



# **From Application and Beyond: Tracking Aspirations and Motivations for Transfer of Ontario's University and College Applicants**

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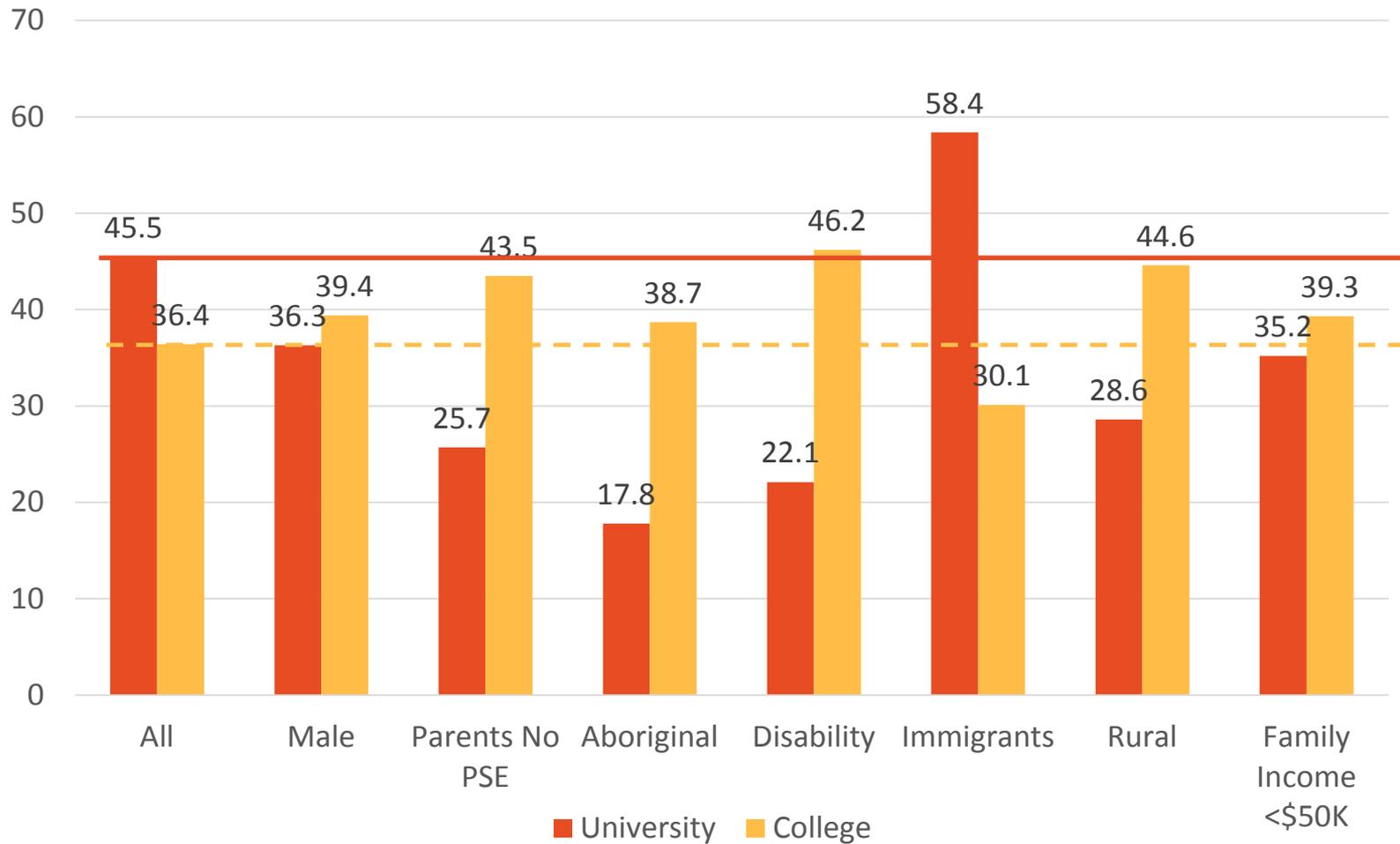
# Introduction: Access and transfer

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It is well established that segments of the population are more or less likely to aspire to and to attend college and university:

- Immigrant youth are more likely to attend university than Canadian-born; but varies widely by region of origin (TDSB, Sweet et al, 2010).
  - Those who are Aboriginal, have a disability, are low income, first generation students, come from rural communities, or are male are less likely to attend university.
  - However, these inequities to access are primarily a university issue; these groups are not actually “underrepresented” in colleges relative to the population.
- Would enhancing the college-to-university pathway be a vehicle to bridge underrepresentation in university of certain groups (Kerr, McCloy, Liu, 2010)?

# College and university participation rates in Ontario: differences by group



# How does transfer relate to access?

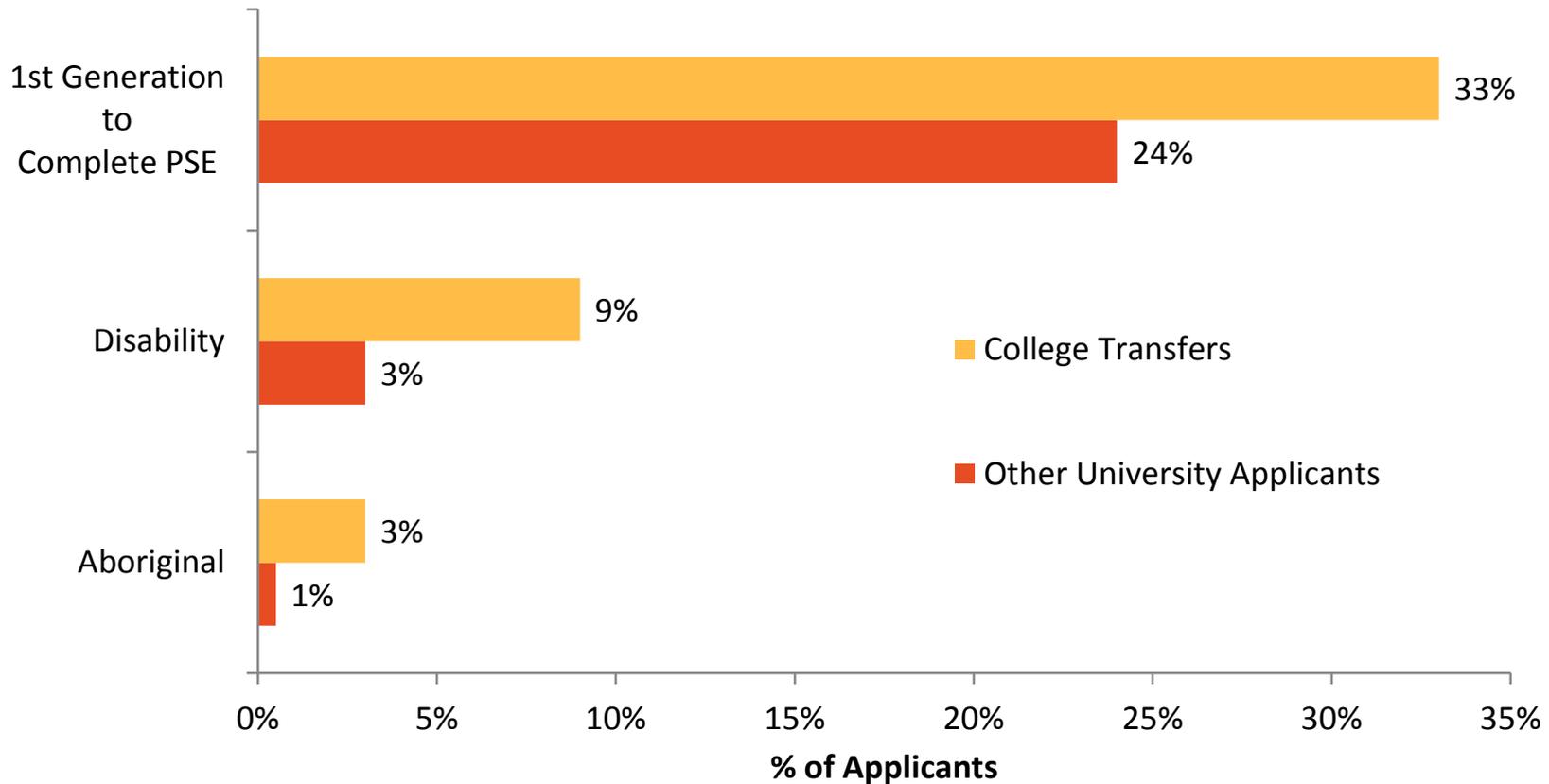
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Would enhancing the college to university transfer increase access to university for certain groups?

