



**Inside
Higher
Ed**

What Keeps Campus Leaders Up at Night:
Inside Higher Ed's 2023 Survey
of College and University Presidents

An Inside Higher Ed webcast
Wednesday, May 10, 2023
2 p.m. EDT

Presenters



Scott Jaschik
Editor and co-founder
Inside Higher Ed

scott.jaschik@insidehighered.com

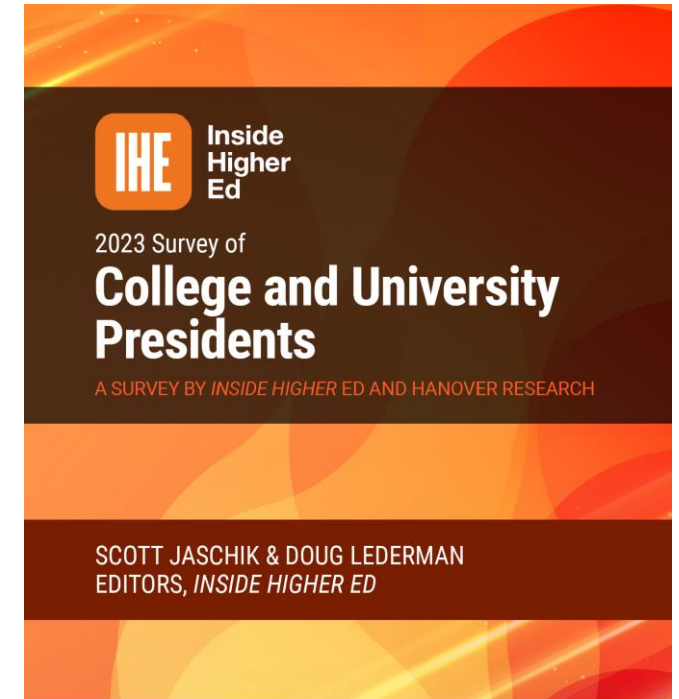
Doug Lederman
Editor and co-founder
Inside Higher Ed

doug.lederman@insidehighered.com



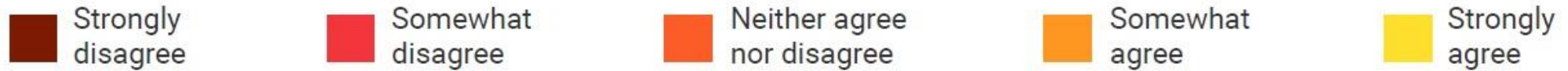
Methodology

- Questions prepared by *Inside Higher Ed*, in collaboration with Hanover Research.
- Polling conducted in February/March.
- 442 presidents responded; 259 public (140 community college), 173 private nonprofit; nationally representative.
- Complete anonymity for respondents, but answers coded to allow for breakdown by sector, geography, etc.



Confidence in Financial Stability

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements.



I am confident my institution will be financially stable over the next five years. (n=442)



I am confident my institution will be financially stable over the next 10 years. (n=442)

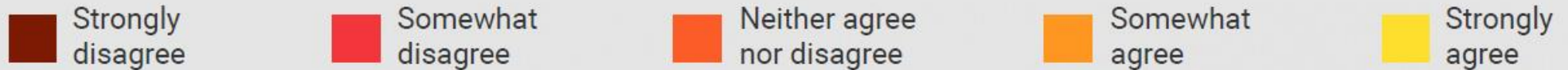


Confidence in Financial Stability by Sector

	All Institutions, by Sector			Public			Private Nonprofit	
	All	Public	Private Nonprofit	Doctoral	Master's/ Bacc.	Assoc.	Doctoral- Master's	Bacc.
I am confident my institution will be financially stable over the next 10 years.								
% Strongly disagree	2	3	2	3	4	2	3	2
% Somewhat disagree	8	9	6	6	11	9	4	10
% Neither agree nor disagree	12	12	10	6	15	13	5	18
% Somewhat agree	48	48	47	30	54	48	55	34
% Strongly agree	31	28	34	55	17	29	32	37

Financial Stability, Looking Back and Ahead

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements.



