

SAMPLE REPORT

2025-2026

Academic Flourishing Report

This sample report is based on a hypothetical dataset constructed using responses from the AFI dataset. It is intended solely to illustrate what a typical institutional report might look like and does not represent any specific institution.

PREPARED BY

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at Harvard University
Flourishing Data Collaborative





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How to Read This Report

Before you review this report, we offer a few comments to help interpret the data presented. The report provides a general summary of the data, offers analyses that indicate institutional strengths and areas for growth, and also documents differences across years in the program, as well as across various demographic groups. These survey data capture participants' responses at a single point in time, rather than longitudinally. Some of the patterns in the data observed across the four academic years may reflect differences in cohort characteristics and therefore cannot be interpreted as causal, especially for demographic groups with small sample sizes.

Structure of the Survey and the Report

The Academic Flourishing Survey that was administered has various sections including: Demographics, Flourishing, University Community Well-Being, Student Formation, and Character. For the Demographics, Flourishing, and Character items, students are asked to self-assess and self-report, and for University Community Well-Being and Student Formation, students are asked to assess the community itself and the support the institution provides in specific areas of student formation and growth. Thus, these measures indicate student perceptions of the institution and of the institution's contribution.

The Academic Flourishing Report, which you are reading, provides an executive summary (Part I) of the overall mean scores for Flourishing, University Community Well-Being, and Student Formation. The demographic distribution of the survey respondents is then given (Part II). The report then provides more detail on each of the survey components, beginning with Flourishing, and then University Community Well-Being and Student Formation (Parts III–V). For each of the sections, the subsections include: 1) an average score of survey items for each of the survey domains; 2) domain means represented across the four undergraduate years; 3) relative strengths listed in order from highest to lowest for each indicator; 4) the change in average scores from Year 1 to Year 4, calculated by subtracting Year 1 means from Year 4 means; and 5) the means of the individual survey indicators by academic year.

Part VI reports the means of the character items, which include select items from the VIA Character Strengths Survey and questions on intellectual humility and pro-social behaviors. Parts VII and VIII present the proportions of “yes” and “no” answers to various questions on academic freedom (Part VII) and opportunities for formation (Part VIII).

The appendices include two or three parts, depending on the information available. The first appendix summarizes the scores for the various domains broken out by gender, by race and ethnicity, and by religious affiliation. If the institution provided overall student body demographic data at intake, the report may also include a second appendix that provides summary statistics, weighted by gender and by race/ethnicity, to reflect demographics of the overall student population. The final appendix is a list of suggested resources for institutions that would like to develop their programming in support of flourishing and student formation.

Scales

The Secure Flourishing Index (VanderWeele, 2017) and the Community Well-Being Assessment (VanderWeele, 2019) have been used in numerous settings, and the psychometric properties of these scales are reported elsewhere (Węziak-Białowolska et al., 2019a, 2019b; Padgett et al., 2024). Likewise, psychometric characteristics for the VIA character indicators are reported elsewhere (McGrath, 2024). The student formation questions were recently introduced, and initial data indicate reasonable reliability of the domain scores (VanderWeele and Case, 2025).

Many of the survey questions use 0–10 scales, with 0 representing the lowest and 10 the highest value, for the Flourishing, University Community Well-Being, and Student Formation sections. The text prompts vary for the Flourishing Index (0 = Not Satisfied at All, Extremely Unhappy, Poor, Strongly Disagree, etc. and 10 = Completely Satisfied, Extremely Happy, Excellent, Strongly Agree, etc.). The material and financial stability items' scale is 0 = Worry All of the Time and 10 = Do Not Ever Worry. For University Community Well-Being and the intellectual humility questions, the scale is 0–10, where 0 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree. With the University Community Well-Being questions, students were asked about agreement with regard to the institution attaining the ideal represented by each statement. For Student Formation, the scale is from 0–10 where: 0 = Has Not Helped and 10 = Has Helped a Lot. The Academic Freedom, Opportunities for Formation, and Charitable Giving questions are “yes” and “no,” and the proportions are presented. The scales for the VIA character items are 1–5 where 1 = Very much unlike me and 5 = Very much like me.

U.S. National Benchmark for Flourishing in Youth (18-24)

A U.S. nationally representative sample of 2,682 young adults aged 18–24, both college-educated and not, from the Global Flourishing Study, completed the Secure Flourishing Index and reported a mean flourishing score of 6.37 (VanderWeele et al., 2025). This can serve as a reference point for the Flourishing section of the survey.

Items (Questions) vs. Domains

While each survey question assesses a particular item, items are grouped into different categories that we call domains. We report both the individual item scores and the average scores across the items in a given domain. The summarized domain scores allow for an easier overall assessment of areas of strength or for potential improvement.

Sample Size

The report draws from all the survey data received for undergraduate students. However, because some respondents may skip questions or stop taking the survey, some of the sections have fewer responses than others. There will be slight variation in the sample sizes depending on the survey section. One particular figure, in Subsection 4, that indicates the changes in scores from years 1 to 4, draws only from complete or nearly complete surveys. In Appendix 1, where data are broken out into demographic groups, it is important to take note of the size of the sample to avoid over-interpretation.

Standard Deviation

The report indicates the means, or averages, of the scores for each question or domain. The standard deviation is also reported. The standard deviation represents the “spread” of the data, or how much the individual responses vary from the mean. A higher standard deviation indicates that there is a wider range of scores reported for that particular item, whereas a lower standard deviation indicates that the responses are more closely clustered around the mean.

Data

Each institution is also provided with its own individual-level data for the full set of survey responses so as to be able to carry out its own analyses.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge funding from the Wake Forest Educating Character Initiative and Lilly Endowment, the Kern Family Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation, and partner institutions to support the infrastructure, staff, and research of the Academic Flourishing Initiative.

References

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I. Executive Summary

Scale 0 (not satisfied, strongly disagree, poor, etc.) to 10 (completely satisfied, strongly agree, excellent, etc.)

Overall Means

Overall	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Flourishing	7.09	1.33	2291
University Community Well-Being	6.97	1.64	2223
Student Formation	7.99	1.61	2182

Flourishing

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Happiness and Life Satisfaction	7.09	1.60	2291
Mental and Physical Health	6.84	1.60	2291
Meaning and Purpose	7.08	1.89	2291
Character and Virtue	7.17	1.65	2291
Close Social Relationships	7.17	2.01	2291
Financial and Material Stability	7.21	2.73	2291

University Community Well-Being

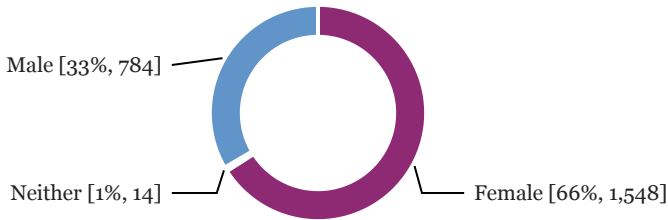
Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Good Relationships	6.22	1.99	2223
Proficient Leadership	6.93	1.86	2223
Healthy Structures	7.52	1.79	2223
Satisfying Community	6.39	2.12	2223
Strong Mission	7.81	1.71	2223

Student Formation

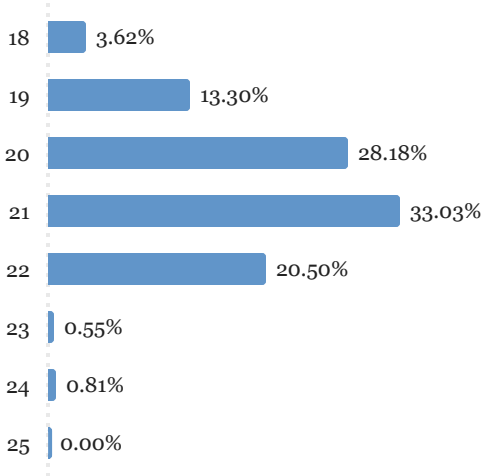
Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Cognitive and Epistemic Capacities	8.32	1.48	2182
Virtues for Academic Flourishing	7.85	1.86	2182
Citizenship	7.87	1.80	2182
Meaning and Growth	7.93	1.84	2182

II. Survey Demographics

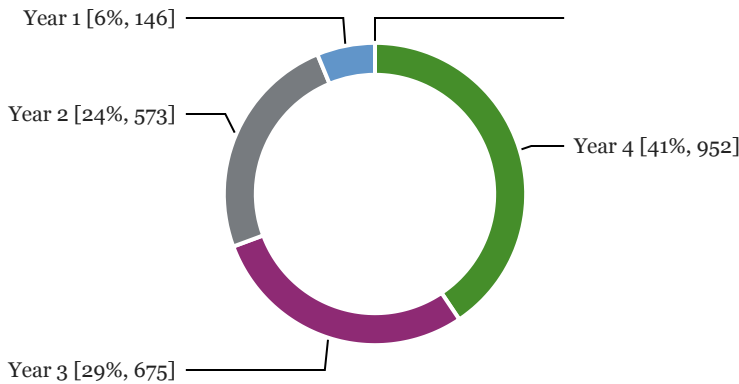
Fully completed surveys 2,182



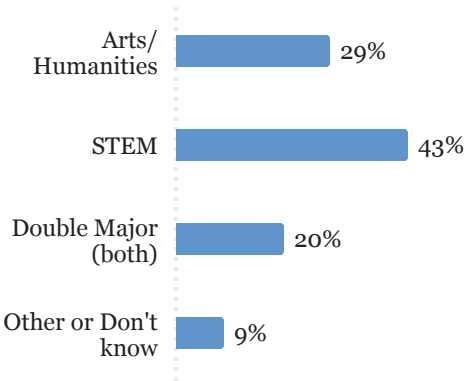
Age



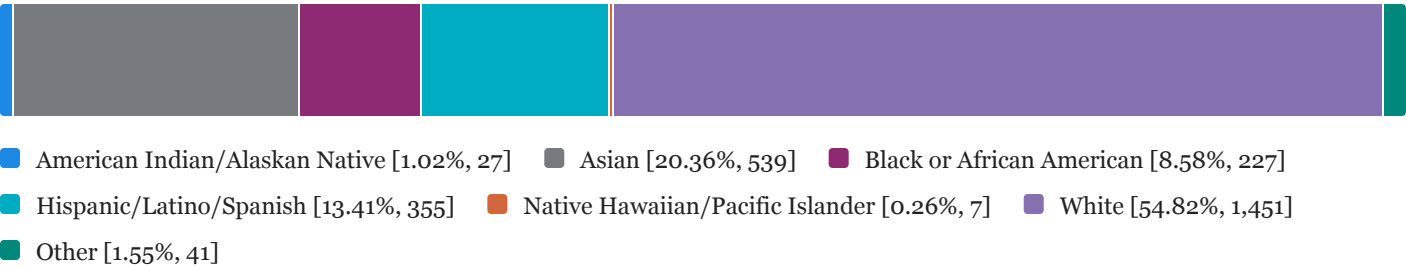
Undergraduate Year



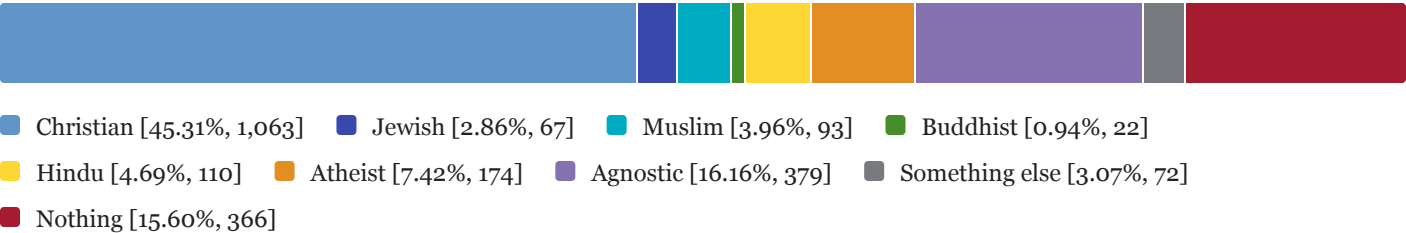
Major



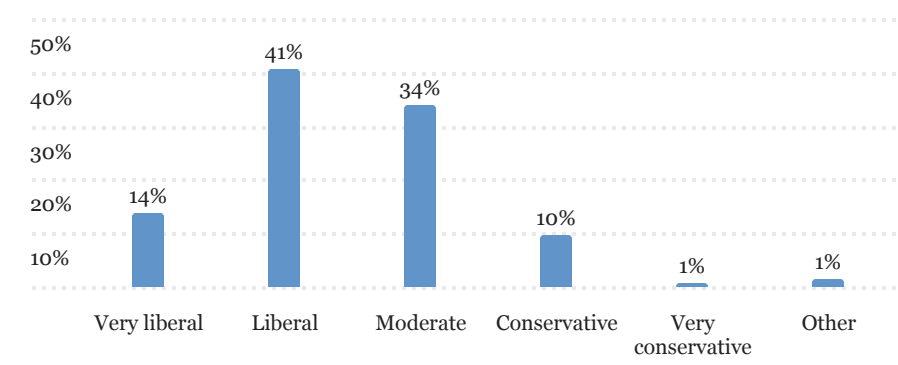
Race/Ethnicity



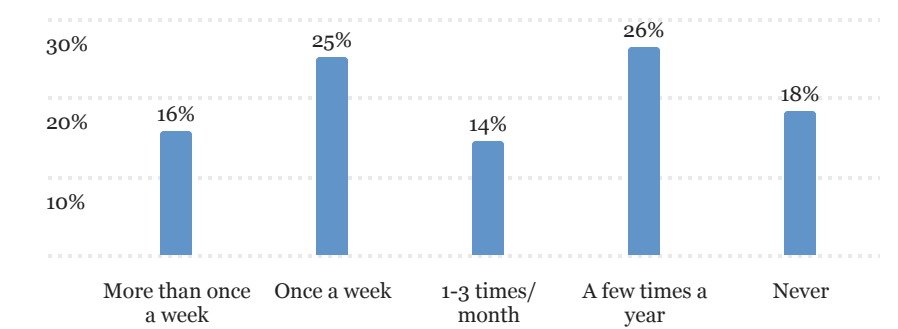
Religious Affiliation



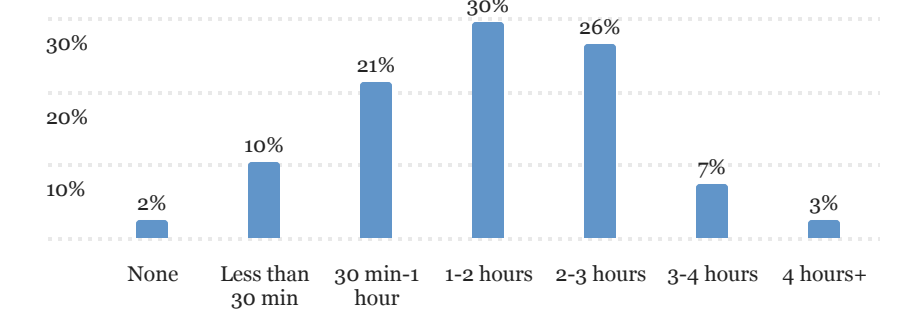
Political Affiliation



Religious Service Attendance

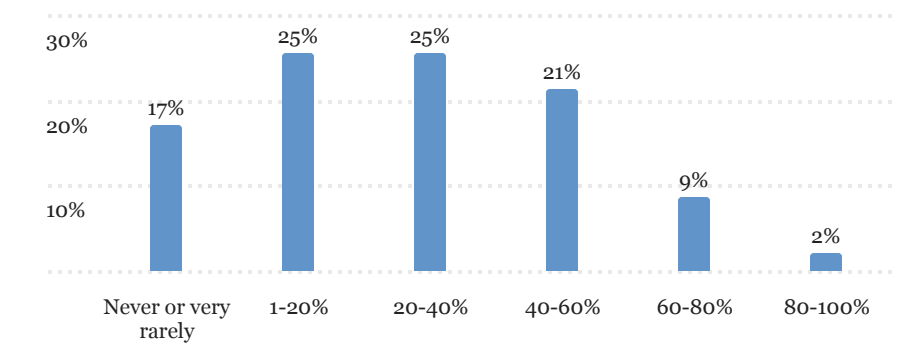


Daily Social Media Use



AI Use

For what proportion of your course assignments and readings do you make some use of artificial intelligence (other than for purposes of grammar correction)?



