

## 2024 Northwestern Survey of New Students

The 2024 Northwestern Survey of New Students was administered to all incoming first-year undergraduate students. The invitation email was sent on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Three reminder emails were sent before the survey closed on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the first day of Wildcat Welcome.

The survey received 1,278 responses for an overall response rate of 61%. This response rate was a ten percentage-point improvement over each of the previous two years. Response rates by sex were essentially the same. For race/ethnicity the response rate was highest for White, Non-Hispanic students and International students (66%) and lowest for Black/African-American students (52%) and American Indian students (43%). First Generation students responded at a lower rate (55%) than Continuing Generation students (62%).

The table below shows the sex and race/ethnicity composition of survey respondents relative to the entire entering class. Comparing the percentages shows that the survey results are representative of the entire class.

Federal Race/Ethnicity Category	M		F	
	Entering Class	Survey Respondents	Entering Class	Survey Respondents
American Indian/Native American	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	9%	9%	10%	11%
Black/African-American	5%	4%	6%	6%
Hispanic	8%	8%	10%	9%
Native Hawaiian/Oth Pac Island	0%	0%	0%	0%
International	6%	6%	7%	8%
Not Applicable	3%	2%	3%	2%
Two or More Races	4%	3%	4%	4%
White, Non-Hispanic	12%	13%	13%	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>

Note: This report uses federal race/ethnicity reporting methodology and assigns each student to one category. These figures may differ from other reporting that uses different methodologies.

The Survey of New Students asks students about their academic interests, expectations for college, high school activities, background, academic preparation, college search process, finances, and post-graduation plans. Below are overall results for selected questions with sub-group results described where notable.

The complete survey results from this year and past years are available to be viewed [here](#).

### Expectations for College

The survey started by asking students to rate the importance of Northwestern providing various experiences to them. Overall, the most important experience that students selected was 'Opportunities to discover and pursue your intellectual passion,' which was considered 'Essential' by 82% of respondents. A majority of respondents also rated three other experiences as 'Essential': 'Opportunities

to develop skills valuable in the workforce' (68%), 'Skills for lifelong learning,' (63%), and 'Deep expertise in a specific discipline or area of study' (60%). The item with the lowest level of interest was 'A broad liberal arts education' with 17% of students rating it as 'Essential,' though only 5% described it as 'Not important at all.'

Students were asked to rate their interest level for participating in a variety of activities while at Northwestern. Two activities stood out as having the most interest: 'Joining a student club or organization' (82% 'Very interested') and 'Having an internship' (82%). Two other activities were also rated as 'Very interested' by a majority of respondents: 'Working with a professor on a research project' (58%) and 'Studying abroad' (50%). Several other activities with higher levels of interest amongst subgroups were: 'Getting a job to help pay for college expenses' was rated 'Very important' by 60% of Hispanic students and 58% of Black/African-American students; 'Doing independent study' was rated as 'Very important' by 27% of International students, by far the highest by race/ethnicity; and 'Joining a fraternity or sorority' was rated as 'Very important' by 13% of White students while less than 8% of every other race/ethnicity rated it similarly.

Overall, 18% of students indicated they are 'Very confident' in their choice of major, with another 38% indicating they are 'Confident' in their choice. By far the highest percentages of 'Very confident' students by school were 36% for Communication students and 33% for Bienen students. Overall, 5% of students rated their confidence in their choice of major as 'Not confident at all.' These percentages were similar across schools.

### **Preparedness for College**

Less than 20% of incoming students indicated they felt 'Very well prepared' to 'Succeed academically' (13%) or 'Get along socially' (19%) at Northwestern. About half of respondents rated themselves as 'Quite well prepared' for each item (51% to 'Succeed academically' and 47% to 'Get along socially'). Male students rated their level of preparedness a little higher than female students with 17% 'Very well prepared' to 'Succeed academically' (compared to 9% for females) and 23% 'Very well prepared' to 'Get along socially' (compared to 16% of females). When segmented by race/ethnicity, White students had the highest percentage 'Very well prepared' for both 'Succeed academically' (17%) and 'Get along socially' (24%). Asian students had the lowest percentage 'Very well prepared' to 'Succeed academically' (5%) and Asian students had the lowest percentage 'Very well prepared' to 'Get along socially' (11%).

### **Choosing a College**

Overall, 71% of respondents rated Northwestern as their 'First choice' among colleges they applied to. Only 7% rated Northwestern as 'Less than third choice.' Of students applying Regular Decision 41% rated Northwestern as their 'First choice.' When segmented by race/ethnicity, White students had the highest percentage (84%) 'First choice' by race/ethnic group with Black/African-American having the lowest percentage (51%) selecting 'First choice.' By school, Medill and SESP students had the highest percentages rating Northwestern 'First choice' (83%) while Communication had the lowest percentage (71%).

