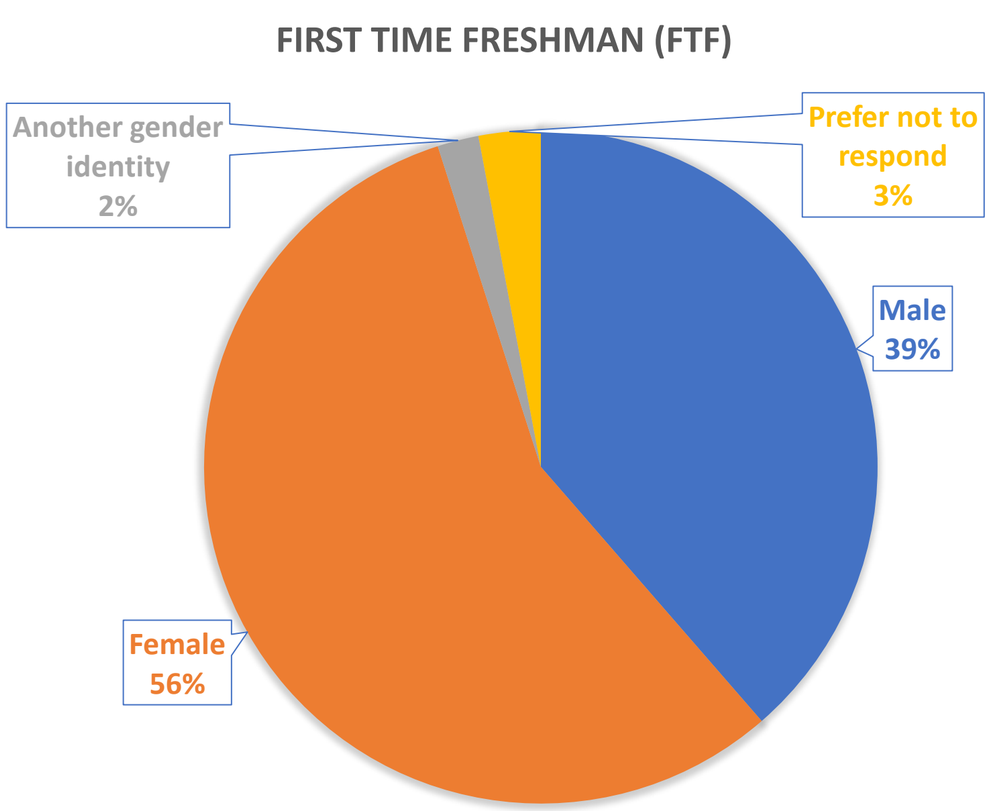
BCSSE 2023: Highlights

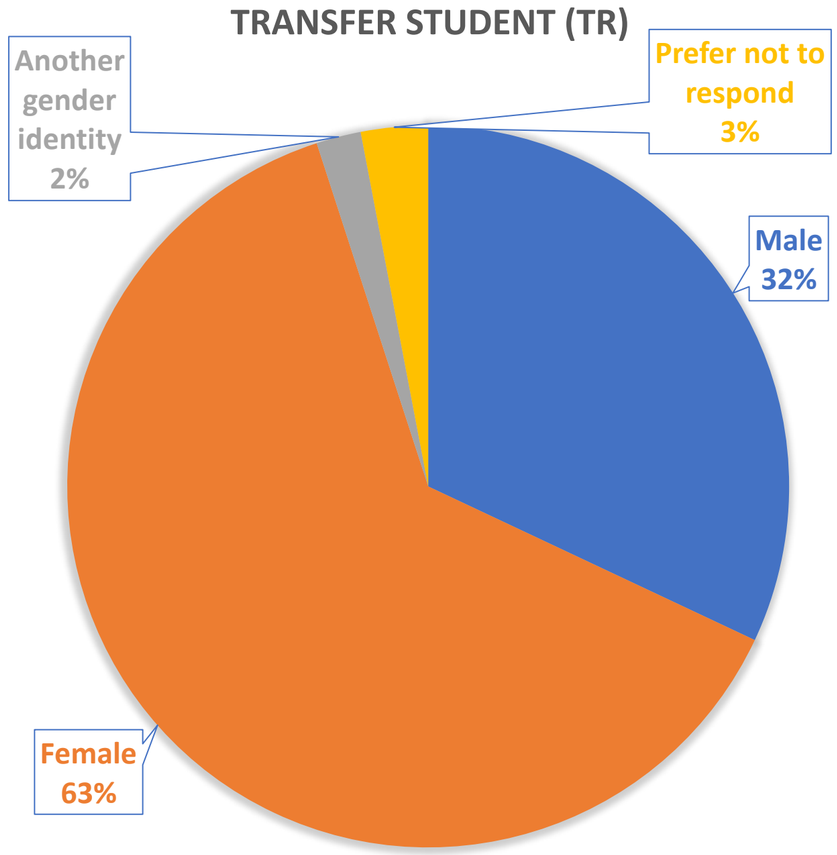
Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Participants

