



# NISTS 2020

## REIMAGINING THE TRANSFER STUDENT EXPERIENCE FEBRUARY 5-7, 2020 • ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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Research Spotlight

### **Survey of Staff at 19 Colleges: Services That Help and Hinder Transfer Student Success**

*Partnerships and Collaboration, Transition Programs and Services*

Over 600 staff, who work with associate-to-bachelor's degree transfer students at City University of New York's 19 colleges, responded to a survey about transfer student services. Staff who work with potential transfer students sometimes reported different views of transfer challenges than staff who work with students who have already transferred, and faculty views sometimes differed from those of non-faculty. These differing views may contribute to the challenges involved in supporting students' successful transfer.

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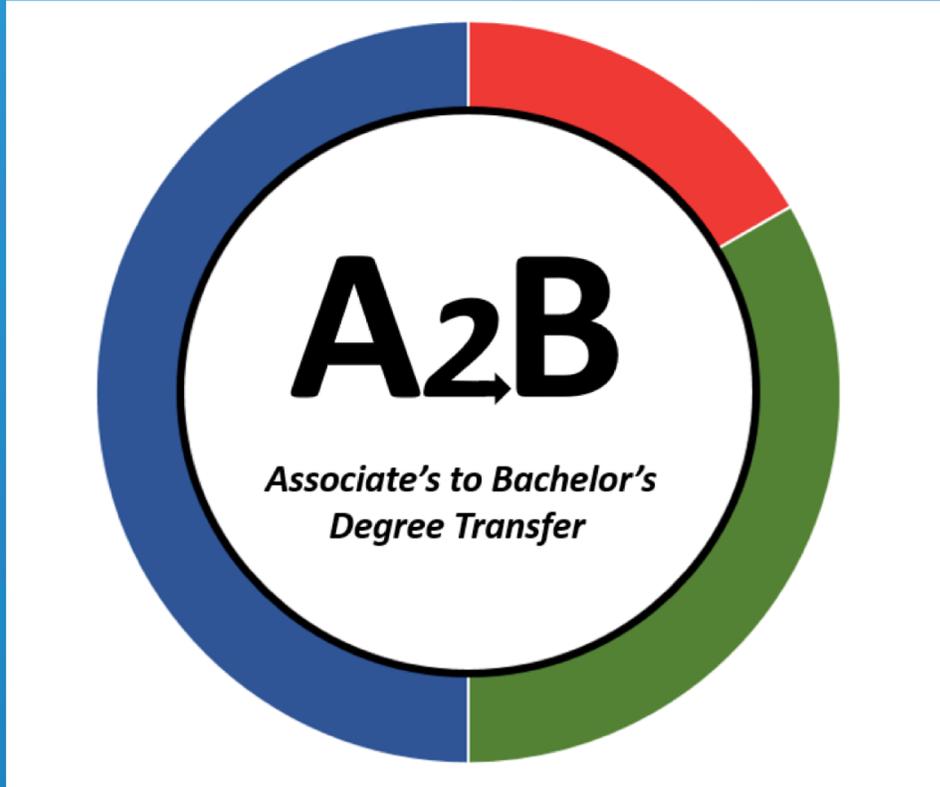
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# Survey of Staff at 19 Colleges: Services That Help and Hinder Transfer Student Success

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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# Acknowledgments

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- Matthew Townsell
- Plus many other members of the TOP Team

# Disclaimer

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# Presentation Plan

# Topics to Be Covered in This Presentation

- Background (who is transferring and why and what are the challenges)
- Staff Survey Methodology
- Staff Survey Results
- Summary and Conclusions
- Discussion

# Background

# Why Transfer from a Community College (Associate's Degree) to a Bachelor's Degree Program?

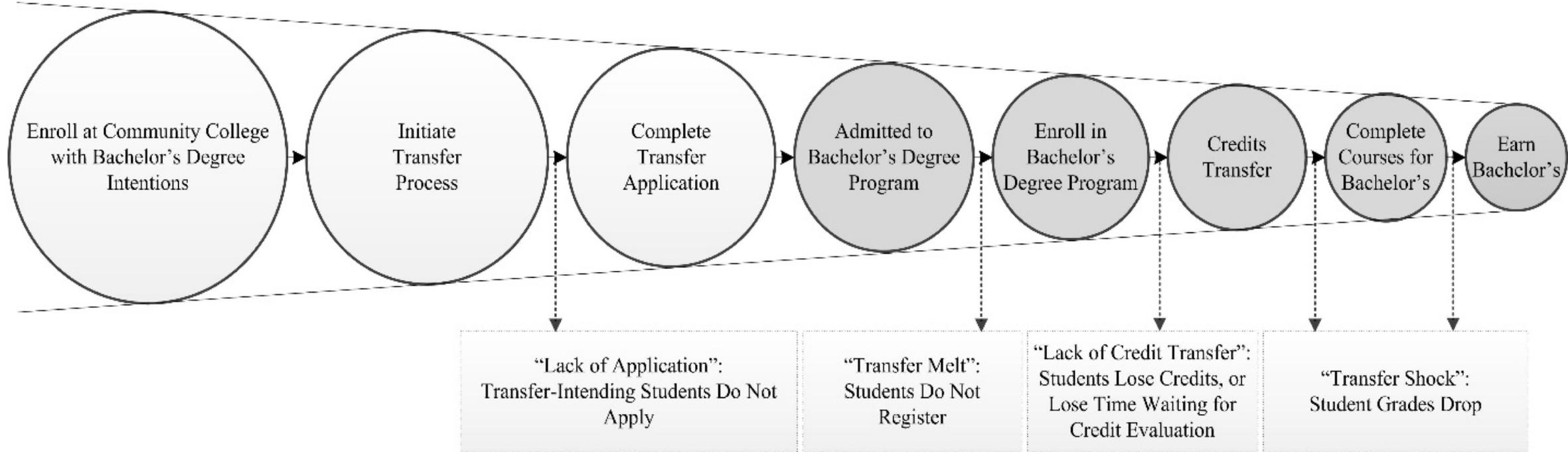
- Increasingly jobs require a bachelor's degree
- Over 80% of new community college freshmen intend to obtain at least a bachelor's degree
- Most community colleges only have associate's degrees
- So community college students will have to transfer to achieve their goals

# What Sorts of Students Attend Community Colleges?

- On average, students at community colleges (in associate's programs), in comparison to students in bachelor's programs, are:
  - More likely to be from underrepresented groups,
  - Have fewer financial resources, and are
  - More likely to be the first in their families to attend college.

