



LOUISVILLE, Kentucky
The Galt House Hotel
April 24 – 27, 2024

2024 GEM Summit

Meet Your New Graduate Students

Insights from EAB's Survey of 3,800+ Students – and What the Findings Mean for Your GEM Plan

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GEM Summit

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Agenda

- State of the Graduate Market
- Graduate Enrollment Management (GEM) Planning
- Adult Learner Survey Findings



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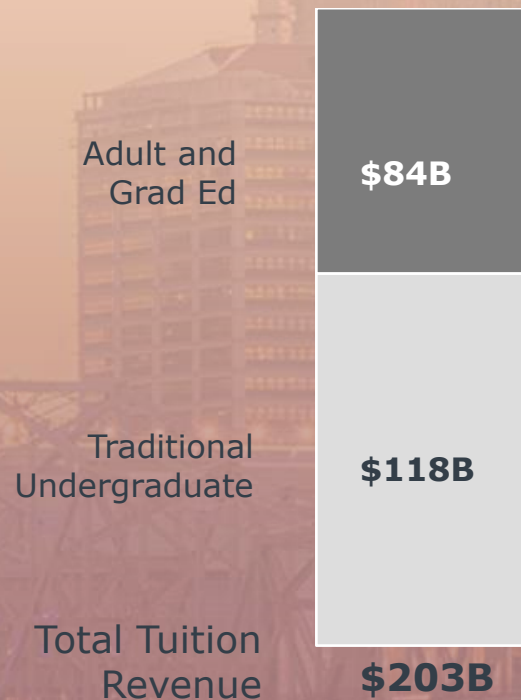
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State of the Graduate Market

How Big is the Adult and Grad Ed Market?

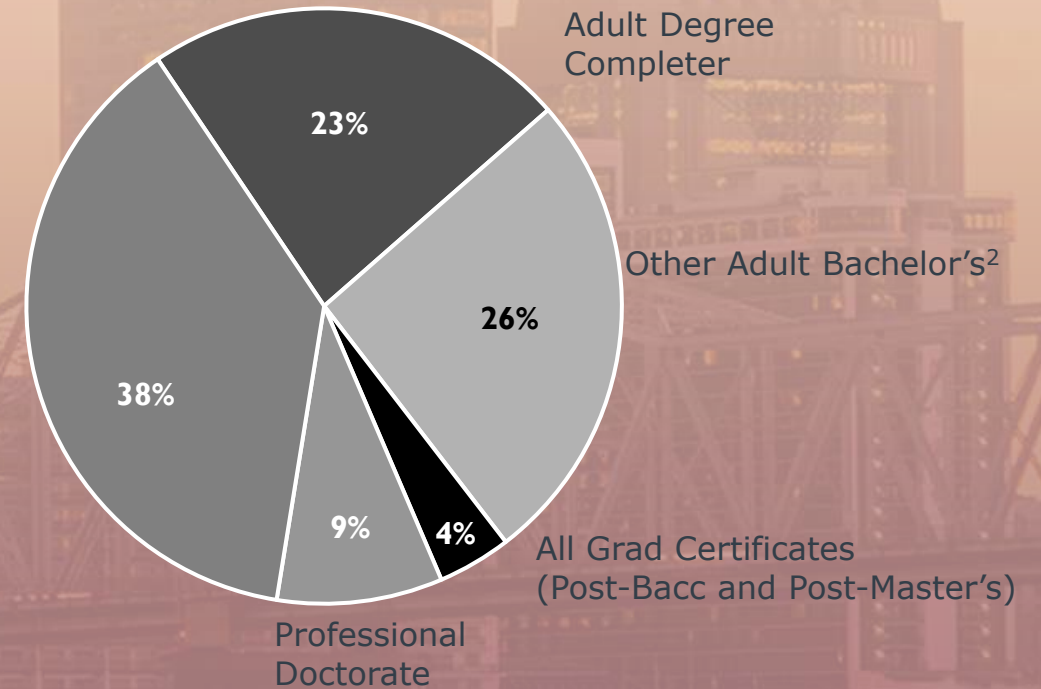
Adult Learners Make Up 42% of Total Higher Ed Tuition Revenue

Higher Ed Gross Annual Revenue², 2021



25+ Undergrad Students Account for Half of All Adult Ed Revenue

Total Gross Annual U.S. Revenue Generated from Adult (25+) Bachelor's, Post-Bac Certificates, and Graduate Enrollment, 20-21



