



**AFFORDABLE
LEARNING PA**



PALCI[™]

Partnership for Academic Library
Collaboration and Innovation

PENNSYLVANIA COURSE MATERIALS COST SURVEY

PREPARED FOR PALCI & ALPA

JULIA SEAMAN & JEFF SEAMAN

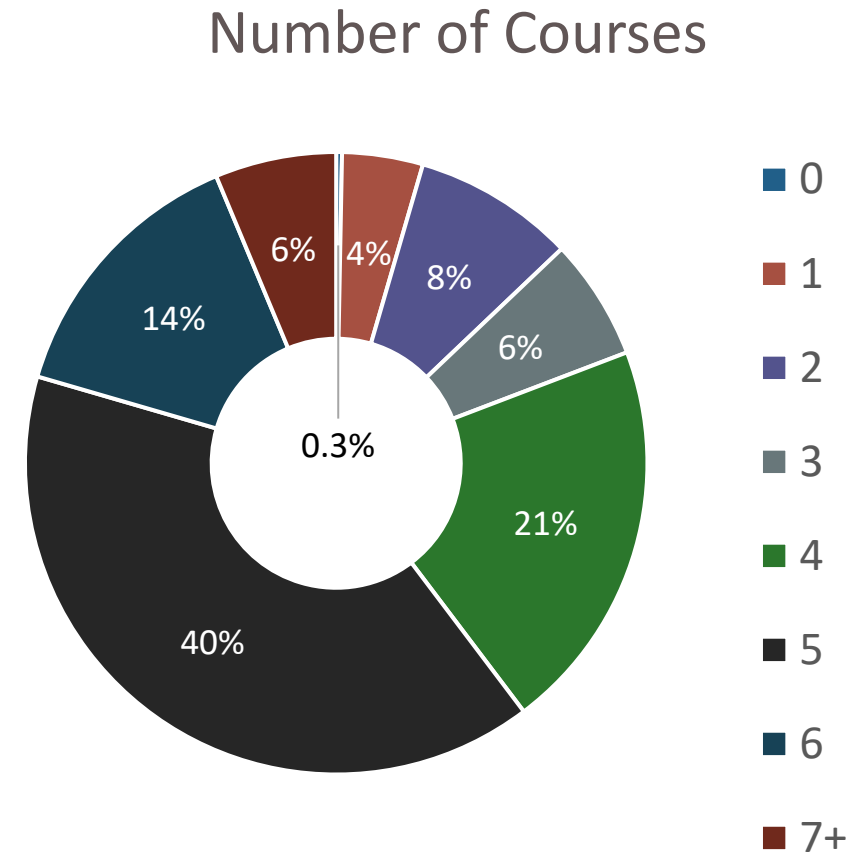


Bay View Analytics[®]



FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF STUDENT RESPONSES

- Majority are **undergraduate students**, evenly split across year (freshman to senior)
- Over 80% of students are **full time** and report taking **at least 4 courses**
- There are a wide variety of majors, though Health, Business, Education, and Psychology make up almost half, and 44% of students report STEM majors



ALMOST ALL STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING SOME OR ALL OF THEIR COURSE MATERIALS

Course Materials

- Almost all courses require course materials to be purchased
- A small number of courses offer materials at no cost to the student, but it is small portion of overall course loads

Course Costs

- Over half of all students report course materials costs at \$200+ per term
- A full load of 4 courses costs students ~\$360 on average

Financial Aid

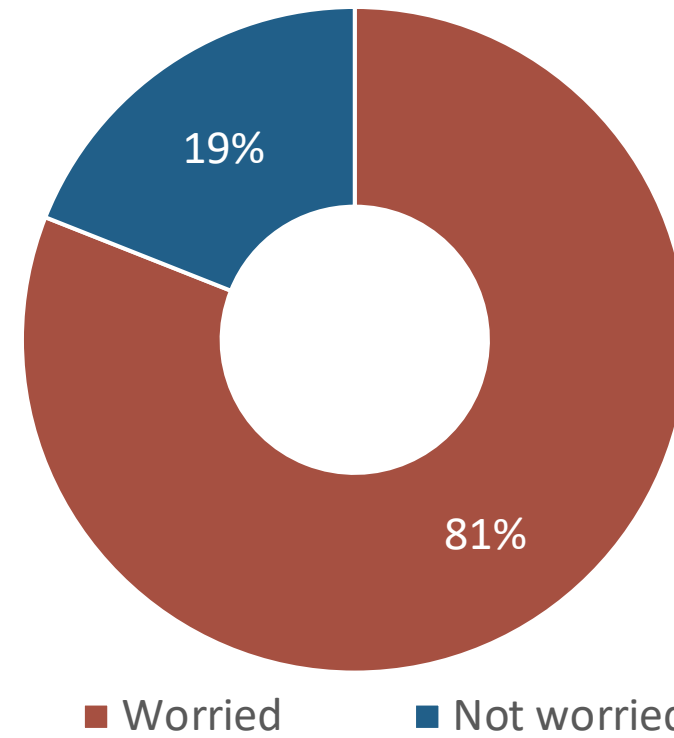
- Majority of students do have financial aid, but for many it does not cover course materials costs
- Only 13% of students report financial aid covers over 50% or more of their costs



MAJORITY OF STUDENTS WORRY ABOUT COSTS

- 81% of students report being worried about meeting course materials costs at some level
- Almost half of students say their worry is “moderate” or “extreme”

Are you worried about meeting your course material costs this term?

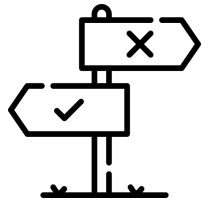


MATERIAL COSTS IMPACT STUDENT LIVES

Course material costs negatively affect student academics

- Students reported earning poor grades and reducing the number of courses they took because of the cost of course materials.
- Only 23% of students have not had an impact on their academic career.