## **Paying for College**

Overall, most respondents have minimal concerns about their family's ability to pay for their college education with 36% rating their level of concern as 'A little' and 38% as 'Not at all.' Nine percent of respondents indicated 'A great deal' of concern.'

## **After College**

A majority (60%) of incoming students indicated they 'intend to pursue a graduate or professional degree' in the future. Only 4% said 'No' and the remainder reported 'Not sure yet.' Female students said 'Yes' at a slightly higher rate than male students (62% to 57%). Black/African-American students had the highest 'Yes' percentages (72%) by race/ethnicity. White students had the lowest 'Yes' percentages (54%). First Generation students reported 'Yes' at a higher rate (64%) than Continuing Generation students (59%).

## **High School and Stress**

A plurality (46%) of incoming students attended a traditional public high school. The rate of attending a traditional public high school for students was highest for Asian (61%) and lowest for Hispanic (48%) students. For International students 41% attended a 'Private – independent non-residential' high school.

Looking at students' perceptions of stress during their last year of high school, most students were able to 'Find a balance between schoolwork and other aspects of their lives' with 15% responding 'Very often' and 46% responding 'Often' to that question. Despite these results, half of students 'felt overwhelmed by all they had to do' with 21% responding 'Very often' and another 31% responding 'Often' to that question. The percentages were much higher for females (29% 'Very often' and 37% 'Often' versus 11% and 25% for males). There were many students reporting they 'feel overwhelming anxiety' with 11% responding 'Very Often' and 17% responding 'Often.' Again, the rates were higher for females (15% 'Very often' and 22% 'Often' versus 5% and 12% for males).

## **Your Background – Help Seeking**

Responding to the question, 'While at Northwestern, what are the chances you will do the following?' almost half of students reported 'Very good chance' (15%) or 'Some chance' (29%) of 'Seeking psychological services and accommodations.' The percentages are noticeably higher for females (20% 'Very good chance' and 31% 'Some chance').

## **Local Questions- Decision to Attend Northwestern**

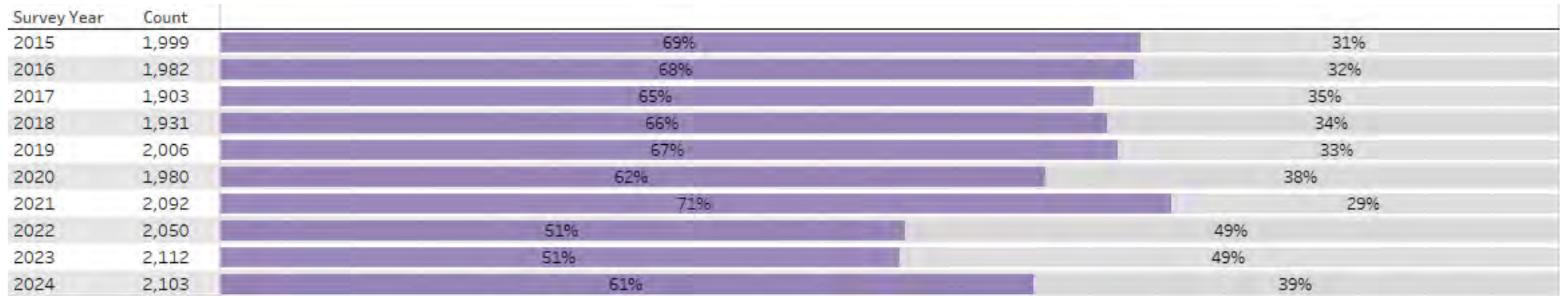
The biggest influences in student decisions to attend Northwestern were: 'Northwestern has a very good academic reputation' (rated as 'Very important' by 89% of respondents), 'Northwestern graduates get good jobs' (77%), 'National and global university rankings (61%), and 'A visit to campus' (56%). Looking at sub-groups, 'Northwestern graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools' was rated as 'Very important' by 60% of Hispanic students. 'The cost of attending Northwestern' was 'Very important' for 54% of Black/African-American students, the highest by race/ethnicity. For International students, 'My high school counselor advised me to attend Northwestern' was rated as 'Very important' by 22% of students. For First Generation students, 55% rated 'The cost of attending Northwestern' as 'Very important.'

## **Additional Results**

This report covered selected questions from the survey. The complete instrument included over one hundred question about these topics and more. The full results from all years of the survey can be found [here](#). Please contact [ir@northwestern.edu](mailto:ir@northwestern.edu) if you have any questions about the survey or are interested in additional analysis of the results.

