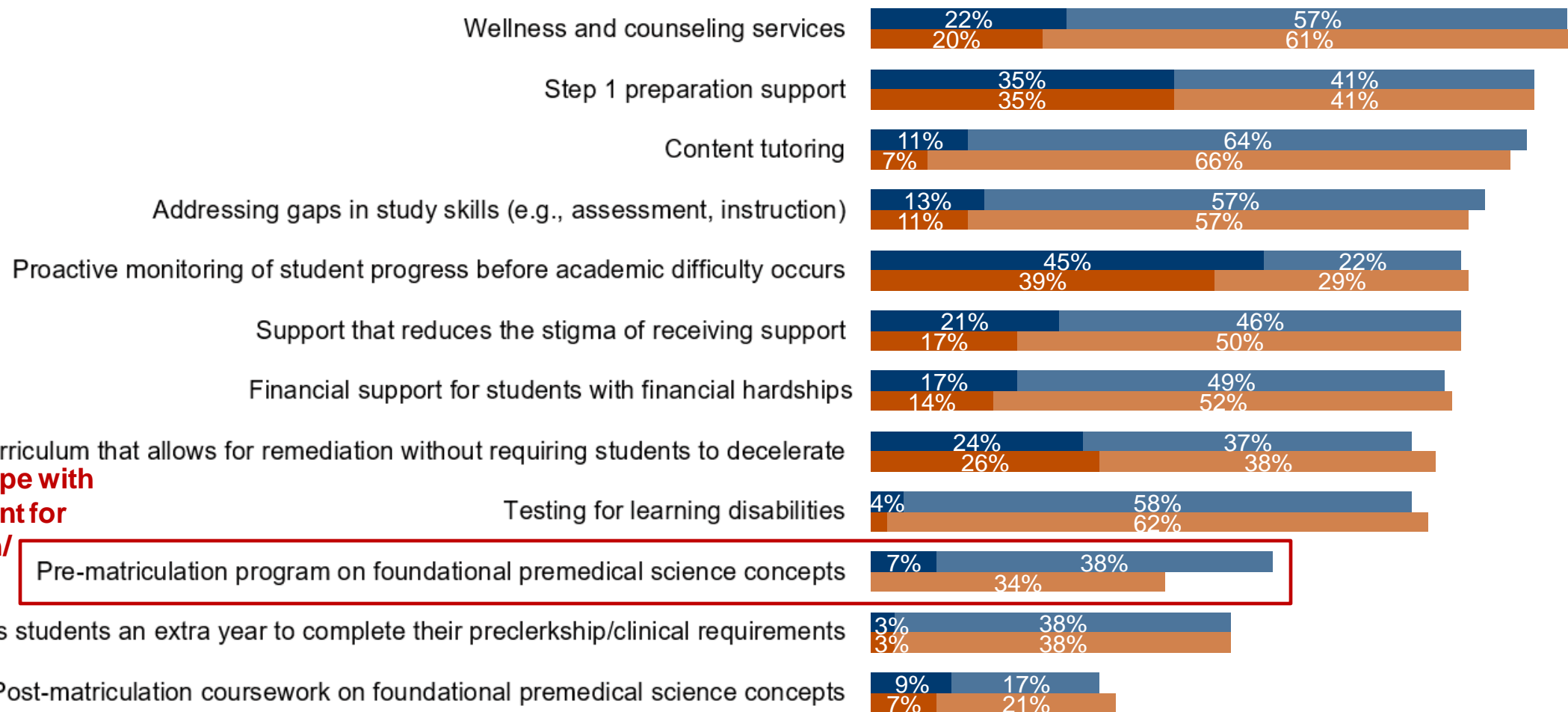
Q30) What are the MINIMUM BCPM GPAs that your committee generally believes represent readiness for your curriculum with academic support or without academic support?



# Student Support

Q32) What types of required and optional support does your school provide for students who are ready for your curriculum with support and for students who are ready without support?