My institution is more financially stable now than it was in 2019. (n=442)



My institution is more financially stable now than I expect it to be year from now. (n=442)



Reasons for Confidence (and Lack of It) in 2024

Presidents who think they'll be *better* off a year from now expect:

- Higher enrollment (67%)
- Increased net tuition (57%)
- More endowment revenue (40%)
- To cut their budgets (31%)
- Less inflationary pressure (21%)

Presidents who think they'll be *worse* off a year from now expect:

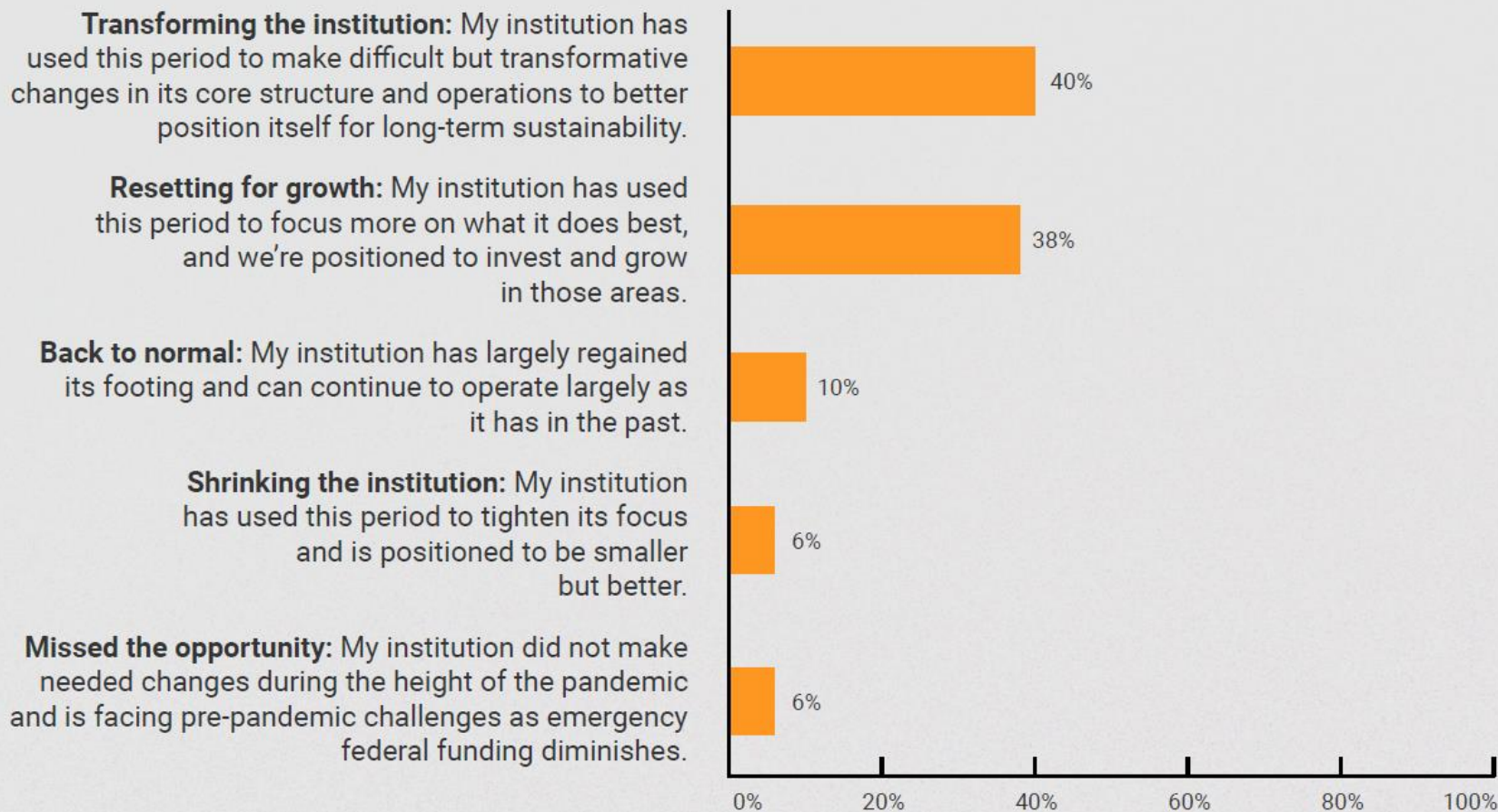
- Rising labor costs (75%)
- More inflationary pressure (71%)
- Lower enrollment (54%)
- Flat or less state support (44%)
- Lower net tuition revenue (35%)