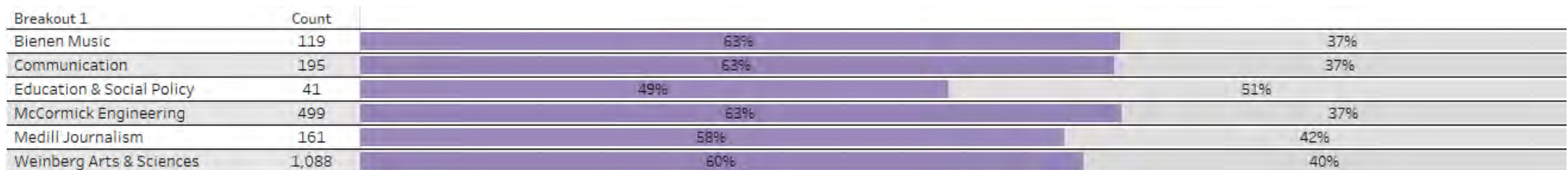
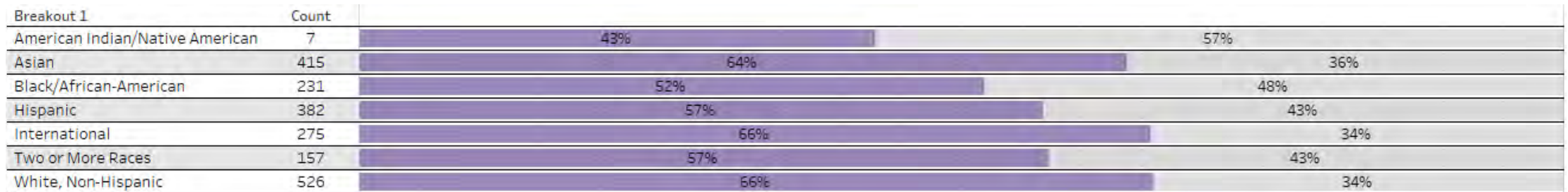
# 2024 Survey of New Students Highlights

# Response rate remains high and improved ten points from last year.



Survey Status  
■ Responded  
■ Did not respond

# Response rates were generally strong across various demographics.



Survey Status

- Responded
- Did not respond



# Students want opportunities to pursue their intellectual passion and develop useful skills.

How important is it that Northwestern provide you with the following?

question_item	Count	
Opportunities to discover and pursue your intellectual passion	1,269	82% 17%
Opportunities to develop skills valuable in the workforce	1,272	68% 29%
Skills for lifelong learning	1,270	63% 33% 4%
Deep expertise in a specific discipline or area of study	1,271	60% 35% 5%
A global perspective	1,271	42% 44% 13%
Experiences that help you develop and clarify a personal code of values or ethics	1,269	35% 44% 19%
Contact with individuals whose backgrounds (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, nationality, sexual orientation) are different from your own	1,271	32% 42% 24%
A broad liberal arts education	1,272	17% 39% 39% 5%

Response Options

- Essential
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not Important at all



# Students plan extracurricular activities and additional educational experiences.

How interested are you in doing the following during your undergraduate years at Northwestern?