Gender

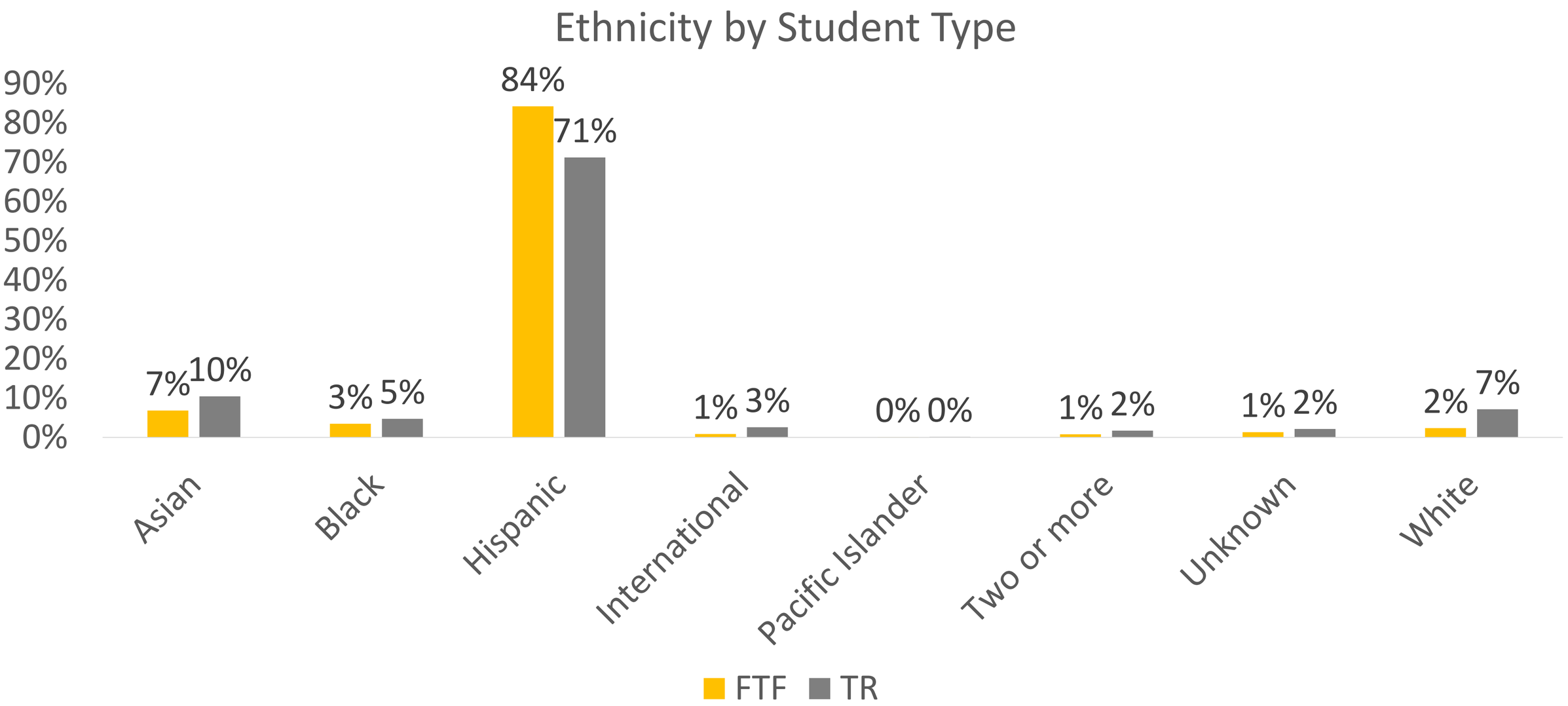




BCSSE Group	Invited	Participated	Response Rate
Total Respondents	6081	1709	28.1%
First Time Freshman	3614	1014	28.1%
Transfers	2467	670	27.2%

Participants

Race/Ethnicity



Race/Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Hispanic	International	Pacific Islander	Two or more	Unknown	White	All
First Time Freshman	87	44	1,069	11	1	10	17	30	1,269
Transfers	73	33	497	18	1	12	15	50	698

Summary – First-Time Freshman

Compared to other participating institutions

Engagement Indicator (EI)	Cal State LA	Other Institutions	Diff
Expected Academic Difficulty	31.5	28.5	3
Collaborative Learning	37.2	37.1	0.1
Student Faculty Interaction	31.3	32.1	-0.8
Academic Perseverance	37	38.1	-1.1
Supportive Campus Environment	41.4	43.2	-1.8
Academic Preparation	36	40.5	-4.5
Discussions with Diverse Others	36.6	41.8	-5.2

This table shows combined Engagement Indicator (EI) average responses for First Time Freshman sorted by highest difference compared to other participating BCSSE institutions. Other institutions include BCSSE participating universities/colleges within the same Carnegie classification (Masters Large).