Many students report that decisions that shape their academic career (institution, major, and minor choices) are affected by material cost responsibilities and expectations



98% of students tried at least one method to reduce costs, from buying a used copy, finding it online, or going without

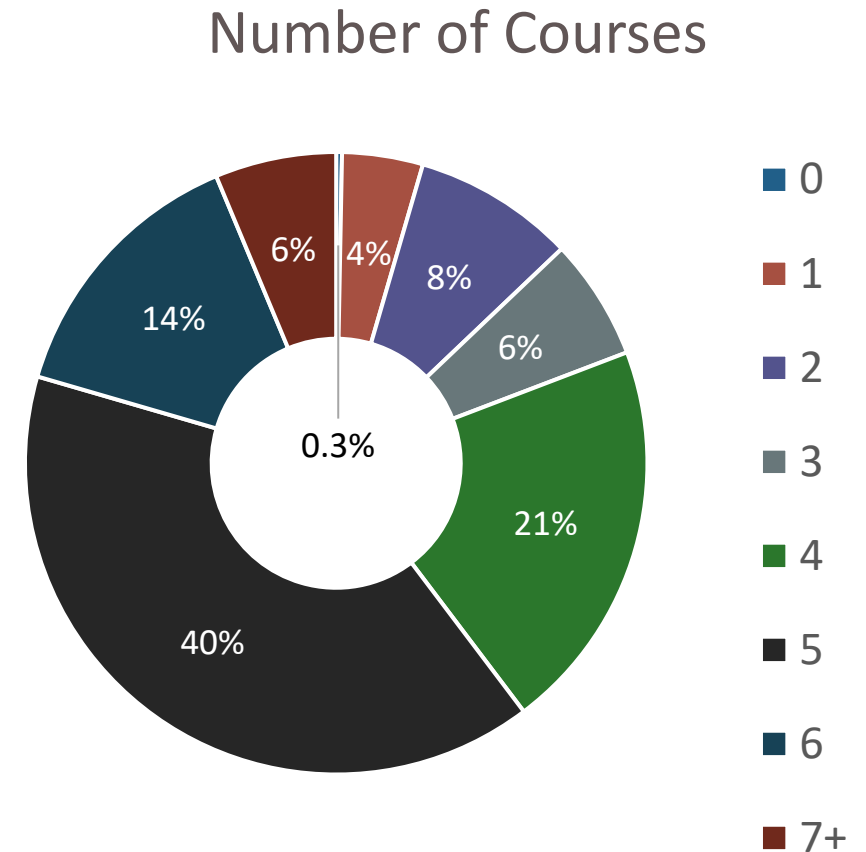


STUDY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



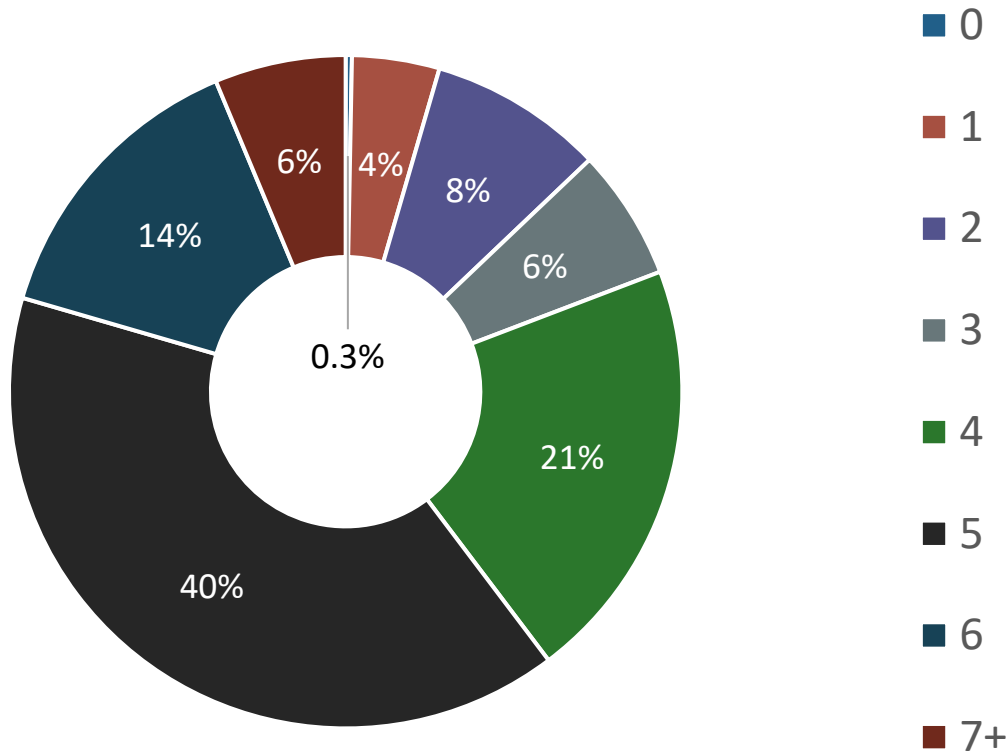
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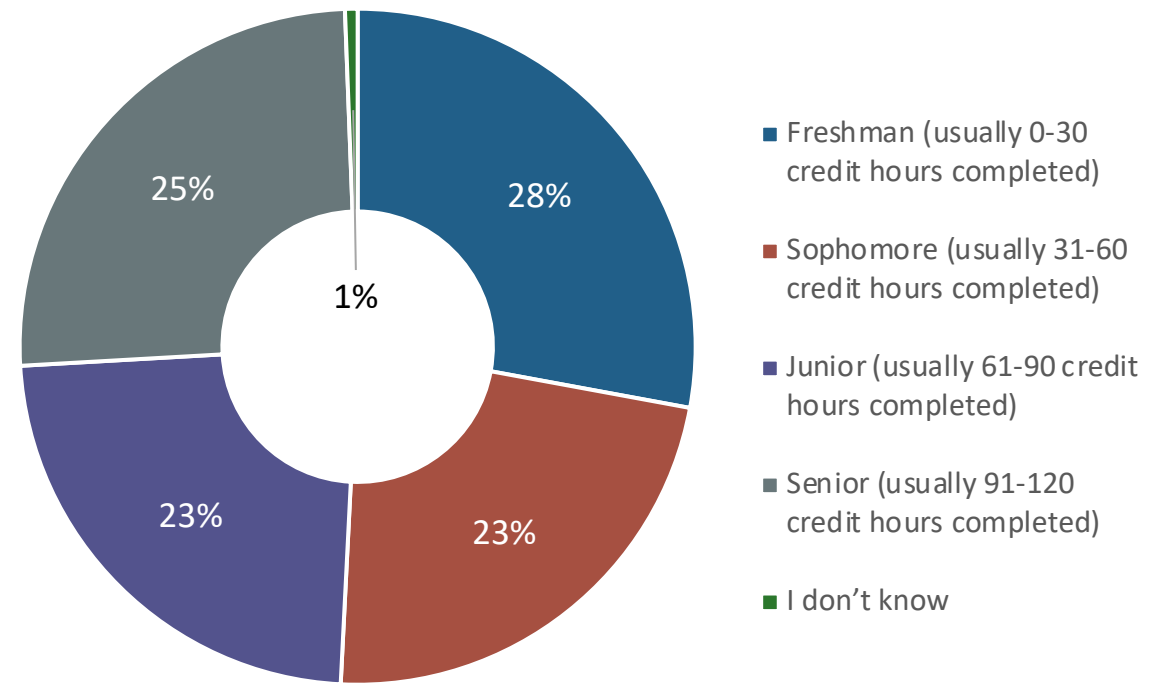