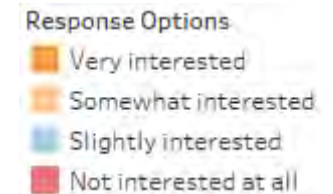
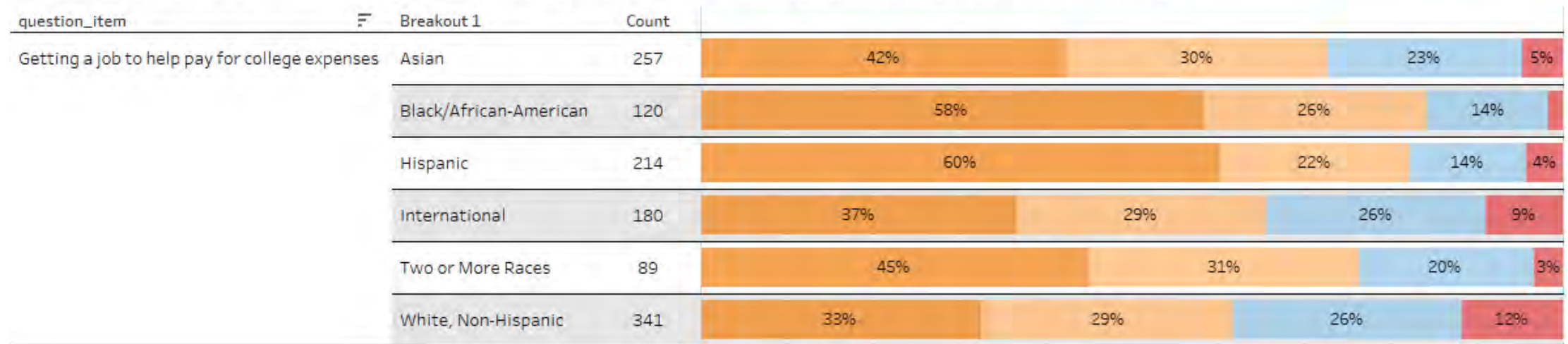
question_item	Count	
Joining a student club or organization	1,256	82% 15%
Having an internship	1,259	82% 14% 4%
Working with a professor on a research project	1,258	58% 28% 12%
Studying abroad	1,259	50% 25% 17% 7%
Getting a job to help pay for college expenses	1,258	43% 28% 21% 7%
Having a leadership role in student government, a club, organization, or team	1,259	36% 34% 26% 4%
Volunteering or community service, not as part of a course	1,258	31% 38% 25% 5%
Doing community service, as part of a course (e.g., service learning)	1,258	21% 43% 30% 6%
Doing independent study (self-designed credit courses)	1,258	15% 39% 36% 10%
Joining a fraternity or sorority	1,257	7% 15% 26% 52%
Participating in ROTC or the National Guard	1,257	4% 10% 85%

Response Options

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Slightly interested
- Not interested at all

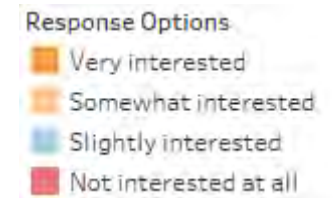
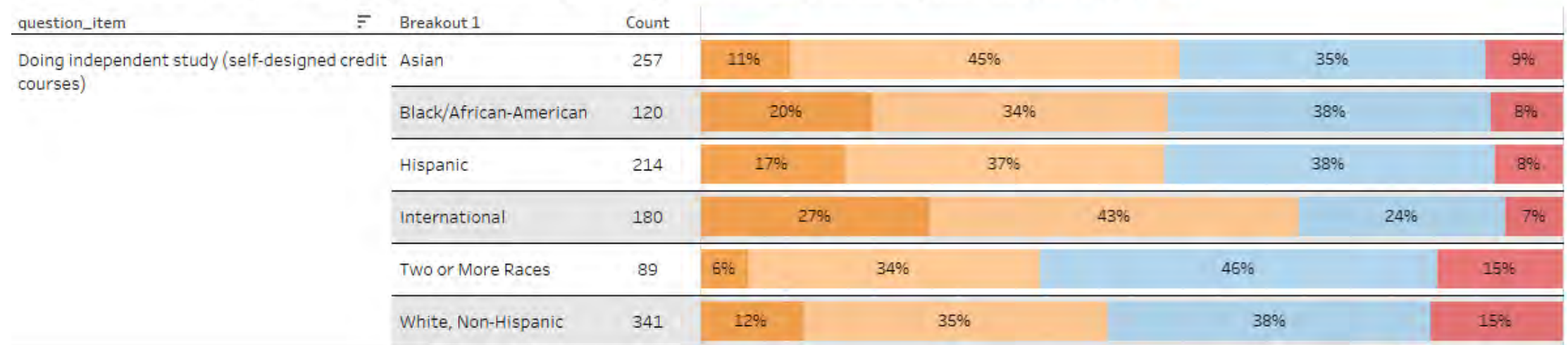
# Black and Hispanic students had higher levels of interest in getting a job to pay for college expenses.

How interested are you in doing the following during your undergraduate years at Northwestern?



# International students had a high level of interest in doing independent study.

How interested are you in doing the following during your undergraduate years at Northwestern?