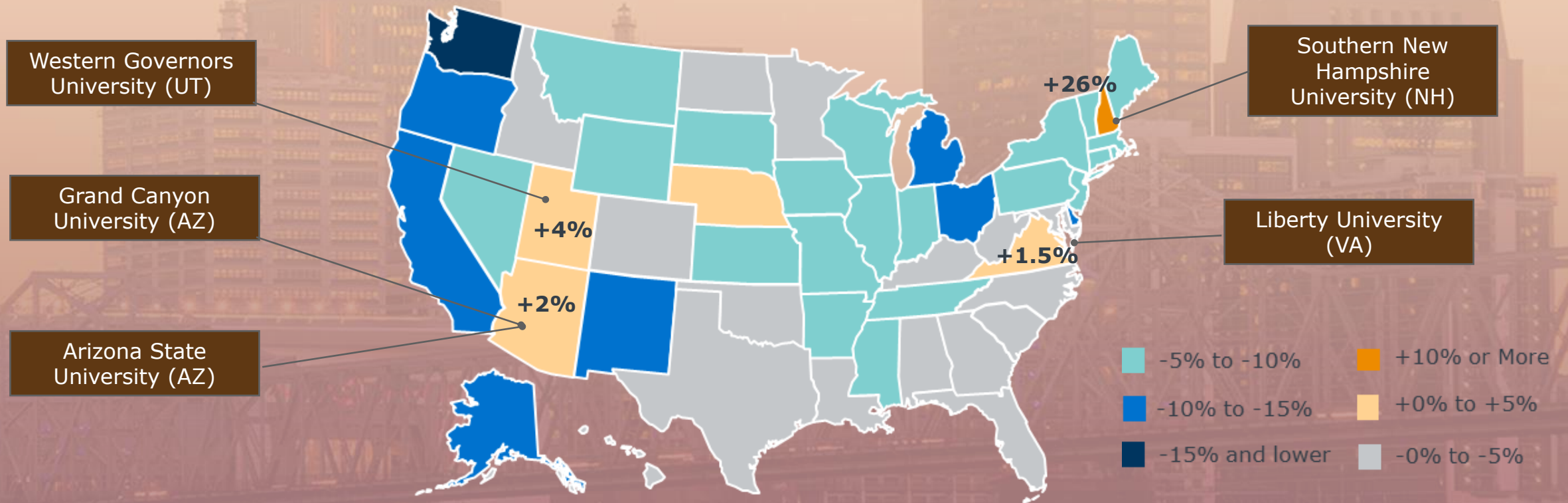
1. Tuition discounts not included in analysis
2. Includes first-time adult students, second bachelor's students, and non-degree seekers

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Postbaccalaureate Enrollment. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences ([link](#)); Weissman, S. *Lower completion rates among part-time students*. Inside Higher Ed ([link](#)); National Student Clearinghouse. (2023) *Some College, No Credential Report* ([link](#)); IPEDS Fall 2021 Enrollment Survey Data; IPEDS Spring 2021 Conferrals Survey Data; IPEDS 2021 Student Charges Survey Data; EAB interviews and analysis.

Graduate & Adult Enrollment Falls Across the U.S.

Falling Enrollment Across US, Institutions with Large Online Enrollment Driving Positive Percent Change in Handful of States

Percent Change in Estimated Enrollment by State of Institution, 2019-2021¹



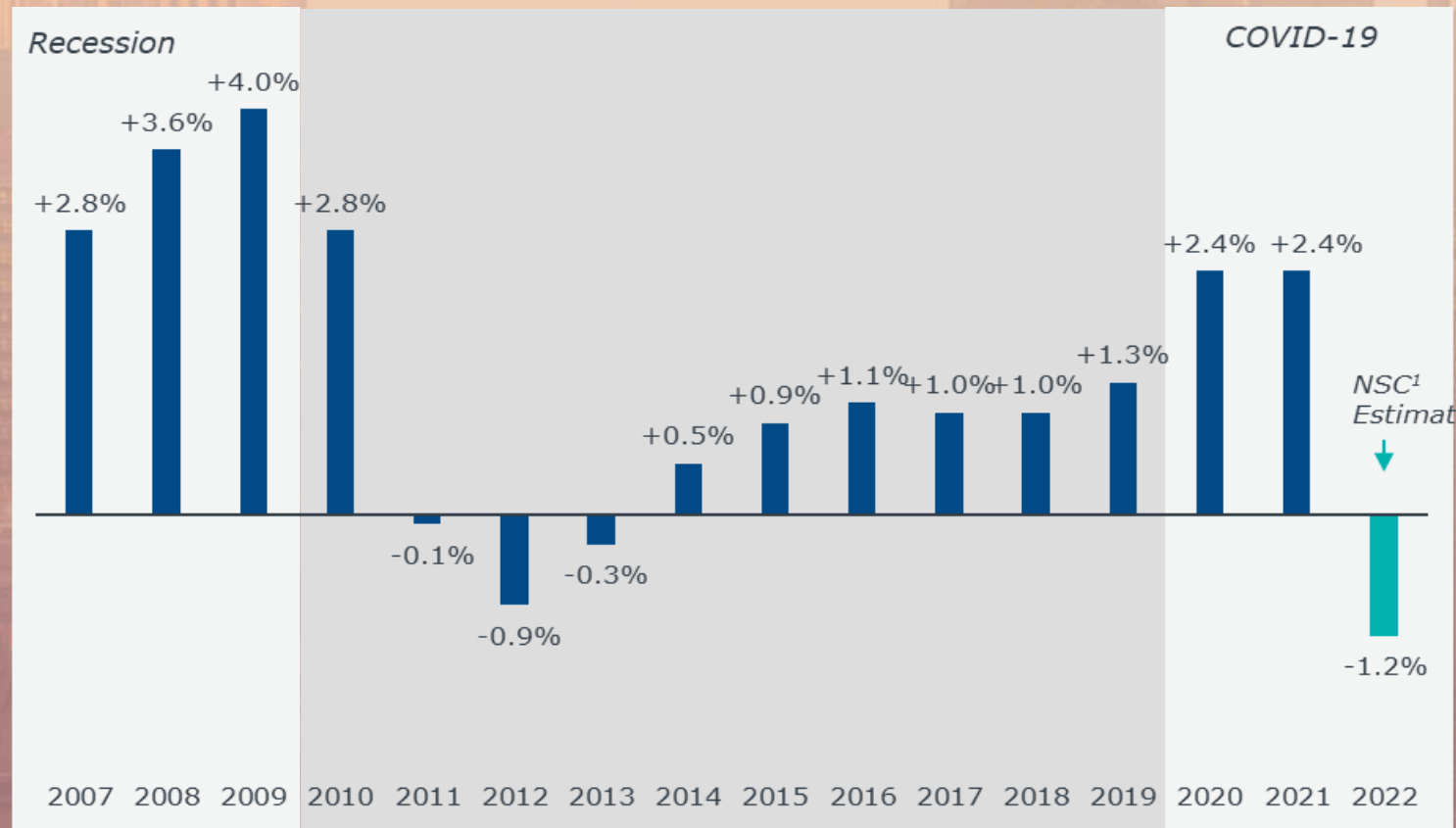
¹ MS, OH, WA: Large declines between 2019 and 2020 are due to a single institution with relatively large enrollments that has not submitted data as of 11/19/2020

Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), Current Term Enrollment Estimates: Fall 2021, [Table 9a. Estimated Enrollment by State of Institution: 2019 to 2021](#), accessed June 1, 2022. See folder: "Enrollment by State of Institution, NSC Data (QIE)"

The Graduate Pandemic Boom Didn't Last Long

Pandemic-Fueled Growth Weak Compared Previous Recession Growth

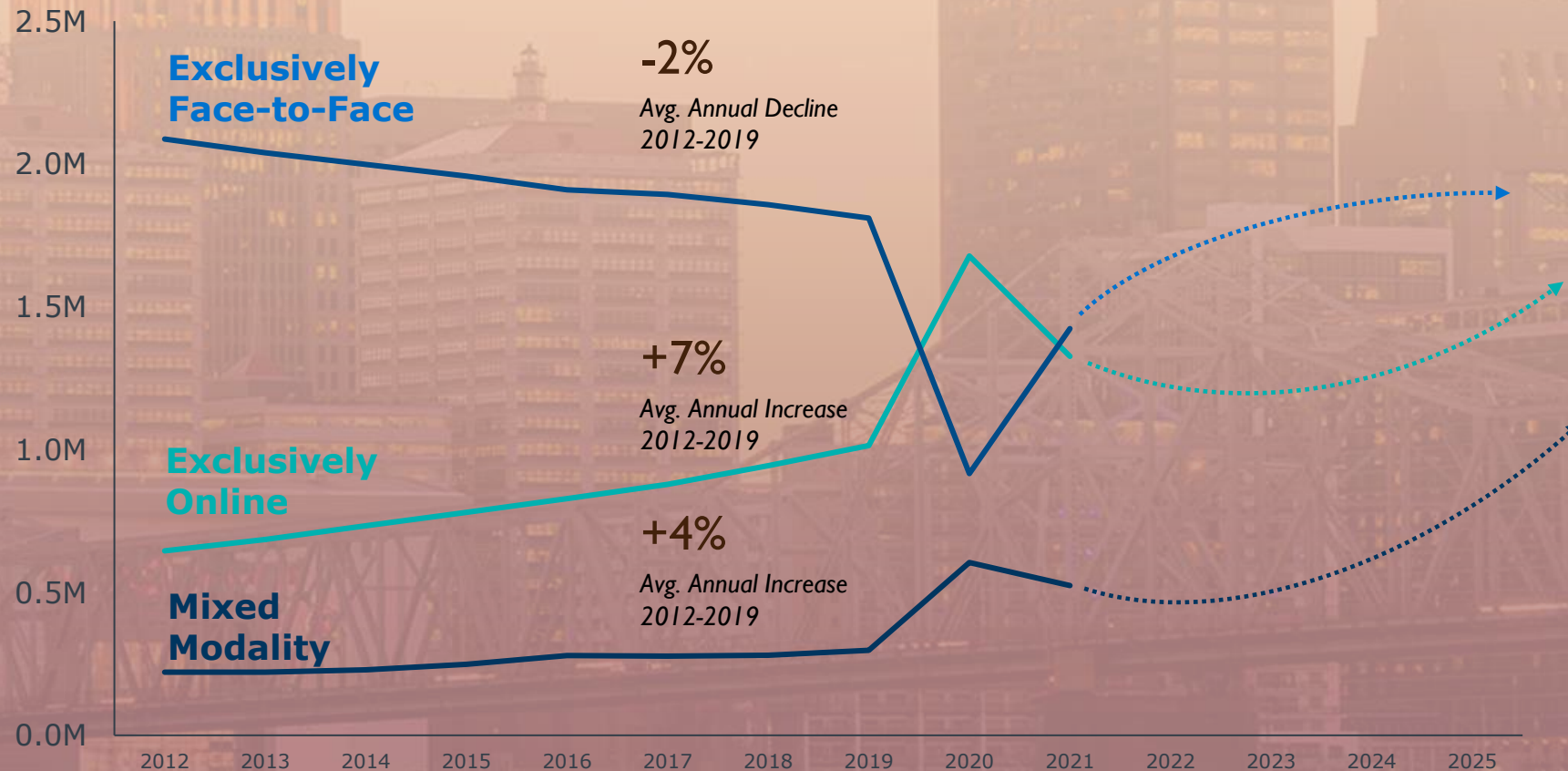
Year on Year Growth of Total Graduate Enrollments – All 4-Year Institutions



The Slow Return to 'Normal'

Pandemic Accelerates Existing Trend Towards Virtual and Hybrid learning

Graduate¹ Enrollments and Projections 2012-2025: Exclusively, Some, and No Online² Courses