Mergers and Consolidation

- Fewer than 1 in 5 presidents (18%) say senior administrators have had “serious internal discussions” in previous year about merging with another college. 31% of leaders of private doctoral/master’s universities and 27% of presidents in the Northeast responded that way.
- 1 in 10 presidents said their institution was very or somewhat likely to merge into or be acquired by another college in the next five years; 17% of leaders of private doctoral/master’s institutions and of colleges in the Northeast saying that.
- More than a quarter of campus leaders (27%) said their institution *should consider* merging with another institution – twice as many private college leaders say that as public (38% vs. 19%).

Do Colleges Need to Change? Some Answers Suggest Yes

As the pandemic recedes, which of the following statements best represents your view of your institution's current situation and positioning for the near future? (n=411)



Do Colleges Need to Change? Reasons for Skepticism

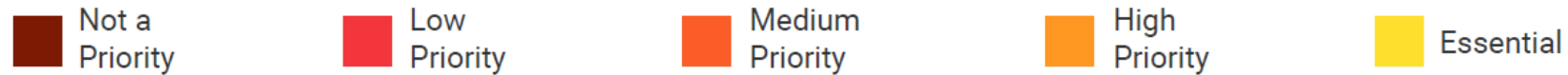
Compared to 2022, presidents are significantly less likely to say institution:

- Was pushed to think out of the box during the pandemic in a way that will benefit the institution in the long run
- Was able to implement some positive, long-lasting institutional changes during the pandemic
- Will keep some of the COVID-19–related changes even after the pandemic ends

Meeting Mental Health Demands

- Most presidents (69%) say they are “very aware” of the mental health of undergrads – far fewer say the same about staff (48%), faculty (46%) or grad students (29%).
- About two-thirds agree (24% strongly) that their institution has the capacity to meet undergrads’ mental health needs.
- Those who agree mainly cite increased counseling staffing and appointments, investments in telehealth, and increased budget for “mental-health-related services” as the reasons why.
- Presidents cite “declining student resilience” and “declining sense of belonging” (58% very or extremely influential) as top causes of increased demand for mental health services.

The Virtual Campus?



How much of a priority is digital transformation for leaders at your institution? (n=404)



- But 8 in 10 presidents say data/student success and leveraging student data for better insight into student retention are high priorities.
- About 1 in 5 presidents says institution is somewhat or very likely to shrink physical campus within five years.
- Presidents are twice as likely to describe their in-person courses as excellent (67%) as they are hybrid (30%) or online courses (21%).