# But What Happens to These Students' Goals?

## The Leaky Transfer Pipeline



# What Are the Results of the Leaks?

## National Data

- Over 80% of new community college freshmen intend to receive at least a bachelor's degree
- Six years later, only 17% have done so

## CUNY Data

- 87% of new community college freshmen intend to receive at least a bachelor's degree
- Six years later, only 11% have done so

# Purposes of TOP Research

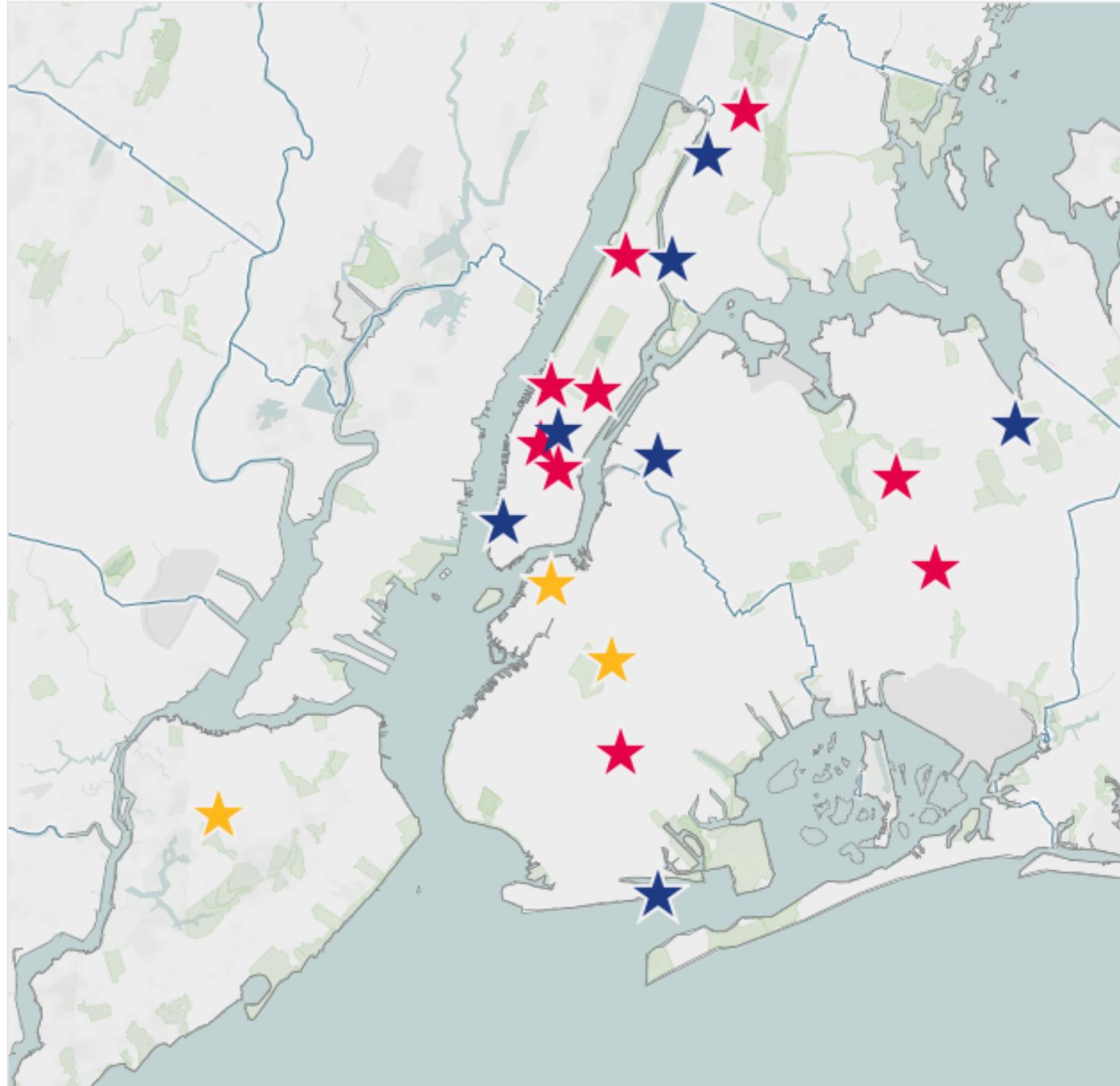
- Where are the major leaks in the pipeline?
- What variables are associated with those leaks?
- What are the possible malleable factors (aspects of the higher education environment that can be modified) that can increase the output of this pipeline?
- What specific interventions might address some of those leaks?



## The City University of New York as a Laboratory for Studying Transfer



- One Board of Trustees and one budget
- 19 undergraduate colleges in the 5 boroughs of NYC
  - 7 community colleges (associate's programs)
  - 3 comprehensive colleges (associate's and bachelor's programs)
  - 9 senior colleges (bachelor's programs)
- 240,000 matriculated undergraduates
- Over 10,000 students transfer from one CUNY college to another each fall alone
- Over 50% of bachelor's-degree recipients are transfers



# Why Study Staff Views?

# Staff Survey: Methodology

# Obtaining Names of Potential Respondents

## Requested names of:

- Staff who deal with transfer from community colleges to senior colleges:
  - In associate's-degree programs, people who work with community college students considering, planning, or pursuing transfer to a bachelor's degree.
  - In bachelor's-degree programs, people who work with incoming transfer students from community colleges.
- Staff who work on any transfer-related service.
- Staff from any office or academic department.
- Staff did not necessarily need to work only with transfer students, but work with transfer students needed to be a significant part of their jobs.

# Staff Who Work With Transfer Students Have Many Different Roles

- For this survey:
  - admissions
  - advising
  - enrollment
  - financial aid
  - orientation
  - registration
  - transfer credit evaluation
  - transfer process support
- In audience today

# Survey Content and Distribution

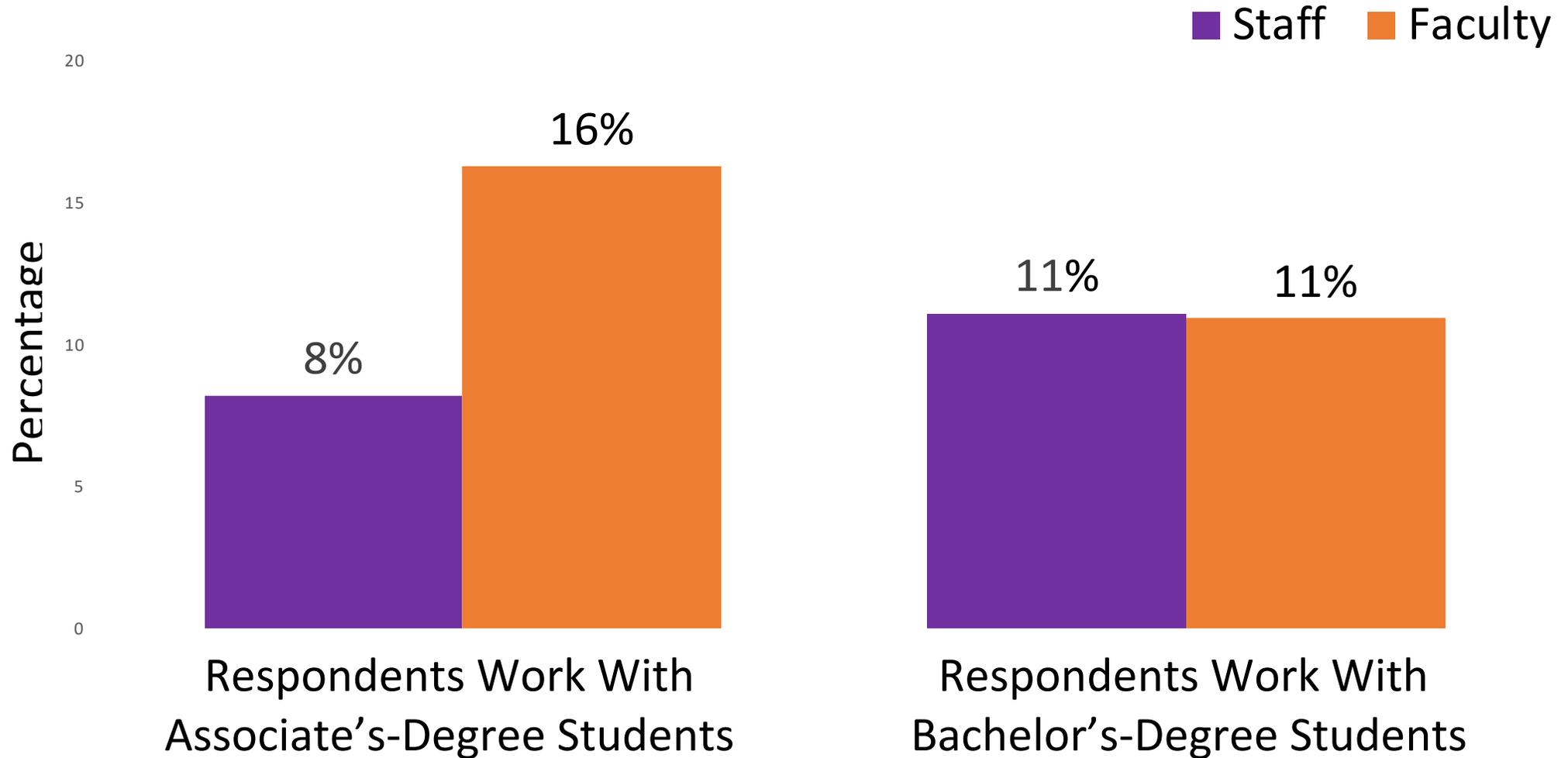
- Survey asked about
  - Respondents' positions, duties, & the nature of their transfer student service
  - How confident respondents felt using the type of software they used most
  - How confident respondents felt in their knowledge about CUNY transfer policies
  - Respondents' views of the challenges associated with the transfer process
- Survey was sent electronically to individual staff email addresses in February 2019, and was available for 3 weeks