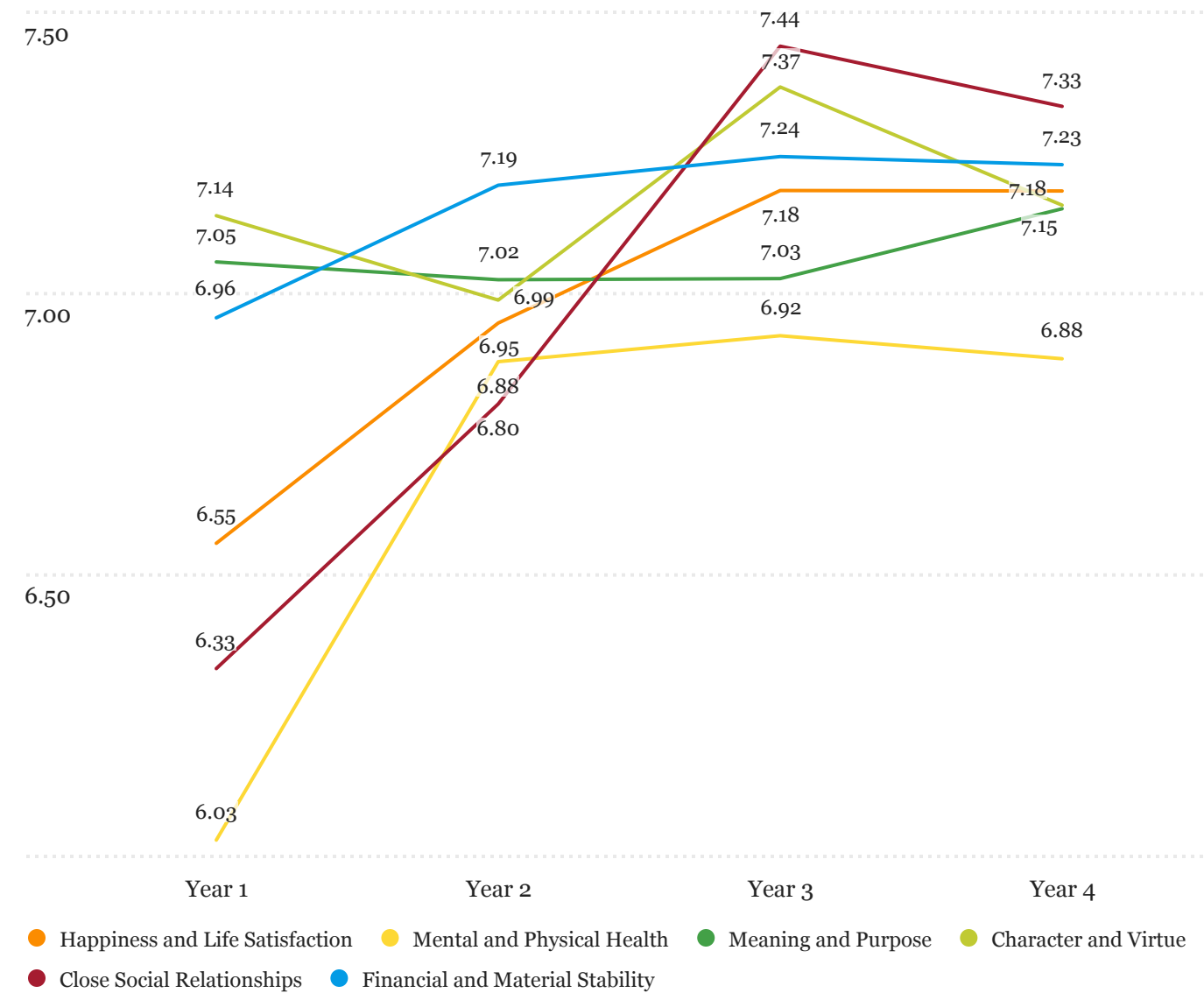
III. Flourishing

1. Flourishing Domain Means

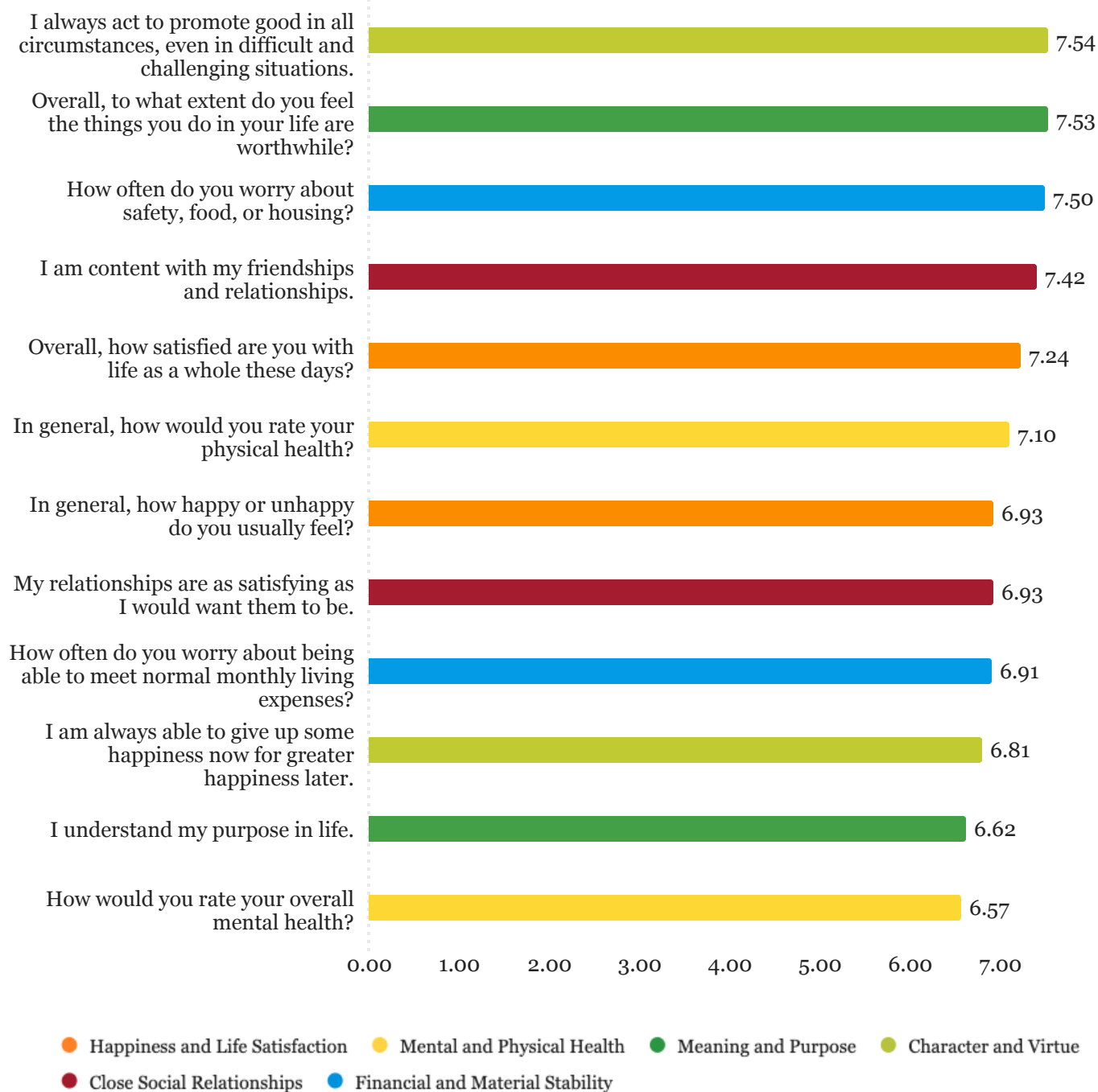
Scale 0 (not satisfied, strongly disagree, poor, etc.) to 10 (completely satisfied, strongly agree, excellent, etc.)

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Happiness and Life Satisfaction	7.09	1.60	2291
Mental and Physical Health	6.84	1.60	2291
Meaning and Purpose	7.08	1.89	2291
Character and Virtue	7.17	1.65	2291
Close Social Relationships	7.17	2.01	2291
Financial and Material Stability	7.21	2.73	2291

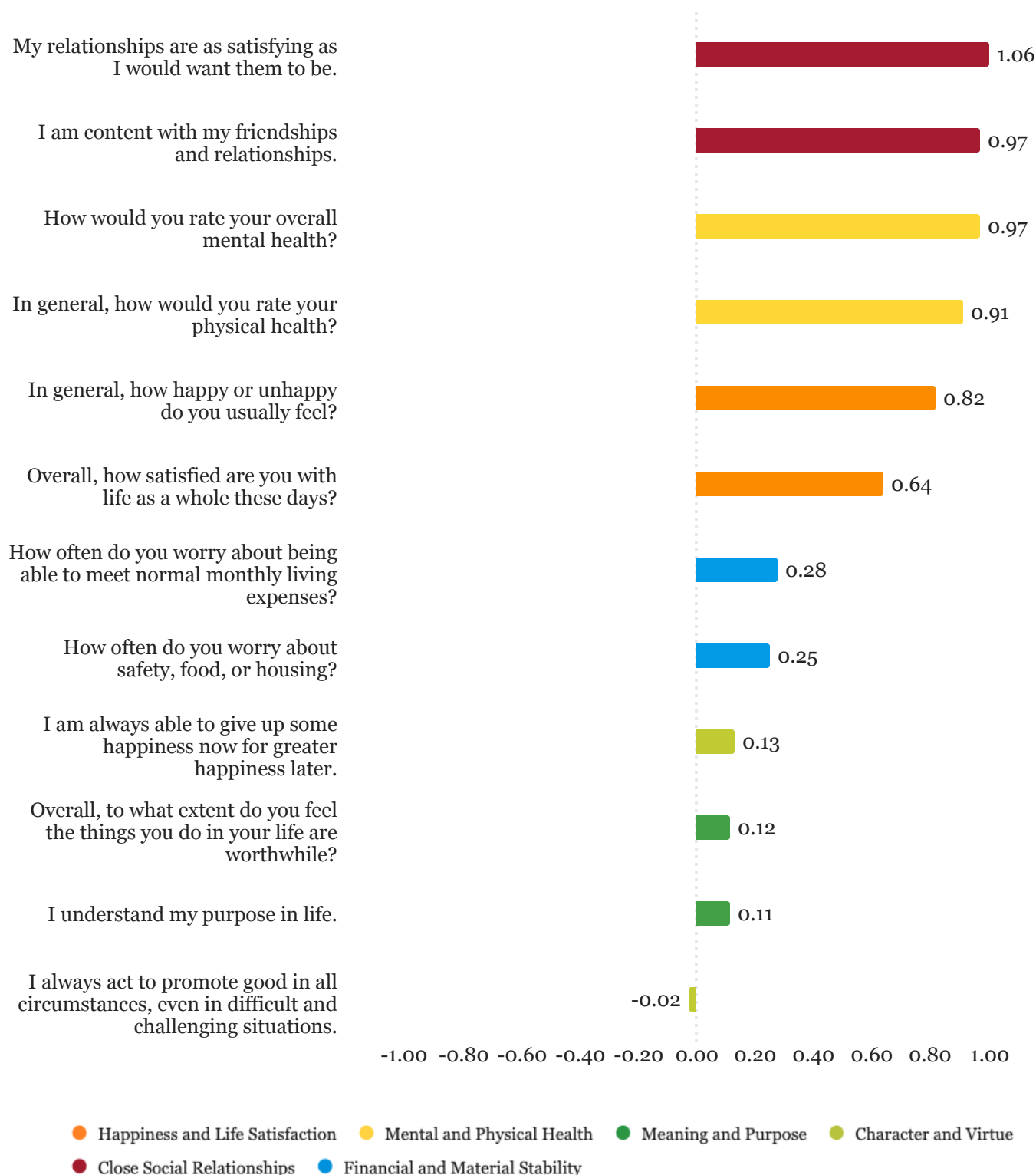
2. Flourishing across Years by Domain



3. Relative Strengths for Flourishing



4. Changes in Flourishing across Years (Year 1 to Year 4)



5. Flourishing Indicators by Year

Scale 0 (not satisfied, strongly disagree, poor, etc.) to 10 (completely satisfied, strongly agree, excellent, etc.)

Flourishing Mean	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Overall
Mean	6.68	6.97	7.20	7.15	7.09
Happiness and Life Satisfaction	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
1. Overall, how satisfied are you with life as a whole these days?	6.80	7.18	7.22	7.34	7.24
2. In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel?	6.31	6.71	7.14	7.02	6.93
Mental and Physical Health	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
3. In general, how would you rate your physical health?	6.32	7.38	7.04	7.11	7.10
4. How would you rate your overall mental health?	5.73	6.37	6.81	6.65	6.57
Meaning and Purpose	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
5. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?	7.53	7.44	7.47	7.63	7.53
6. I understand my purpose in life.	6.58	6.60	6.58	6.67	6.62
Character and Virtue	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
7. I always act to promote good in all circumstances, even in difficult and challenging situations.	7.64	7.21	7.71	7.59	7.54
8. I am always able to give up some happiness now for greater happiness later.	6.63	6.77	7.02	6.72	6.81
Close Social Relationships	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
9. I am content with my friendships and relationships.	6.54	7.16	7.72	7.49	7.42
10. My relationships are as satisfying as I would want them to be.	6.12	6.44	7.16	7.17	6.93
Financial and Material Stability	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
11. How often do you worry about being able to meet normal monthly living expenses?	6.77	6.82	6.84	7.02	6.91
12. How often do you worry about safety, food, or housing?	7.14	7.56	7.65	7.43	7.50