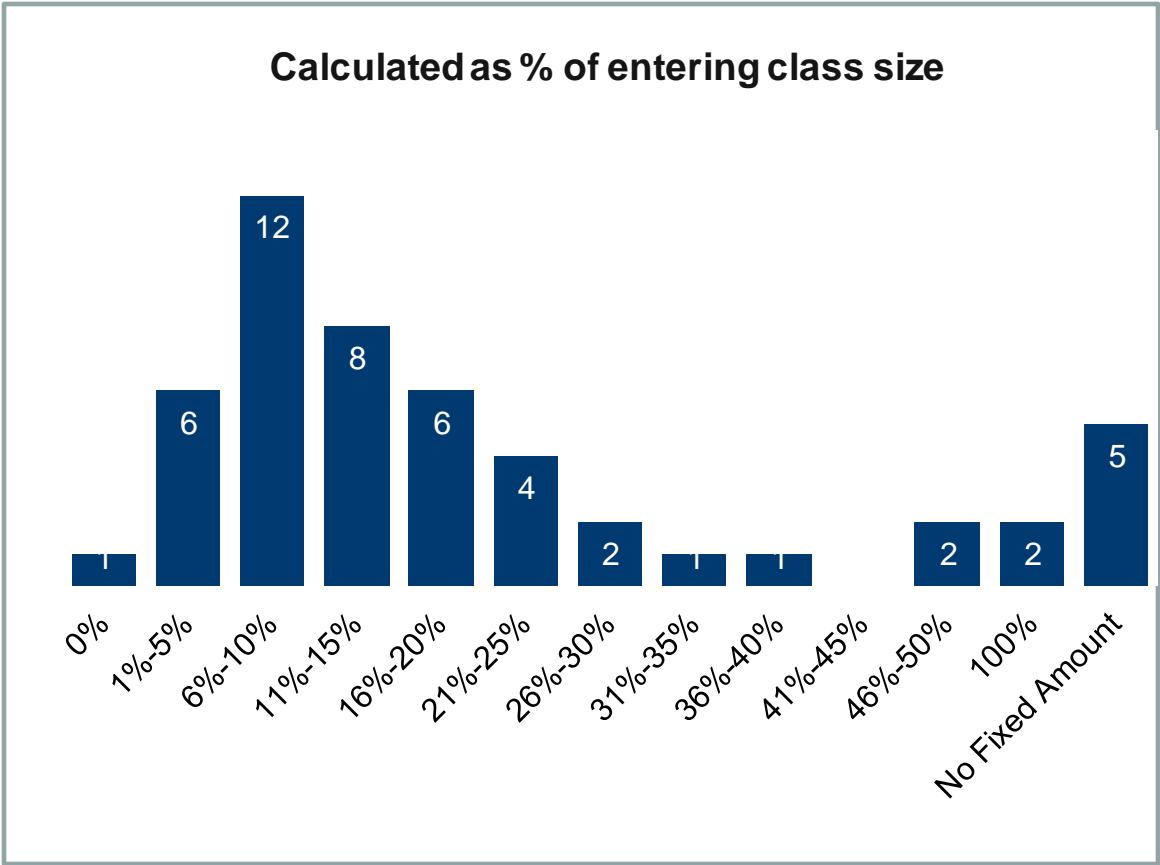
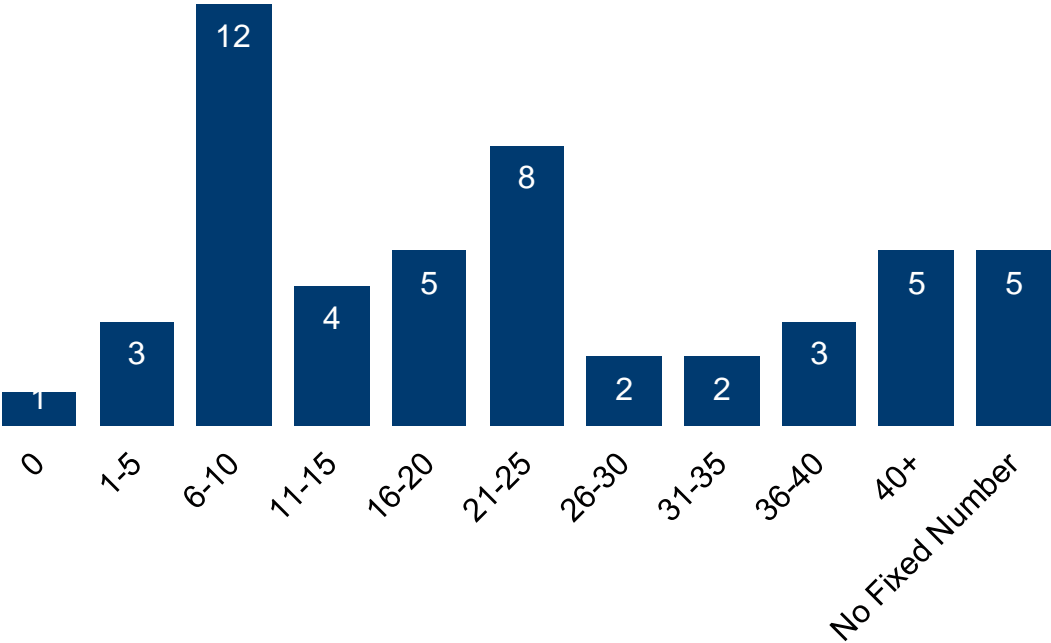
**The only support type with different requirement for students ready with/without support**