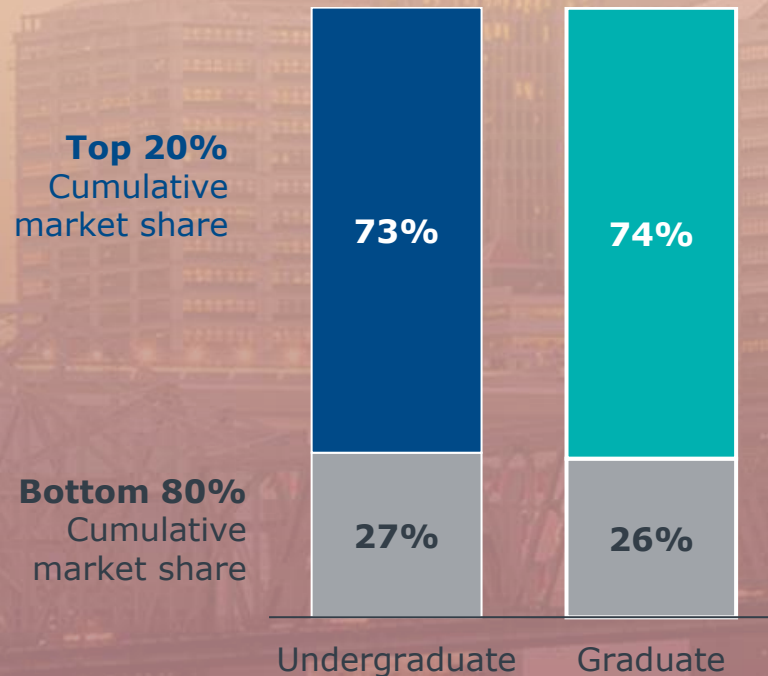
1. Graduate students include both master's and doctoral students.
2. Recorded as 'Distance Education' in IPEDS data

Source: EAB analysis of distance enrollment data from IPEDS Fall Enrollment Surveys 2012-21, EAB interviews and analysis.

Capturing Share in Competitive Markets

Institutions with Highest Conferrals Control Most of the Market

Percentage of total degrees¹ conferred by top 20% of institutions, 2021



And for Graduate Degrees, the Biggest Have Only Gotten Bigger

Net change in number of graduate degrees conferred, 2013-2021

Top 20%
Cumulative market share

+ 330,784

(+100K from 2019)

Bottom 80%
Cumulative market share

-79,502

(-15K from 2019)

1. Graduate students include both master's and doctoral students.
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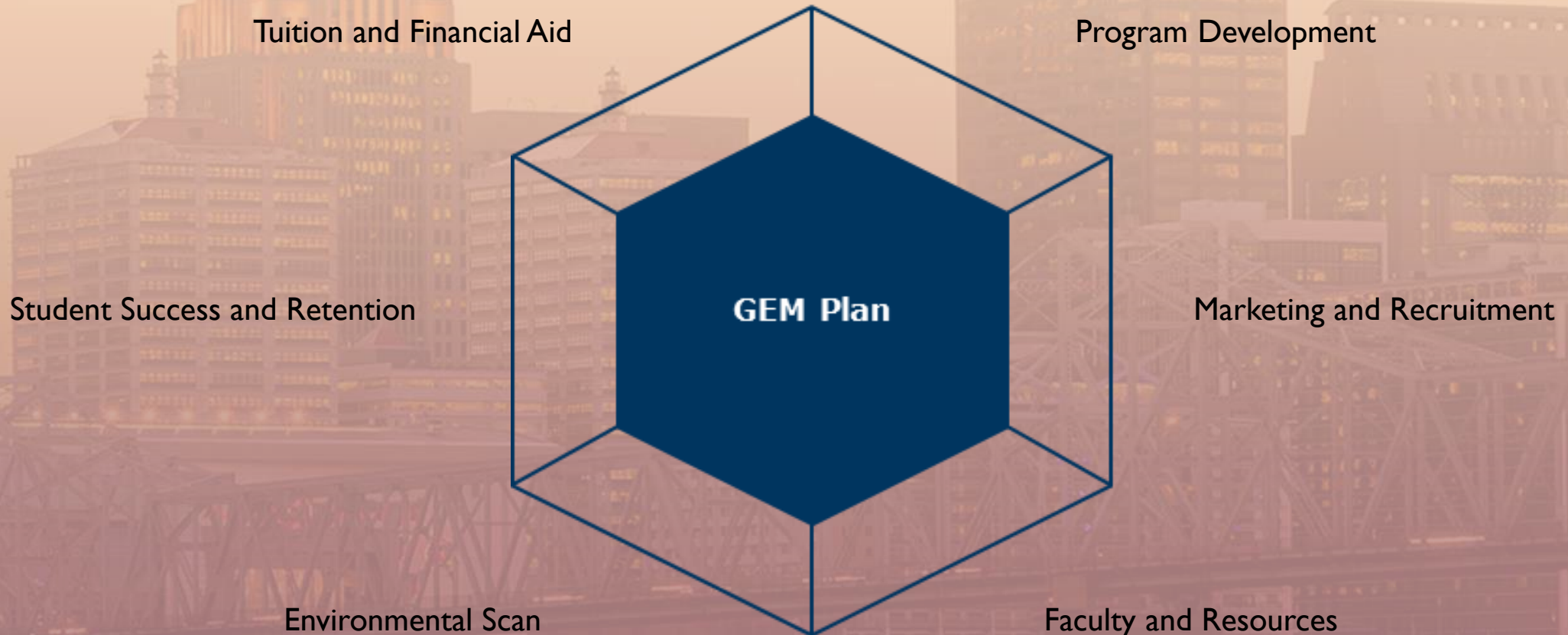


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**Graduate Enrollment
Management Planning**

Creating a GEM Plan to Meet Your Goals





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Adult Learner Survey Findings



EAB's Biennial Survey of Graduate and Adult Learners

Survey Methodology



- Data collected from **May to June 2023**
- **3,853** participants, including current and prospective graduate, online, and adult learners
- Survey conducted every other year to **track trends over time**