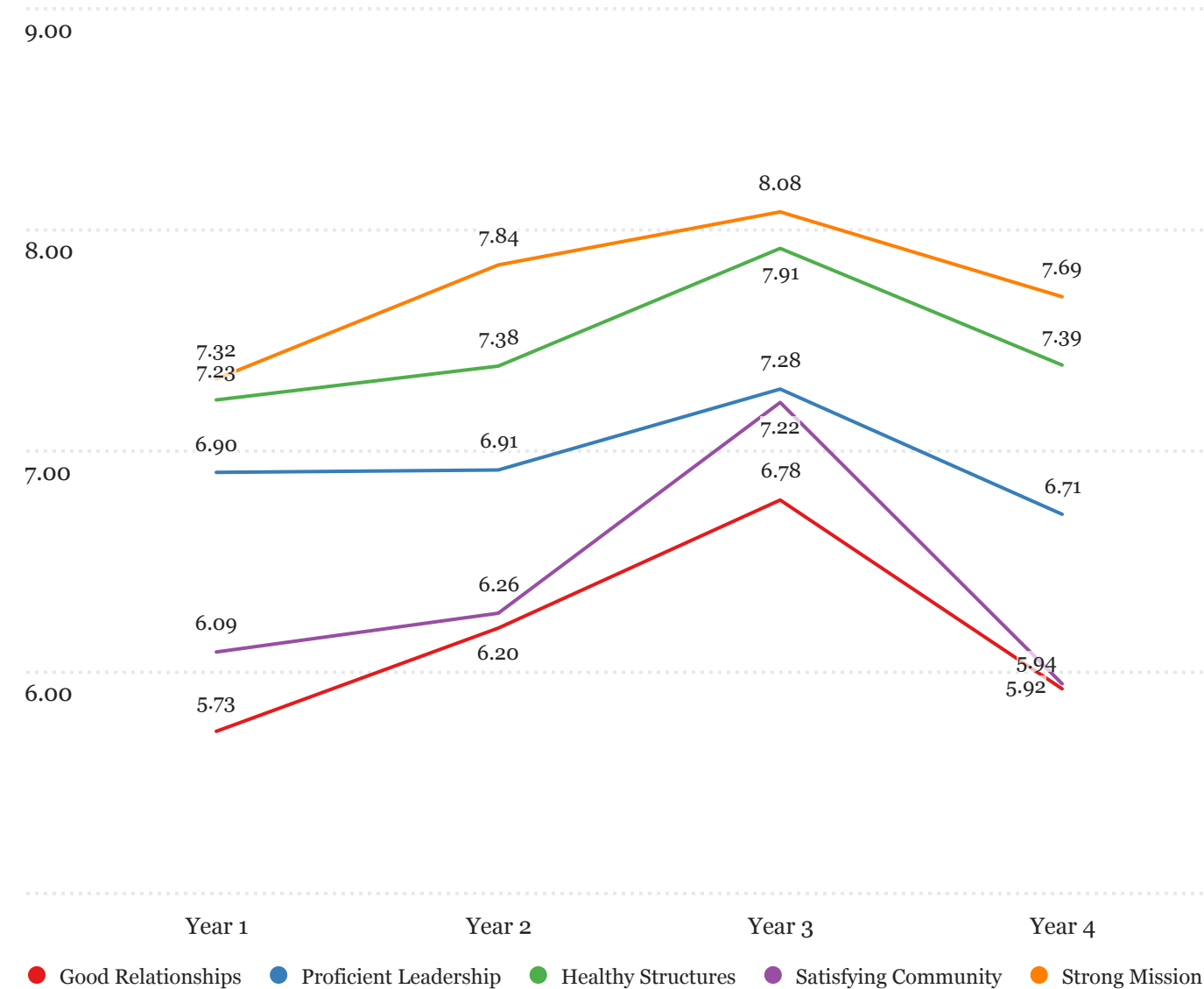
IV. University Community Well-Being

1. University Community Well-Being Domain Means

Scale 0 (Strongly disagree) to 10 (Strongly agree)

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Good Relationships	6.22	1.99	2223
Proficient Leadership	6.93	1.86	2223
Healthy Structures	7.52	1.79	2223
Satisfying Community	6.39	2.12	2223
Strong Mission	7.81	1.71	2223

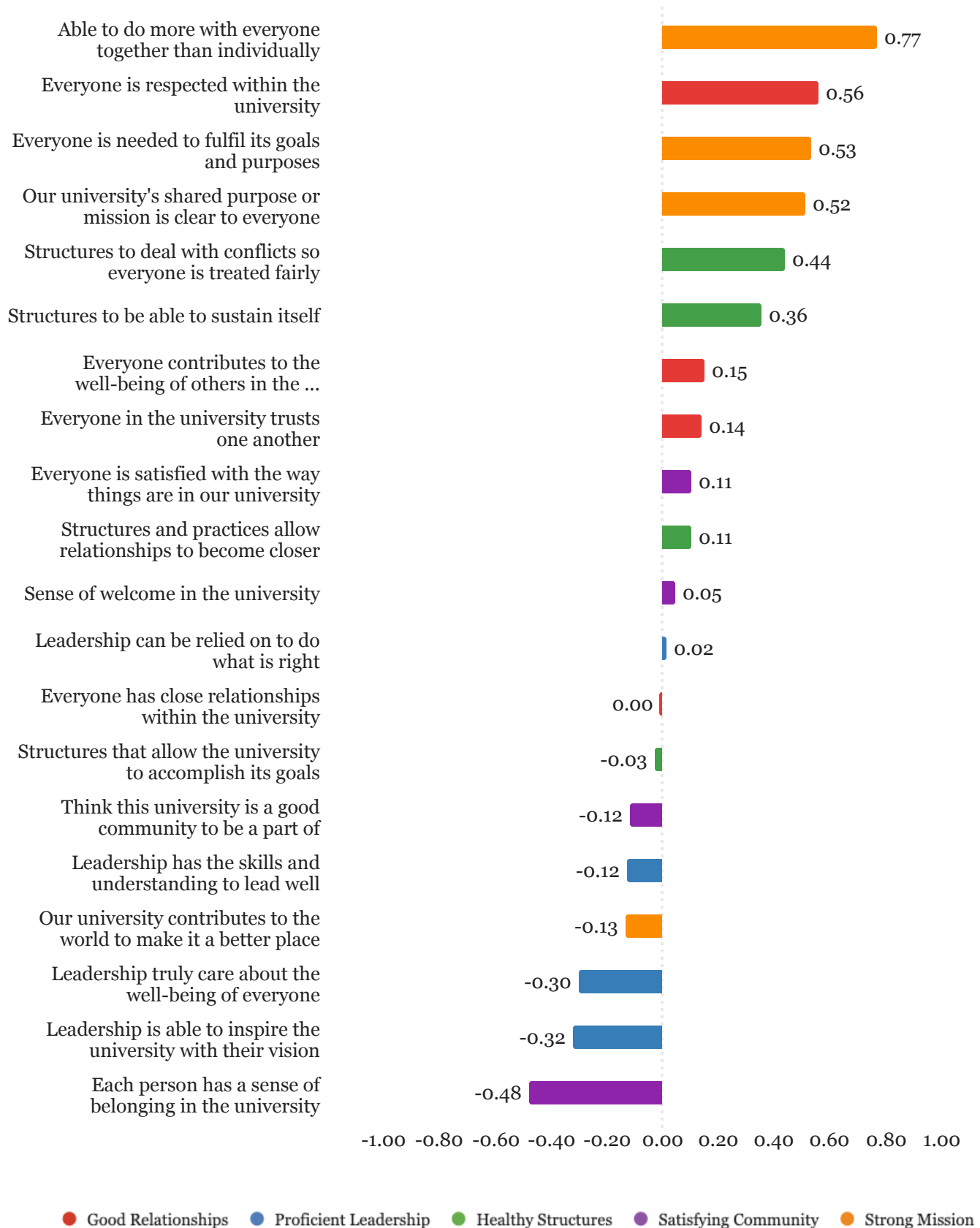
2. University Community Well-Being across Years by Domain



3. Relative Strengths for University Community Well-Being



4. Changes in University Community Well-Being across Years (Year 1 to Year 4)



5. University Community Well-Being Indicators by Year

Scale 0 (Strongly disagree) to 10 (Strongly agree)

University Community Well-Being mean	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Overall
Mean	6.65	6.92	7.45	6.73	6.97
Good Relationships	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Everyone has close relationships within our university	5.92	6.12	6.53	5.91	6.14
Everyone is respected within our university	5.39	6.65	6.92	5.94	6.35
Everyone at our university trusts one another	5.74	5.80	6.80	5.84	6.10
Everyone contributes to the well-being of others at our university	5.87	6.20	6.85	6.00	6.28
Proficient Leadership	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Those in leadership truly care about the well-being of everyone at our university	7.13	6.84	7.46	6.84	7.03
Those in leadership can be relied on to do what is right	6.17	6.60	6.99	6.18	6.51
Those in leadership have the skills and understanding they need to lead well	7.08	7.08	7.38	6.93	7.10
Those in leadership are able to inspire our university with their vision	7.23	7.12	7.28	6.89	7.08
Healthy Structures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
There are structures & practices at our university that allow relationships to become closer	7.61	7.39	7.93	7.65	7.66
There are structures & practices in place that allow our university to deal with conflicts so that everyone is treated fairly	6.19	6.65	7.23	6.59	6.76
Our university has structures & practices so as to be able to sustain itself	7.28	7.70	8.15	7.59	7.75
Our university has structures & practices that allow it to accomplish its goals	7.82	7.78	8.34	7.72	7.92
Satisfying Community	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Everyone is satisfied with the way things are at our university	4.40	5.00	6.02	4.47	5.03
Everyone thinks that our university is a good community to be a part of	6.46	6.67	7.79	6.31	6.82
Each person has a sense of belonging at our university	6.30	6.27	7.21	5.81	6.35
There is a sense of welcome at our university so that it is possible for each person to become more integrated over time	7.19	7.11	7.84	7.19	7.36
Strong Mission	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Our university's shared purpose or mission is clear to everyone	6.69	7.22	7.79	7.19	7.33
Our university contributes to the world to make it a better place	7.82	8.00	8.15	7.63	7.88
Everyone is needed for our univ. to fulfil its goals and purposes	6.78	7.63	7.67	7.27	7.44
Our university is able to do more with everyone together than we could individually	8.00	8.50	8.70	8.69	8.60

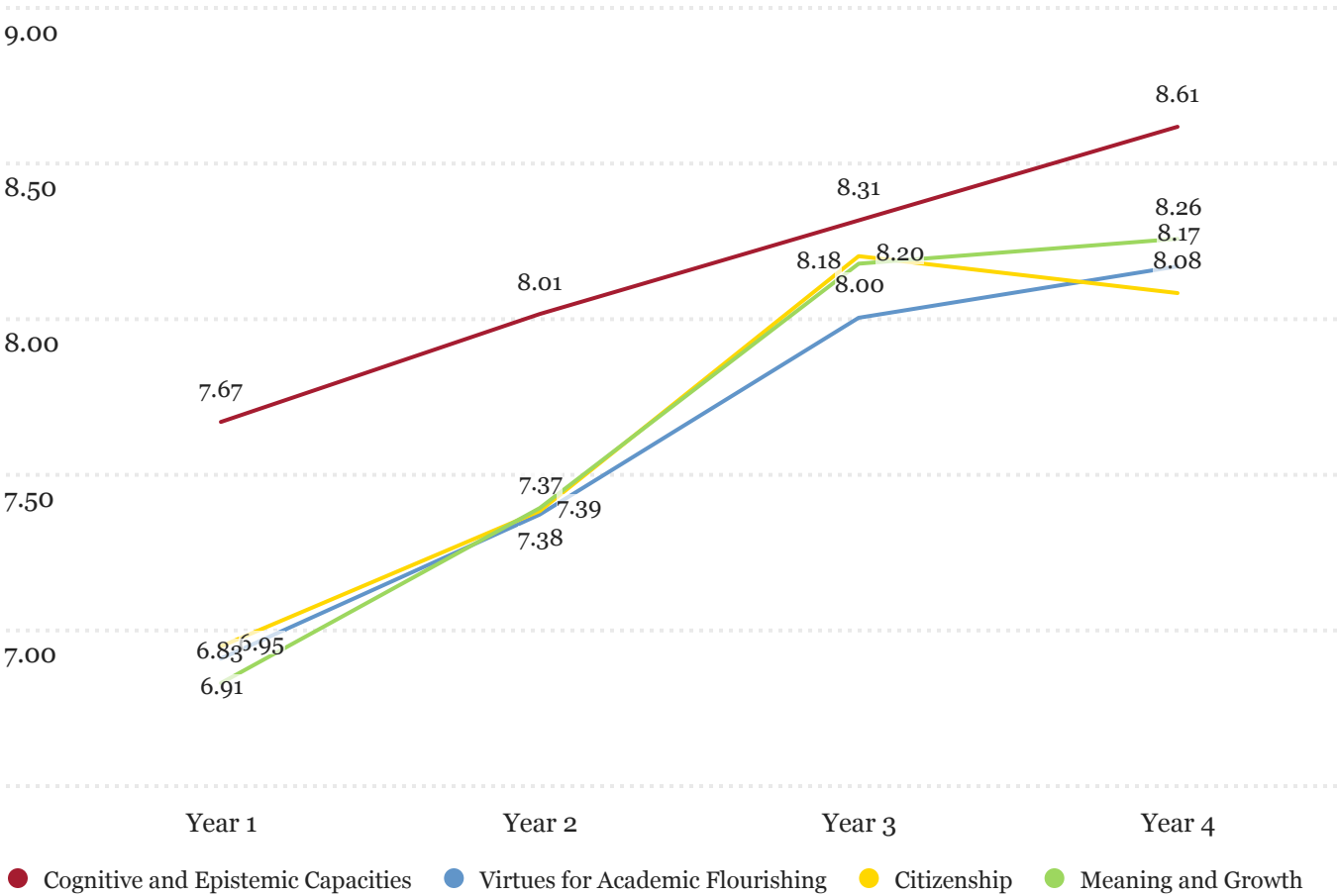
V. Student Formation

1. Student Formation Domain Means

Scale 0 (Has not helped) to 10 (Has helped a lot)

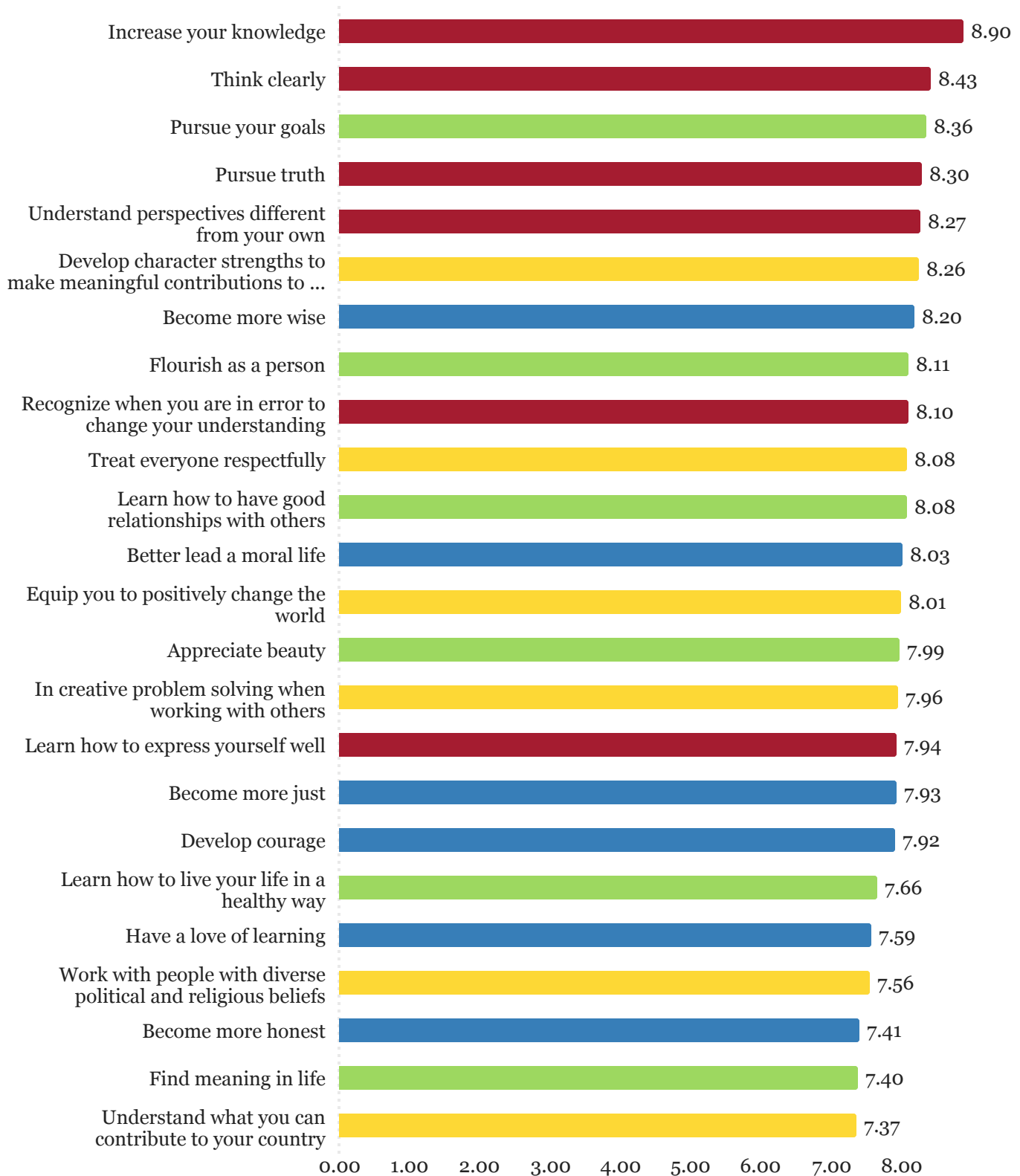
Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Cognitive and Epistemic Capacities	8.32	1.48	2182
Virtues for Academic Flourishing	7.85	1.86	2182
Citizenship	7.87	1.80	2182
Meaning and Growth	7.93	1.84	2182