# Staff Survey: Results

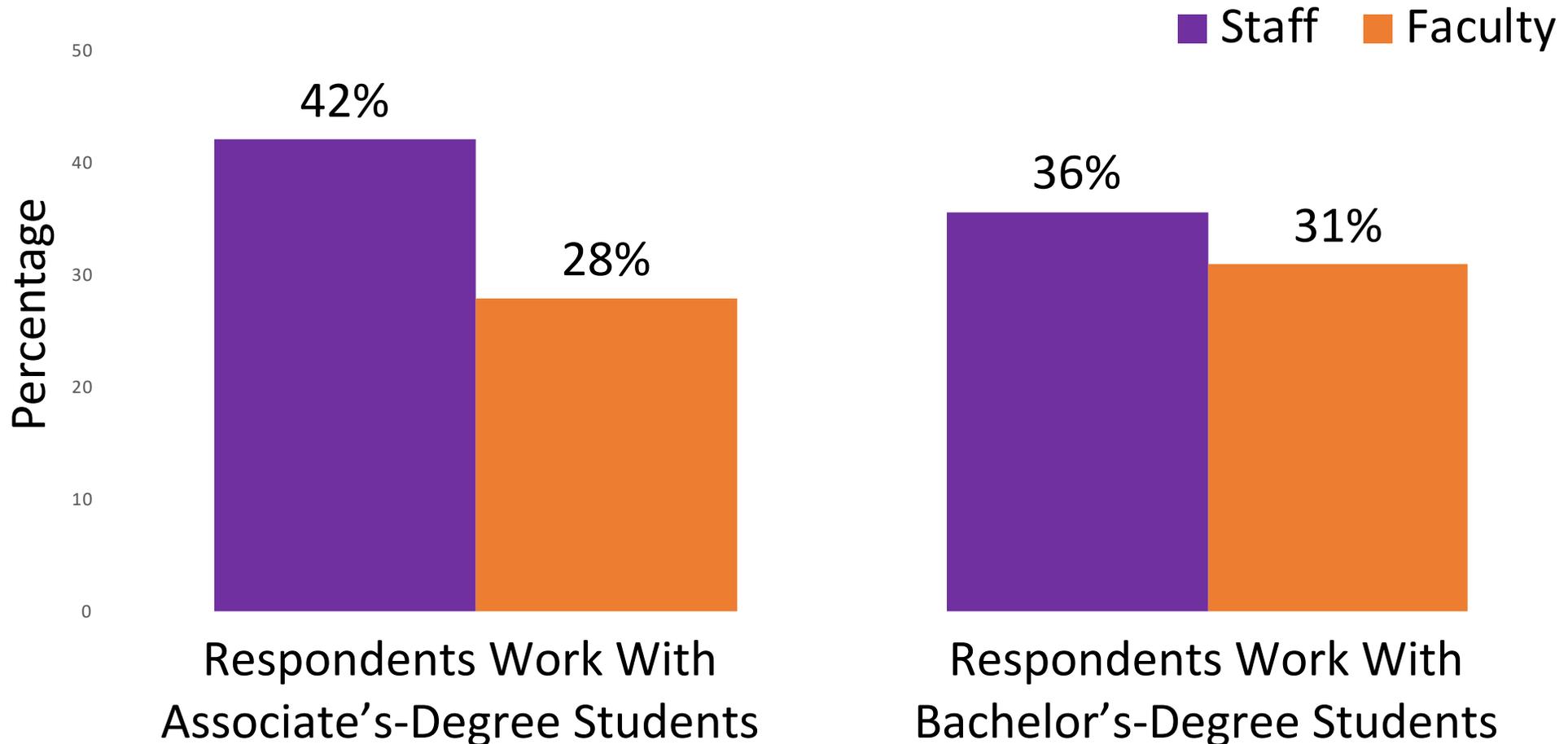
# Survey Response Rates

- Distributed to 1,111 verified staff at 19 colleges (range: 9 to 129 per college)
- Total of 622 responses (range: 8-82 per college)
  - 15 administrators (associate deans and above; not reported below)
  - 475 staff (hereafter “staff”)
  - 132 faculty (hereafter “faculty”)
- Overall response rate 56.0% (range: 21.7%-100.0% per college)