Participant Profile



- **Age:** 25.7% under 26, 35.4% age 26-35, 38.9% age 36 and over
- **Employment Status:** 52.5% employed full-time, 20.6% employed part-time, 26.9% unemployed
- **Location:** 21.2% international students
- **Caregiver Status:** 32.3% identify as caregivers
- **Intended Area of Study:** 18.8% business, 11.1% law, 15.3% medical/health services, 70.9% other (e.g., MS, MA, MFA)

Roadmap for Survey Findings

- Student Search Behavior and Preferences Are Shifting
- Students Are Increasingly Making Enrollment Decisions Based on Cost
- Students Seek a Variety of Modality and Schedule Options

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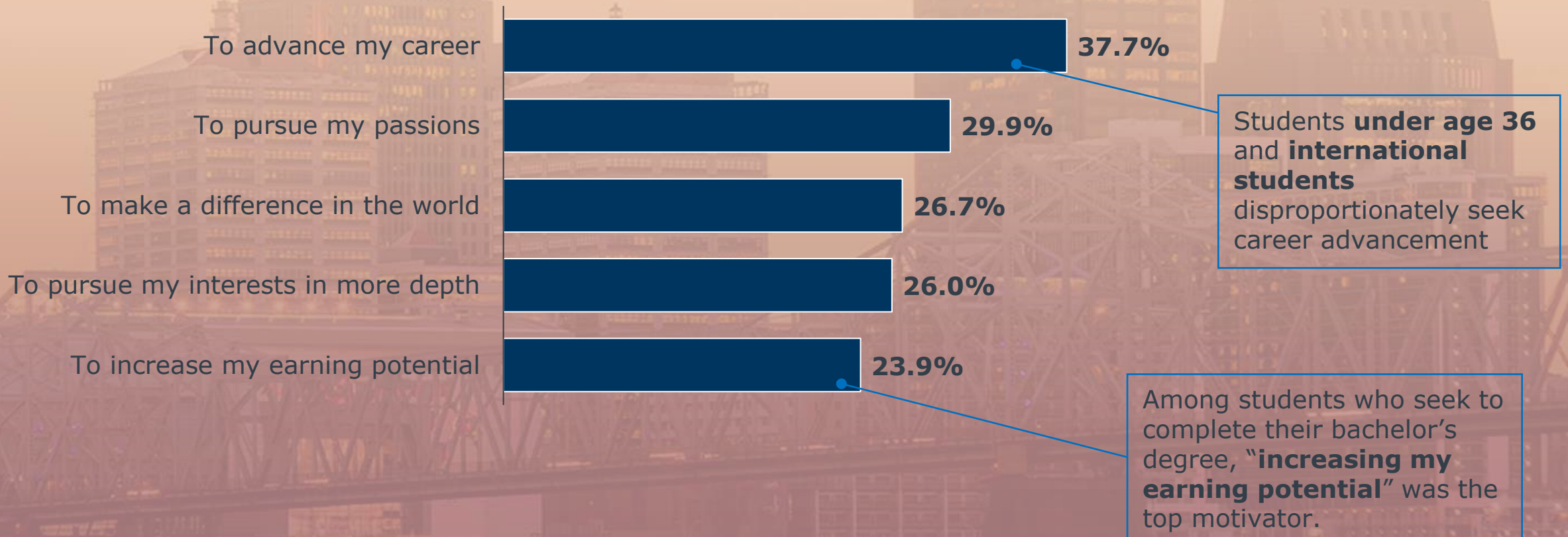


Student Search Behavior and Preferences Are Shifting

Prioritize Understanding Student Intent

“What Are Your Primary Reasons For Furthering Your Education?”


Asked of students who are currently enrolled or planning to enroll in the next two years; top five answers



Use Student Intent to Personalize Marketing

Sample Micro-Survey to Uncover Student Intent

EAB Adult Learner Recruitment



Tell us a little more about your plans.

We'd love to hear about your plans for graduate school. Please take the brief survey below, which will help us help you during this process!

First Name *(Required)* Last Name *(Required)*

Preferred Email Address *(Required)*

Tell us about why you are considering a degree.

- Advance my career
- Change my career
- Change the world
- Enhance my current skill set

What is your biggest obstacle to earning a degree?

- Balancing school and family
- Balancing school and work
- Finances
- Program prerequisites

Tell us about why you are considering a degree.

- Advance my career
- Change my career
- Change the world
- Enhance my current skill set