2. Student Formation across Years by Domain



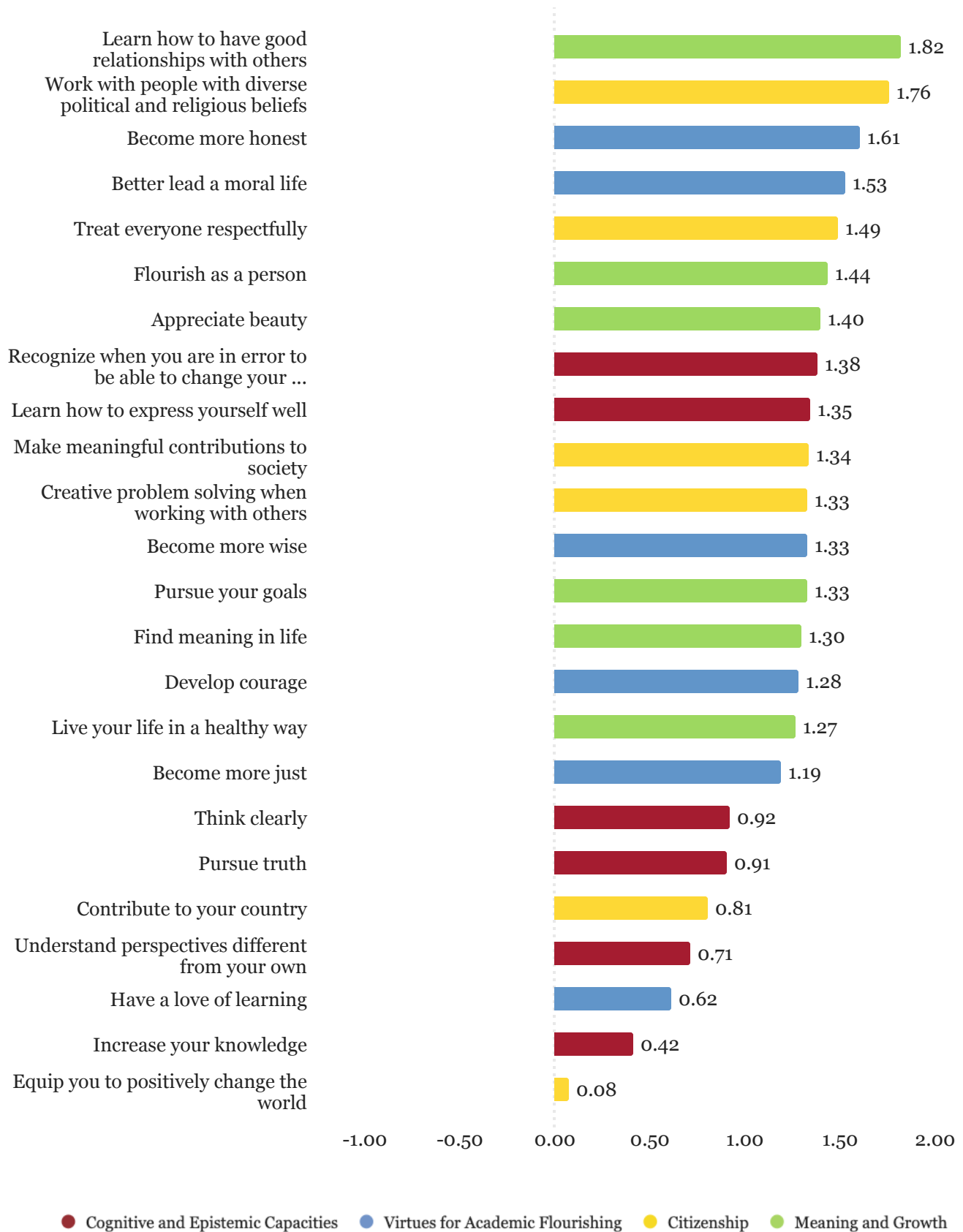
3. Relative Strengths for Student Formation

To what extent has university life helped you to...



4. Changes in Student Formation across Years (Year 1 to Year 4)

To what extent has university life helped you to...



5. Student Formation Indicators by Year

Scale 0 (Has not helped) to 10 (Has helped a lot)

Student Formation Mean	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Overall
Mean	7.09	7.54	8.17	8.28	7.99

Cognitive and Epistemic Capacities

To what extent has university life...	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Helped you to increase your knowledge	8.76	8.46	8.88	9.18	8.90
Helped you to think clearly	7.83	8.01	8.47	8.75	8.43
Helped you to pursue truth	7.75	8.13	8.05	8.66	8.30
Helped you recognize when you are in error to change understanding	7.03	7.95	8.04	8.41	8.10
Helped you understand perspectives different from your own	7.72	7.92	8.45	8.43	8.27
Helped you learn how to express yourself well	6.91	7.60	8.00	8.26	7.94

Virtues for Academic Flourishing

To what extent has university life...	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Helped you to become more honest	6.10	6.71	7.87	7.71	7.41
Helped you to develop courage	6.81	7.46	8.29	8.09	7.92
Helped you to have a love of learning	7.53	7.28	7.06	8.15	7.59
Helped you to become more wise	7.19	7.75	8.33	8.53	8.20
Helped you to become more just	7.00	7.48	8.15	8.19	7.93
Helped you to better lead a moral life	6.80	7.54	8.30	8.33	8.03

Citizenship

To what extent has university life...	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Helped you develop character strengths in order to make meaningful contributions to society	7.20	7.94	8.38	8.54	8.26
Helped you understand what you can contribute to your country	6.52	7.08	7.87	7.33	7.37
Helped equip you to positively change the world	7.98	7.59	8.28	8.06	8.01
Helped you to treat everyone respectfully	6.97	7.34	8.41	8.46	8.08
Helped you in creative problem solving when working with others	6.89	7.47	8.25	8.22	7.96
Helped you to work with people with diverse political and religious beliefs	6.12	6.86	8.02	7.88	7.56

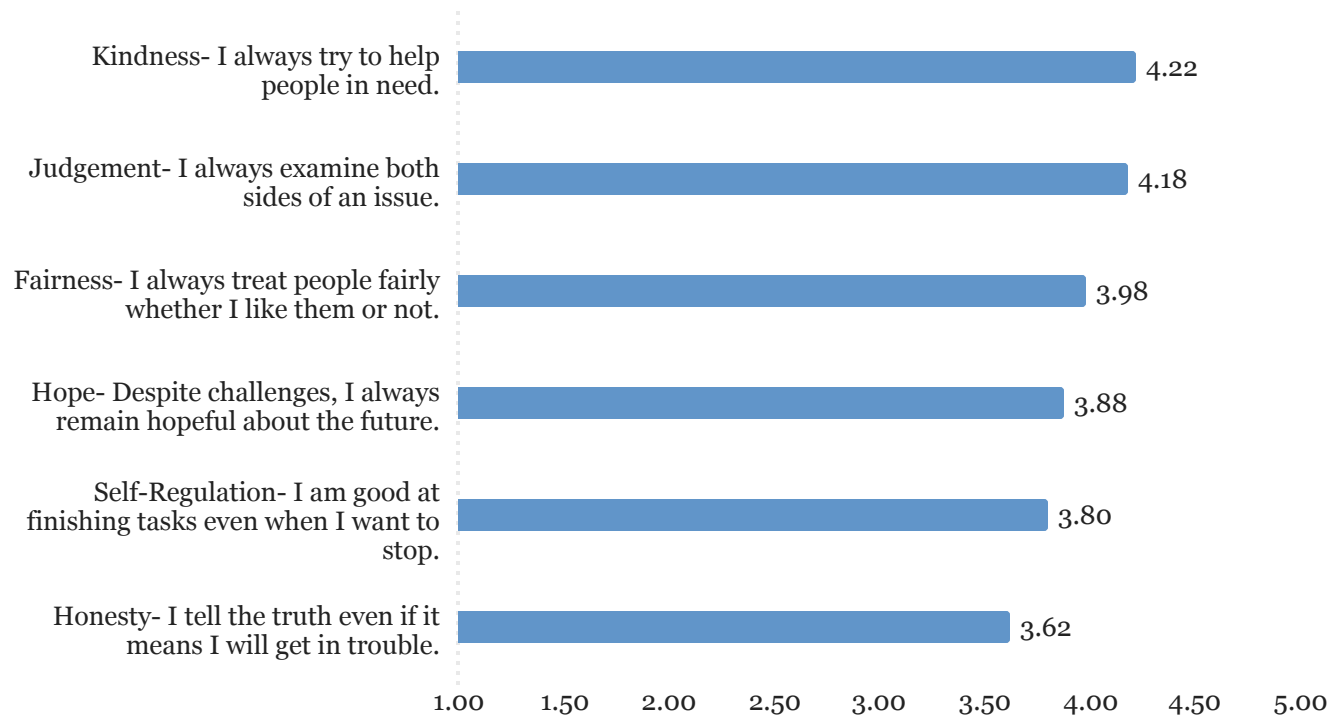
Meaning and Growth

To what extent has university life...	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Overall
Helped you to find meaning in life	6.42	6.89	7.57	7.73	7.40
Helped you to appreciate beauty	6.94	7.33	8.27	8.34	7.99
Helped you to flourish as a person	7.01	7.63	8.30	8.45	8.11
Helped you to pursue your goals	7.25	8.28	8.35	8.58	8.36
Helped you learn how to have good relationships with others	6.71	7.18	8.49	8.53	8.08
Helped you learn how to live your life in a healthy way	6.64	7.04	8.06	7.90	7.66

VI. Character

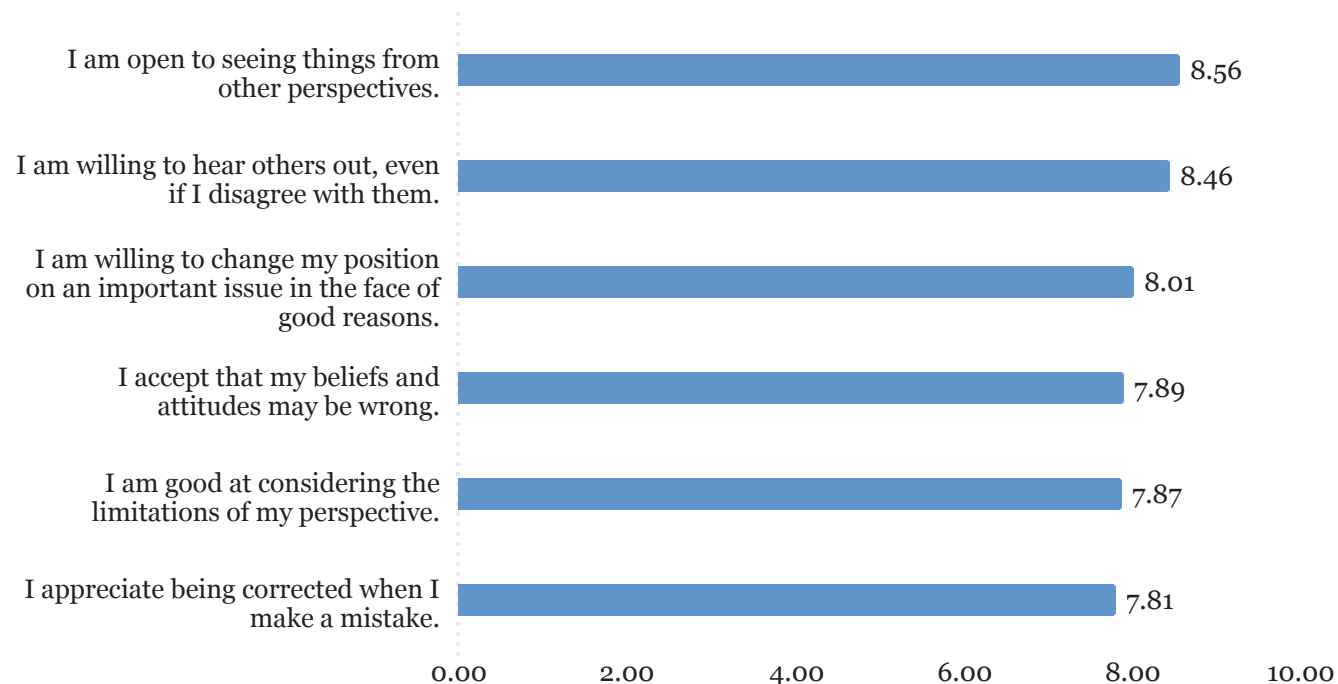
VIA Character Items

(1-5, 1=Very much unlike me, 2=Unlike me, 3=Neutral, 4=Like me, 5=Very much like me)

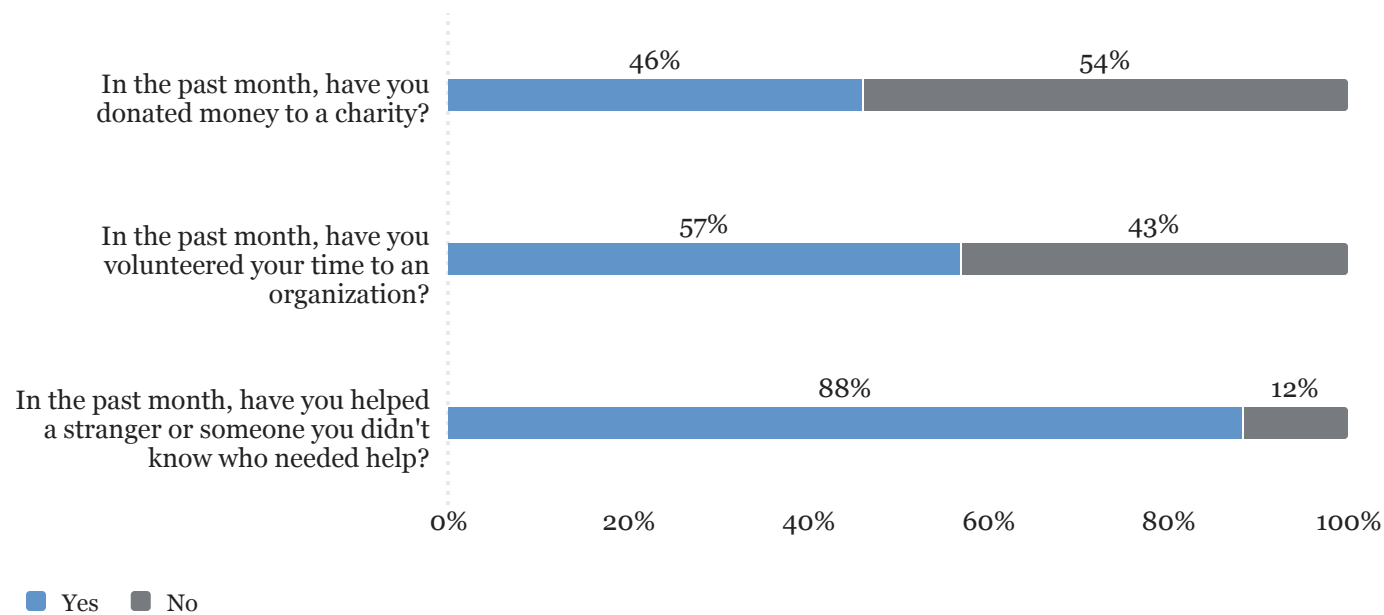


Intellectual Humility

(0-10, 0=Strongly Disagree, 10=Strongly Agree)