Summary – Transfer Students

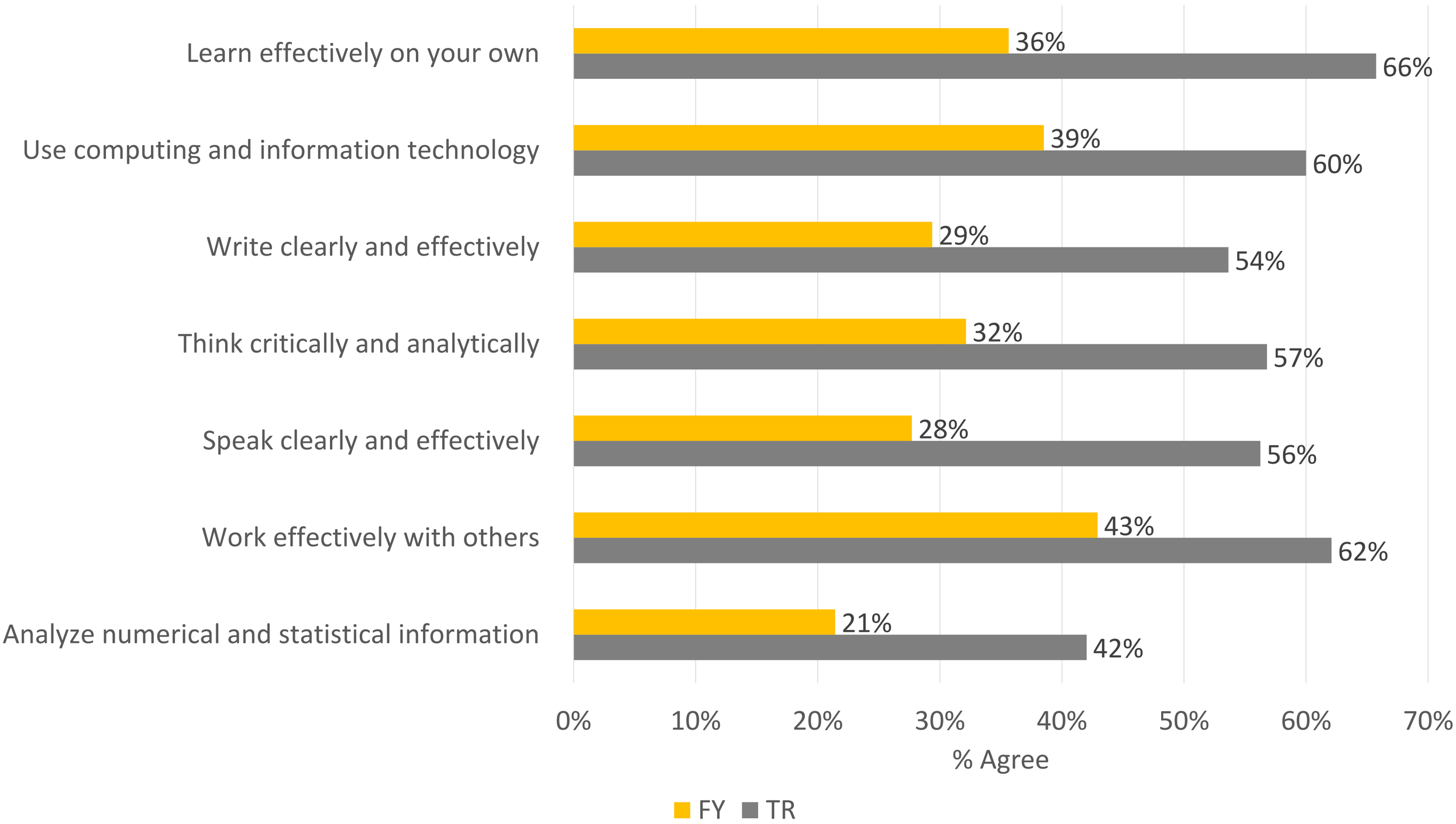
Compared to other participating institutions

Engagement Indicator (EI)	Cal State LA	Other Institutions	Diff
Academic Perseverance	44.1	41.7	2.4
Expected Academic Difficulty	30.6	28.5	2.1
Supportive Campus Environment	43.7	42.2	1.5
Student Faculty Interaction	30.6	29.7	0.9
Collaborative Learning	33	32.3	0.7
Academic Preparation	43.8	44.8	-1
Discussions with Diverse Others	37.1	39.8	-2.7

First Year EI mean scores sorted by highest difference compared to other participating BCSSE institutions.