Employee Turnover

How worried are you about the turnover rate of faculty and staff at your institution? (n=423)



Top reasons they cite for why employees are leaving:

- Competitive offers elsewhere (86%)
- Natural career progression (55%)
- Burnout (52%)
- Lack of opportunity for growth (45%)

Race Relations on Campus



Generally speaking, how would you rate the state of race relations on your campus? (n=404)

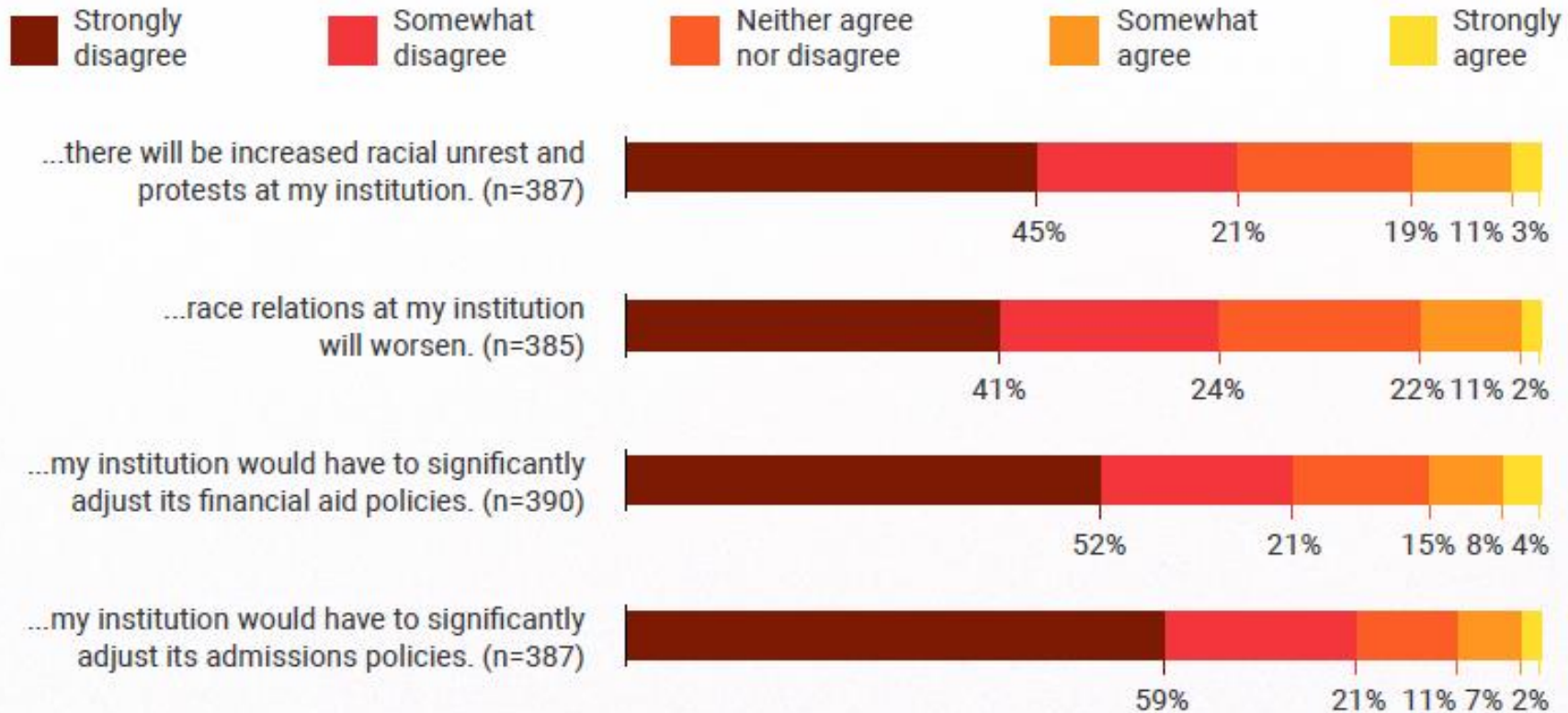


Generally speaking, how would you rate the state of race relations on college and university campuses? (n=389)