# About half of all students across race/ethnic groups have no interest in joining a fraternity/sorority.

How interested are you in doing the following during your undergraduate years at Northwestern?

question_item	Breakout 1	Count				
Joining a fraternity or sorority	Asian	257	4%	13%	24%	59%
	Black/African-American	120	4%	15%	26%	55%
	Hispanic	213	8%	14%	31%	48%
	International	180		13%	34%	50%
	Two or More Races	89	4%	22%	19%	54%
	White, Non-Hispanic	341	13%	16%	22%	49%

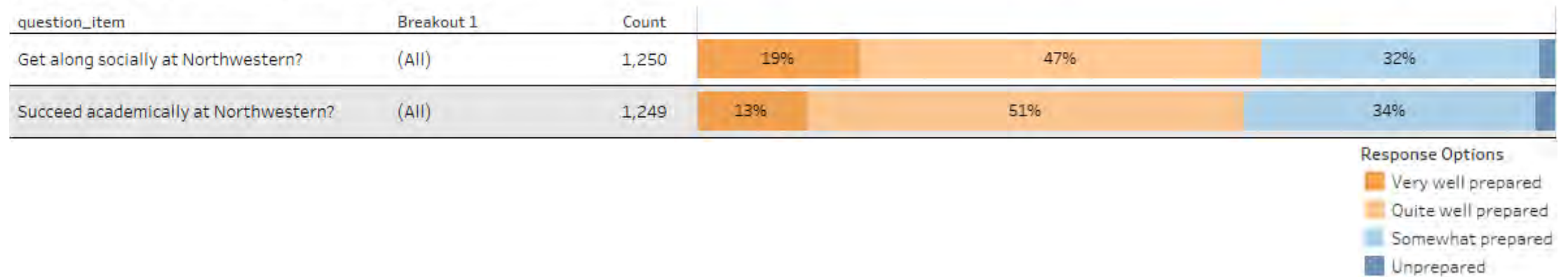
#### Response Options

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Slightly interested
- Not interested at all



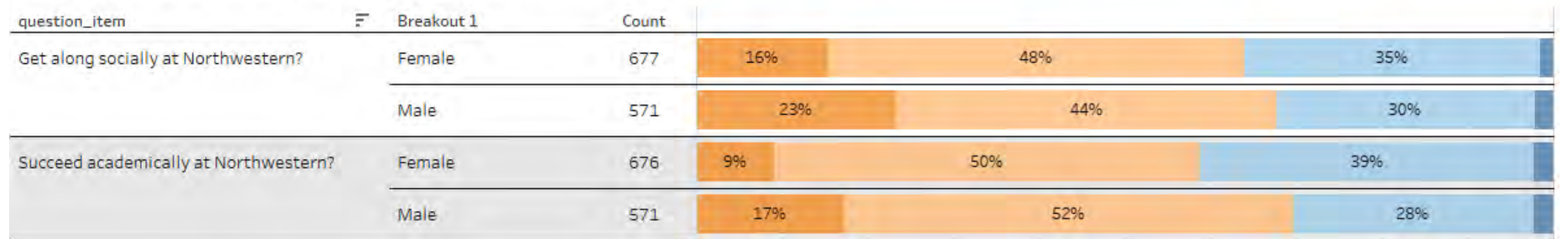
# Most students feel they're well prepared to succeed academically and socially at Northwestern.

How well prepared do you feel you are to...



# Men expressed higher levels of confidence in being well prepared for Northwestern.

How well prepared do you feel you are to...



Response Options

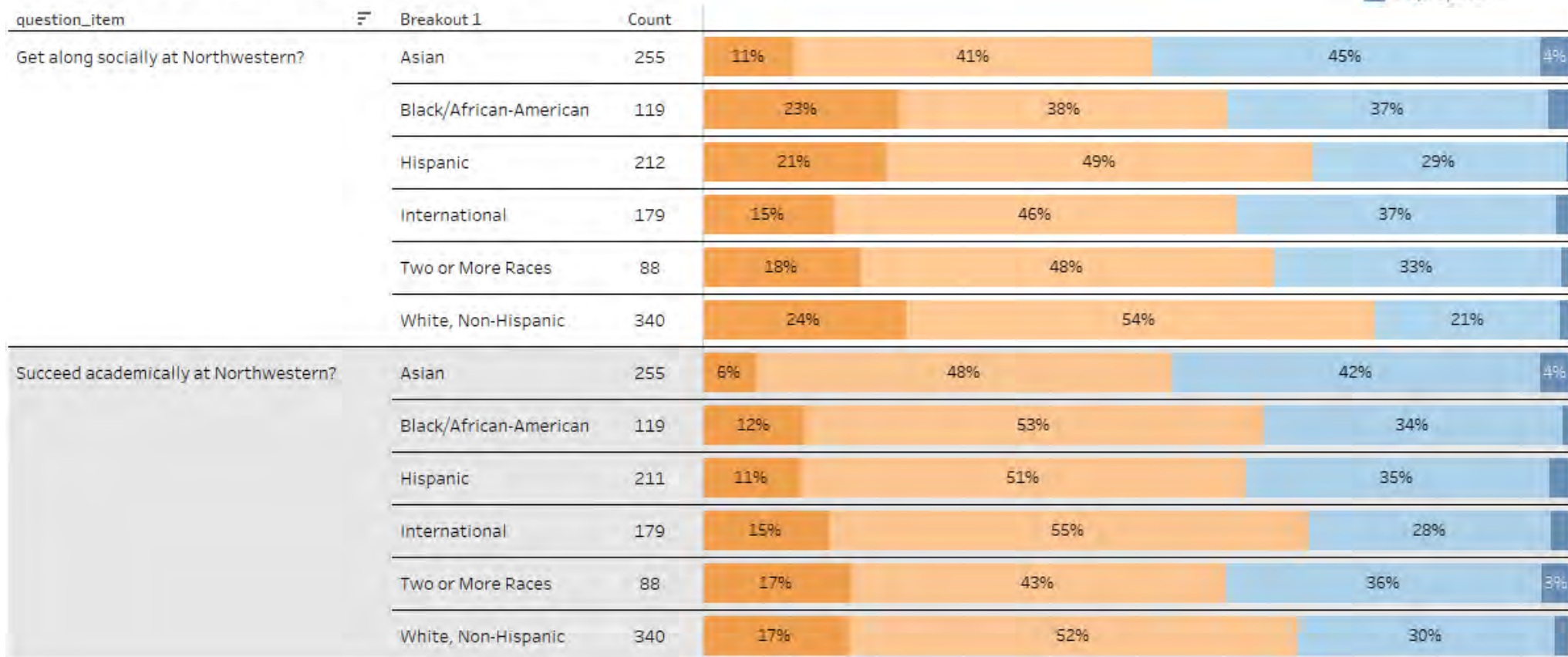
- Very well prepared
- Quite well prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Unprepared