- BC and Ontario data indicate that transfer students are more likely to be from “underrepresented” groups than other university students (HEQCO, BCAAT)
- Students with university educated parents, and those born outside of Canada are more likely to aspire to transfer, and to eventually transfer (CRSM, Seneca, 2016).
- University graduates who had been college transfers are more likely to be funded by student loans, less likely to rely on family for funding, and have higher debt than direct entrants, linked in part to being lower income (BCAAT, 2005).

# Transfer students more likely to be from underrepresented groups: Ontario university applicants

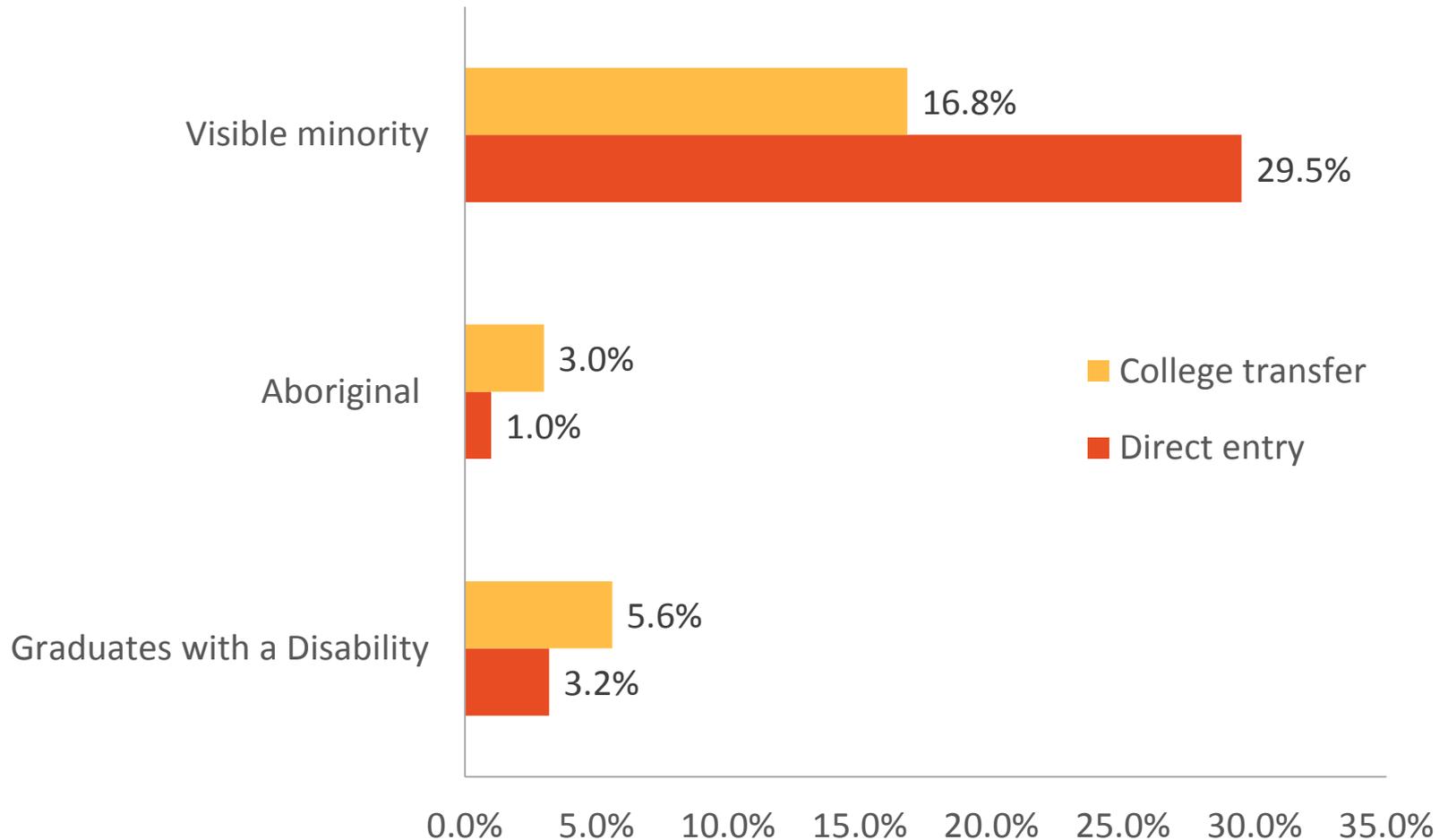
**2009 College-University Transfer Applicants: Academica's University-College Applicant Survey**



Academica Group, published in Kerr, McCloy, Liu, HEQCO, 2010

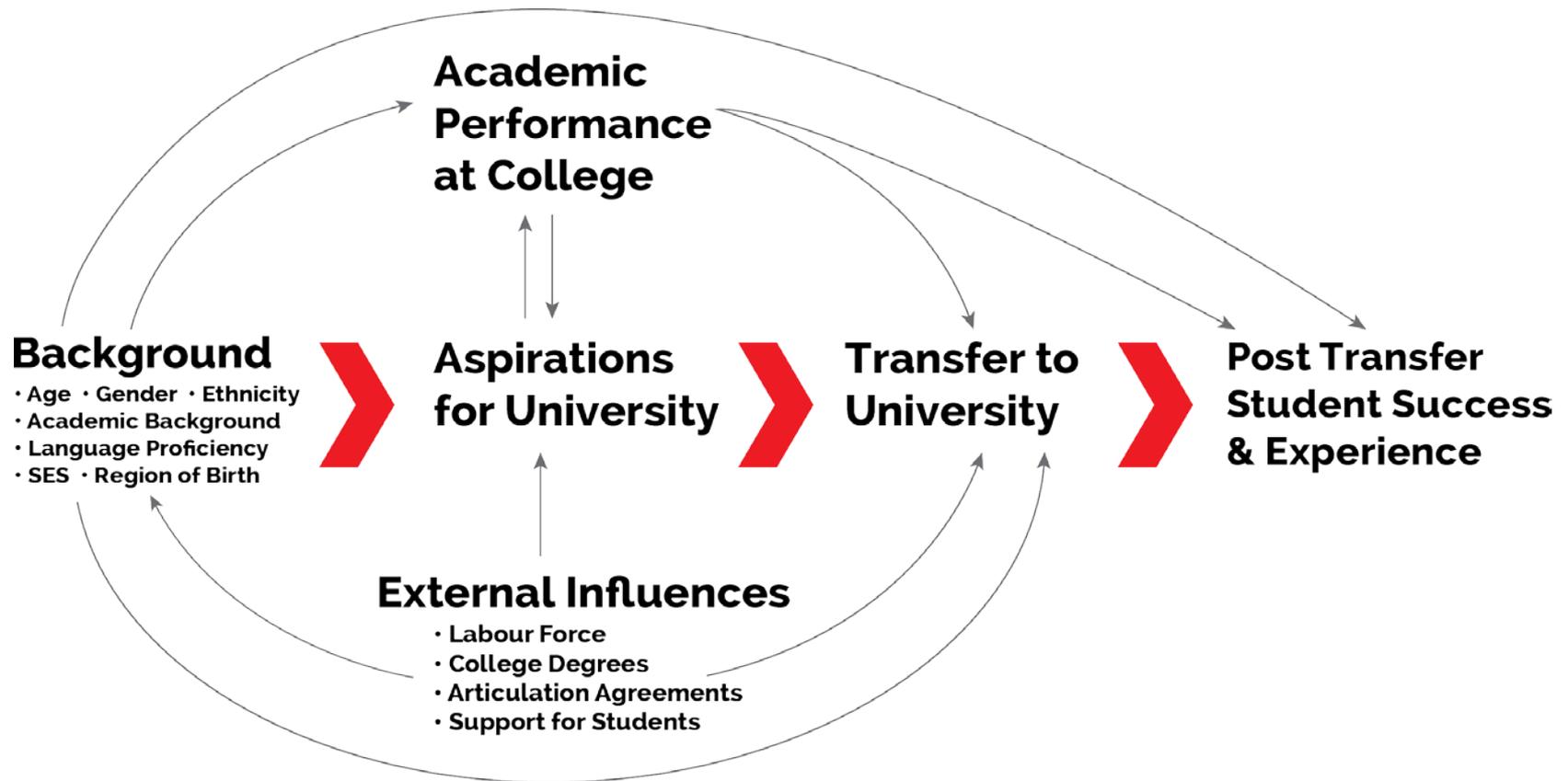


# Transfer students more likely to be from underrepresented groups: BC university graduates



# Influences on Student Transfer and Transfer Outcomes: Central role of aspirations

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# Research questions

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How does the profile of applicants to Ontario colleges compare for those who aspire to university versus those who do not?