MOST STUDENTS TAKE 4+ COURSES AND ARE EVENLY SPLIT ACROSS ACADEMIC LEVEL

Number of Courses



Current Academic Level



For Bachelor Students only

COURSE MATERIAL COSTS



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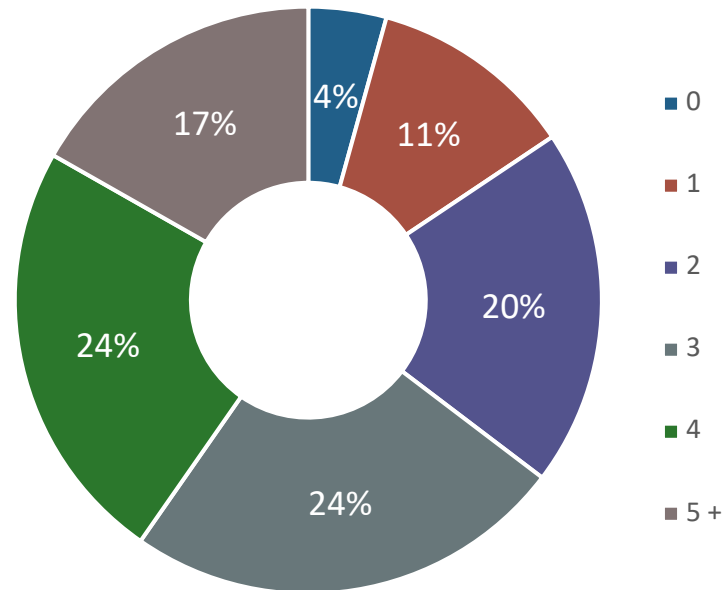
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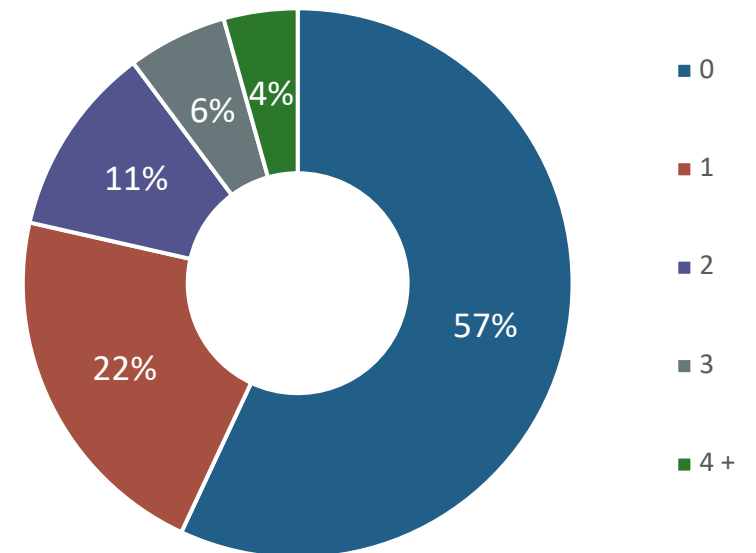
REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS ARE THE NORM

- Most courses require course materials to be purchased
- 2 in 5 students report at least one course materials were offered at no cost to them

How many of your current term courses required you to purchase textbooks or instructional material?

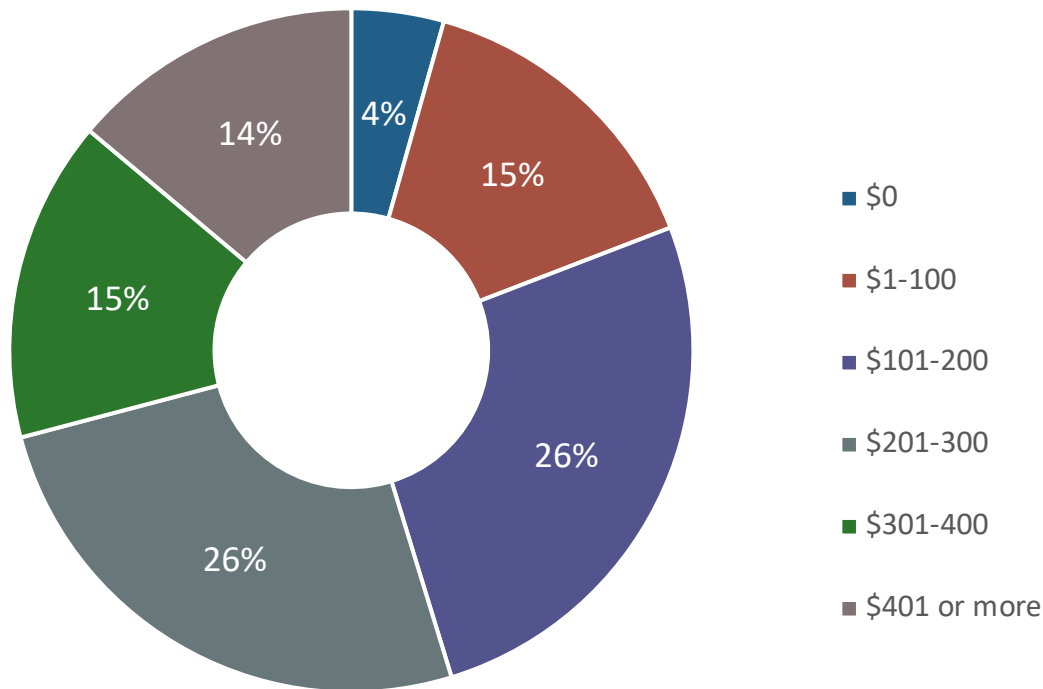


How many of your current term courses offered all textbooks or instructional material at no cost?