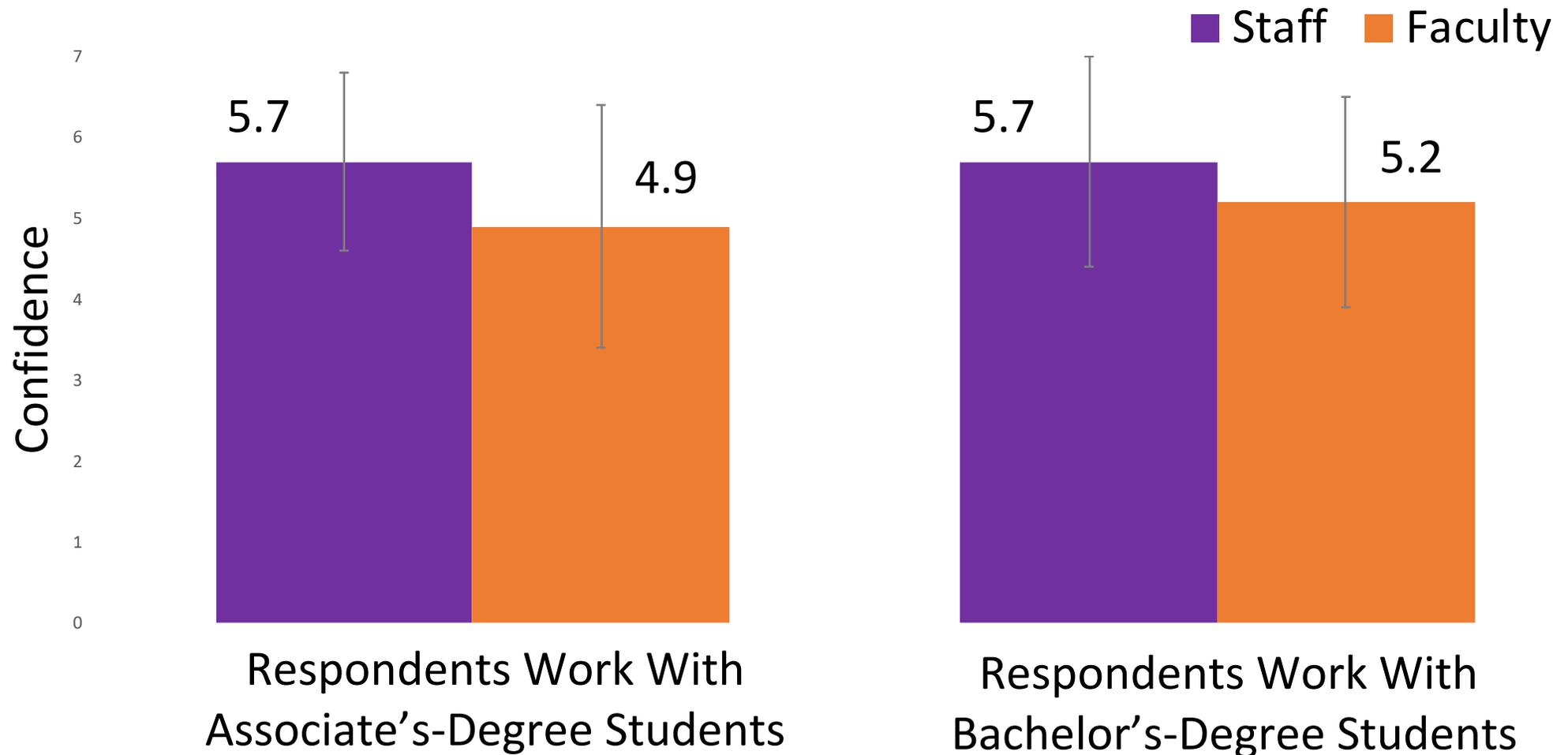
# Challenges With Your Service: Disconnected Services