How does the profile of applicants to Ontario universities compare for those who previously completed a college credential versus those with the “traditional” high school background?

- By understanding these profiles, it will help our understanding of who is accessing the college- university transfer pathway, and their unique needs and experiences.
- It also will lay the ground work for a follow-up survey on transfer aspirants and transfer applicants to further understand student pathways and experiences.

**Project funded by ONCAT**

# Study Design

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# Methodology: Survey and administration

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Source: Academica's University and College Applicant Survey (UCAS™) for the years 2010-2015.

- The same survey is administered annually to college and university applicants across Canada. Response rate averages ~20%.
- This analysis focussed on applicants (residing from inside or outside Canada) to Ontario colleges and universities.

## 1. Applicants to Ontario Colleges N= 72,419

All Ontario colleges are represented in all years, with Ontario College Application Services (OCAS) overseeing the distribution of email invitations to applicants who opt-in to participate.

## 2. Applicants to Ontario's Universities N= 78,062

Universities decide annually whether to participate, resulting in a variable university applicant pool.

The UCAS explores a range of applicant views concerning:

- Motivations for PSE; factors influencing choice, use of information sources, key decision factors, demographics, and aspirations.

Note: Since international students don't typically apply through OCAS there are few in the sample. International applicants are included in the university applicant pool.



# Transfer Aspirants (College Applicants)

Label	College applicants who are University transfer aspirants: “Aspire for degree”	College applicants who “Do not aspire for degree”	Other pathways: Remainder of applicant sample (Excluded from analysis)
Sample size	22,600	35,239	14,579
Description	Responses to the question “ <i>What is the highest level of education you plan to attain?</i> ”, were degree or postgrad credential; did not have a degree already	Responses to the question “What is the highest level of education you plan to attain?” were 1, 2, or 3 year cert/ diploma; did not have a degree already	Response to the question “What is the highest level of education you plan to attain?” was “don’t know” or indicated they already had a degree (separate question)

# Transfer Students (University Applicants)

Label	Transfer Students: Group 1. College Graduates	High School Graduates	Other Pathways: Remainder of applicant sample (excluded from analysis)
Sample size	2,759	68,054	7,249
Description	Applicants to an Ontario university whose highest level of education was a completed a college or trades credential	Applicants to an Ontario university whose highest level of education was a high school diploma*	University applicants with incomplete PSE, or university degrees

Note: Those who indicated their highest education was HS diploma, but also indicated they attended PSE in the previous year were placed in “other pathways”; includes both direct and delayed entrants from HS.

# Results

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# Presentation of results: Applicant profiles

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## 1. Sociodemographic:

- age, gender, rural/ urban
- region of birth, ethnicity, first language
- Aboriginal identity, disability, parent's education
- dependents

## 2. Academic:

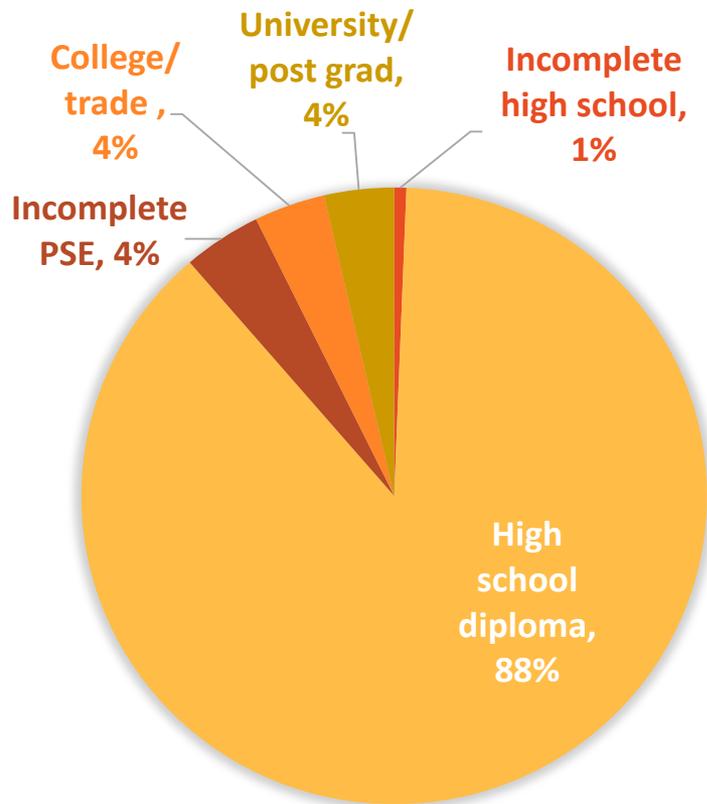
- HS grades
- academic program of application
- selectivity of university chosen (entering averages)
- preferred program delivery (online/ hybrid)

## 3. Information sources/ motivations/ decision making

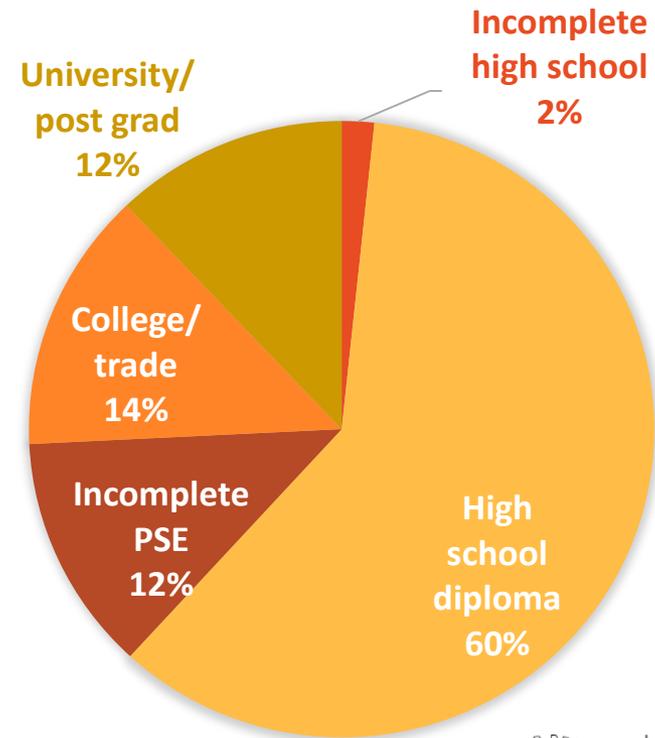
- reasons for applying to PSE
- information sources
- career and program certainty