STUDENTS REPORT SPENDING HUNDREDS PER TERM ON COURSE MATERIALS

About how much did you spend on course materials, whether purchased, leased, or rented, during this term?



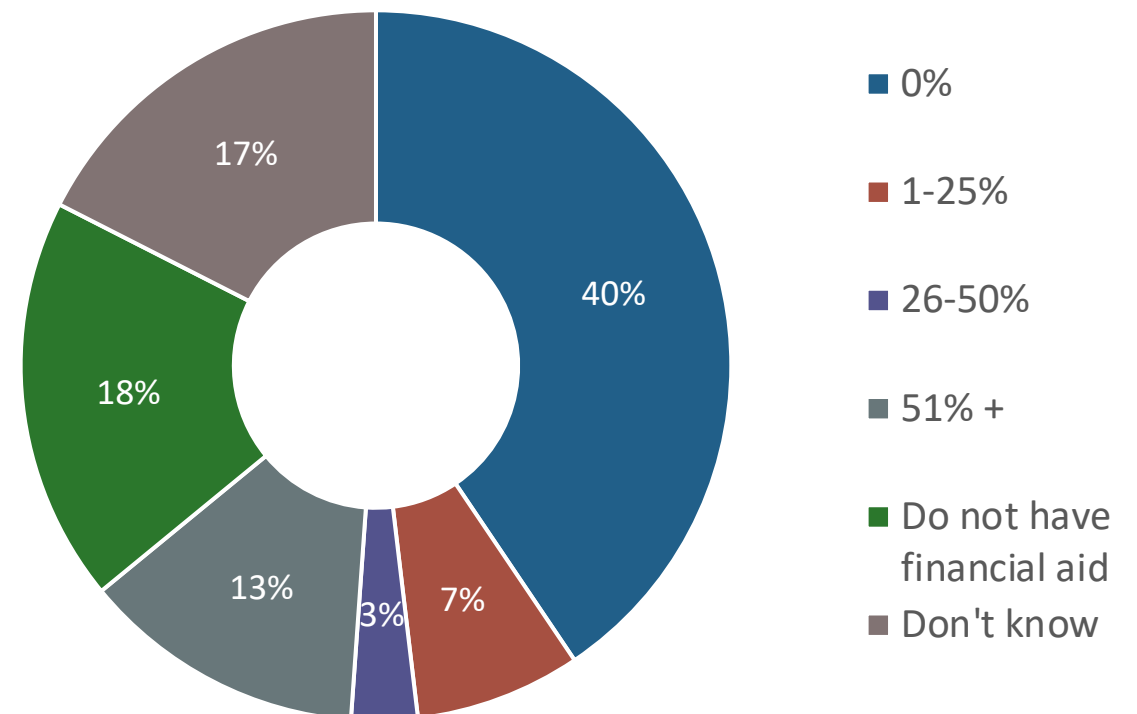
- More than half of students pay greater than \$200
- Just under 1 in 5 students pay less than \$100
- Average course material cost reported is \$90; a full course load 4 courses is \$360 and 5 courses is \$450



OVER HALF OF STUDENTS COVER ALL MATERIAL COSTS

- While many students report having financial aid, only a small portion say it covers some or all of material costs
- 68% of students are solely responsible for the whole cost of their materials

What percentage of your textbook costs is covered by financial aid for this term?