# Challenges With Your Service: Inadequate/Inappropriate Student Behavior

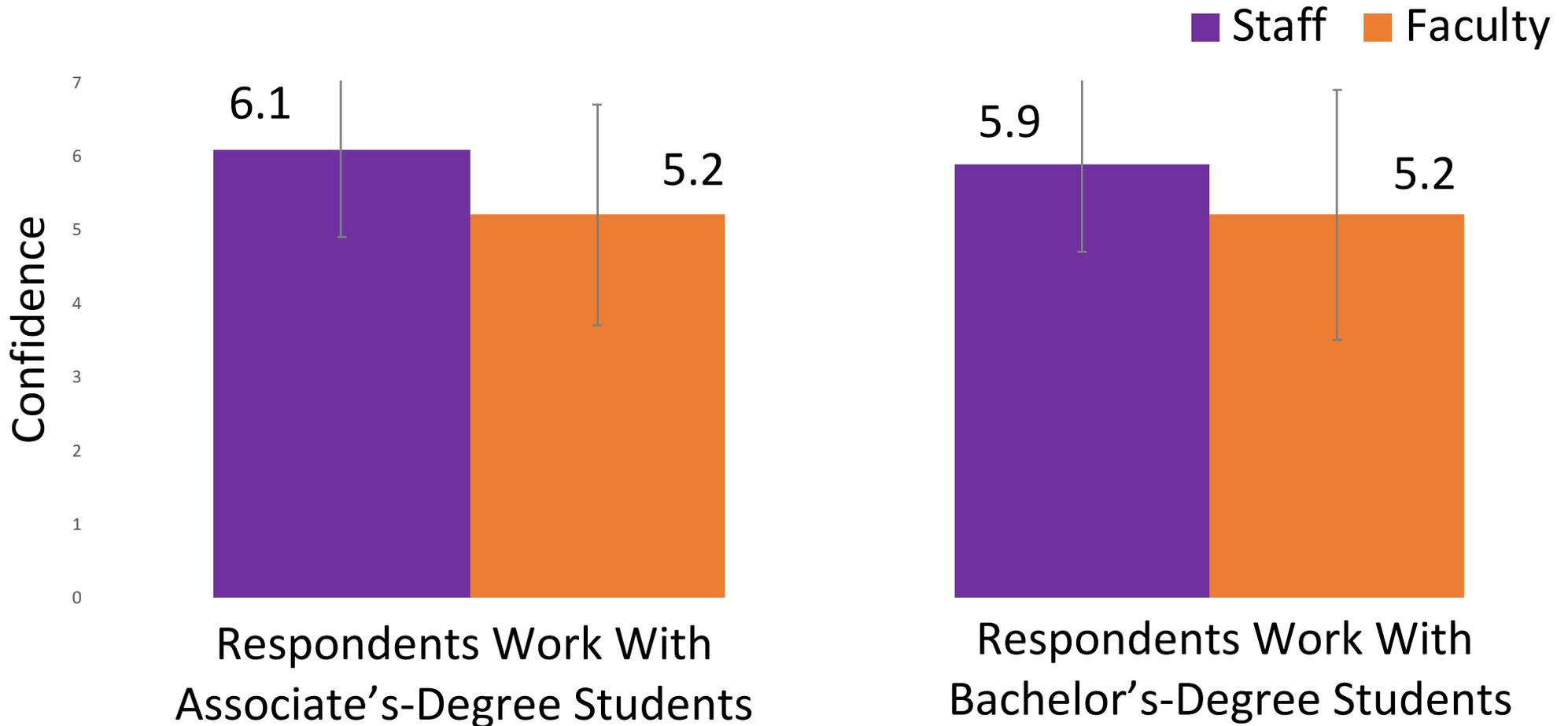


# Confidence in Understanding of University Transfer Policies



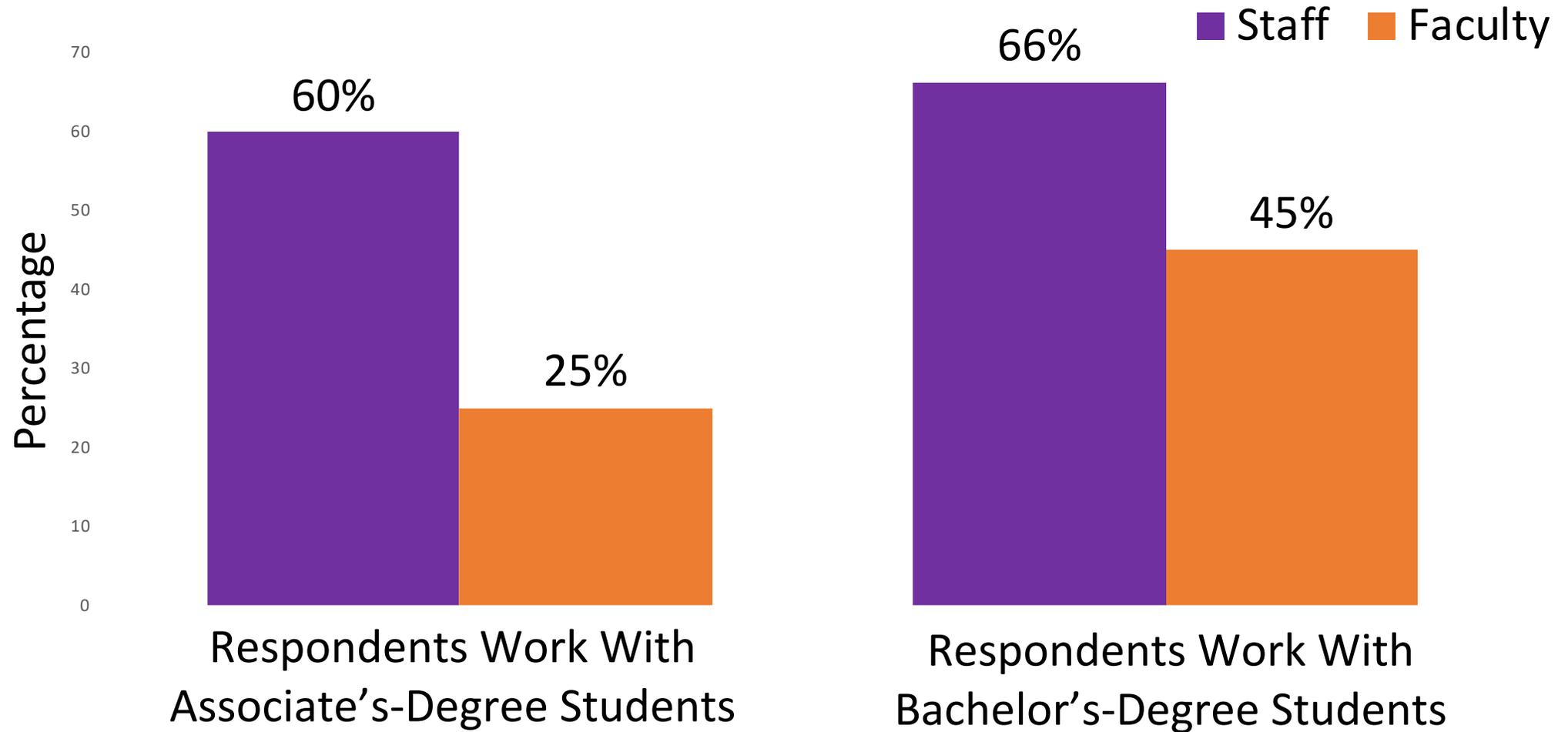
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# Confidence in Using Transfer Software



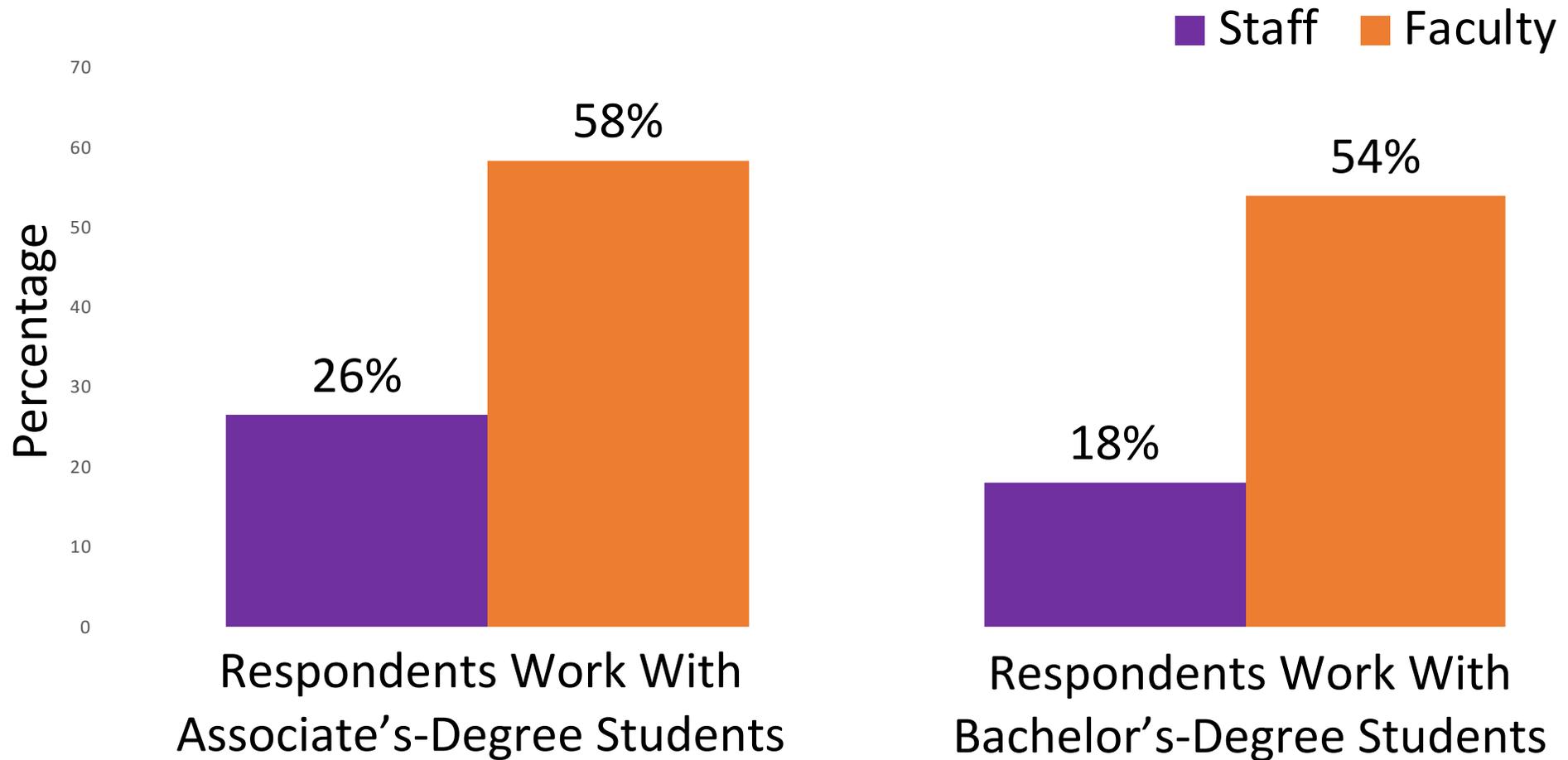
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# Service is Available Evenings and/or Weekends