Sample Digital Ads Based on Student Intent

EAB Adult Learner Recruitment

5. Be the best *you* possible.

**40 FLEXIBLE DEGREE PROGRAMS
TO FIT YOUR LIFE AND PASSION**

\$94k
Average Starting
Salary for MBA
graduates

**ELEVATE
YOUR FUTURE.
YOUR WAY.**

What Will Your Impact Be? Earn Your Graduate Degree

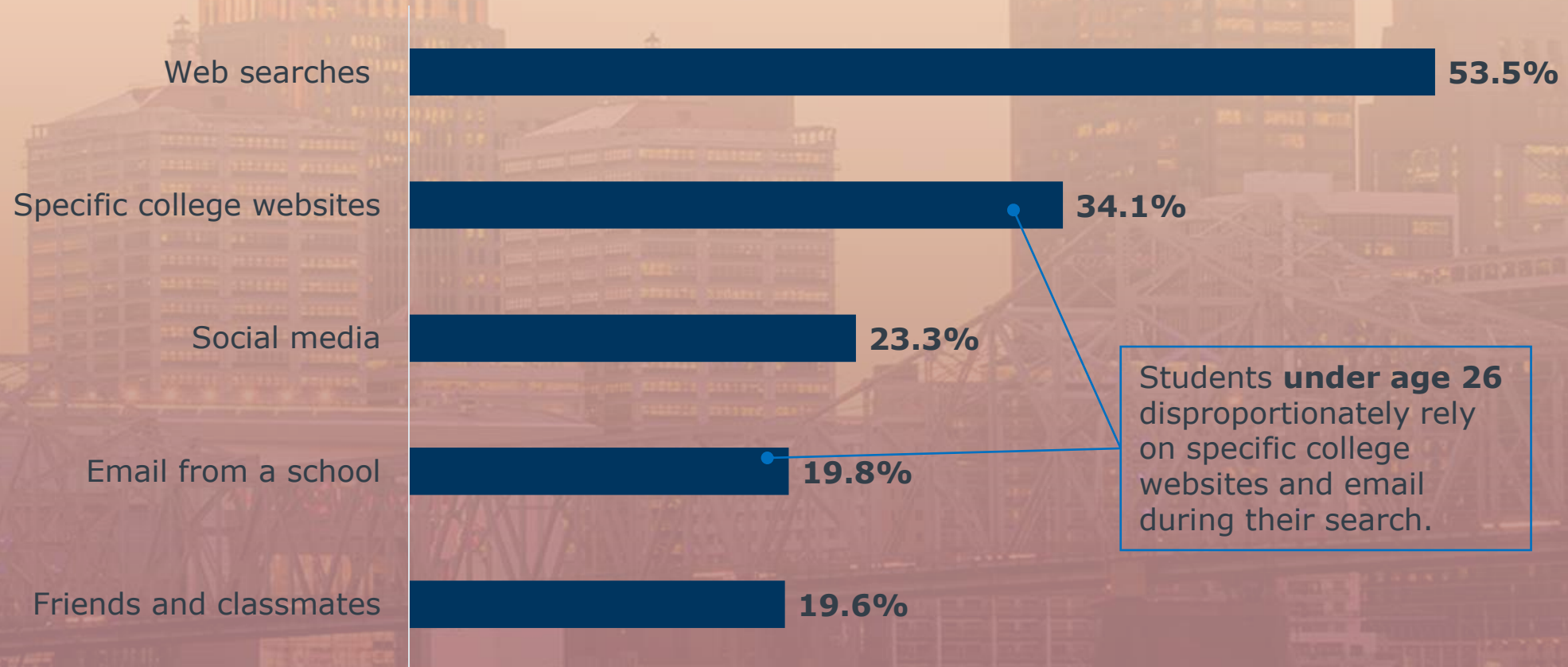
go.data-stat.grad[redacted].edu

[Sign Up](#)

Students Rely on Web Search and Your Website

“Which sources of information [did you use/have you used] in your search?”

Top five answers



A Well-Designed Website Is Table Stakes

But Many Program Pages Have Room for Improvement

Is Your Website Helping or Hurting Your Recruitment Efforts?

93.4%

Visit websites of all schools
they are considering

89.9%

Said a well-designed website
improves their opinion of a school

84.9%

Said a poorly-designed website will
negatively affect their opinion of a school

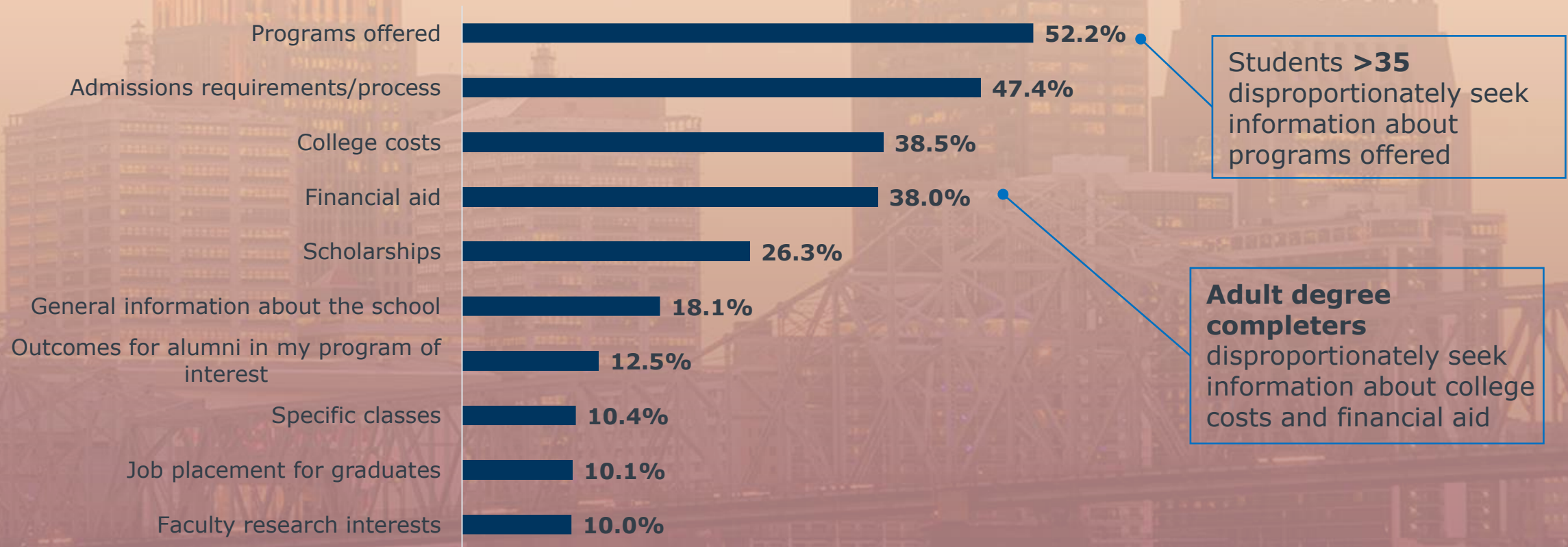
Show of Hands...