Academic Preparation

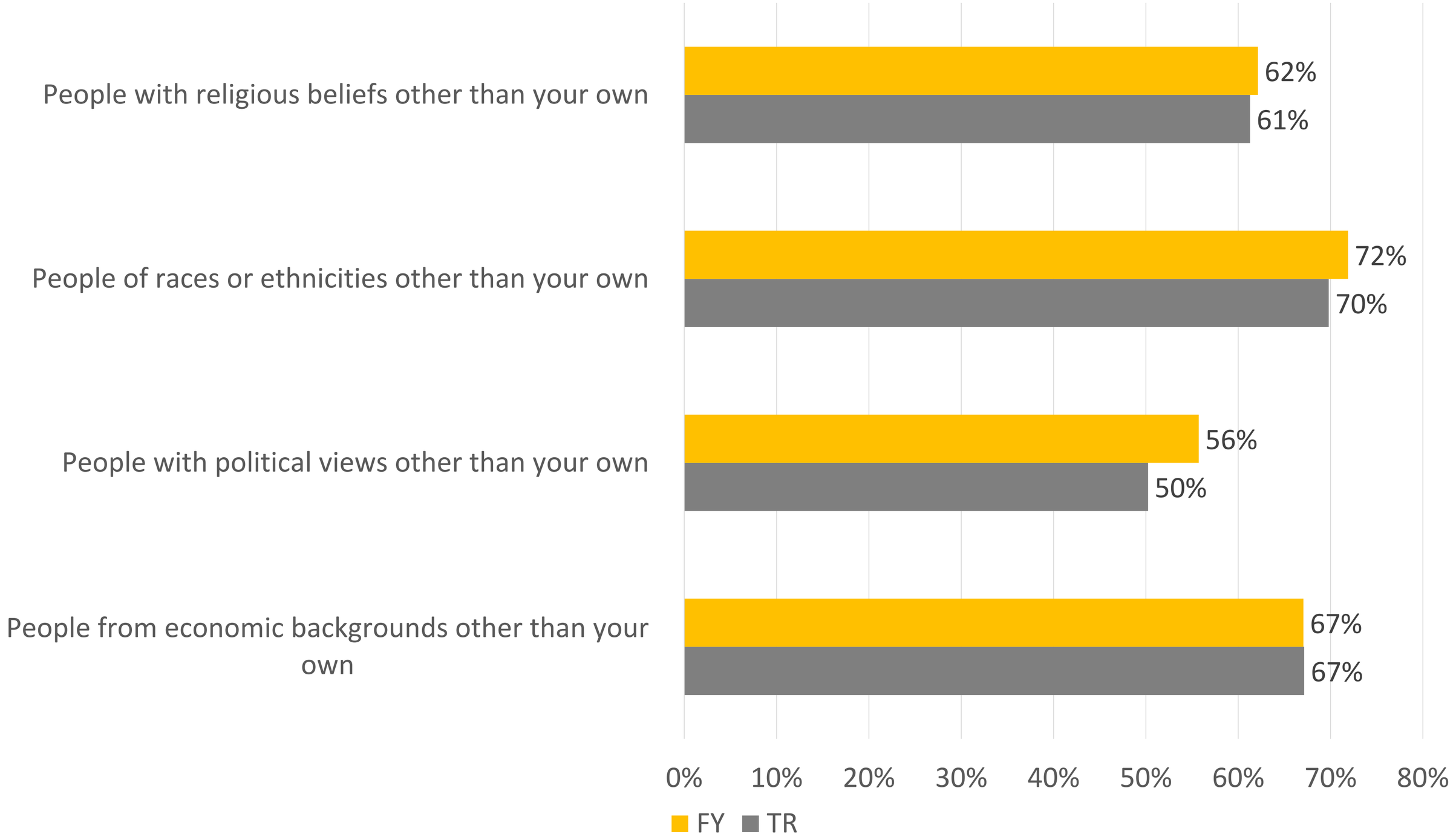
First-Year and Transfer students



CAL STATE LA

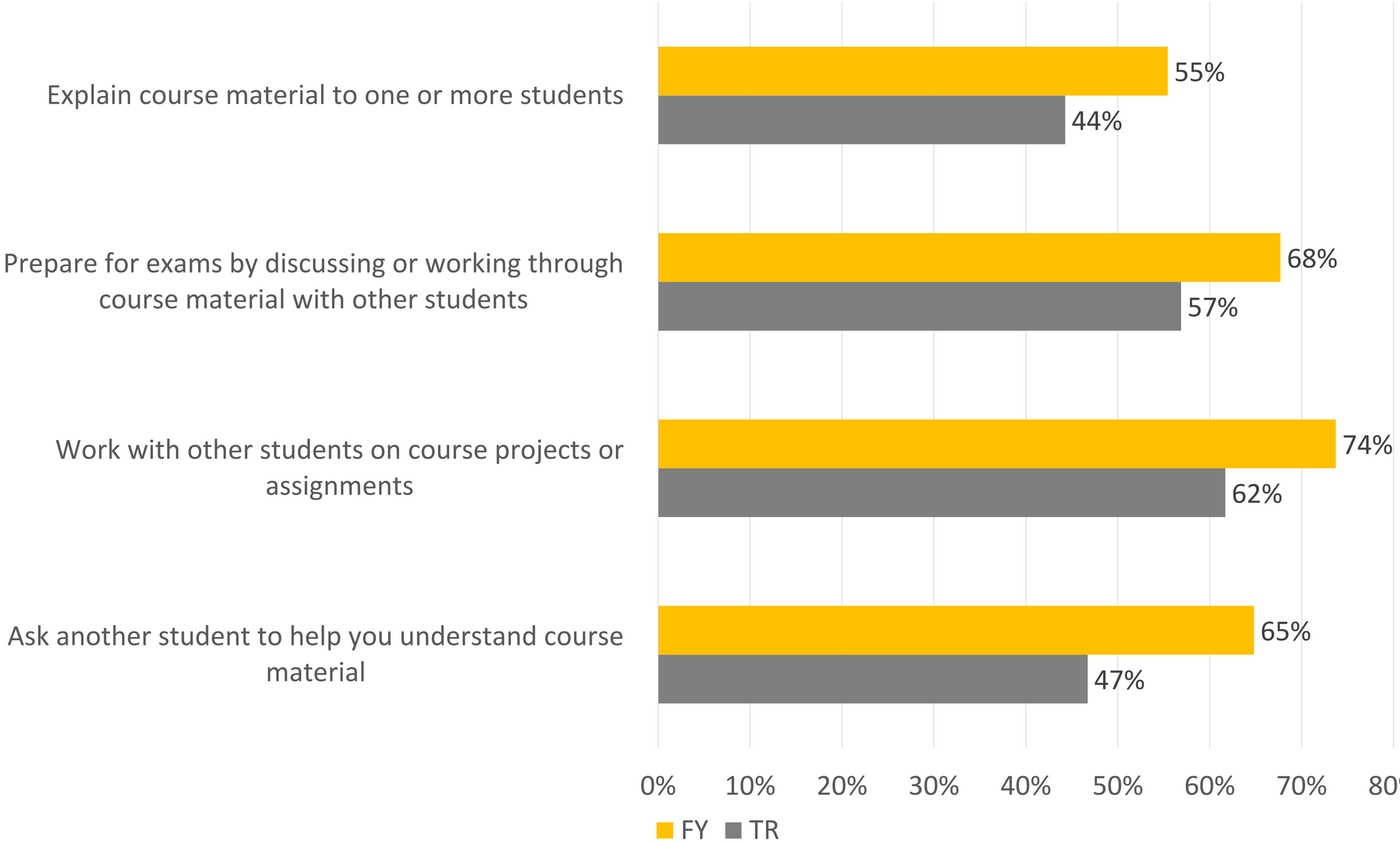
Discussions with Diverse Others

First-Year and Transfer students



Collaborative Learning