# Asian students had lower levels of confidence in being well prepared for Northwestern.

How well prepared do you feel you are to...

Response Options

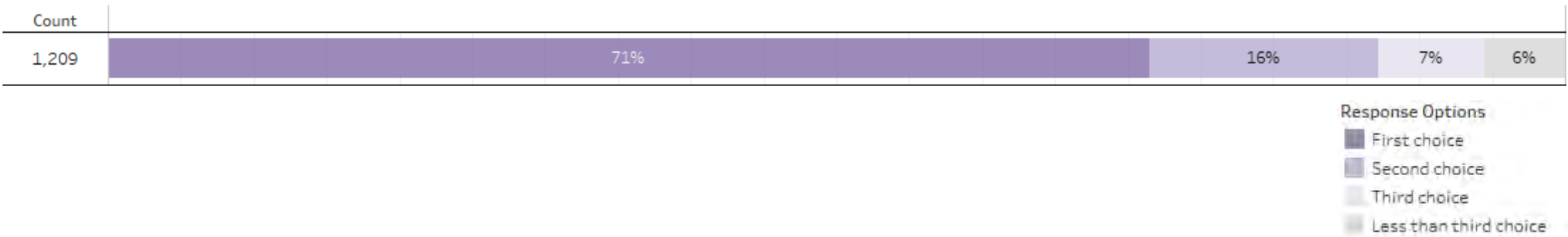
- Very well prepared
- Quite well prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Unprepared





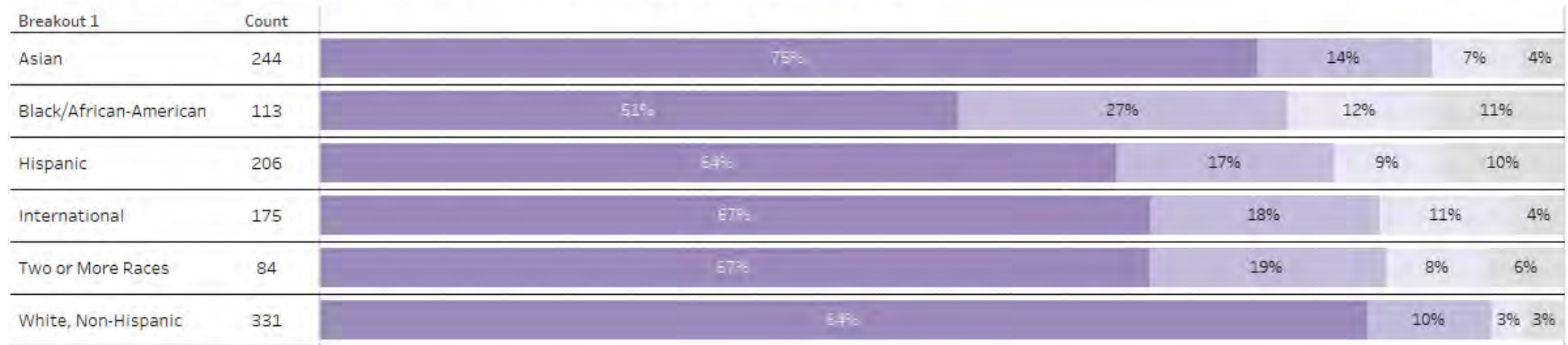
# A majority of students identified Northwestern as their first choice college.