Which of the following can students find on your website in two minutes or less?

- General information about your institution
- Tuition and fees
- Financial aid and scholarships
- Admissions requirements
- List of programs offered
- Specific classes offered
- Outcomes (e.g., job placement rates) for graduates
- Faculty research interests

Can Students Easily Find the Info They Need?

“What information were you most often trying to find when searching school websites?”

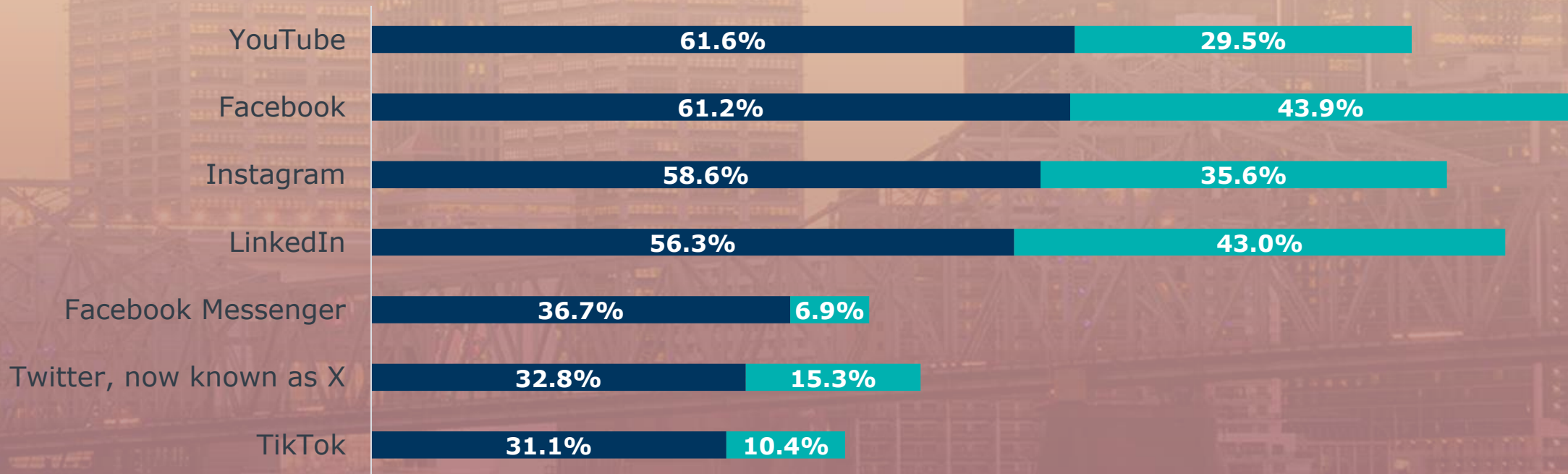


Students Are Open to Receiving Ads on Social Media

Students Most Open to Receiving Ads from Universities on Facebook and LinkedIn

Platforms which >30% of surveyed students use are included below

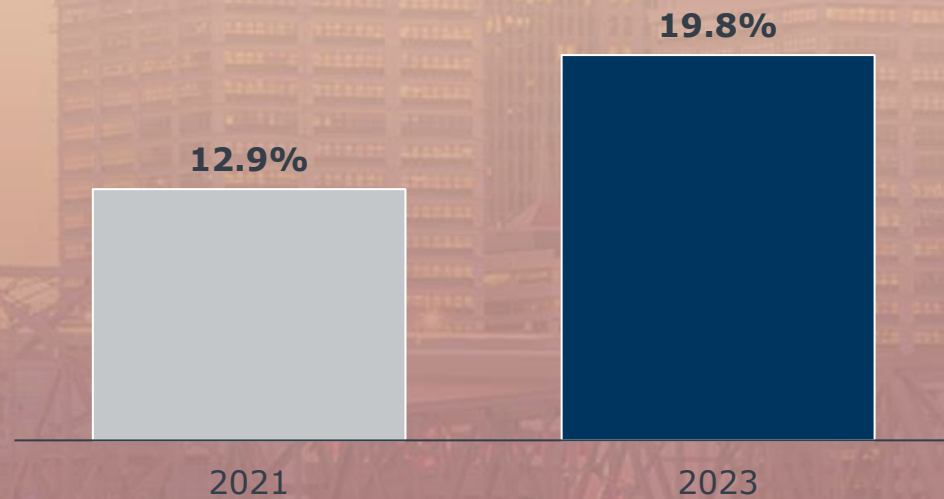
- Which social media do you use?
- On which channels are you open to receiving ads from colleges and universities?



Email Remains a Tried-and-True Channel

Prospects Are Increasingly Relying on Recruitment Emails...

Percentage of Graduate and Adult Learners Who Consulted Recruitment Emails, EAB Surveys



...Especially Younger Students

26%

of respondents **under age 26** rely on recruitment emails to learn more about graduate and adult education programs