■ Need Support: Required
 ■ Need Support: Optional
 ■ Do not need Support: Required
 ■ Do not need Support: Optional

# Student Support

Q31) For each entering class and with the infrastructure you have, about how many students can your school matriculate who may need academic support to be ready for your curriculum? Please insert the number here \_\_\_\_\_.



# Attitudes about the MCAT Exam

**Q28) In general, have administrator or faculty attitudes about the MCAT exam become more positive, more negative, or stayed the same at your school in the last couple of years?**

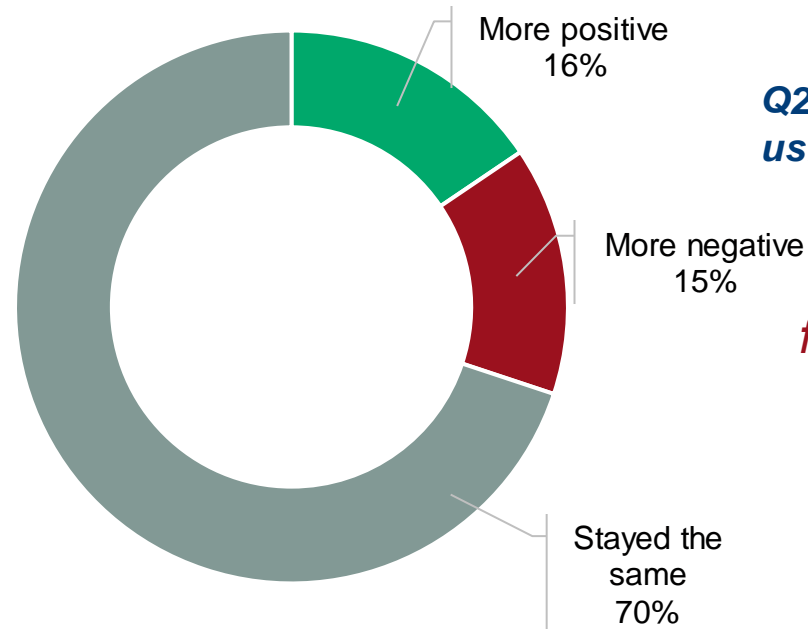
**Q26) What is the one most important reason that you use MCAT scores at your school?**

*“A leveling agent for applicants from multiple undergrad institutions.”*

*“The MCAT sets the minimum academic threshold is needed for a student to be successful.”*

*“To determine a threshold to succeed in our curriculum, pass licensing exams on first attempt, and graduate in 4 or 5 years.”*

*“To gauge applicants aptitude for the rigors of the coursework.”*



**Q27) What is the one most negative impact of using MCAT scores at your school?**

*“The reliance on high scores more than others [metrics] prevents us from truly diversifying our classes.”*

*“Applicants from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are not able to afford to take multiple test nor are they usually able prep courses.”*