Among the colleges that you applied to, how would you rank Northwestern?



# White students had the highest percentage identifying Northwestern as their first choice.

Among the colleges that you applied to, how would you rank Northwestern?

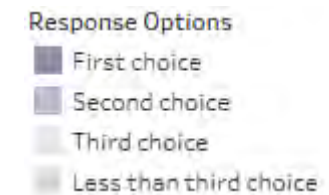
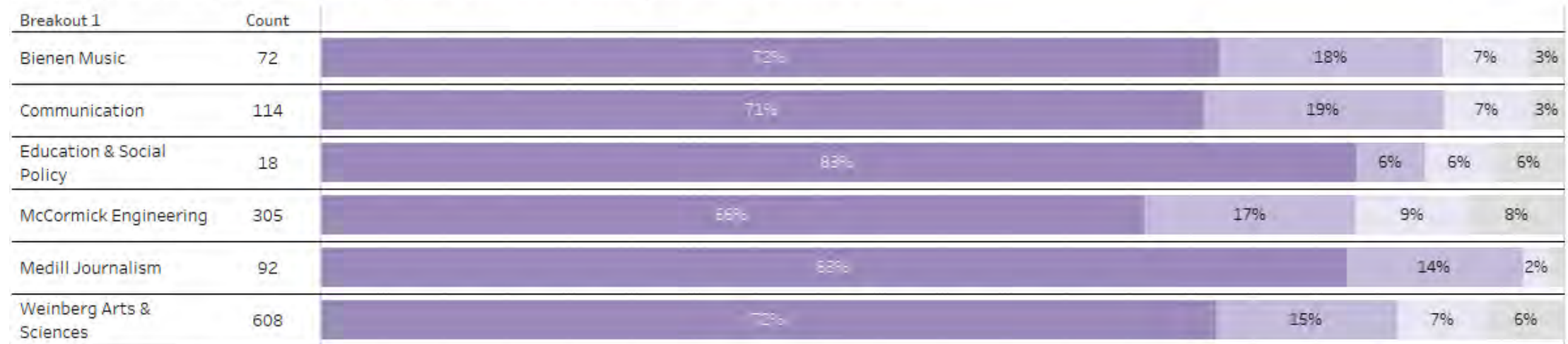


## Response Options

- First choice
- Second choice
- Third choice
- Less than third choice

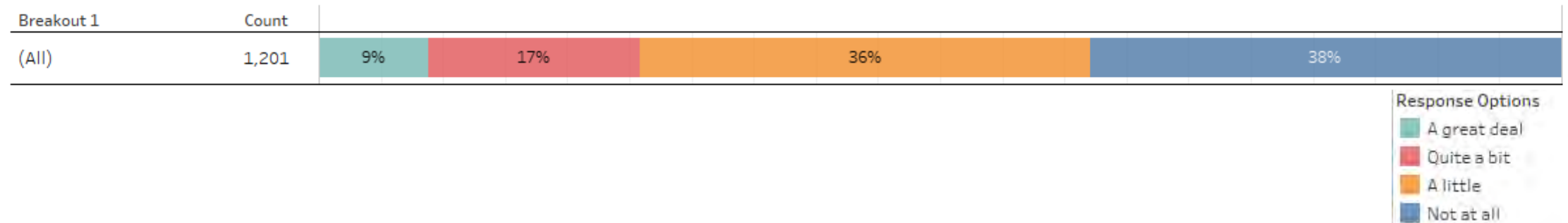
# Medill and SESP students had the highest percentage declaring Northwestern as their first choice.

Among the colleges that you applied to, how would you rank Northwestern?



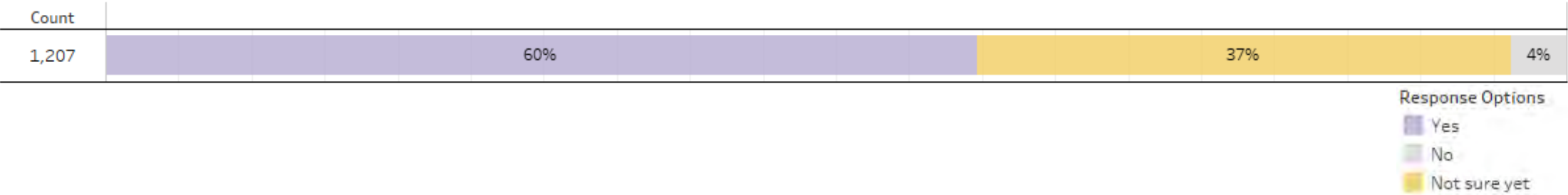
# Most students had little or no concern about their family's ability to pay for their college education.