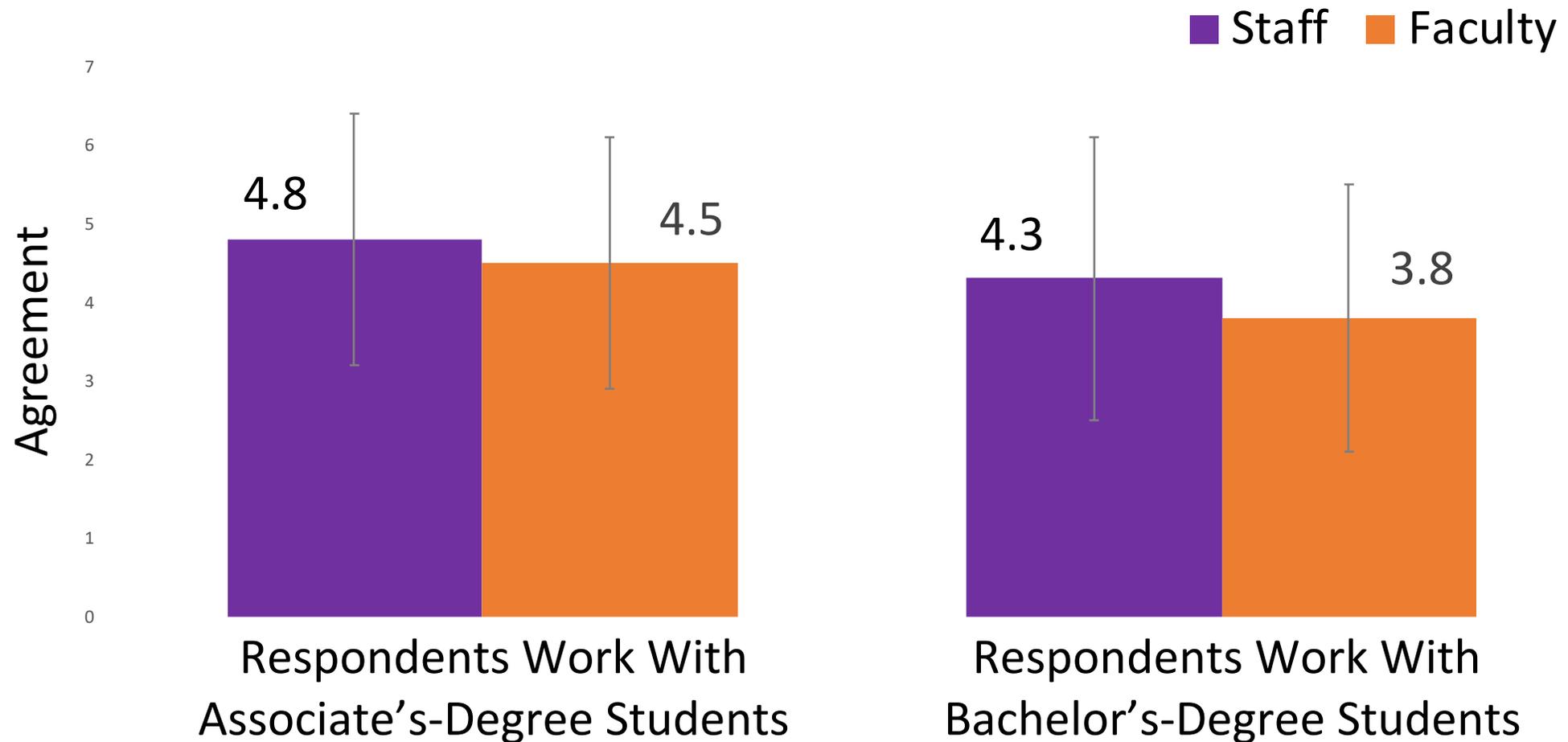
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# Never or Rarely Communicate With Other Offices



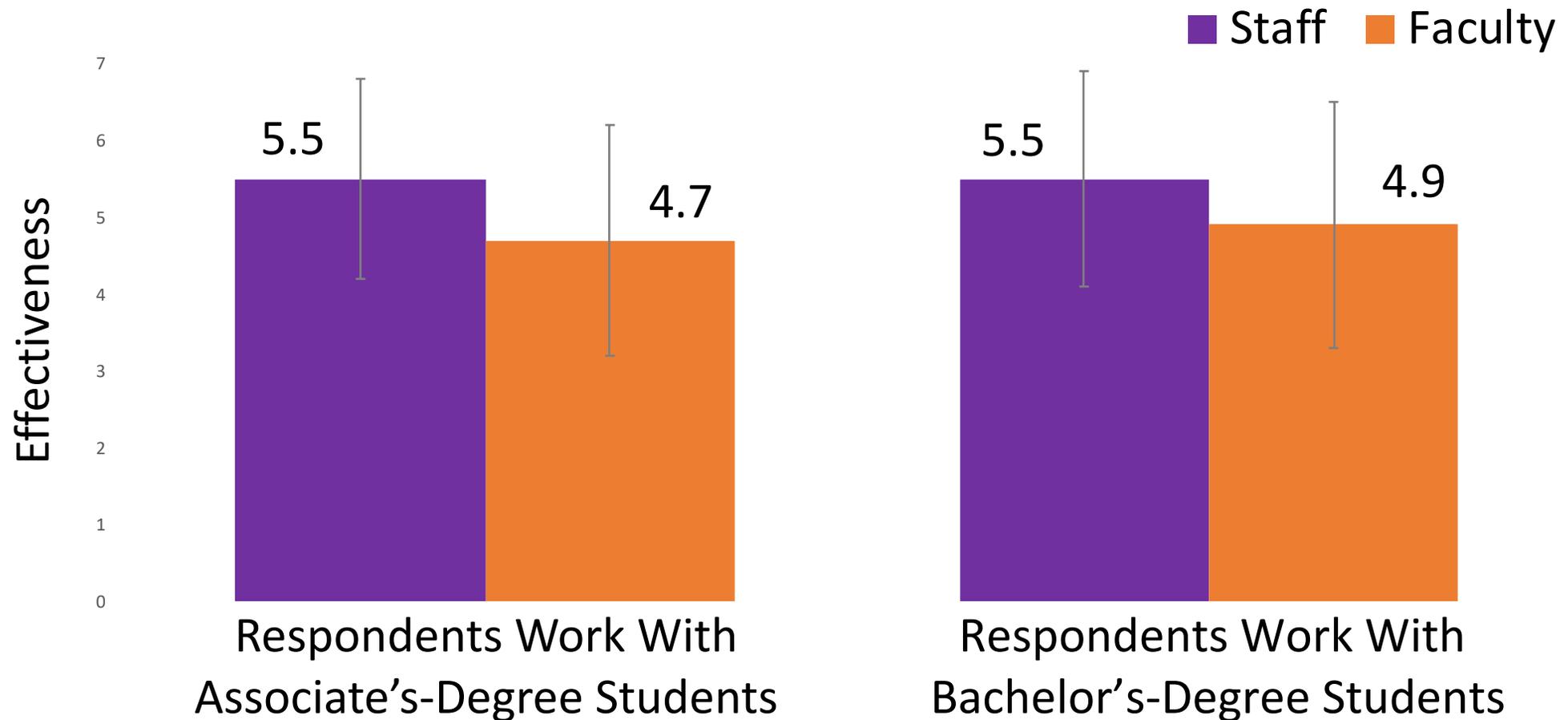
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# Campus Has Sufficient Resources to Adequately Provide My Service