# Previous education of college and university applicants, 2010-2015

## UNIVERSITY APPLICANTS

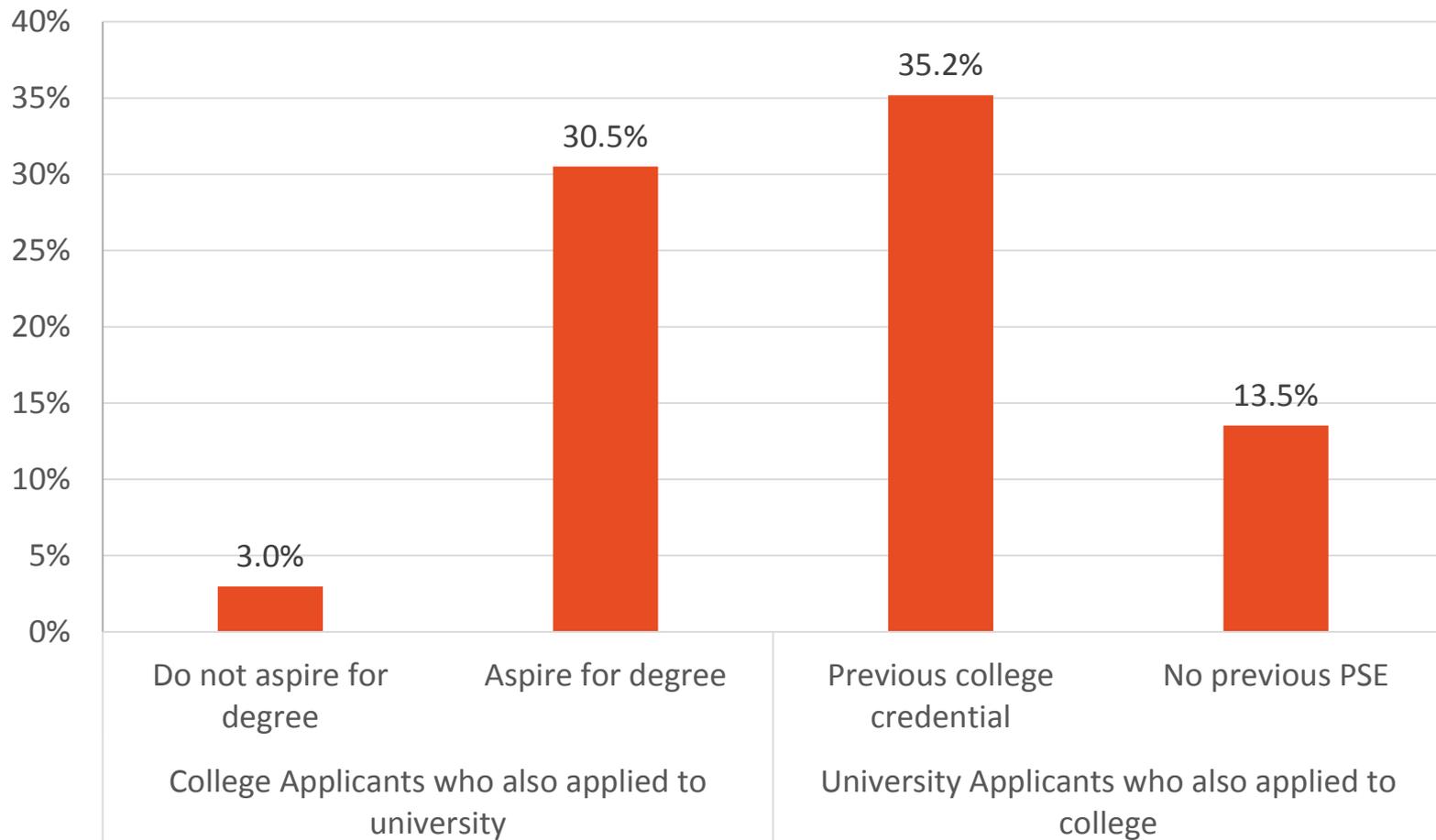


## COLLEGE APPLICANTS



Note: High school graduates include delayed and direct entry

# Applicants applying to both college and university by aspirations and pathway



# Sociodemographic profile of university aspirants and transfer applicants

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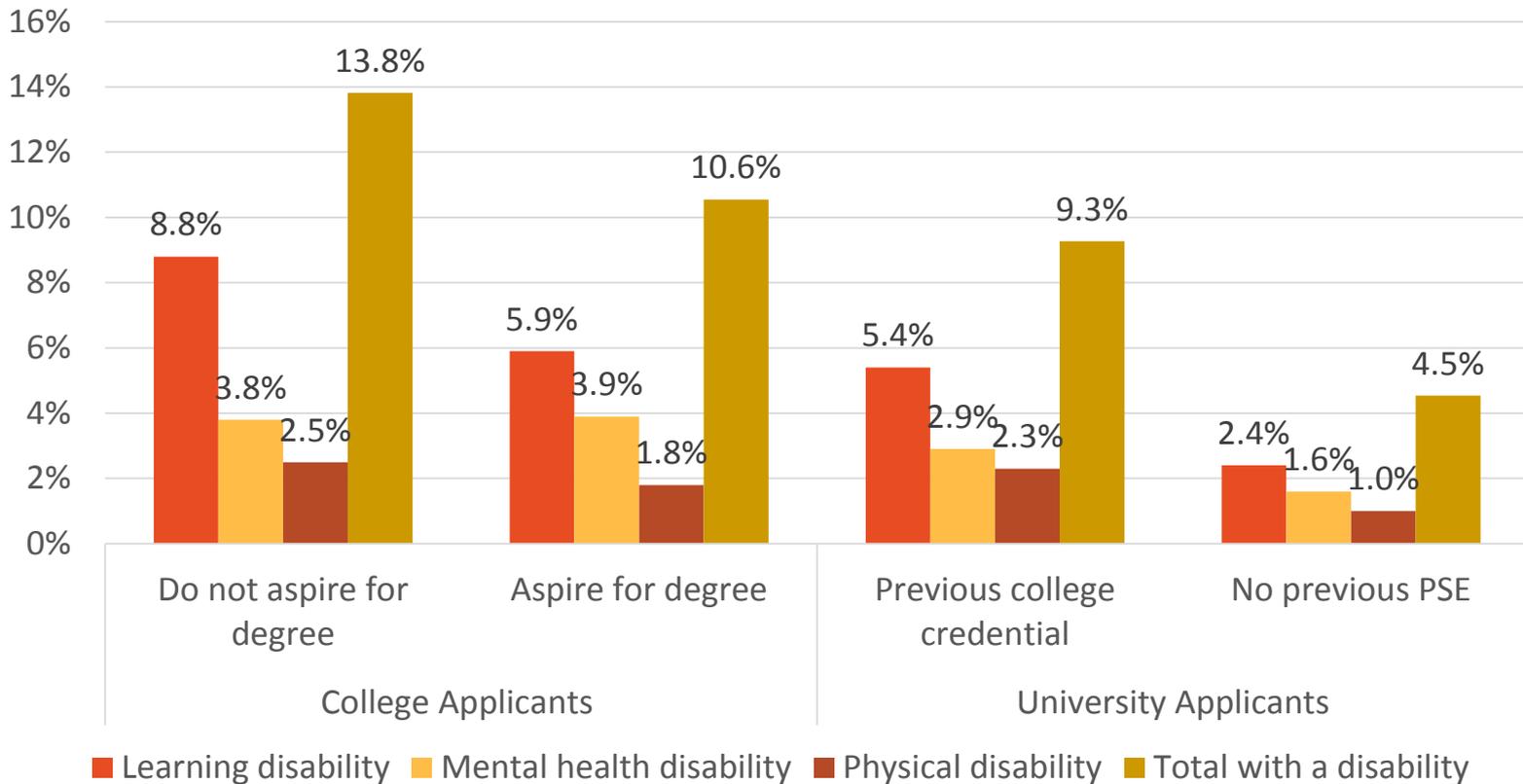
## Demographics by pathway

	College Applicants		University Applicants	
	Do not aspire for degree	Aspire for degree	Previous college credential	No previous PSE
Average Age (y)	21.7	20.6	24.1	17.9
% >25 y	18.2%	13.9%	27.2%	0.3%
% Female	52.8%	59.1%	57.3%	54.1%
% Born in Canada	86.4%	78.9%	71.5%	67.6%
% English spoken at home	86.3%	79.0%	82.0%	71.8%
% International*	0.3%	0.5%	5.8%	6.1%
% rural	32.2%	23.2%	20.3%	15.8%
% with dependents <15 y	9.5%	7.2%	8.4%	0.7%
% planning to move for school	45.4%	46.5%	55.7%	75.7%