*“Convincing the committee that a wider range of scores still allows for high likelihood of student success.”*

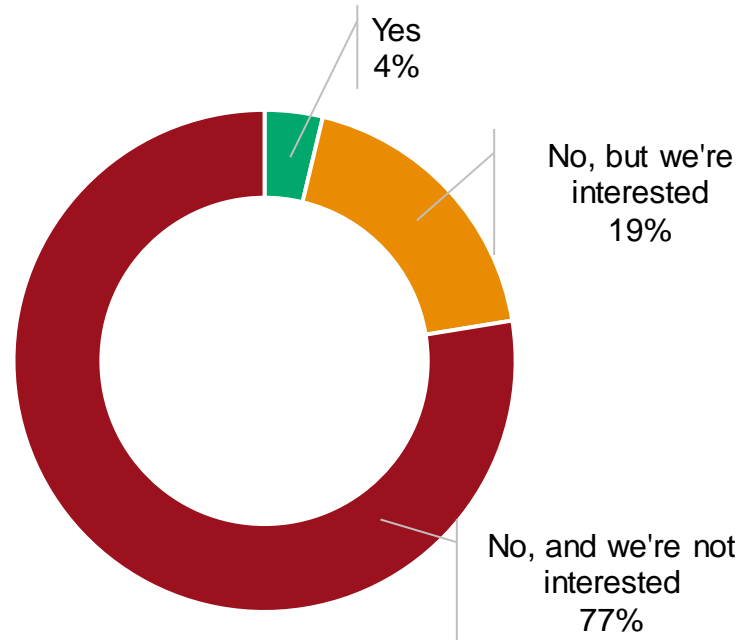
# Alternative MCAT Scoring Scale

**Q12) Does your school currently convert MCAT scores to a different scale that groups scores into ranges?**

**Q13) Please describe the conversion process your school currently uses.**

*“MCAT scores are part of a academic assessment formula that also includes BCPM GPA and individual coursework.”*

*“We currently take the percentile and divide it by .50 and then add to GPA score.”*



**Q14) Please describe the conversion process your school is interested in using.**

*“Our school is interested in moving to a threshold or a tiered system. The applicant is above the threshold for academic readiness, the applicant meets the threshold, or the applicant is below the threshold for academic readiness.”*

*“A conversion score where it takes GPA and MCAT score and converts into score to indicate likelihood of passing USMLE and unimpeded progress in medical school.”*

# Test Optional Policy

**Q22) Has your school decided to make MCAT scores optional (i.e., not require MCAT scores for admission) for your 2022 applicants or is your school considering it?**

- One medical school **decided to** make MCAT scores optional for 2022 applicants
- One medical school **is considering** making MCAT scores optional for 2022 applicants
- All other schools will **require** MCAT scores for 2022 applicants

## MCAT 2021

For the Fall 2022 application cycle, the MCAT exam will be optional for those who have not yet taken the exam. We will consider and accept applicants without MCAT scores. If an applicant already has a MCAT score, or has a pending MCAT score, it will be considered by the Admissions Committee. The current deadline to take the MCAT is September 30, 2021 for those choosing to take the MCAT in the 2022 application cycle.

The decision to take the MCAT will depend on individual circumstances. Applicants should seriously evaluate the benefit and risk of taking the exam for themselves and their immediate contacts such as family members and roommates. Additionally, consideration of test availability and accessibility may be important. Without an MCAT score, the Admissions Committee will rely more on grades and science GPA to evaluate an applicant's academic preparation for medical school. Applicants with an inconsistent academic record, or a previous low MCAT score, should strongly consider taking the MCAT or delay application until they feel they can do so with less risk or delay. This will provide the Committee an additional metric to consider with their grades and/or previous MCAT score.

When the application has been received by the UWSOM, applicants without a score and test date will be asked to declare if they intend to take the MCAT within two weeks of receiving the request. Given the linear nature of the admissions process, applicants cannot change their mind once they have declared they are not taking the exam. If an applicant declares that they are not taking the MCAT but decide to register or take the exam, their application will be immediately withdrawn from consideration.