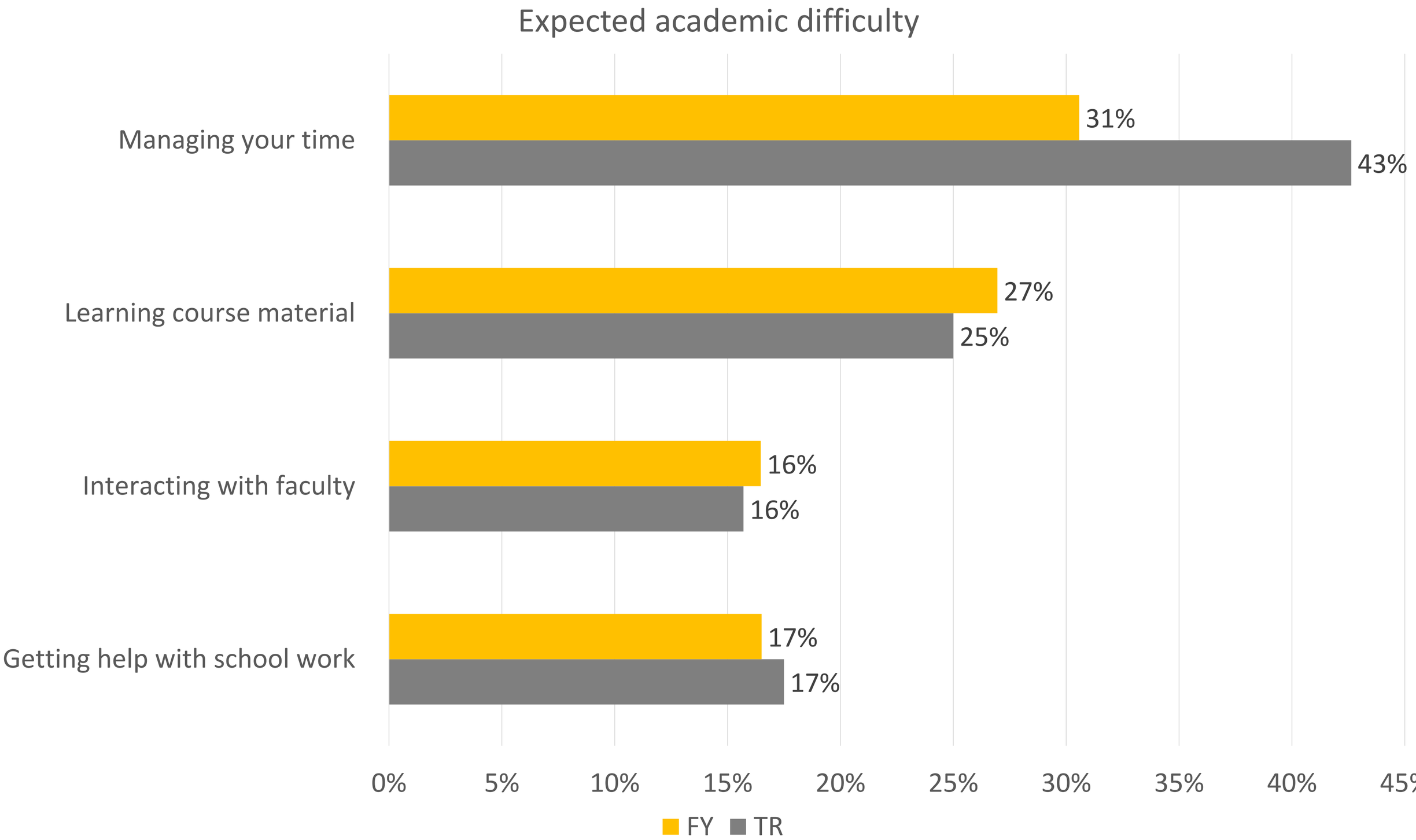
First-Year and Transfer students



CAL STATE LA

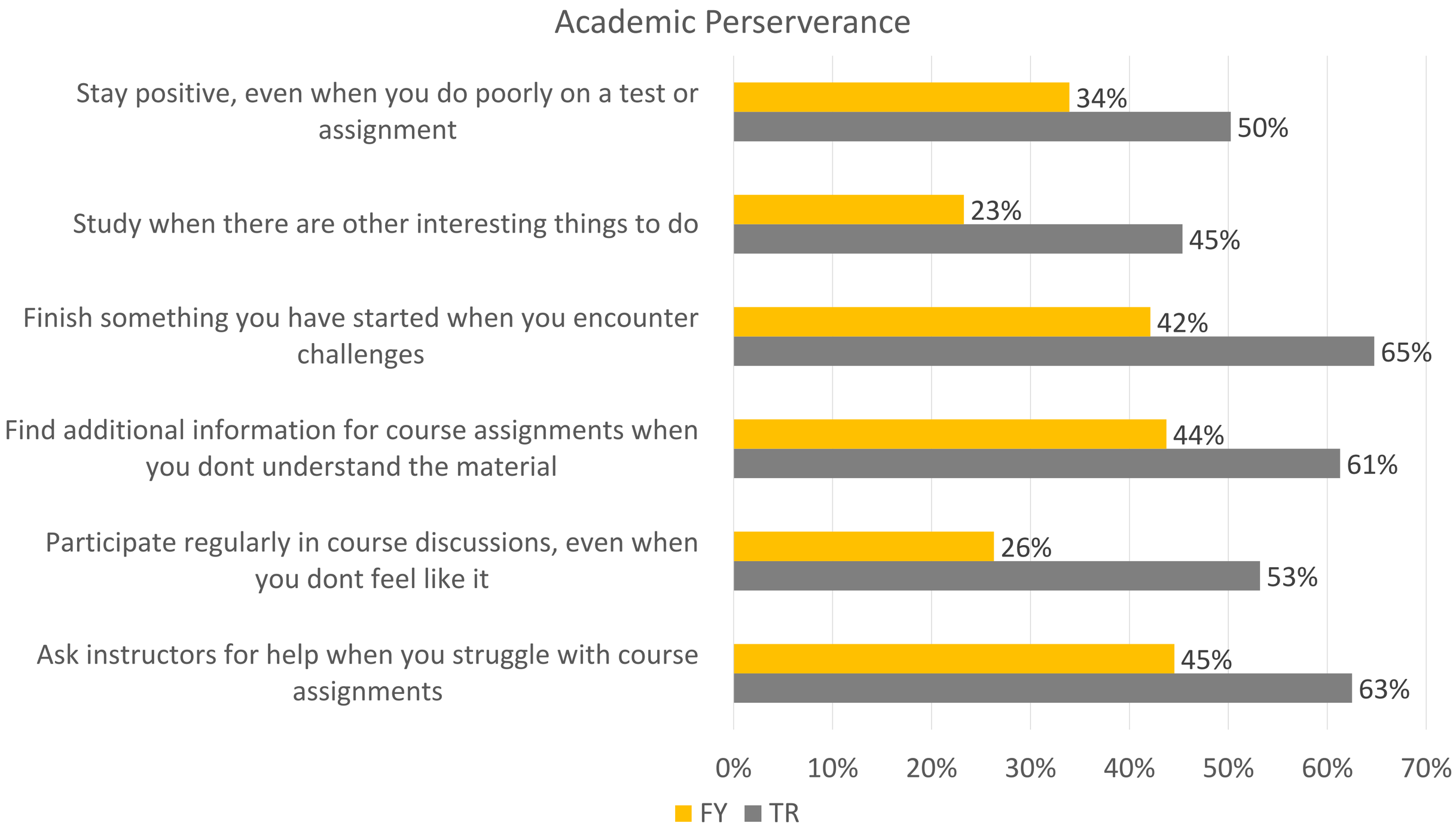
Expected Academic Difficulty

First-Year and Transfer students



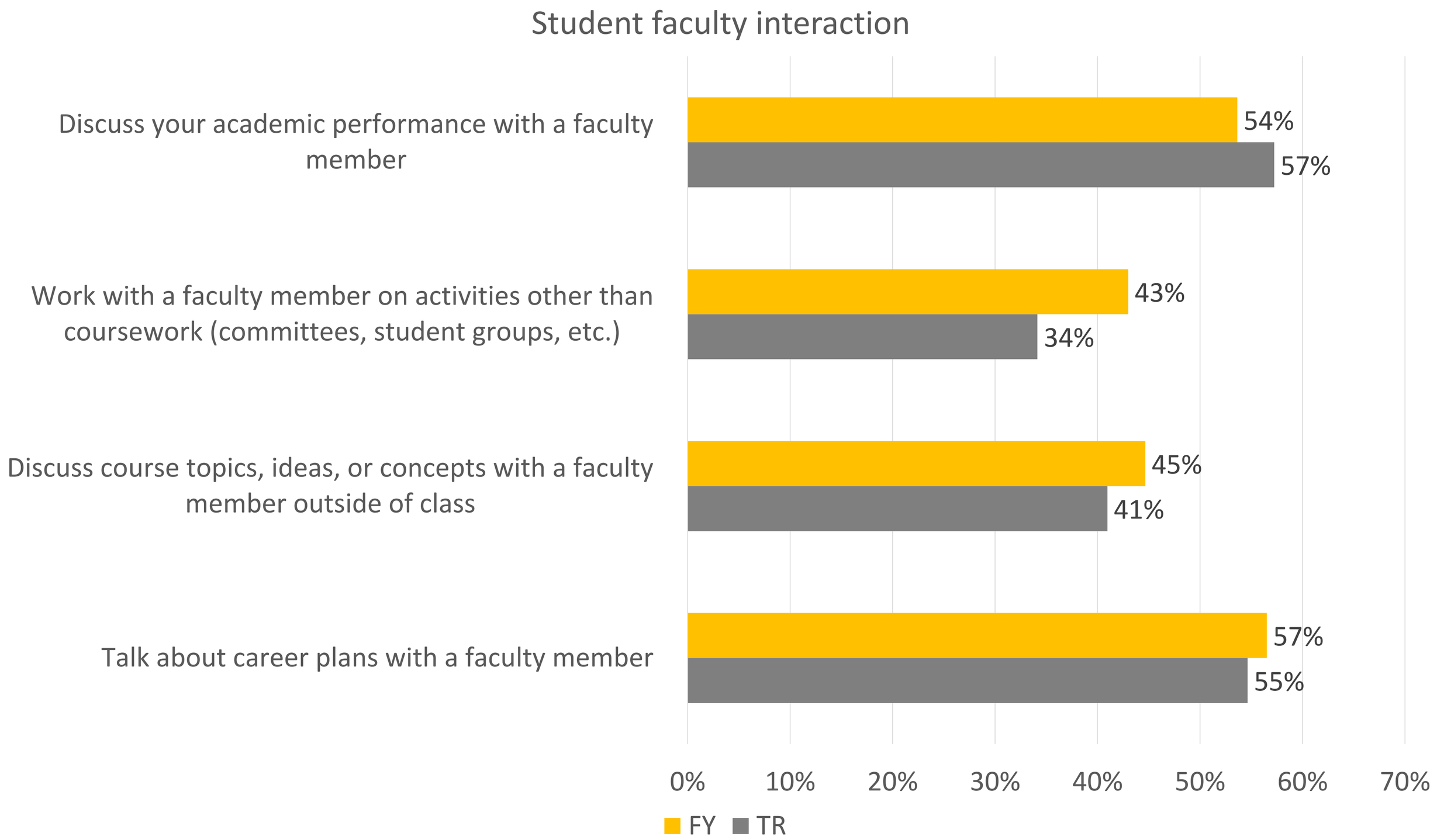
Academic Perseverance