Note: International students do not apply through OCAS generally

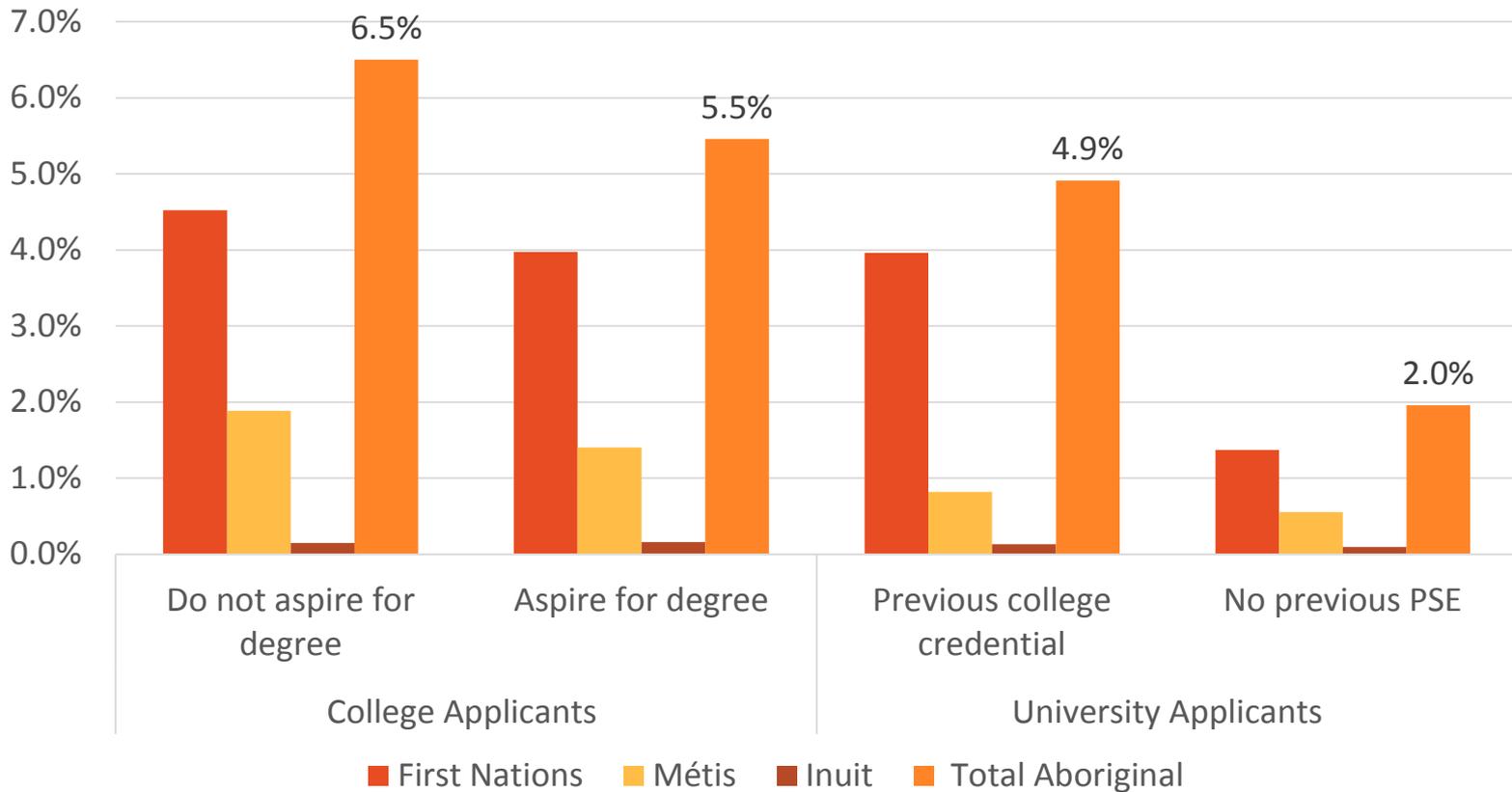
# Applicants with a disability by pathway

What type of disability/disabilities do you have? (check all that apply)

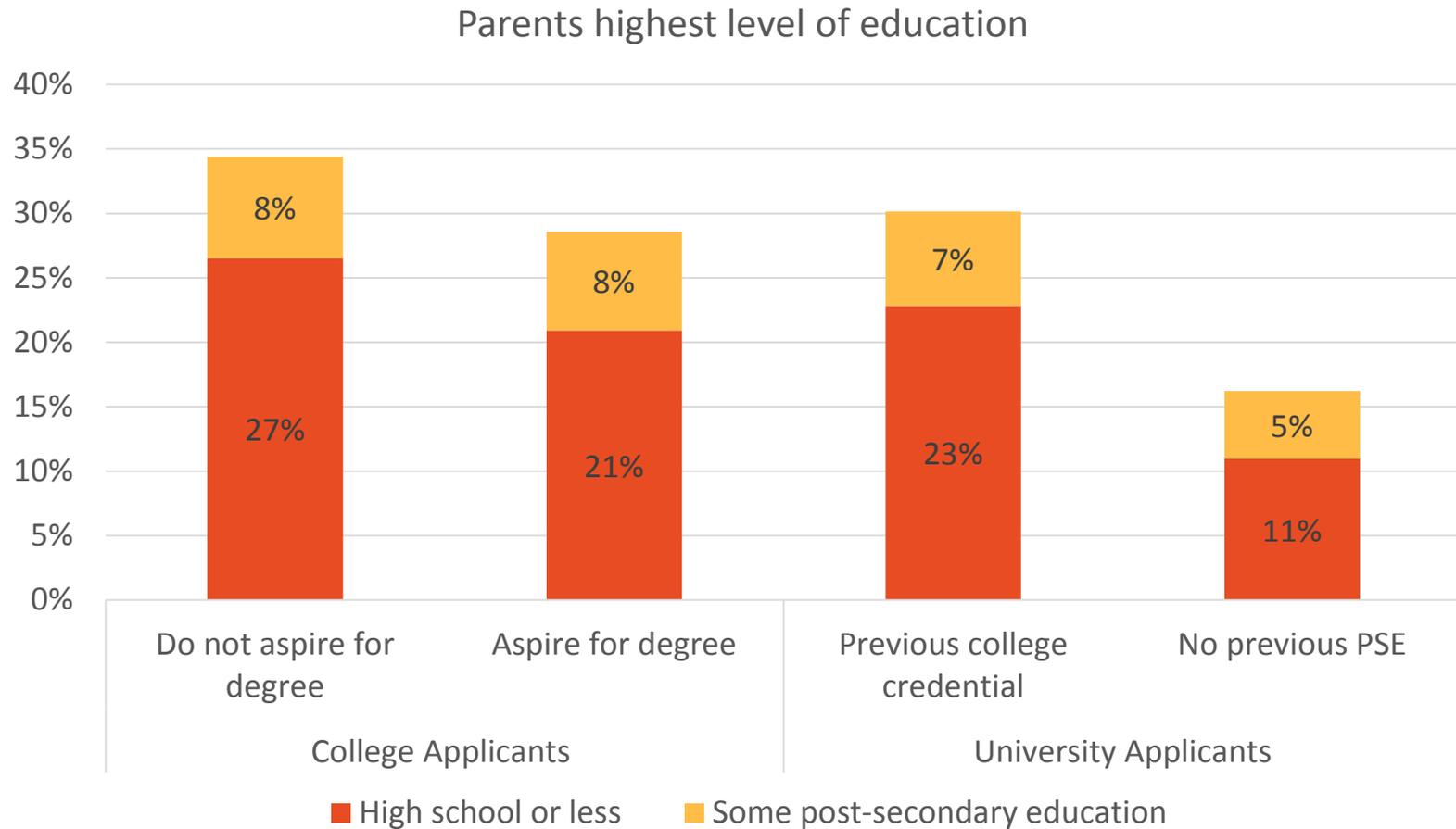


# Aboriginal applicants by pathway

Are you a First Nations (status or non-status), Métis, or Inuit person?  
(Select all that apply)