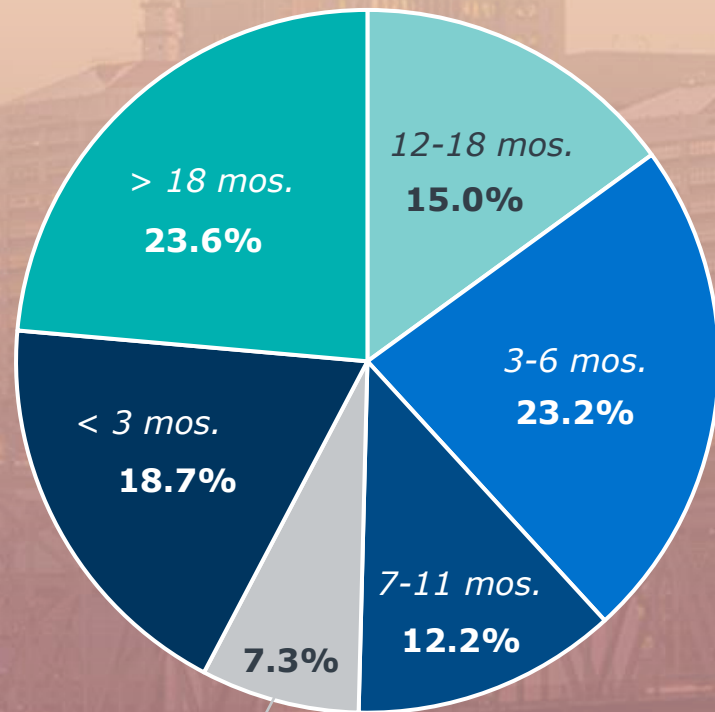
75%

of **surveyed high school students** want to hear from colleges via email, suggesting future adult learners will rely on emails*

Adult Learners Linger in the “Search” Phase

Don't Overlook Prospects Who Haven't Engaged With Your Marketing Recently

“How long have you been actively searching/did you search for information about furthering your education?”



I don't remember

38.6%

of respondents searched for information about going back to school for **at least 12 months**

80%

reported **stealth shopping rate** among interviewed Professional, Online, and Continuing Education units

Implications for GEM

Marketing and Recruitment



- ▶ Rather than traditional marketing campaigns that use the same message and timing for all prospects, **use student intent to inform your marketing** and recruitment messaging, cadence, and channel



- ▶ Since career advancement was the top reason survey respondents wanted to further their education, **prioritize highlighting job placement rates**, top employers, etc. in marketing materials



- ▶ Web searches and specific college websites are the most used sources of information in college searches. Since this will inadvertently serve as a recruitment channel, **make sure your website is up to snuff**



- ▶ Take note of **which channels** adult learners are most willing to receive marketing on, and be willing to engage with prospects who haven't responded to marketing recently

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Students Are Increasingly Making Enrollment Decisions Based on Cost

Implications for GEM

Tuition and Financial Aid



- ▶ Our respondents highlighted the importance of having a very **sound and effective financial aid strategy**. Ensure that this is a priority for your team when creating and reviewing your GEM plan.



- ▶ **Evaluate your tuition rates** on an annual basis through a thorough review of competitive programs as part of the external environmental scan.

Student Success and Retention



- ▶ The primary reason that adult learners discontinued their studies was the high cost. If you're at a school that's now offering more scholarship or financial aid options, ensure you **allocate some of this to current students** as well as using aid to attract new students.



- ▶ Changes in personal circumstances was also a top reason for stop-outs. **Student success at the graduate level** is often overlooked, but it is even more important with adult learners that often have more on their plates than traditional undergraduate students.

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Students Seek a Variety of Modality and Schedule Options

Implications for GEM

Program Development



- ▶ Three key questions to ask about program development include **market viability**, **program modality** and **competitive advantages** of your program.



- ▶ Use the survey findings on modality and flexibility to **inform your program development**.

Environmental Scan



- ▶ **Conduct regular internal environmental scans** of your academic programs. Use surveys like this one and surveys created in-house as part of your review.



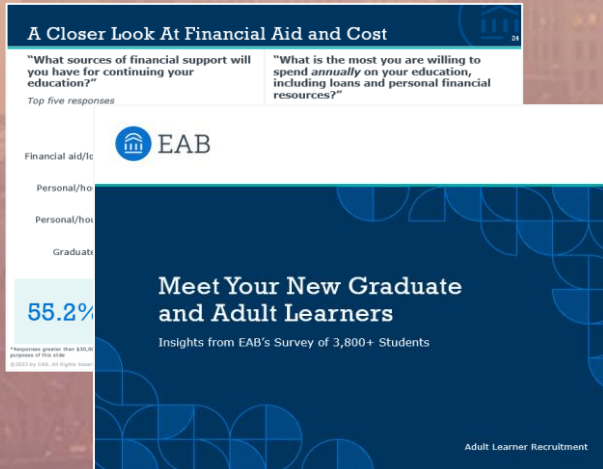
- ▶ Remember to **consider external scans** to save institutional resources and time, while still assessing the favorable and unfavorable effects of events, trends, or scenarios on the institution and its programs.

Next Steps

Today's Slides Booth Visit Next Research Study

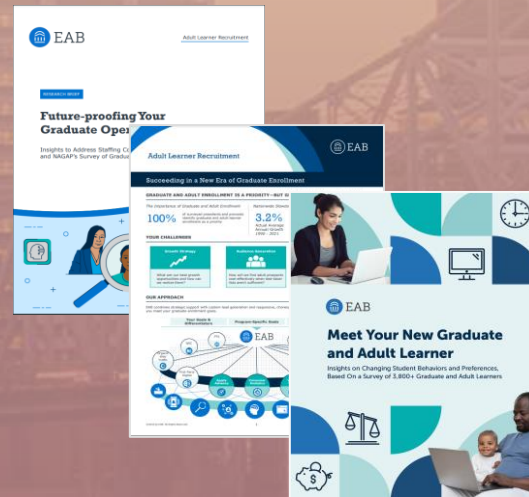
1

Receive a copy of today's presentation slides



2

Stop by booth #712 to connect with us live and collect printed or virtual research



3

Sign up to be the first to receive a copy of a research study based on a joint EAB + NAGAP survey



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Thank You!



Todd Heilman

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**Consider our
team a resource**