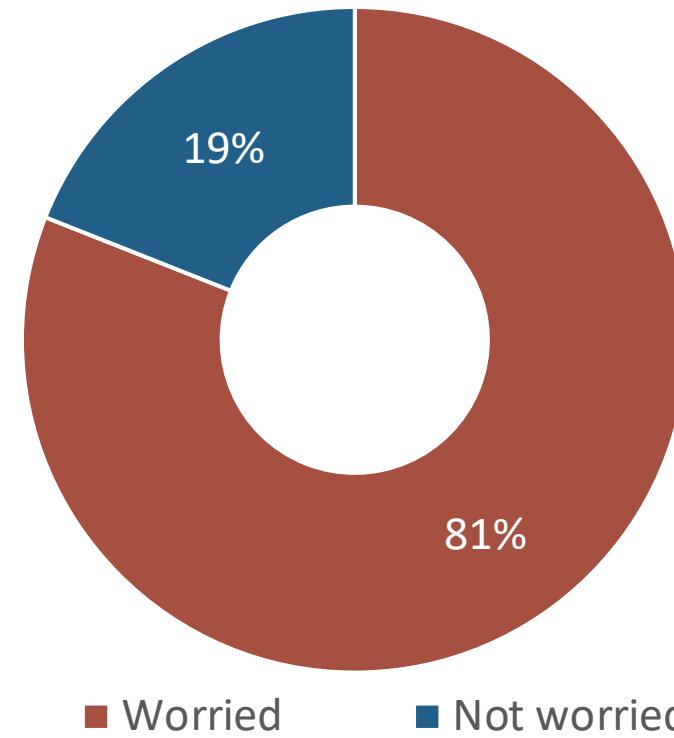
STUDENT WORRY



MAJORITY OF STUDENTS WORRY ABOUT COSTS

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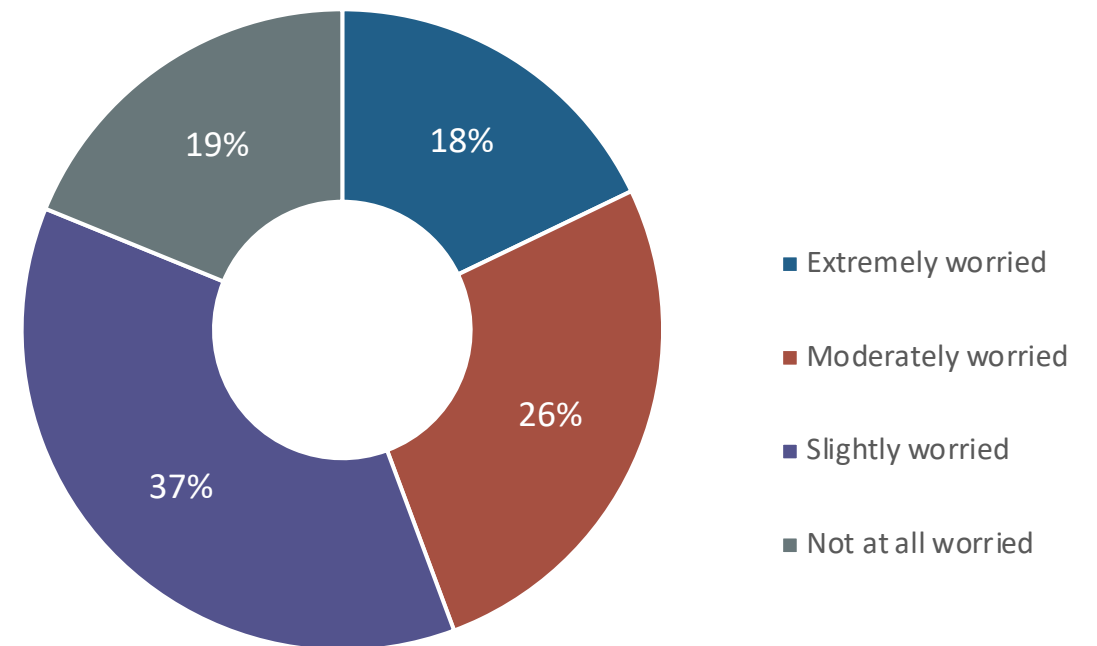
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STUDENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT MEETING COURSE MATERIAL COSTS

- 81% of students report that they are worried about meeting course material costs
 - 1 in 5 are “extremely worried”
- Students that reported higher levels of worry were:
 - Black
 - Hispanic
 - Women
 - Had a full-time job off campus
 - Pell Grant recipient.

How worried were you about meeting your course material costs this term?



COST IMPACT TO STUDENTS

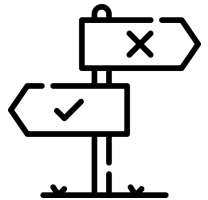


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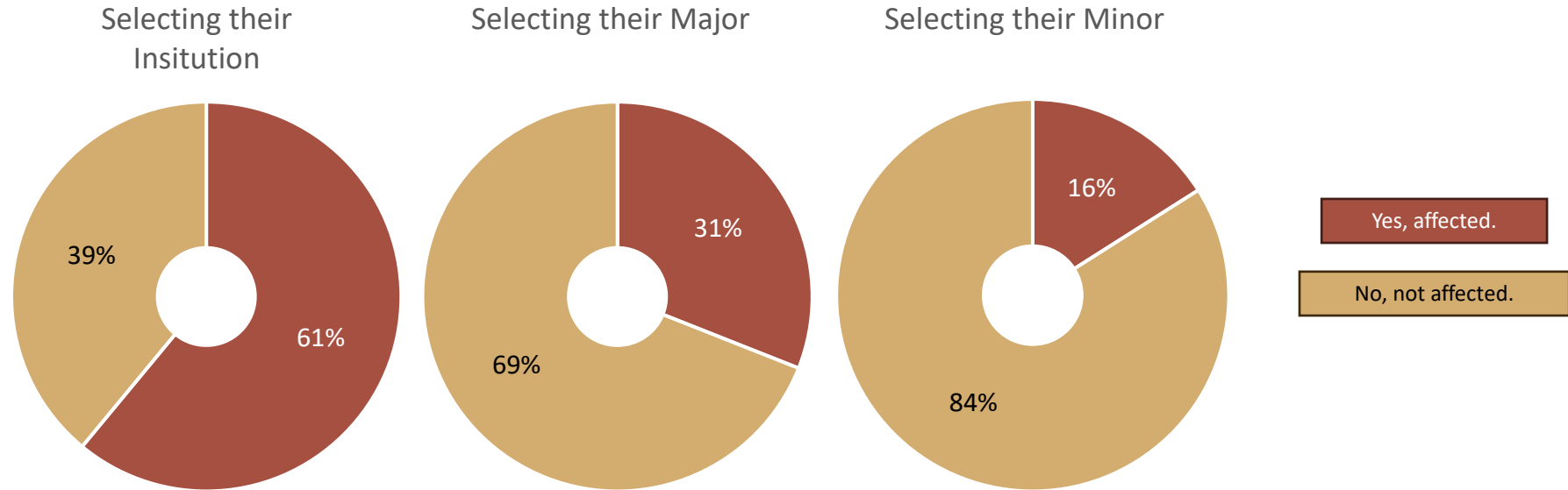
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98% of students tried at least one method to reduce costs, from buying a used copy, finding it online, or going without