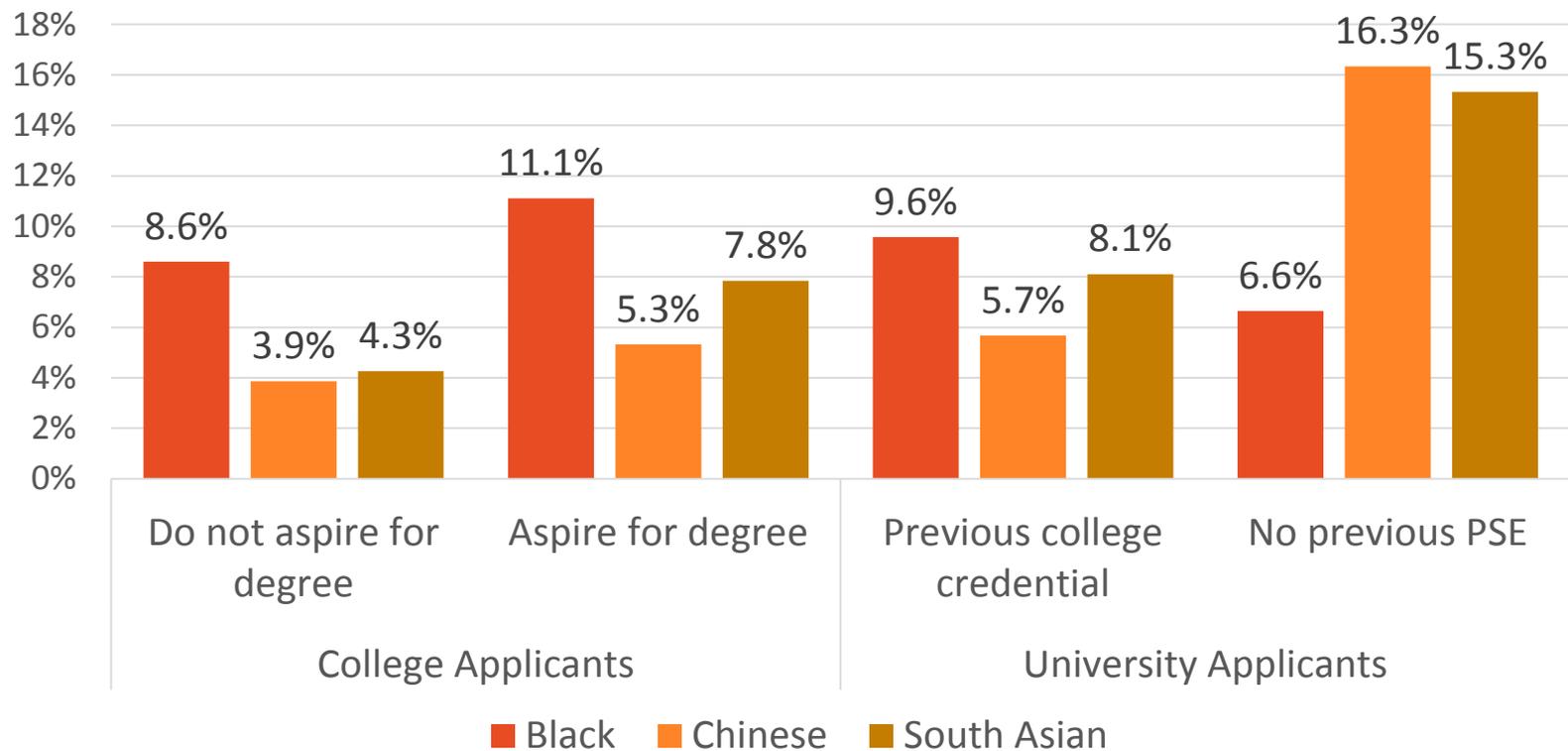
# First generation applicants by pathway



Excludes those who answered "Don't know" or N/A

# Visible Minority group by pathway (selected groups)

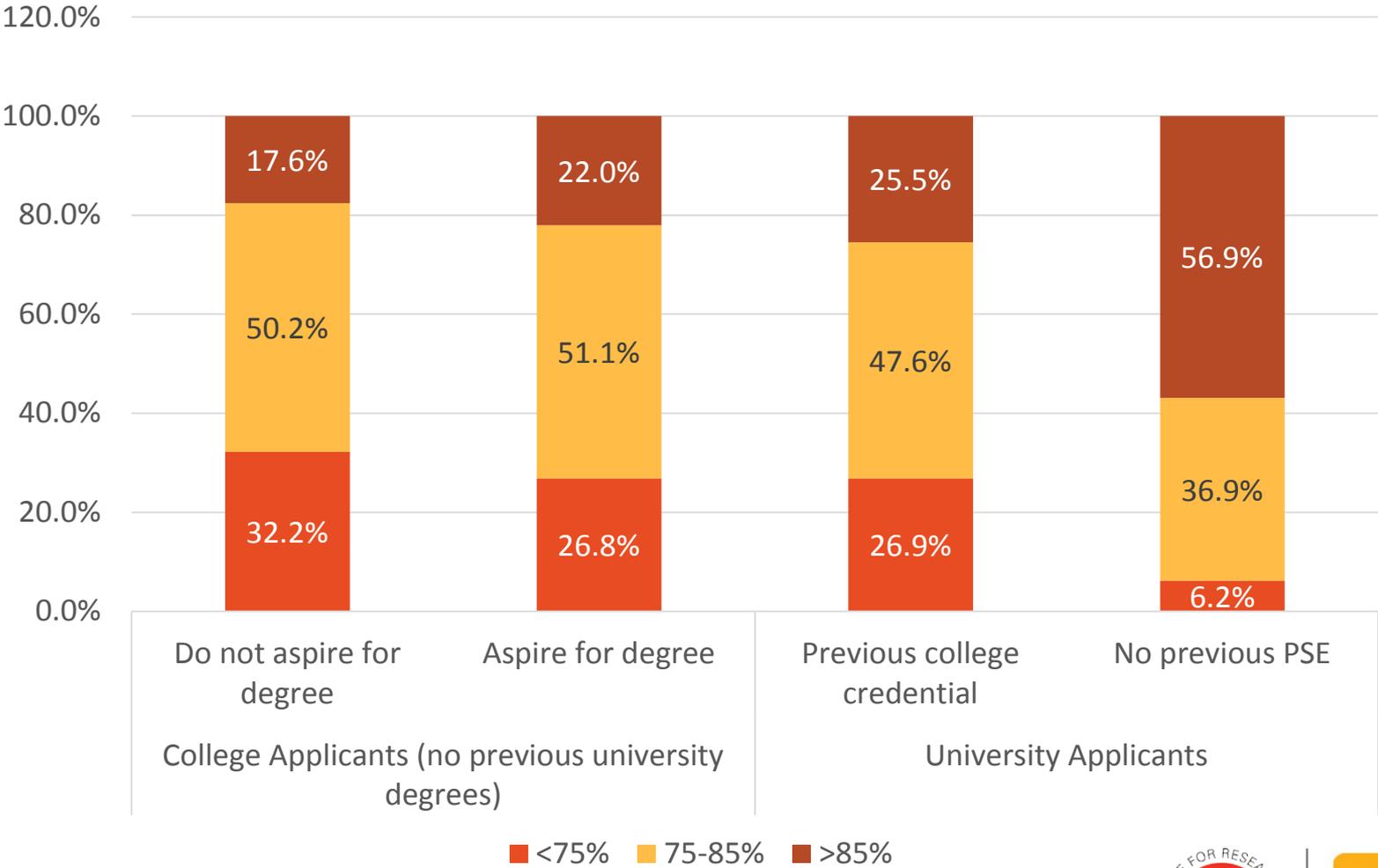
People in Canada come from many different ethnic, cultural and racial groups. Of the list provided below, which of these group(s) do you identify with most? (Select all that apply)