Little Worry About Affirmative Action

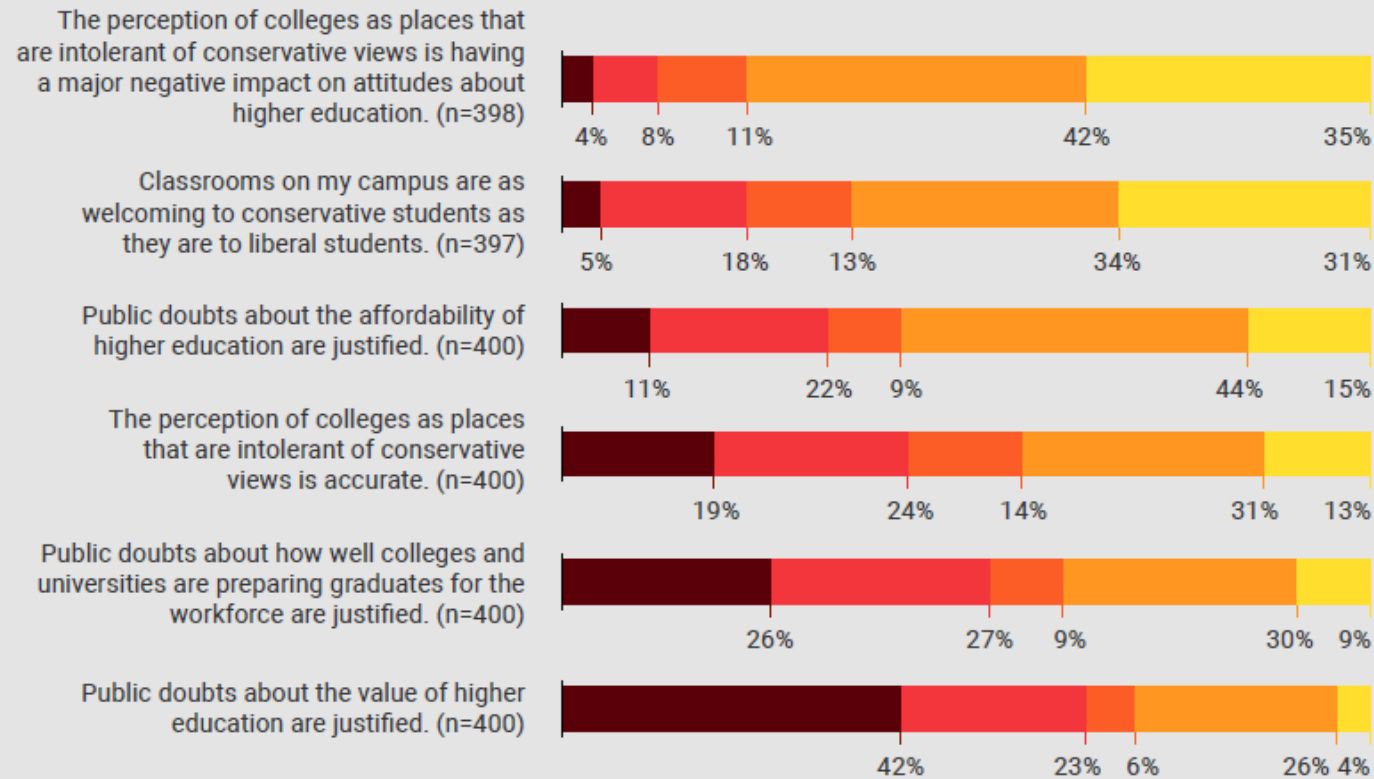
If the Supreme Court does curtail the use of affirmative action in admissions...