REDUCING COURSE MATERIALS COST IMPACTS MAJOR LIFE CHOICES



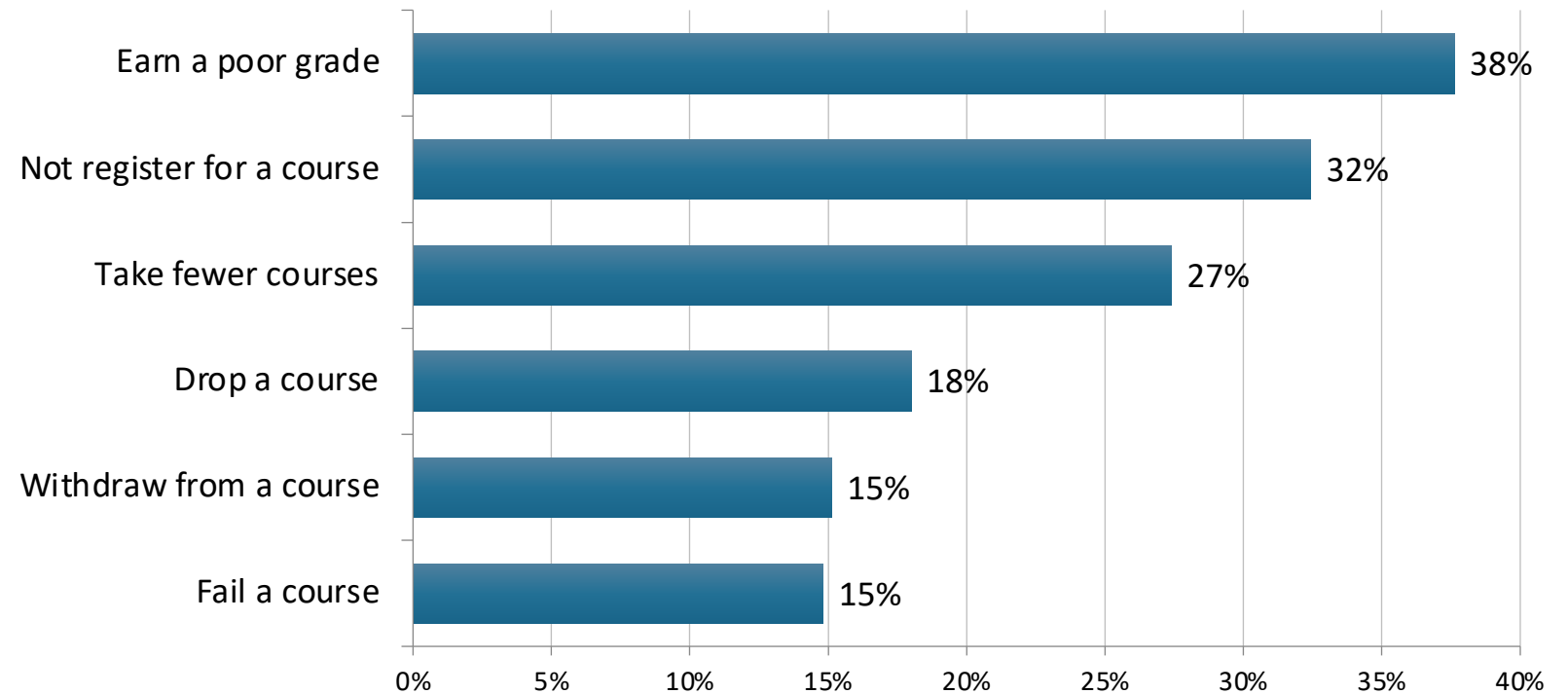
- Student decisions that shape their academic career are affected by material cost responsibilities or expectations



COURSE MATERIAL COSTS NEGATIVELY IMPACT ACADEMICS

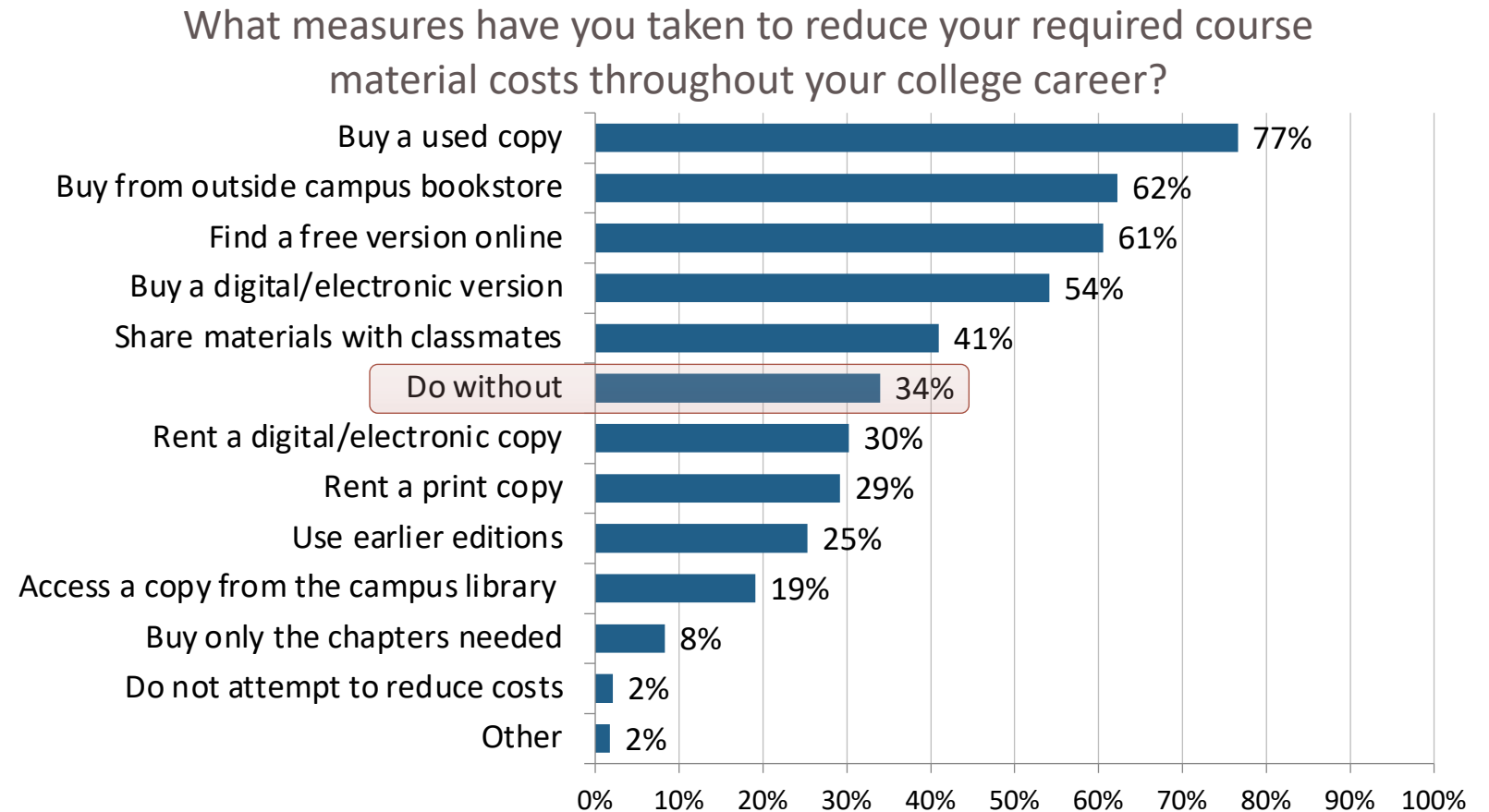
- Students reported earning poor grades and reducing the number of courses because of the cost of course materials
- Almost 4 in 5 students report material costs impacted their academic career

In your academic career, has the cost of required course materials caused you to:



STUDENTS ACTIVELY TRY TO REDUCE COST THROUGH VARIOUS METHODS

- 98% of students report trying at least one method
- A third of students have gone without materials because of cost
- Methods include legal and non-legal solutions



NATIONAL COMPARISON



NATIONAL SURVEY

- During Spring 2023, a national sample was also surveyed
 - 500 validated student responses
 - Survey with sub-set of questions presented to PA students

The national sample provides a benchmark to compare Pennsylvania's own response rates.

PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS FACE UNIQUE COURSE MATERIAL COSTS COMPARED TO NATIONAL SAMPLE

PA students are like students everywhere...but they **do differ on some key metrics**

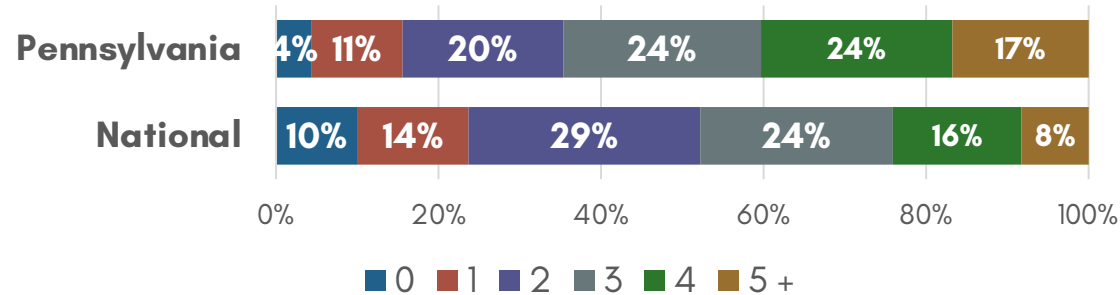
- PA students spend similar to national levels per term for materials
- Course material costs affects large academic decisions at both PA and national level
- Digital vs. print preferences are similar between PA and national students

- PA students are **more worried** than national at their ability to meet course material costs
- A **lower proportion** of course material costs are covered by financial aid for PA students

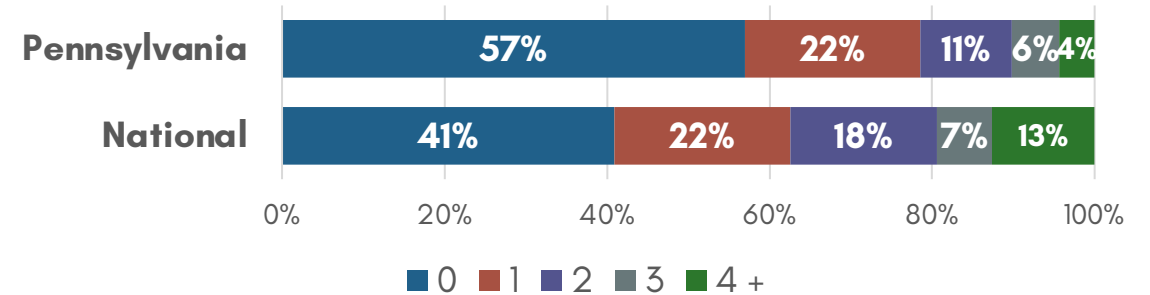


PA STUDENTS SPEND SIMILAR TO NATIONAL LEVELS THOUGH LESS OF IT IS COVERED BY FINANCIAL AID

How many of your current term courses required you to purchase textbooks or instructional material?