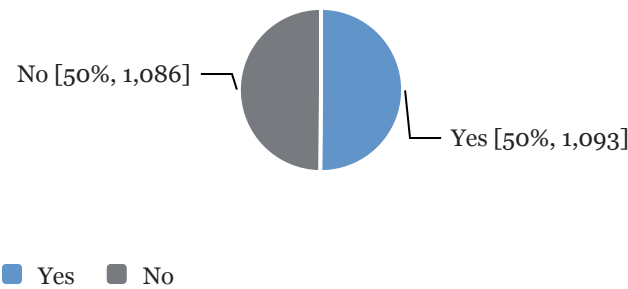
Charitable Behaviors



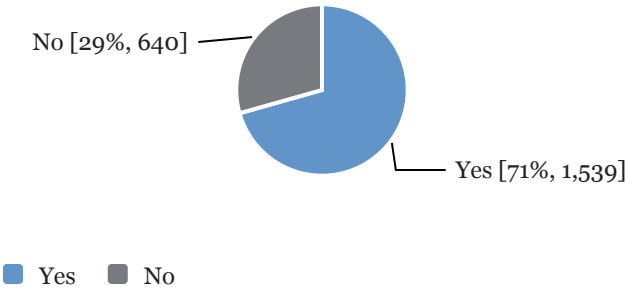
VII. Academic Freedom

Most of the time, do you feel comfortable expressing what you really think on controversial issues....

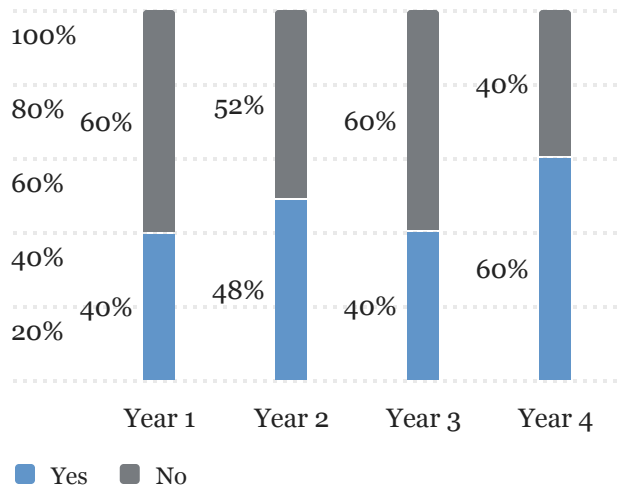
Within the classroom?



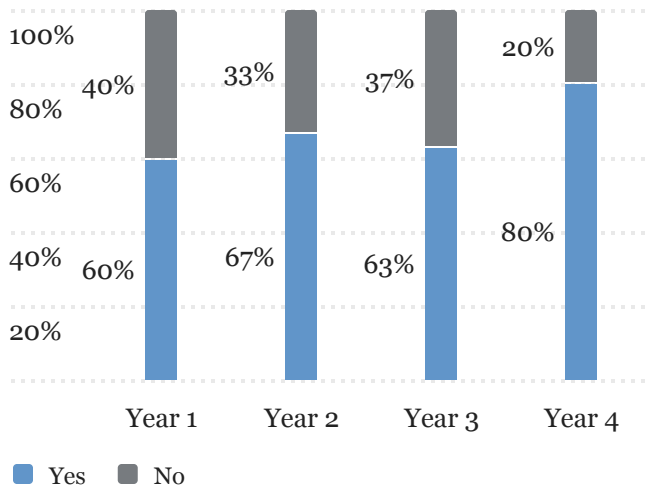
Outside of the classroom?



Within the classroom? By Year



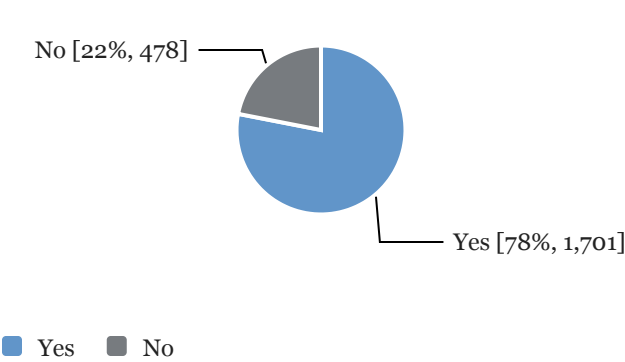
Outside of the classroom? By Year



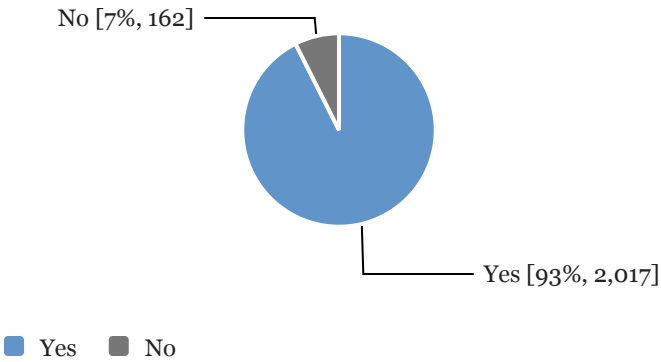
VIII. Opportunities for Formation

Do you think our university offers adequate opportunities for personal and character development...

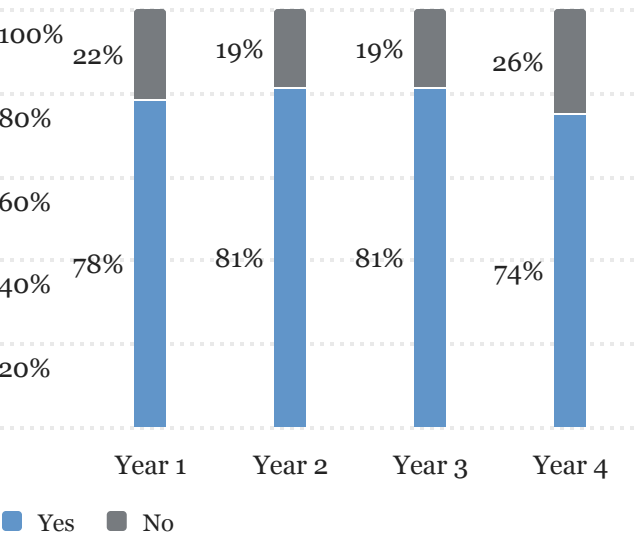
Within courses?



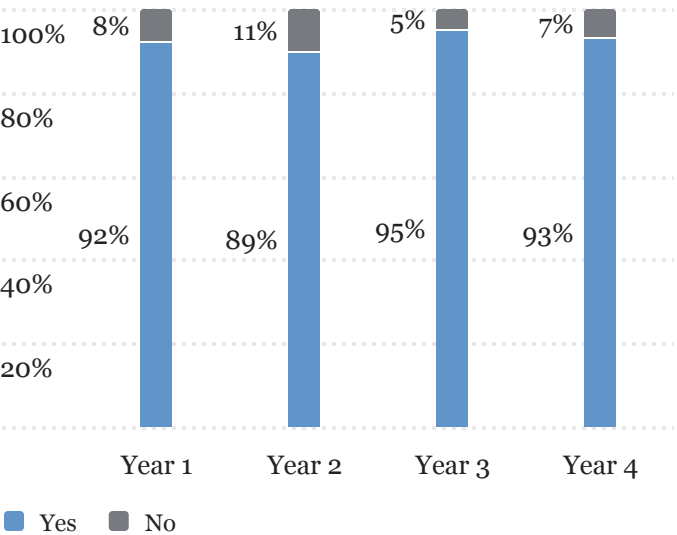
Through extra-curricular activities?



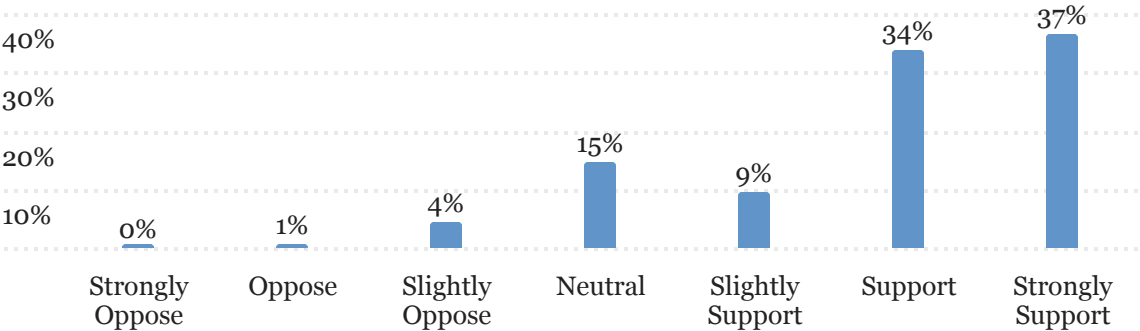
Within courses? By Year



Through extra-curricular activities? By Year



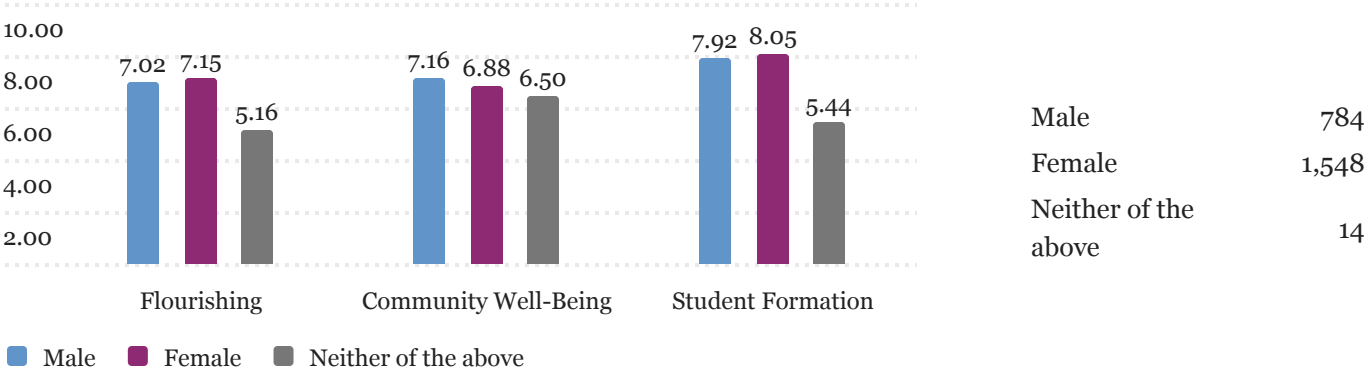
Do you support or oppose character development programs at your school?



Appendices

A1. Summary of Means by Demographic Group

1. Means by Gender



Flourishing Means

Domain	Male	Female	Neither	Overall
Happiness and Life Satisfaction	6.99	7.19	0.96	7.09
Mental and Physical Health	6.94	6.79	6.07	6.84
Meaning and Purpose	7.11	7.09	4.21	7.08
Character and Virtue	7.06	7.26	4.14	7.17
Close Social Relationships	6.86	7.33	7.29	7.17
Financial and Material Stability	7.14	7.23	8.29	7.21

University Community Well-Being Means

Domain	Male	Female	Neither	Overall
Good Relationships	6.51	6.05	7.38	6.22
Proficient Leadership	7.15	6.82	6.71	6.93
Healthy Structures	7.76	7.42	5.86	7.52
Satisfying Community	6.72	6.23	5.71	6.39
Strong Mission	7.69	7.89	6.82	7.81

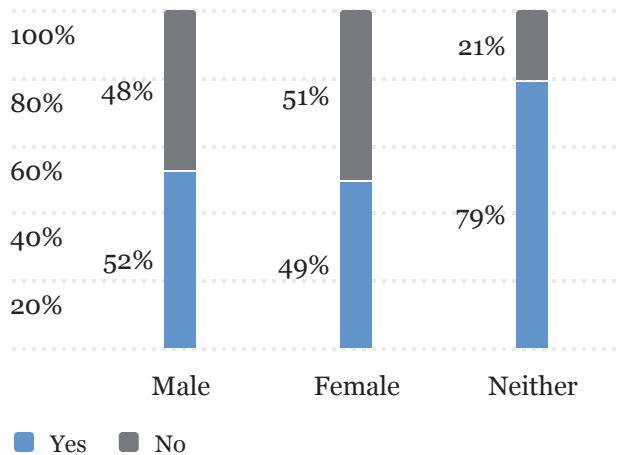
Student Formation Means

Domain	Male	Female	Neither	Overall
Cognitive and Epistemic Capacities	8.34	8.33	7.07	8.32
Virtues for Academic Flourishing	7.84	7.89	3.80	7.85
Citizenship	7.75	7.96	5.43	7.87
Meaning and Growth	7.77	8.04	5.46	7.93

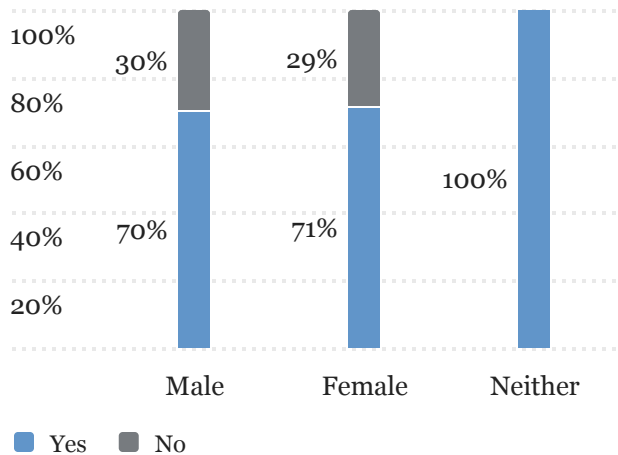
Academic Freedom Questions

Most of the time, do you feel comfortable expressing what you really think on controversial issues....

Within the classroom?



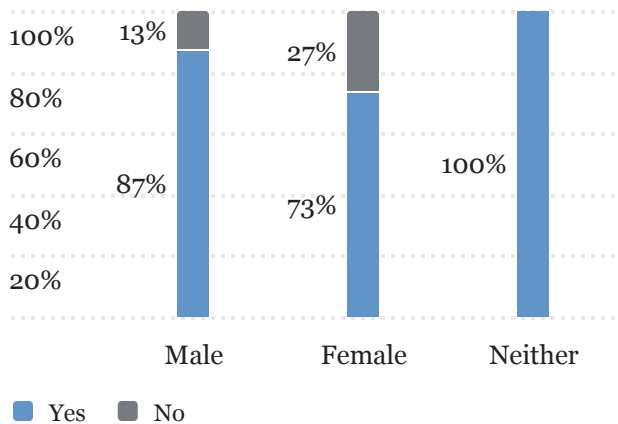
Outside of the classroom?