Higher Ed's Image

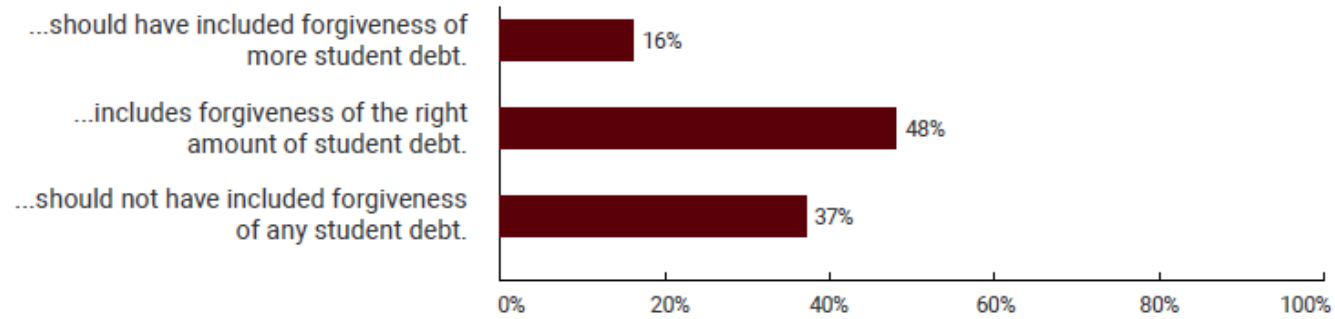
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the image of higher education:

Strongly disagree
 Somewhat disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Somewhat agree
 Strongly agree

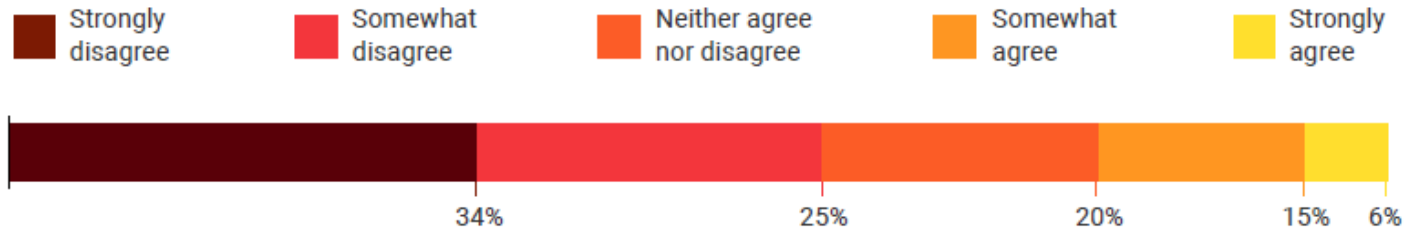


Skepticism About Debt Relief

The Biden administration proposed canceling debt for millions of student loan borrowers. At this time, the plan is under review by the U.S. Supreme Court. Which of the following options best describe your views of the Biden administration's proposed actions on debt cancellation?
The Biden administration's plan...

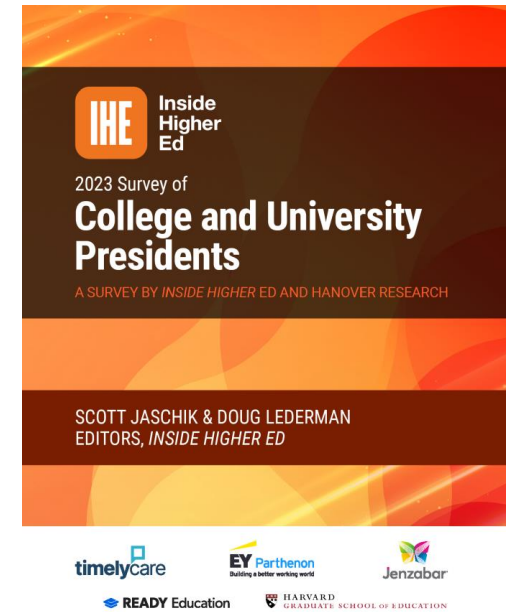


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Student debt cancellation would make college more affordable. (n=432)



More on the Survey

- *Inside Higher Ed* [article on the survey](#)
- [Download](#) the survey report.



Thanks to the Sponsors