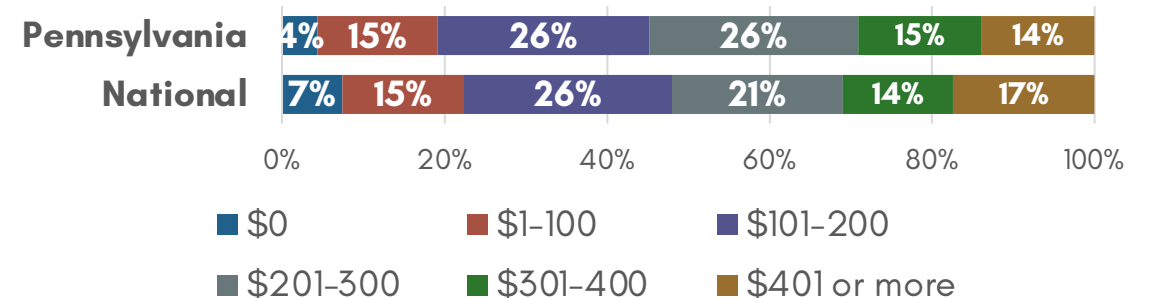


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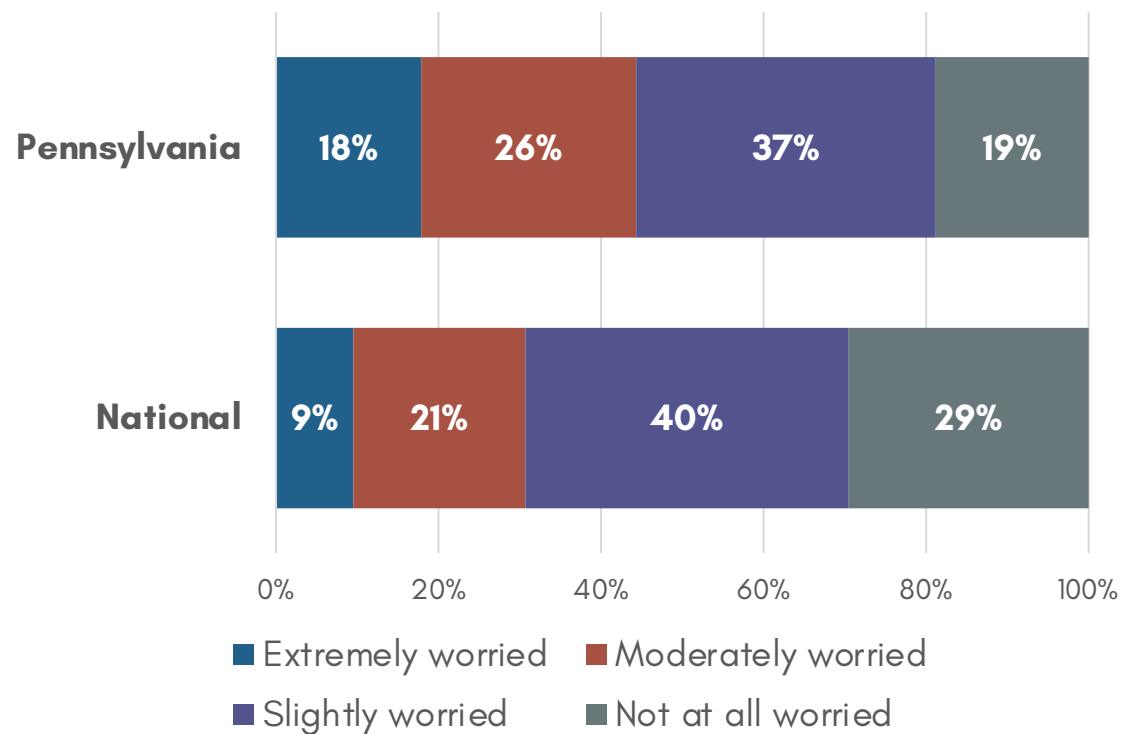
- PA students report that they more courses requiring materials be purchased (96% vs. 90%)
- PA students report fewer no cost courses (57% vs. 41%)
- The cost per term for PA students is similar to national levels
- 40% of PA students report no financial aid coverage for materials, much higher than the 17% reported nationally

About how much did you spend on course materials, whether purchased, leased, or rented, during this term?



PA STUDENTS ARE MORE WORRIED THAN NATIONAL

How worried were you about meeting your course material costs this term?

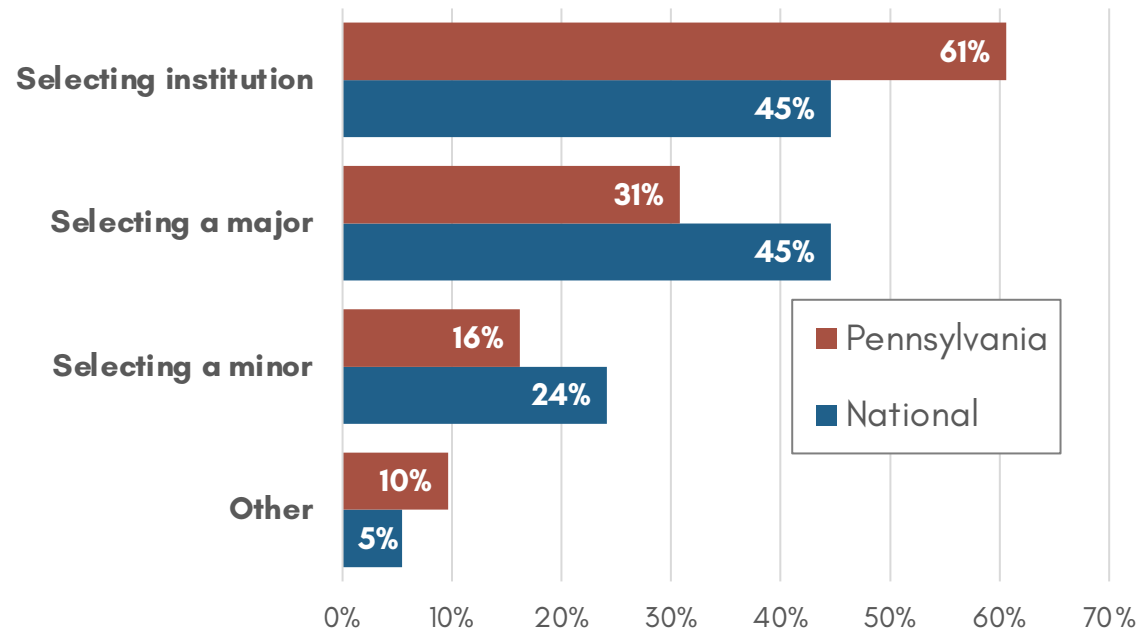


- Overall levels of worry are higher in PA (81% vs. 71%)
- Biggest difference is number of students saying they are “extremely worried” with 18% vs. 9%



COURSE MATERIAL COSTS AFFECTS LARGE ACADEMIC DECISIONS AT BOTH PA AND NATIONAL LEVEL

What measures have you taken to reduce your required course material costs throughout your college career?



- PA students report material costs impacting their institutional choice more than national
- But there are fewer PA students saying costs impact their major or minor choices

APPENDIX



BACKGROUND: STUDIES IN FLORIDA AND VIRGINIA

- Florida Distance Learning Consortium - Florida Virtual Campus

- <https://dlss.flvc.org/colleges-and-universities/research/textbooks>
- Surveys in 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018, and 2022
 - The 2022 report surveyed **13,800 students**
- Most questions remained the same to explore changes over time
- Some questions dropped, added, or revised



- Virginia (VIVA)

- <https://vivalib.org/va/open/survey>
- Survey conducted in Fall 2021 with over **5,600 respondents**
- Questionnaire based on recent Florida version with some small modifications



BACKGROUND: STUDY PROCESS



Institutions voluntarily participate.



Each institution responsible for communications to their own students.



All institutions use a common questionnaire.



Central organization administers the surveys and processes the data.



Central organization produces reports and presentations of the findings.



PENNSYLVANIA PROCESS FOR INSTITUTIONS

- Each institution is responsible for deciding how best to reach their students
 - Full control of the messaging (ALPA provides sample you can use or modify)
 - Control of sample (all students or a sample)
- Each institution will have its own unique survey link
 - Full control of wording on the survey landing page (ALPA provides sample to use or modify)
 - Regular reports of response status
 - All personal information removed before combining with state-wide data
 - Control of data collection period start and stop (within overall project timeline)
- All institutions will have access to weekly updates on survey completions and top-level data summaries during the data collection process
- All institutions with 50 or more completed student surveys will receive an Excel workbook of charts and tables comparing their results to the state-wide data