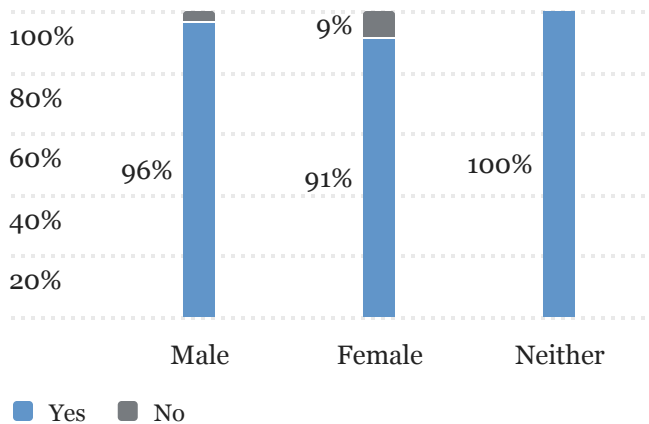
Opportunities for Formation

Do you think our university offers adequate opportunities for personal and character development...

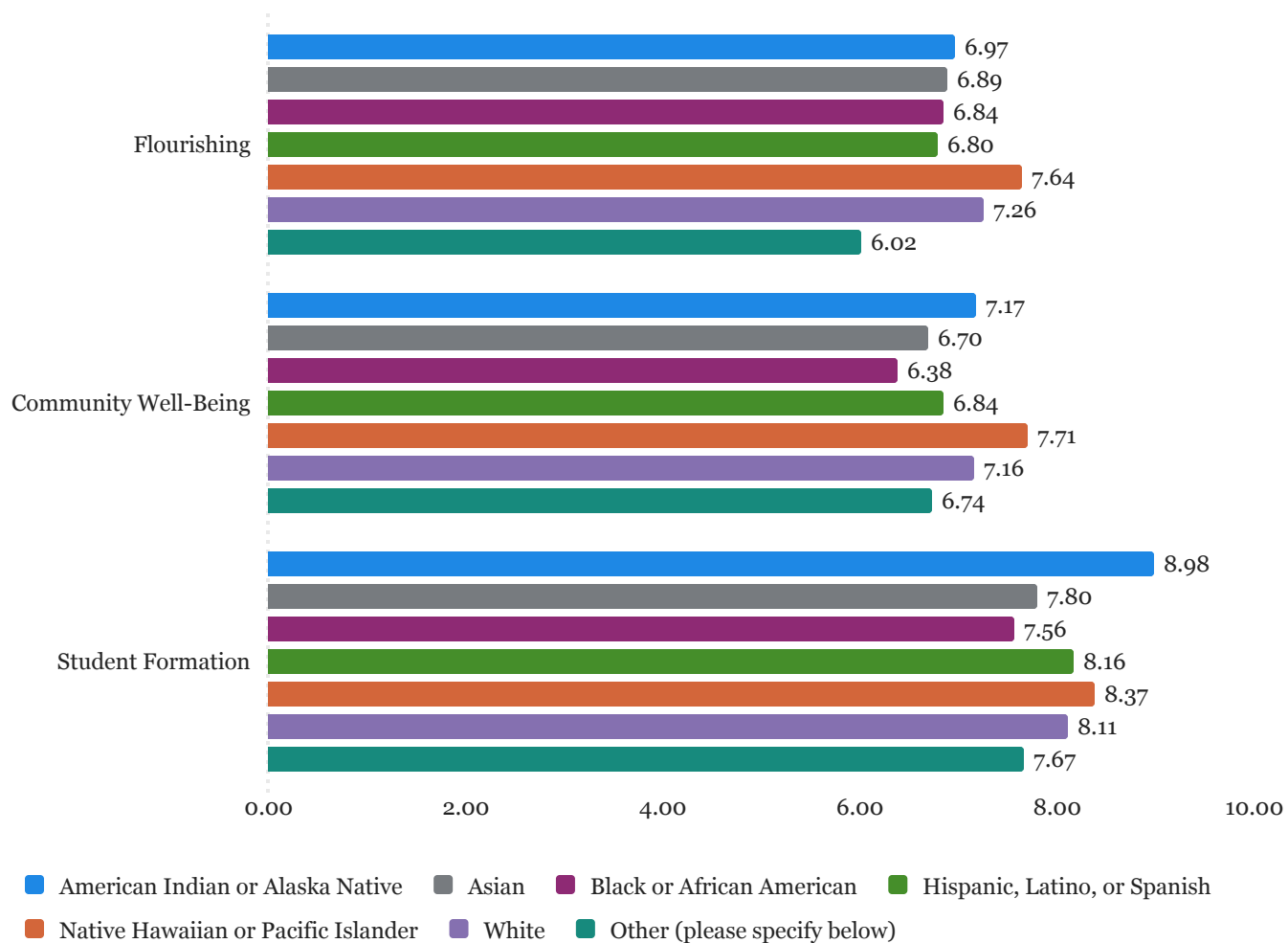
Within courses?



Through extra-curricular activities?



2. Means by Race/Ethnicity



American Indian or Alaska Native	27
Asian	539
Black or African American	227
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	355
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7
White	1,451
Other	41

Flourishing Means

Domain	AI/AN	Asian	Black/AA	Hisp./Lat.	NHPI	White	Other	Overall
Happiness & Life Satisfaction	6.94	6.77	6.63	6.92	7.33	7.34	6.10	7.09
Mental & Physical Health	6.52	6.64	6.47	6.37	7.50	7.07	5.21	6.84
Meaning & Purpose	7.63	7.00	6.82	6.82	7.92	7.24	5.65	7.08
Character & Virtue	6.78	7.10	7.34	7.37	7.33	7.16	6.74	7.17
Close Social Relationships	8.13	6.74	7.07	7.05	7.42	7.33	6.96	7.17
Financial & Material Stability	5.83	7.09	6.73	6.26	8.33	7.42	5.48	7.21

University Community Well-Being Means

Domain	AI/AN	Asian	Black/AA	Hisp./Lat.	NHPI	White	Other	Overall
Good Relationships	7.06	6.00	5.75	6.06	6.88	6.33	6.25	6.22
Proficient Leadership	6.38	6.83	6.57	6.68	7.38	7.06	6.39	6.93
Healthy Structures	7.66	7.09	6.84	7.43	8.33	7.79	6.83	7.52
Satisfying Community	6.63	6.16	5.78	6.13	7.58	6.55	7.01	6.39
Strong Mission	8.13	7.43	6.97	7.90	8.38	8.05	7.22	7.81

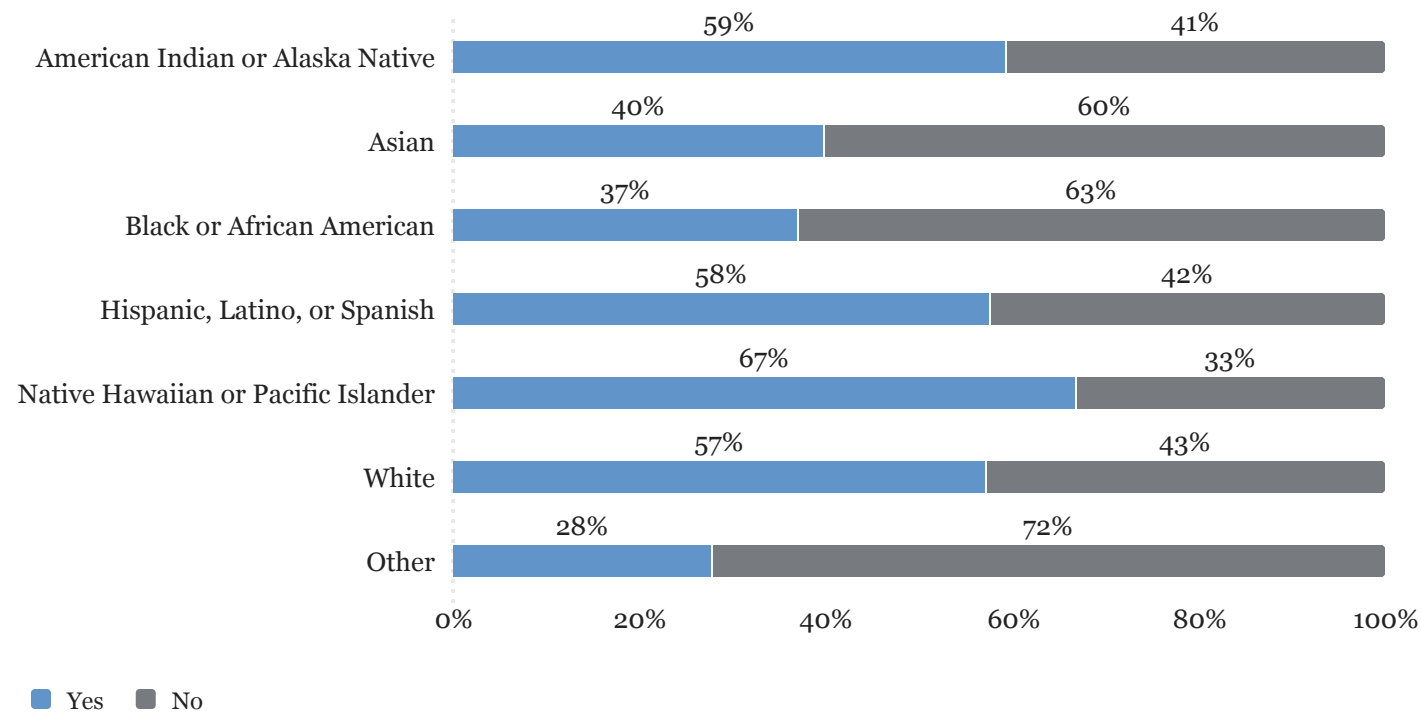
Student Formation Means

Domain	AI/AN	Asian	Black/AA	Hisp./Lat.	NHPI	White	Other	Overall
Cognitive and Epistemic	9.33	8.12	7.97	8.46	8.67	8.42	7.77	8.32
Virtues for Acad. Flourishing	8.91	7.70	7.26	8.05	8.36	7.97	7.50	7.85
Citizenship	8.95	7.71	7.52	8.19	8.03	7.95	7.76	7.87
Meaning and Growth	8.73	7.65	7.51	7.96	8.44	8.12	7.62	7.93

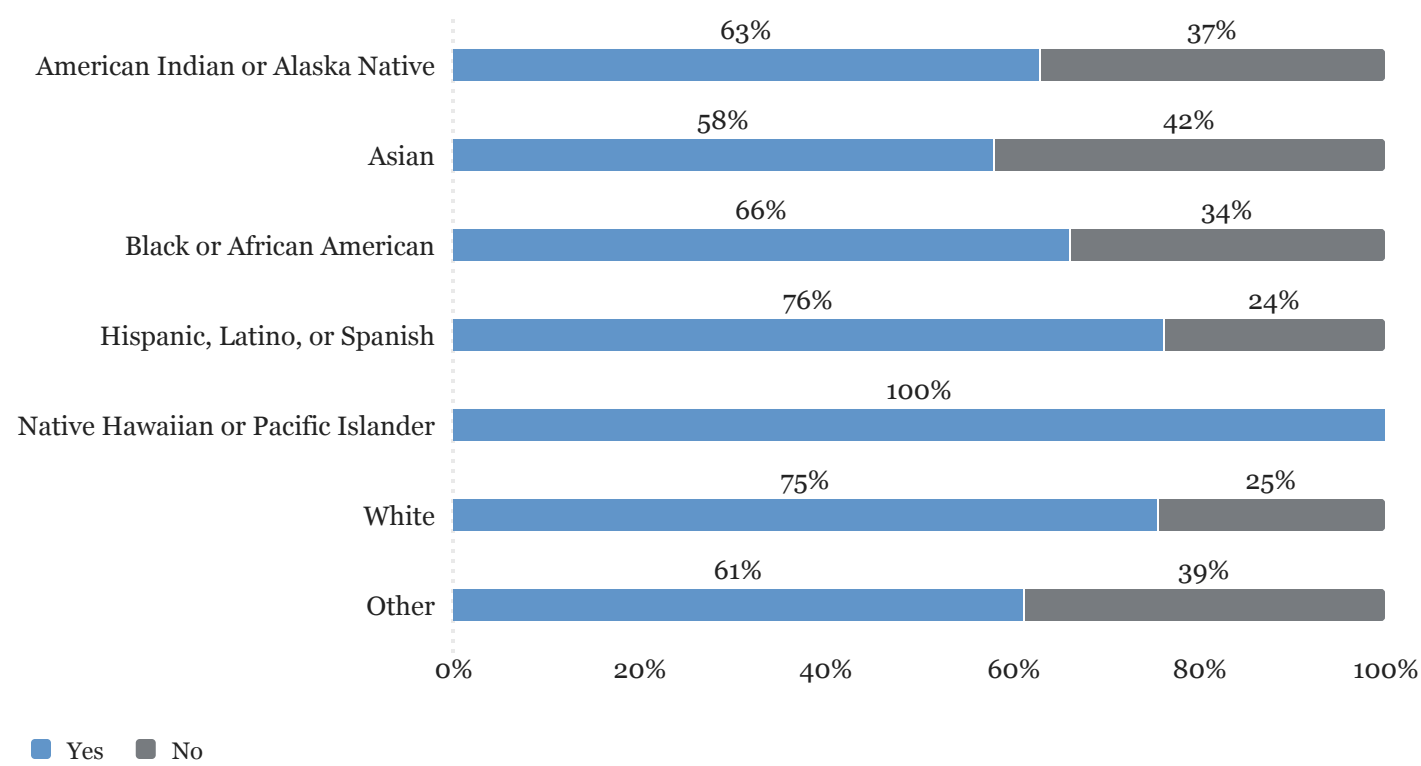
Academic Freedom Questions

Most of the time, do you feel comfortable expressing what you really think on controversial issues....

Within the classroom?



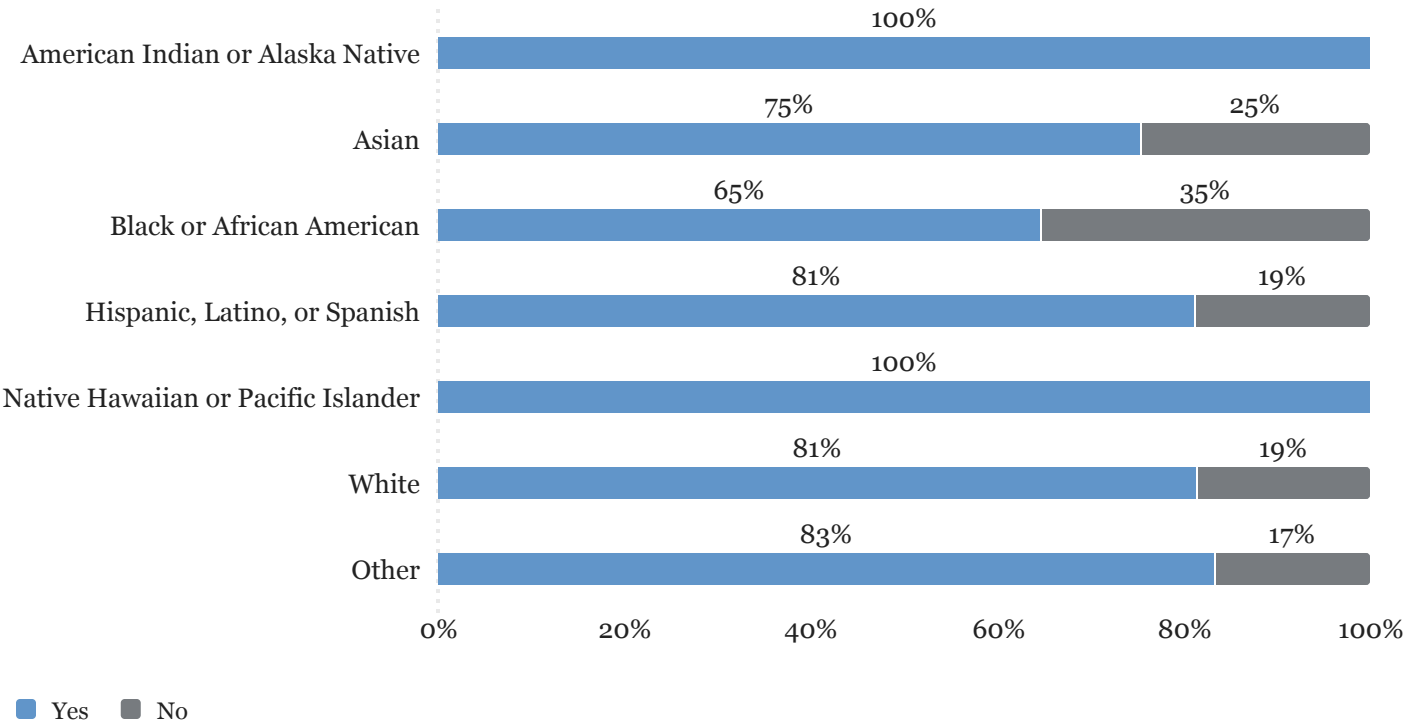
Outside of the classroom?