# Academic profile of university aspirants and transfer applicants

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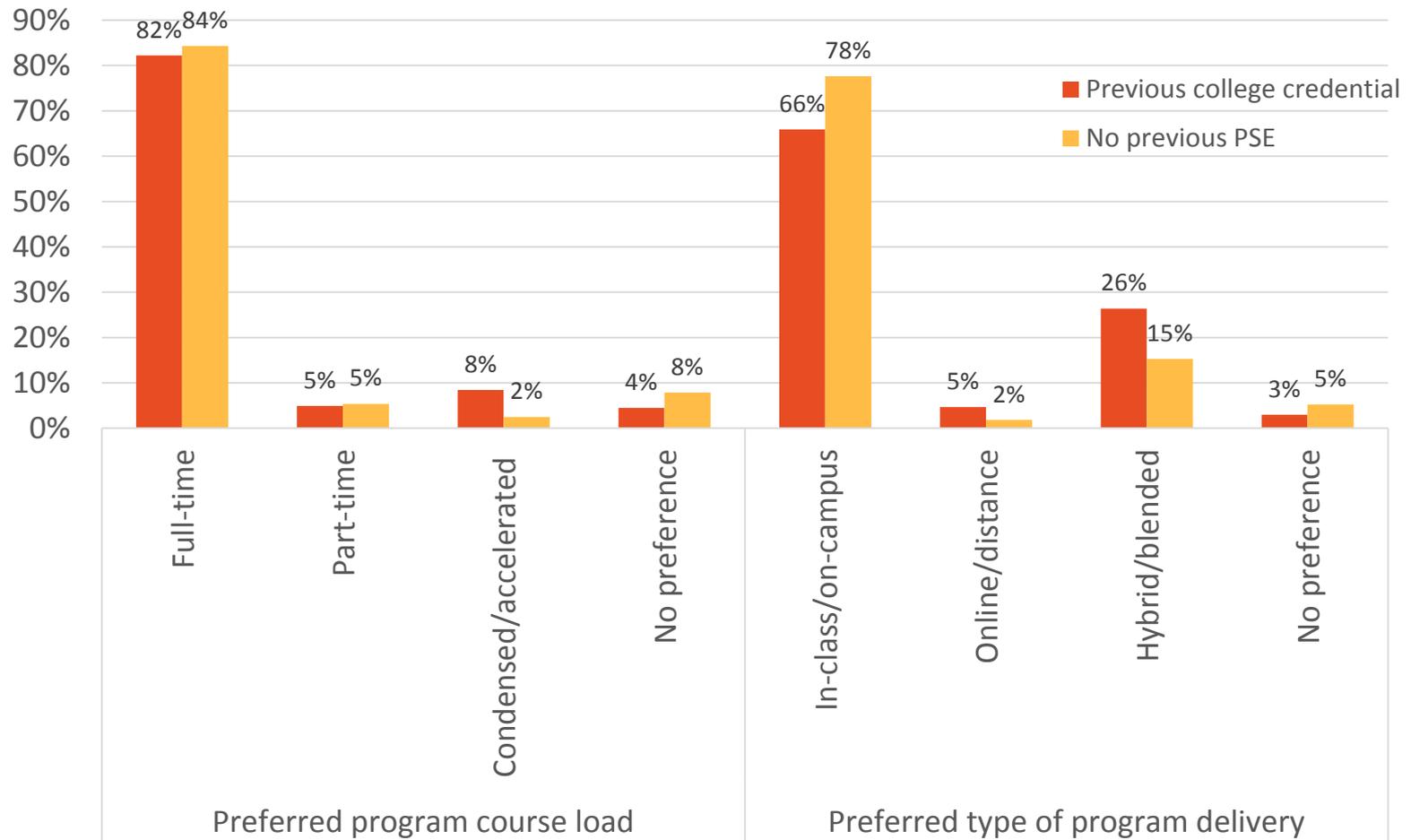
# Reported high school grades by pathway



# Program of application by aspirations and pathway

	College Applicants		University Applicants	
	Do not aspire for degree	Aspire for degree	Previous college credential	No previous PSE
Social Science, Humanities & Related	37.9%	38.0%	37.0%	30.1%
Health & Health Related	21.7%	31.6%	25.6%	15.6%
Natural/ Applied Sciences & Technology	27.1%	15.9%	20.8%	31.2%
Business	8.4%	11.0%	11.8%	17.4%
Preparatory/ Skills Development	0.6%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%
Other/ Undeclared	4.3%	3.2%	4.7%	5.6%