First-Year and Transfer students



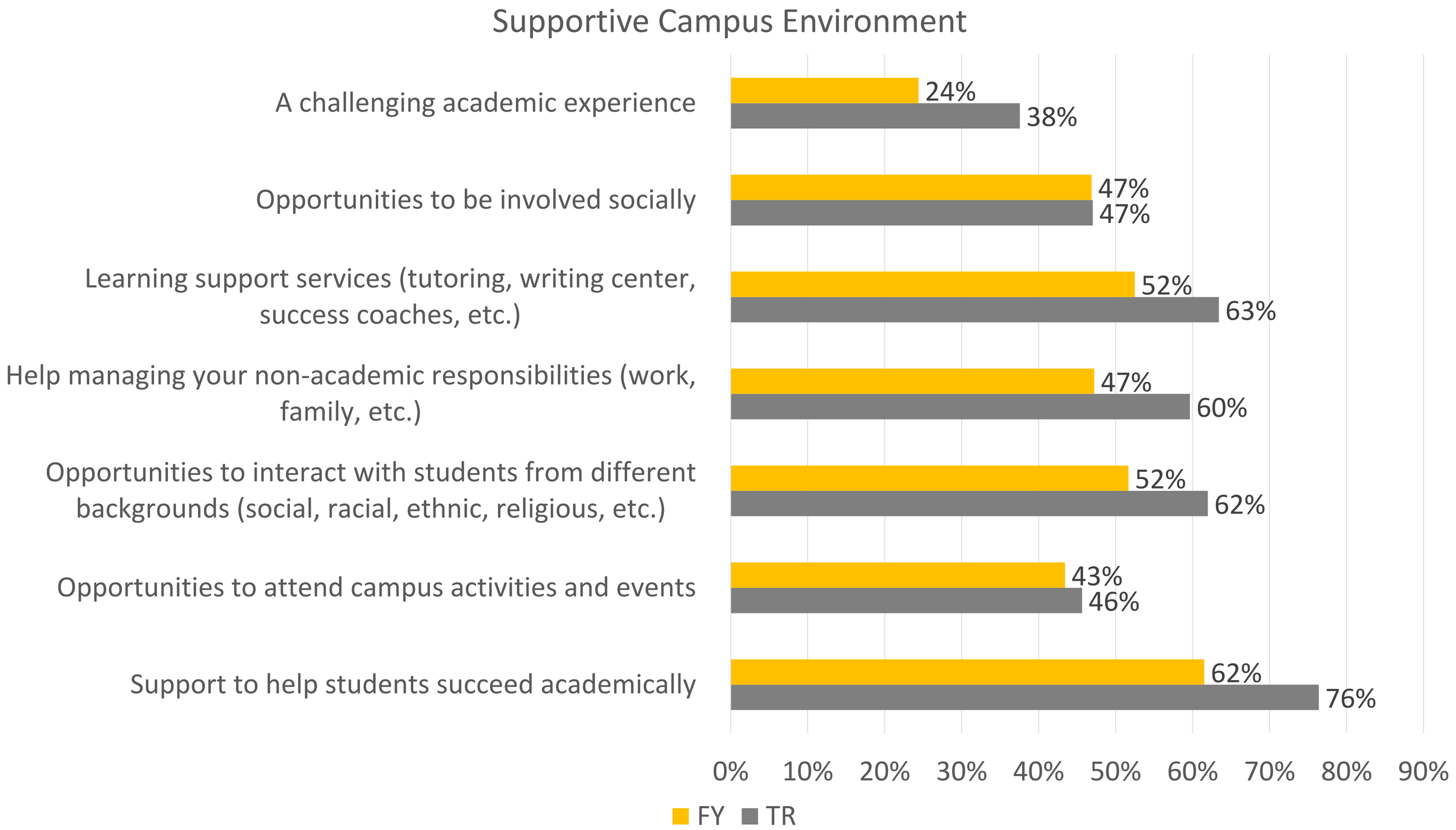
Student-Faculty Interaction

First-Year and Transfer students



Supportive Campus Environment

First-Year and Transfer students



Qualitative Findings

Expectations

First-Year and Transfer students

At the end of the survey, students were asked:

What are you most looking forward to about the coming year? What is your biggest concern?

Eight themes emerged from First-Year and Transfer student responses.