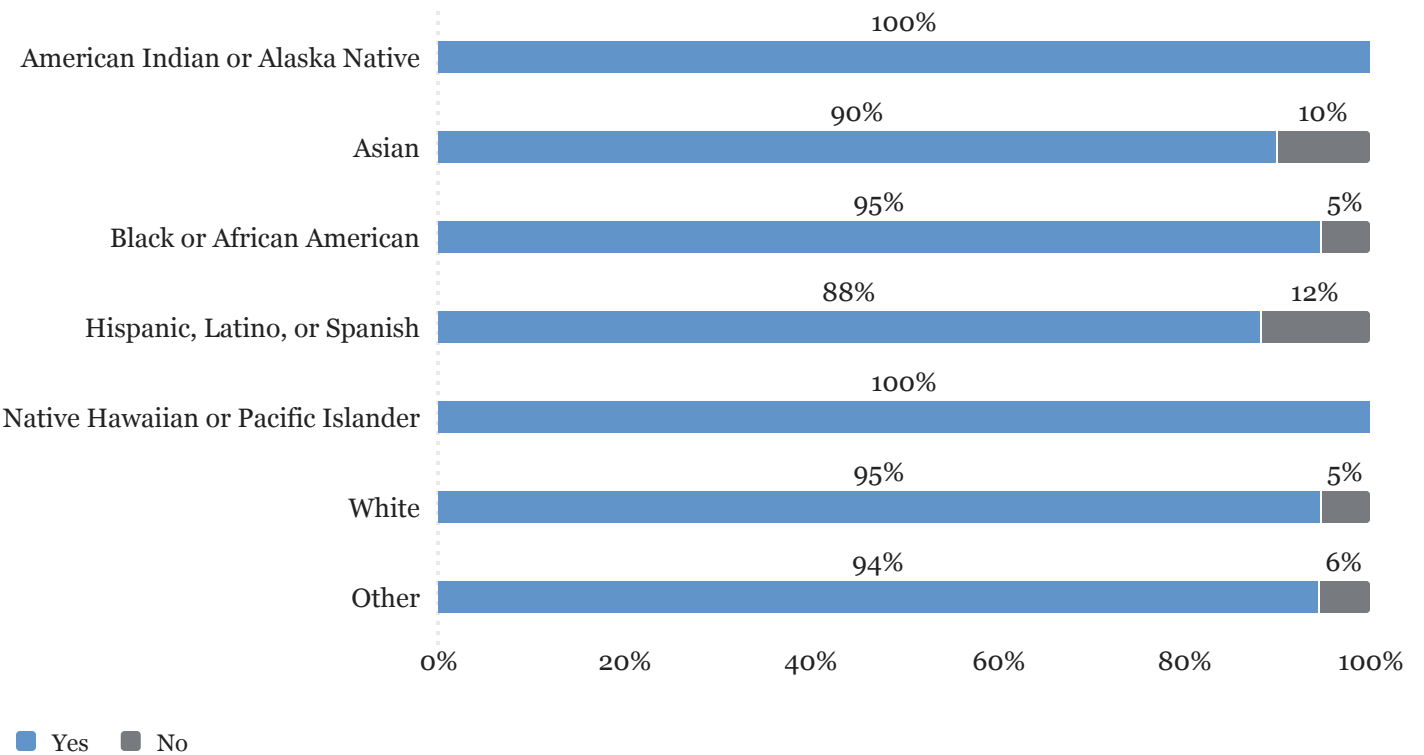
Opportunities for Formation

Do you think our university offers adequate opportunities for personal and character development...

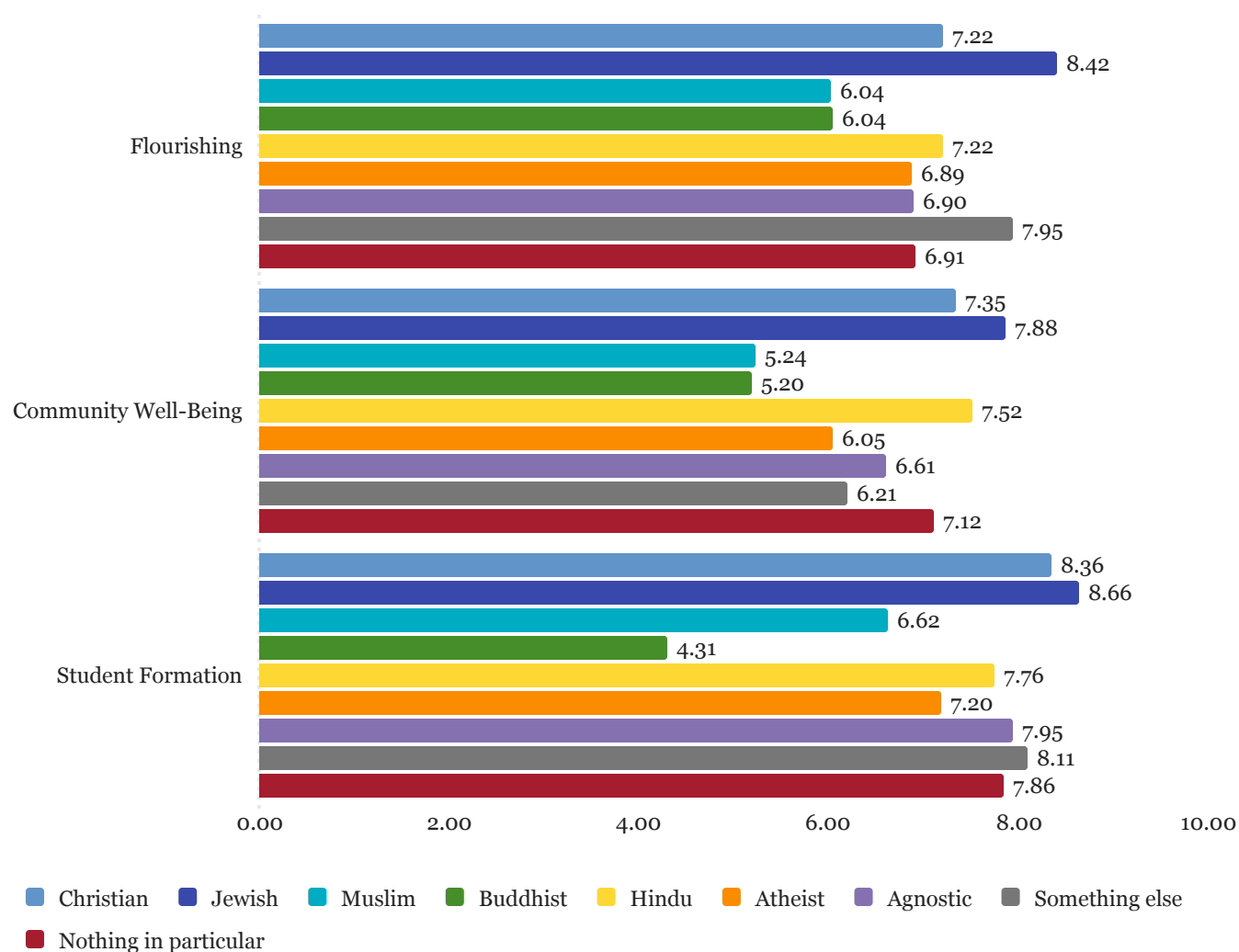
Within courses?



Through extra-curricular activities?



3. Means by Religious Affiliation



Christian	1,063
Jewish	67
Muslim	93
Buddhist	22
Hindu	110
Atheist	174
Agnostic	379
Something else	72
Nothing in particular	366

Flourishing Means

Domain	Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Atheist	Agnostic	Something else	None	Overall
Happiness & Life Satisfaction	7.19	8.75	6.06	3.50	6.81	7.02	7.13	8.21	6.78	7.09
Mental & Physical Health	6.87	7.63	5.43	6.50	7.25	6.32	6.85	7.89	6.89	6.84
Meaning & Purpose	7.22	8.31	6.33	4.75	7.63	6.88	6.73	8.11	6.88	7.08
Character & Virtue	7.42	7.61	5.68	4.25	7.40	7.44	6.88	7.22	7.04	7.17
Close Social Relationships	7.29	9.00	6.35	8.25	6.88	7.33	7.19	6.69	6.74	7.17
Financial & Material Stability	7.31	9.24	6.38	9.00	7.33	6.31	6.61	9.57	7.13	7.21

University Community Well-Being Means

Domain	Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Atheist	Agnostic	Something Else	None	Overall
Good Relationships	6.45	7.85	4.89	4.25	7.11	5.60	5.78	6.31	6.21	6.22
Proficient Leadership	7.26	7.50	4.91	6.38	7.55	5.94	6.35	6.28	7.54	6.93
Healthy Structures	7.91	7.95	5.28	4.88	7.84	6.57	7.49	5.94	7.85	7.52
Satisfying Community	6.87	7.46	4.99	3.75	7.21	5.48	5.89	5.63	6.22	6.39
Strong Mission	8.30	8.62	6.13	6.75	7.91	6.65	7.52	6.88	7.79	7.81

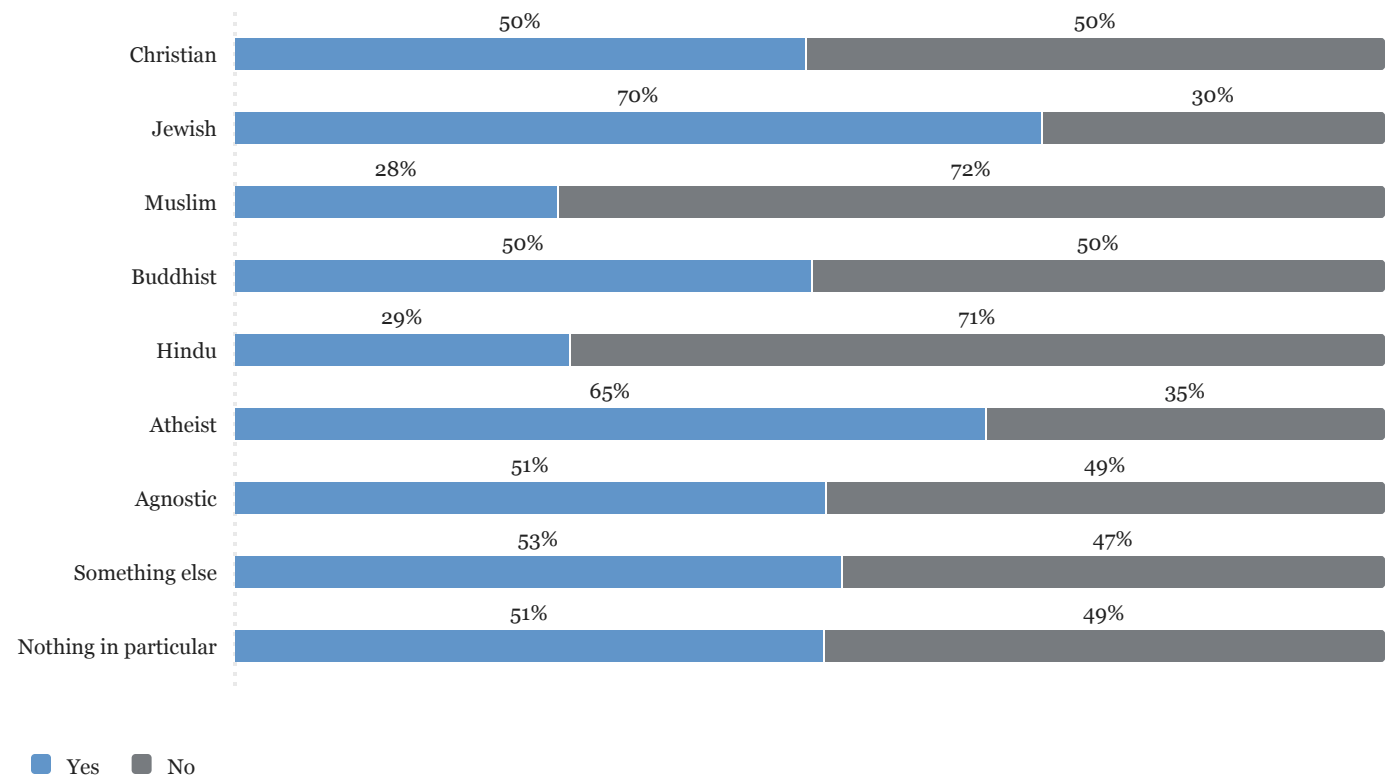
Student Formation Means

Domain	Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Atheist	Agnostic	Something else	None	Overall
Cognitive and Epistemic	8.57	8.73	7.05	5.92	8.30	7.50	8.40	8.38	8.34	8.32
Virtues for Acad. Flourishing	8.21	8.66	6.51	3.17	7.79	6.84	7.89	8.34	7.61	7.85
Citizenship	8.32	8.83	6.52	4.33	7.63	7.25	7.67	7.57	7.62	7.87
Meaning and Growth	8.35	8.41	6.41	3.83	7.30	7.19	7.84	8.14	7.87	7.93