# Preferred program delivery and course load, university applicants

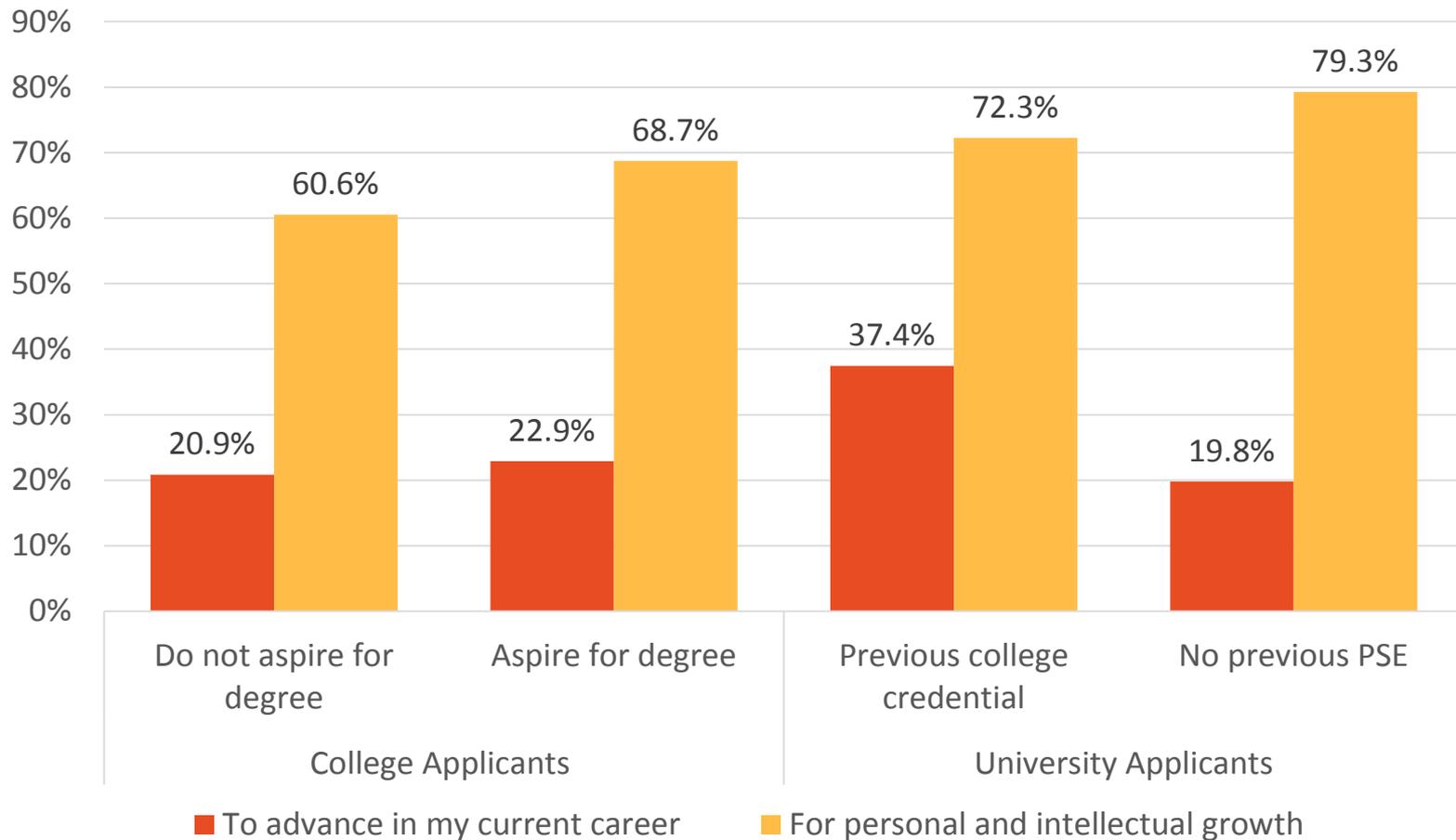


# Information sources, motivations, decision making

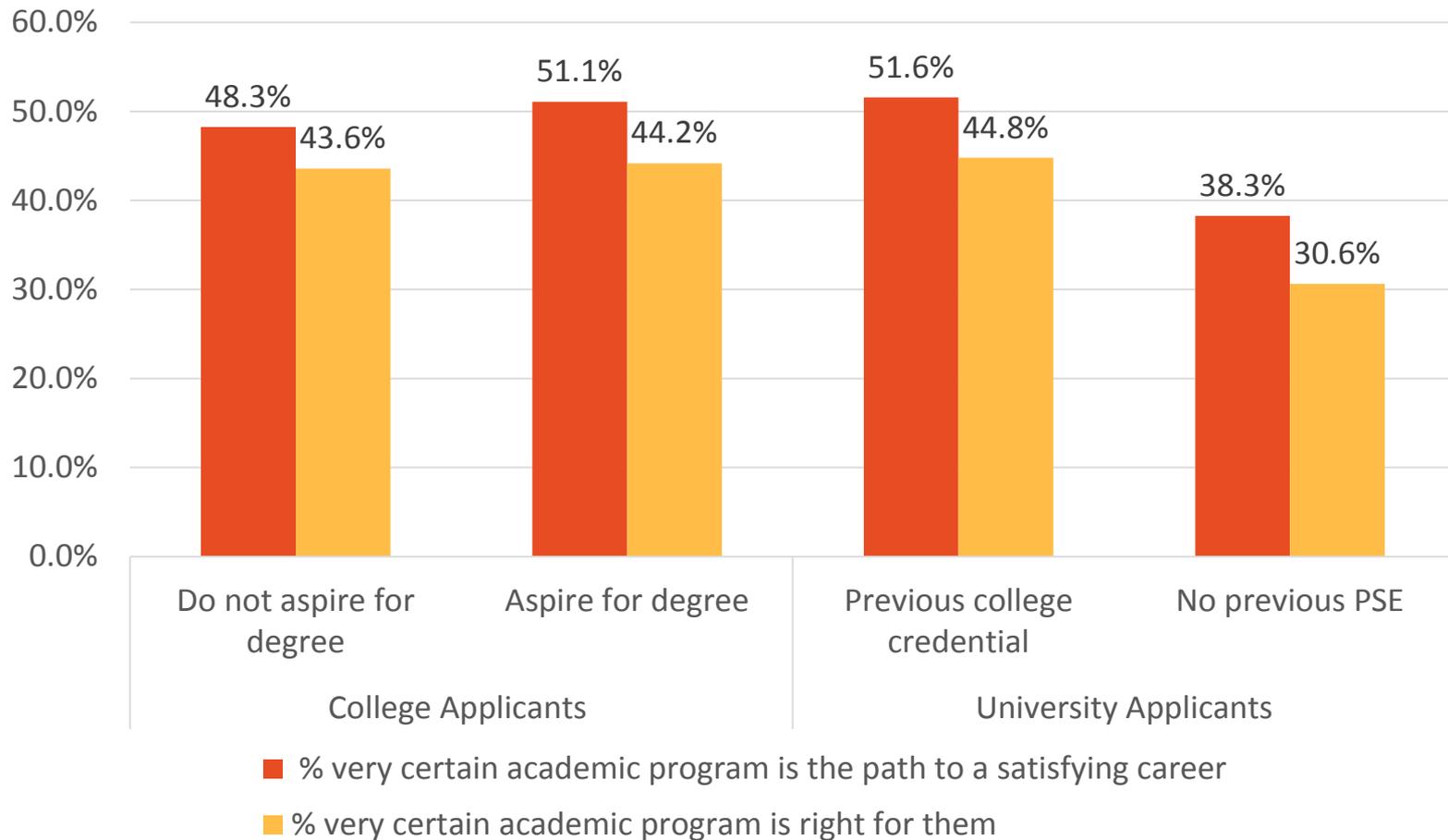
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UNIVERSITY ASPIRANTS AND TRANSFER  
APPLICANTS

# Please select your main reasons for applying to postsecondary education (selected responses):



# Program certainty by aspirations and pathway



# Information sources: key findings

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College applicants who aspire to a degree versus those who do not, differ little on sources of information used.

However, university applicants with a college credential are:

- More likely to use professor consultations; less likely to use recruitment activities related to high school (these results related to recent schooling)
- Less likely to use institutional specific materials except course calendar and website
- Rely on personal contact rather than broader institutional contact, i.e. rely on email, phone calls, regular mail, informal visits, professors, and friends
  - May be indicative of requiring specific information related to their individual case, i.e credits transferred

# Information sources used by university applicants

	No previous PSE	Previous college credential	% pt. difference
Institution website	90.9%	89.9%	1.0%
Viewbook	87.1%	58.5%	28.6%
Education-related webportals	83.3%	63.7%	19.6%
Brochures	76.6%	53.4%	23.2%
<b>Current students/graduates</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
<b>Emails after application</b>	<b>69.9%</b>	<b>63.4%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
HS presentations/visits	67.0%	24.5%	42.4%
<b>Friends</b>	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>56.3%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>
Parents/ family members	64.8%	41.5%	23.3%
Guidance counsellor	53.4%	20.5%	32.9%
Teacher	53.1%	18.2%	34.9%
<b>Mail received after application</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
University/college fair	51.2%	21.7%	29.5%
Maclean's ranking	48.9%	25.7%	23.2%
Open house	44.4%	22.4%	22.0%
Formal tour	44.2%	20.2%	24.1%
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>47.7%</b>	<b>-4.8%</b>
<b>Informal/unofficial visit</b>	<b>38.5%</b>	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Facebook	35.1%	24.0%	11.1%
<b>Phone calls after application</b>	<b>33.2%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>Talking to a professor</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>-10.0%</b>

When considering postsecondary options, which of the following was the single most important consideration?

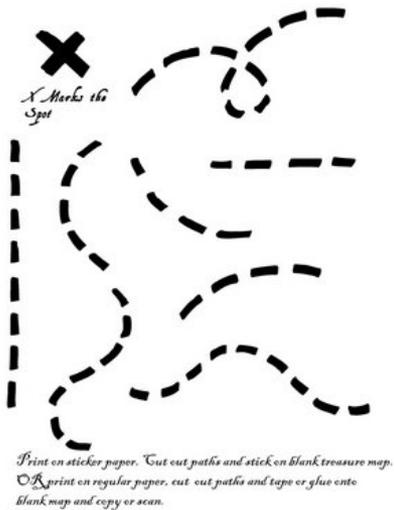
	College Applicants		University Applicants	
	Do not aspire for degree	Aspire for degree	Previous college credential	No previous PSE
Strong reputation in my specific program of interest	32.9%	36.3%	36.1%	37.6%
Strong overall academic reputation	7.9%	11.3%	15.8%	21.1%
Institutions were close to home	21.5%	17.1%	17.8%	7.0%
Strong reputation for graduates having good careers	19.3%	17.7%	12.4%	15.6%
Financial reasons	6.1%	5.3%	5.1%	3.5%
Strong reputation for campus experience	2.6%	2.8%	1.7%	6.7%
Strong reputation for teaching	2.7%	3.2%	2.1%	2.5%
Where my friends are going	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%	0.6%
None of the above	5.7%	5.4%	8.1%	5.2%

# Finances: Percentage coverage of total first year costs by funding source

	College Applicants		University Applicants	
	Do not aspire for degree	Aspire for degree	Previous college credential	No previous PSE
Personal (savings, employment earnings etc.)	31%	27%	30%	16%
Parents/family	26%	28%	23%	49%
Government student grants/loans	25%	25%	24%	17%
Financial aid (scholarship) from university/college	10%	11%	11%	10%
Other (scholarships, bursaries, etc.)	5%	6%	6%	6%
Private loans	3%	3%	6%	2%

# The Changing Face of HE

## Pathways



Student knowledge of:

- Interests
- Skills
- Career options



Costs

- Tuition +
- Debt

Choice

- Competition
- 1000s programs

Outcome Certainty

- Credentialism
- Employment Types

# Conclusions

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- Diversity - College and university applicants continue to vary greatly in sociodemographic, academic and motivational factors. Some are related to age and maturity, however many are not.
  - College students aspiring to transfer and those who graduate and continue on to university, appear to be a hybrid of both college and university population.
  - Increasing transfer for students should reduce inequities in university participation; however there is still inequities in aspirations of college students, reproducing that seen in college-university divide.
  - College transfers are more certain in their program selection, and are more likely to attend for career based reasons.
- Communication - The traditional channels of recruitment and information provision, HS, viewbooks, etc. do not work as well for transfers. Rather they seem to rely on interpersonal contact for their individual circumstances, transfer credit etc.
- Data Driven – UCAS-like research can help universities in particular reach out to college transfers, to see how they are accessing info, etc.

# It's less about U and more about Fit

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Student Education and Career Goal Development is more important

Prominent, Accurate, and Complete, program information is more important

Student support services more important than ever:

- Incoming assessment | Ongoing | Outgoing



Student mobility is more important than ever – more incoming and outgoing articulation agreements and pathways

## Next Steps- Phase 2

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Both groups (college applicants who aspire to a degree, and university applicants who are transferring from college), will be studied in a follow-up survey and their pathways and experiences compared. Three subgroups:

1. Follow-up of college applicants who aspired to university: what differed between ***those who eventually transferred and those who did not?***
2. Comparison of ***first year university experience*** of college transfers and direct entrants (eg. orientation experience, academic preparation, student services, student engagement).
3. ***Transfer students***: What was their transfer to university experience like? (satisfaction with experience, amount of transfer credit, when did they find out how much credit, etc.)

# Thank you!

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# Percentage of Ontario university students (NSSE) with previous college