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

Social Integration

First-Year and Transfer students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

Both first-year and transfer students mentioned social interaction related topics including meeting new people, making new friends, and talking to professors. They are interested in learning from people of different backgrounds and hope to get involved on campus. However, they are also apprehensive about their ability to form friendships. Many students are anxious about not making any friends, feeling alone, or not fitting in.

"I'm most looking forward to meeting new people and having new experiences. My biggest concern is feeling homesick and being alone."

"Staying on top with my classes. Getting to know my professor more & being able to bond with them. As well getting to know the campus even more & learn about it. Not fitting in with my classes nor classmates as well feeling unsure about major."

"What I am most looking forward to about the coming year is hopefully making new friends … My biggest concern is being new to the campus and not having any friends is a little intimidating for me."

"I am not looking forward to interacting with the teachers or my peers. Interacting for me is difficult because I don't know how to interact or what to say. Oftentimes I need a script. Despite all of this, I want to know the teachers and my peers and I want to be their friend. I want to be able to ask them for help but it's very difficult for me to do so. I am scared of talking to people."

"… I am shy, so making friends is a bit hard for me, but I am looking forward to it."

Academic Preparation

First-Year and Transfer students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

The most frequent topic among Transfer students was related fear of falling behind in class due to academic unpreparedness or poor time management between school, part-time work, and family responsibilities. Transfer students are more likely to have children to care for.

Academic difficulty is also a frequent concern among first-year students, but less so comparatively. They express worry about being underprepared from high school, having poor study habits or losing motivation to keep moving forward in their education.

"I am looking forward to finishing my degree and starting a satisfying career. My biggest concern is having a job that will pay enough for my basic needs and help out my family, while also being flexible enough to go to school full-time."

"Right now, my biggest concern is being able to find a part time job to help with my living expenses (food, bills, rent) and my school expenses. I was recently laid off and it's been difficult to buy food sometimes."

"My biggest concerns are that I resigned my full time job to be a full time student with a 2 year old toddler. Paying for day care, transportation (live 52 miles away), paying for tuition, food, necessities, etc. I'm scared. Definitely made a risky decision but I plan to apply for scholarships, take advantage of the resources at school and pray for the best."

"I am looking forward to the college experience. My biggest concern is that my high school did not prepare my for the work load."

Mental Health

First-Year students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

Mental heath concerns was one of the most frequent topics among first year students, but not transfers. First year students felt anxious about being in a new environment, not being able to handle the stress or find support and getting overwhelmed (burnout).

“My biggest concern is how anti-social I am and how I can get anxiety attacks. But something that I'm looking for is making new friends and adapting hopefully quick.”

“Making new close friends that will last a lifetime and finding my career passion and life goal. Failing classes and having mental breakdowns and emotional struggles.”

I'm most looking forward to meeting new people. My biggest concern is getting overwhelmed and stressed.

What I'm looking forward to this upcoming year is to live my college life, be able to finally stay in class without getting a panic attack or anxiety and to be great friends with my classmates and teachers. One of my biggest concern is I might get panic attacks or a lot of anxiety. (I hope not, I'm trying to be a new person).

Time Management

First-Year and Transfer students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

For first year students, time management is a significant concern. Specifically, managing time between classwork, a job, family, and a social life. Transfer students also remark on time management as a concern, but more so because it will cause them to fall behind in class, whereas first year students desire a social life.

"…I have concerns about adjusting to higher academic standards, homesickness, financial responsibilities, and time management. "

"My biggest concern is being able to understand the material in a couple of my classes and overall being able to manage my time especially with having a part time job as well."

"My biggest concern is making managing time with my family , school and work"

"My concern is probably just managing time and money since I'm basically going to transition from teen to young adult."

"Reaching the opportunity to get closer to receive my degree. My biggest concern is balancing my time with my 18-month-old child, full- time classes and self-care."

Financial Concern

Transfer students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

Transfer students expressed more financial concerns compared to first-years. Students express worry paying for 1) tuition, 2) additional costs such as books and supplies and 3) transportation. Additionally, students are concerned they will not be able to keep up with paying for daily living with the additional costs.

"I'm looking forward to learning as much as I can this coming year. My biggest concern is paying for tuition. I didn't qualify for financial aid and had to get a 2nd job to try to afford it."

"My biggest concern is whether or not I'm going to get financial aid and how I will afford school if not."

'Biggest concern is having enough gas money to go to and from school while trying to find a job to afford to continue to go to school on a daily basis."

"Paying for tuition and supplies. "

Professional Growth

Transfer students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

Transfer students were also more excited about their career/professional development and finding employment opportunities related to their major.

“I'm looking forward to a successful school year and learn new things about my major.”

“I'm looking forward to learning more about social work and what avenues of career paths I can choose.”

Professional Growth

Transfer students

Social Interaction

Academic Preparation

Mental Health

Time Management

Financial Concerns

Professional Growth

Personal Growth

The final common theme among Transfer student responses were related to related to social interaction and career growth. Many students hope to grow as a person with attributes related to being confident, pushing themselves, and understanding their own strengths & weaknesses.

“I am looking forward to taking on this new experience and really stepping out of my comfort zone. My biggest concern is not feeling like I belong here.”

“I'm looking forward to gaining a better sense of self and understanding my strengths and weaknesses more fully.”

“Looking forward to this year is mostly about personal growth and pushing myself to do things I've never done.”

“Looking forward to meeting new people and making personal developments.”

For Questions

Contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

IE@calstatela.edu