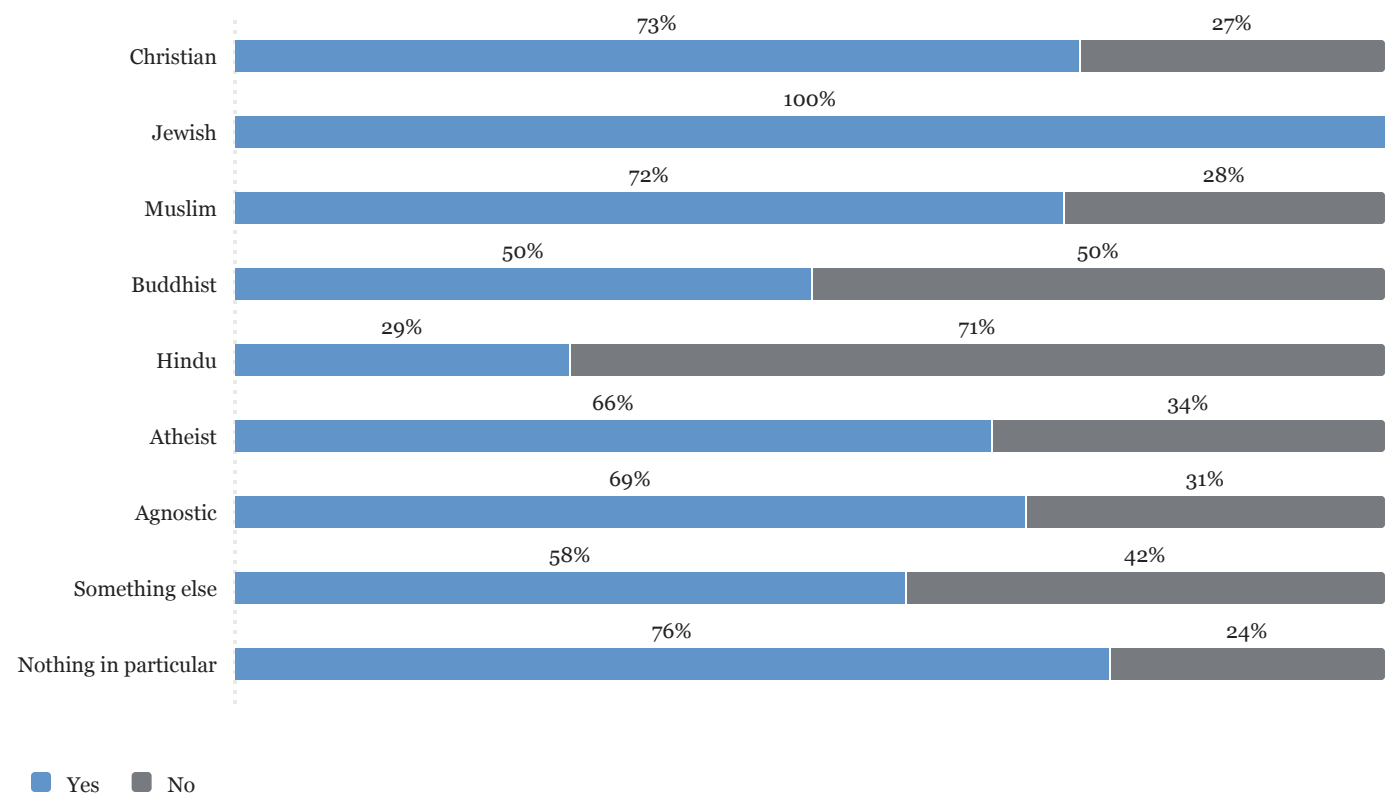
Academic Freedom Questions

Most of the time, do you feel comfortable expressing what you really think on controversial issues....

Inside the classroom? By Religious Affiliation



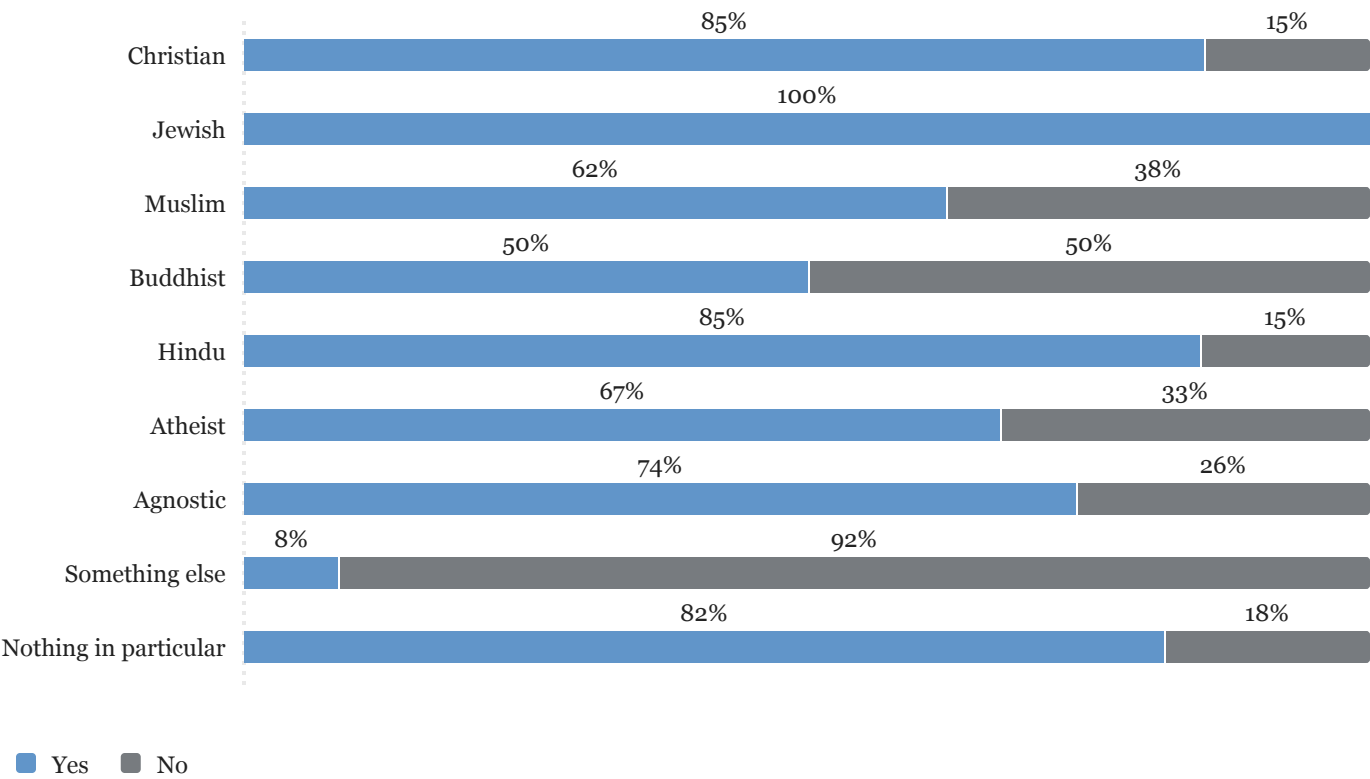
Outside of the classroom? By Religious Affiliation



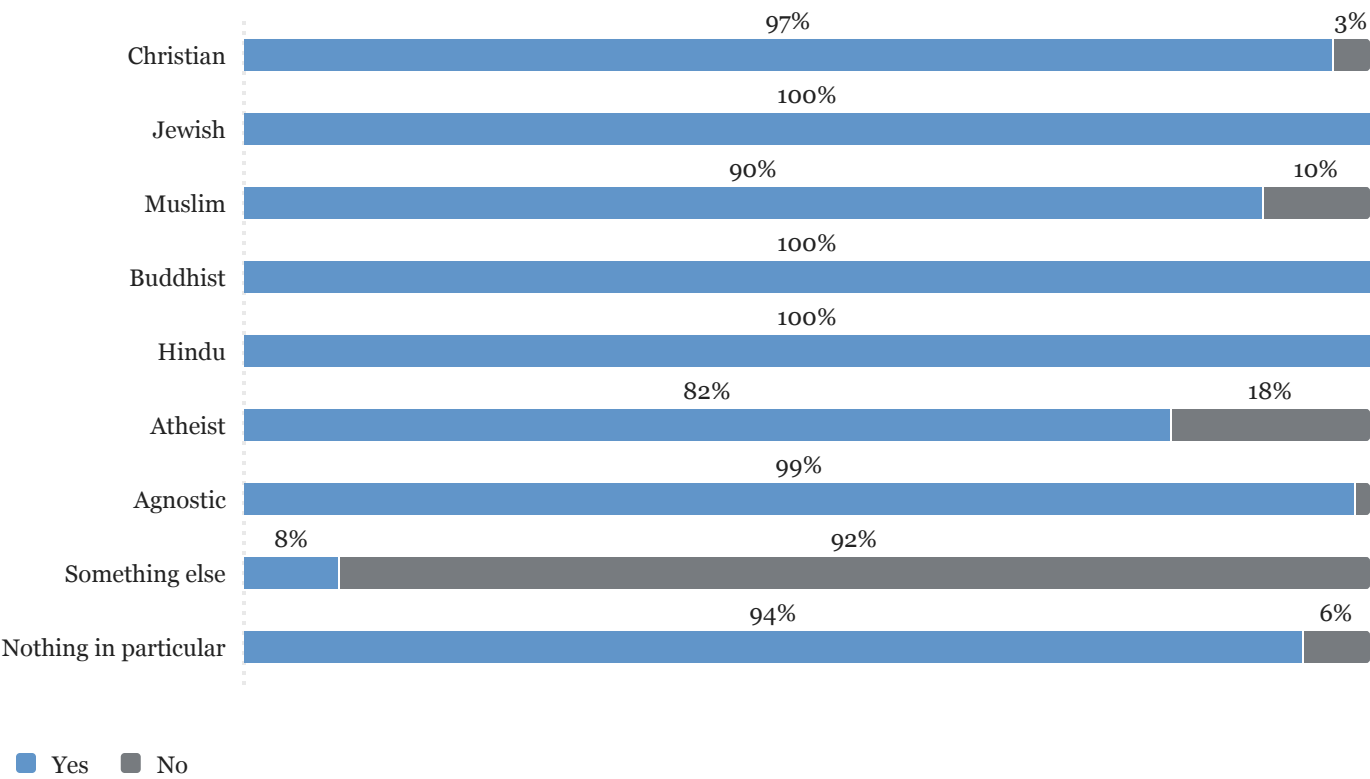
Opportunities for Formation

Do you think our university offers adequate opportunities for personal and character development...

Within courses? By Religious Affiliation



Through extra-curricular activities? By Religious Affiliation



A2. Summary of Means, Weighted by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Scale 0 (not satisfied, strongly disagree, poor, etc.) to 10 (completely satisfied, strongly agree, excellent, etc.)

The summary statistics are weighted by gender and by race/ethnicity to reflect the demographics of the overall university student population.

Overall Means (Weighted)

Overall	Mean	Standard Deviation	Unweighted Mean
Flourishing	7.12	1.32	7.09
University Community Well-being	6.91	1.76	6.97
Student Formation	7.93	1.75	7.99

Student Flourishing (Weighted)

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Unweighted Mean
Happiness and Life Satisfaction	7.12	1.53	7.09
Mental and Physical Health	6.83	1.62	6.84
Meaning and Purpose	7.17	1.84	7.08
Character and Virtue	7.32	1.60	7.17
Close Social Relationships	7.33	2.05	7.17
Financial and Material Stability	6.93	2.81	7.21

University Community Well-being (Weighted)

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Unweighted Mean
Good Relationships	6.32	1.89	6.22
Proficient Leadership	6.74	2.10	6.93
Healthy Structures	7.35	1.96	7.52
Satisfying Community	6.49	2.05	6.39
Strong Mission	7.66	1.95	7.81

Student Formation (Weighted)

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Unweighted Mean
Cognitive and Epistemic Capacities	8.36	1.45	8.32
Virtues for Academic Flourishing	7.90	1.80	7.85
Citizenship	7.93	1.79	7.87
Meaning and Growth	7.98	1.75	7.93

Resources

The following are a small set of sample resources that colleges and universities may want to make use of in conceptualizing or developing their own student formation and flourishing support programs. Ongoing work is underway to provide an expanded set of evidence-based resources. Further details and context for these resources are also available elsewhere (VanderWeele and Case, 2025).

Character and Student Formation Frameworks

- A framework for character education that has been widely used in educational settings and has been adapted for universities can be found in: *Character Education in Universities: A Framework for Flourishing* from the Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/character-education-/higher-education-framework/>
- A more activity-oriented framework for character formation in higher education has been put forward in: “[How is virtue cultivated?](#)” by Lamb et al. (2021a) and [Cultivating Virtue in the University](#) by Brant et al. (2022). This framework includes seven strategies for character development in higher education:
 1. habituation through practice,
 2. reflection on personal experience,
 3. engagement with virtuous exemplars,
 4. dialogue that increases virtue literacy,
 5. awareness of situational variables,
 6. moral reminders, and
 7. friendships of mutual accountability.

[Lamb et al.](#) (2021b) and Brant et al. (2022) also discuss evidence concerning the efficacy of these various strategies and provide examples of implementation.

- Brooks and Lamb (2026) provide a [paper](#) offering ten reasons colleges and universities should pursue character education, and Case and VanderWeele (2025) a [paper](#) on how such character education contributes to a college’s or university’s central aim in the pursuit of knowledge.

Example Character and Student Formation Programs

- Wake Forest University’s [Program for Leadership and Character](#) integrates character formation into their curriculum across schools (cf. Lamb et al., 2021a). They share [resources](#) that could be adapted to other contexts and their [Educating Character Initiative](#) supports other colleges and universities in their own character education programming.
- The [Oxford Character Project](#) at the University of Oxford, along with its Global Leadership Initiative, provides another model of a project, more focused on voluntary extra-curricular individual character formation, that could likewise also be potentially replicated at other universities (Brooks et al., 2019; Lamb et al., 2021b).

Civil Discourse

- Other university-relevant character-related resources concern developing capacities to carry out civil discourse with those who hold differing viewpoints, and navigating matters of freedom of expression respectfully within academic contexts, and such resources could likewise help with student formation specifically as regards citizenship
 - Bipartisan Policy Center produced [Campus Free Expression: A New Roadmap](#)
 - Campus Compact created [Practicing Democracy: A Toolkit for Educating Civic Professionals](#) by Longo, 2023

University Leadership

- For university leaders, there are programs devoted providing resources for and convenings around fostering character formation and student wellbeing:
 - [Aspen-Kern Program for Leadership and Character in Higher Education](#) is an initiative “to support and enhance the leadership of new college presidents.”
 - [The Coalition on Transformative Education](#) “is a group of leaders in higher education dedicated to evidence-based, learner-centered education that lays the foundation for wellbeing and work engagement throughout life” (White et al., 2024).
- The [Practical Wisdom Project for University Leadership](#), “works with educators and leaders across sectors to develop the judgment, habits and practices they need to navigate challenges, form people, and build strong, flourishing institutions.”

Character-related Interventions

- There are evidence-based character interventions that could be implemented as a part of voluntary extra-curricular or orientation programming or as part of a “well-being week.” Different activities might be promoted each semester. Research from randomized trials suggests effects of these character interventions not only on character assessments themselves, but also on happiness, sleep, and physical health (Davis et al., 2016; Emmons and McCullough, 2003; Kirby et al., 2017; Curry et al., 2018), depression and anxiety (Wade et al., 2014; Kirby et al., 2017; Cregg and Cheavens, 2020; Ho et al., 2024), hope (Wade et al., 2014; Ho et al., 2024), educational test scores (Alan et al., 2019) and general flourishing (Ho et al., 2024). Further information and evidence on specific character intervention is available for promoting particular character strengths including:
 - Gratitude promotion (Davis et al., 2016; Cregg and Cheavens, 2020)
 - Kindness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Curry et al., 2018)
 - Forgiveness (Wade et al., 2014; Ho et al., 2024)
 - Compassion (Kirby et al., 2017)
 - Patience (Alan and Ertac, 2018)
 - Perseverance/grit (Alan et al., 2019)
- For more information on these types of interventions and others, see:
 - [Greater Good Science Center](#) at the University of California, Berkeley
 - [Making Caring Common](#) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
 - [Project Zero](#) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
 - [The Global Forgiveness Movement](#) at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University

General Well-Being

- There is a broad range of evidence-based practices for general well-being promotion that can be incorporated during orientation sessions or an annual well-being week (VanderWeele, 2020). Some of these activities include:
 - Gratitude exercises
 - Acts of kindness activities
 - Imagining one’s best possible self-reflection
 - Mindfulness
 - Cognitive-behavioral activities

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The Human Flourishing Program
at Harvard University
Flourishing Data Collaborative
<https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/>