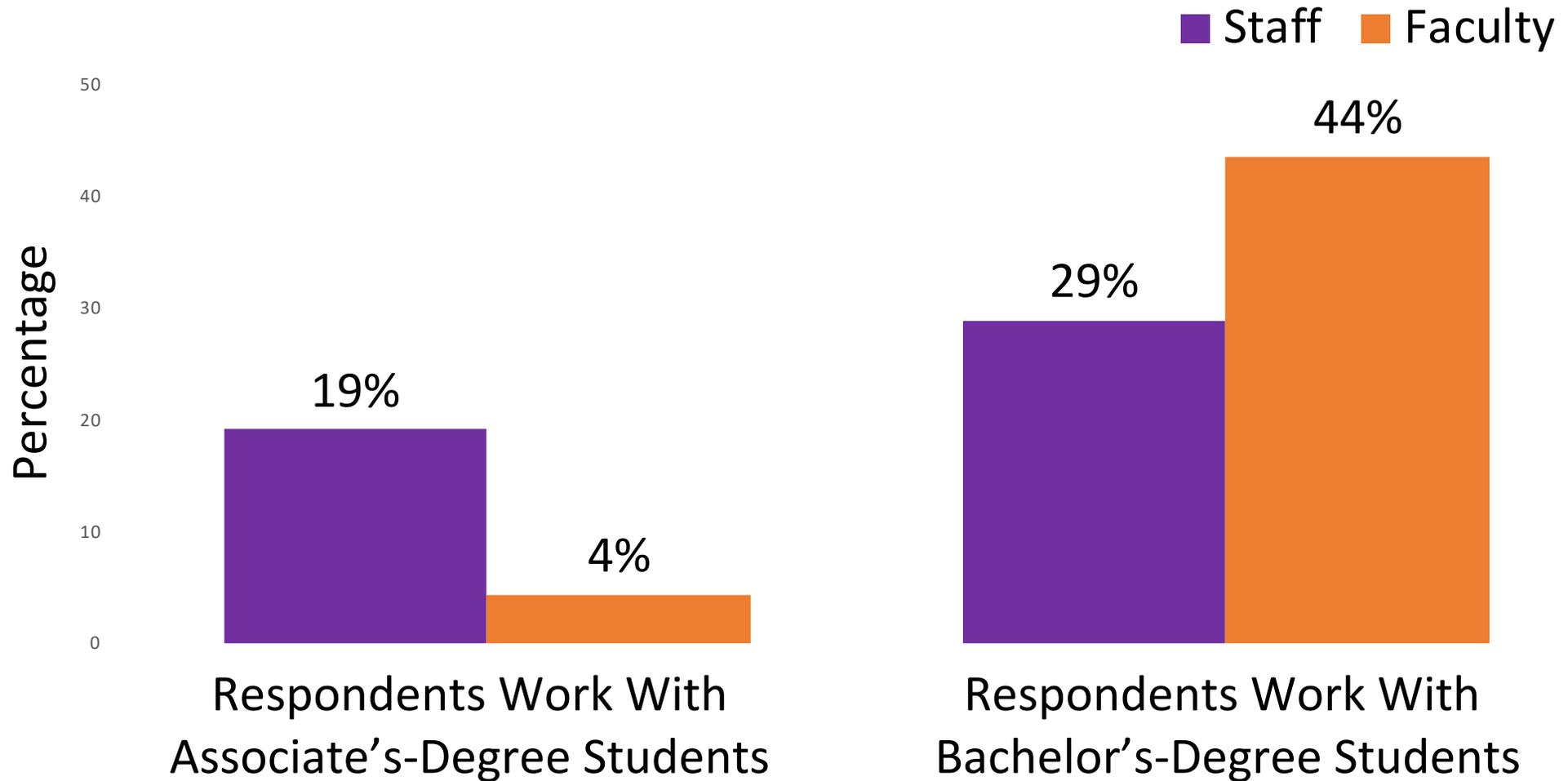
$p < .05$ : All Staff vs. All Faculty; All Associate's vs. All Bachelor's

# Effectiveness of Support in My Service Area of Transfers From Associate's-Degree Programs



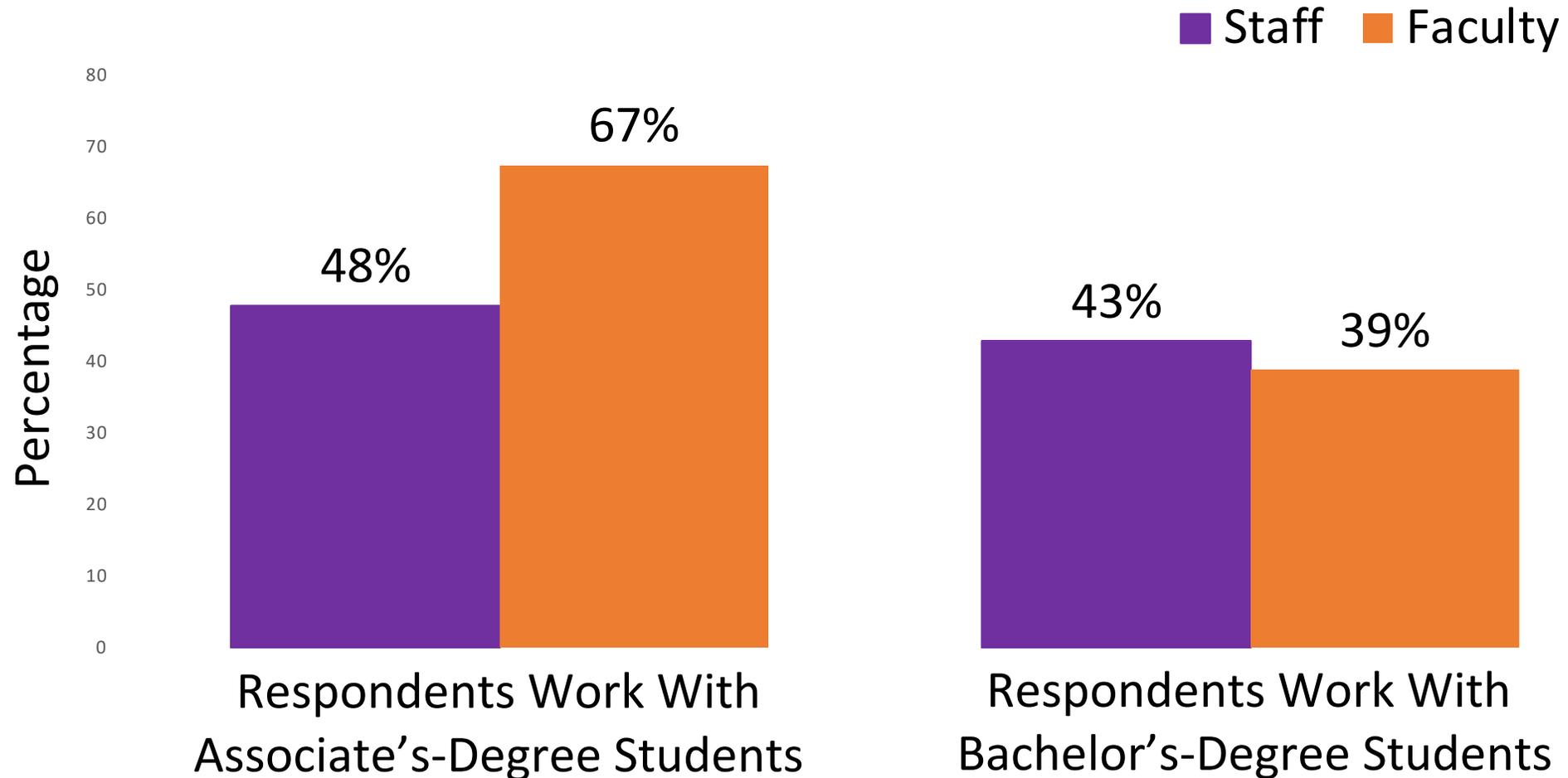
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# Biggest Transfer Process Barrier: GPA Decline



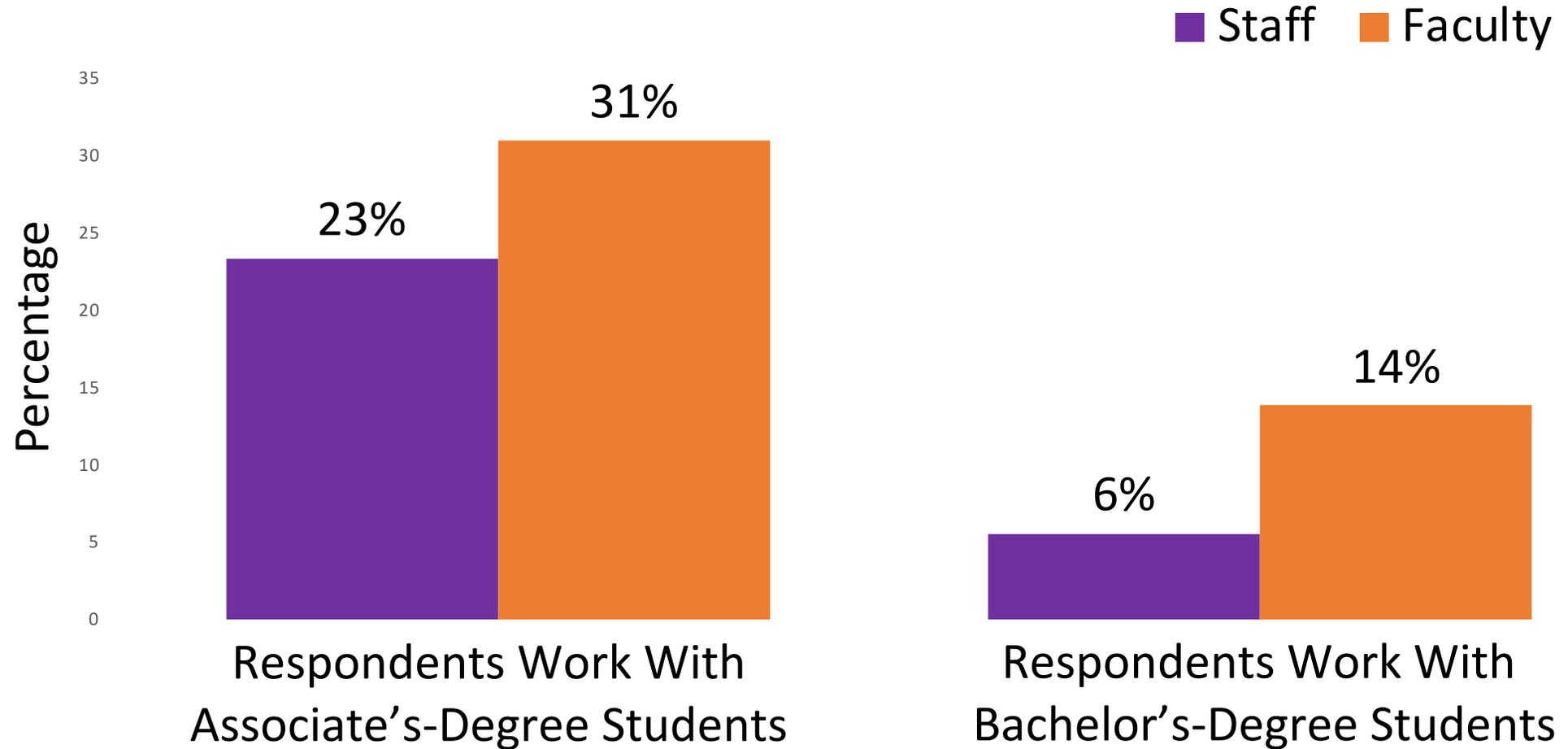
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# Biggest Transfer Process Barrier: Credit Transfer



$p < .05$ : All Assoc. vs. All Bach.; Staff vs. Faculty for Assoc. Only

# Topic of Credit Transfer Not Covered in Advising Sessions



$p < .05$ : All Associate's vs. All Bachelor's

# Summary and Conclusions

# Summary

- For both associate's and bachelor's institutions, there were no differences between faculty and staff in the reported challenges to their transfer service from disconnected services or inappropriate student behavior.
- But in both associate's and bachelor's institutions, faculty (as compared to staff) reported feeling less confident in their knowledge of university policies, and in their use of transfer software.
- And in both associate's and bachelor's institutions, faculty (as compared to staff) reported being less likely to be available evenings and weekends, and more likely to never or rarely communicate with other offices concerning transfer.

## Summary (continued)

Thus it is not surprising to learn that, at both Associate's and Bachelor's institutions, faculty, as compared to staff, are less likely to report that

- Their campus has sufficient resources to adequately provide their service
- Support in their service area is effective for transfer students

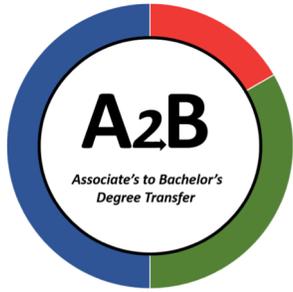
Faculty in this sample, as compared to staff, seem to be particularly challenged in providing effective service to transfer students and prospective transfer students.

## Summary (continued)

- Respondents who work with associate's students are more likely to attribute lack of transfer student success to bachelor's program policies, and respondents who work with bachelor's students are more likely to attribute lack of transfer student success to student or associate's-program factors
- Faculty who work with associate's students are particularly concerned that credit transfer practices are harming transfer student success.
- Yet the topic of credit transfer is not covered in about one-fourth to one-third of advising sessions.

# Conclusions and Questions

- Comparing people who work with associate's- and bachelor's-degree students, and comparing staff and faculty, there appear to be differences in the perceptions of the challenges for transfer student services and for transfer student success.
- These differences could contribute to, and/or be a symptom of, the lack of consistent and effective transfer policy and practice across associate's and bachelor's institutions, and across faculty- and staff-provided services for transfer students.
- How could the results reported here be of use, including with regard to policy and practice recommendations?
- What is the feasibility of actually effecting these recommendations?



Thank you!



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A2B (Associate's to Bachelor's) website:

<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/policy/a2b/>