As of right now, how concerned are you about your family's ability to pay for your college education?



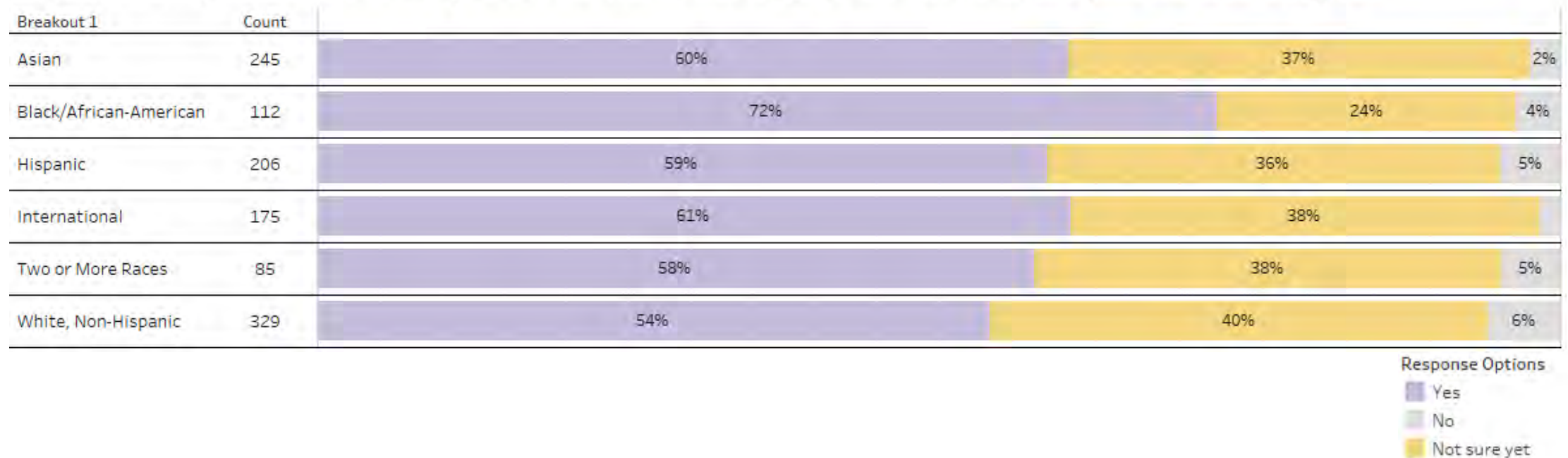
A majority of respondents said they plan to pursue a graduate or professional degree after graduation.

Do you currently intend to pursue a graduate or professional degree after you complete your bachelor’s degree?



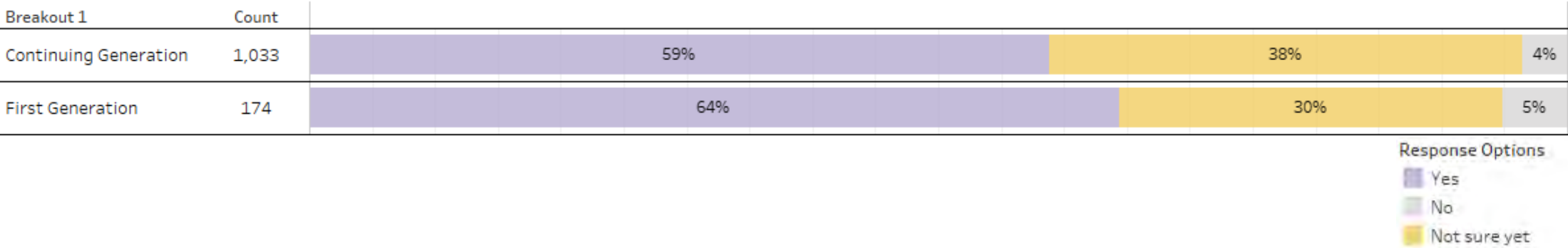
# Black students had the highest level of intention to pursue an additional degree after graduation.

Do you currently intend to pursue a graduate or professional degree after you complete your bachelor's degree?



# First Generation students expressed a higher level of intention to pursue a graduate or professional degree.

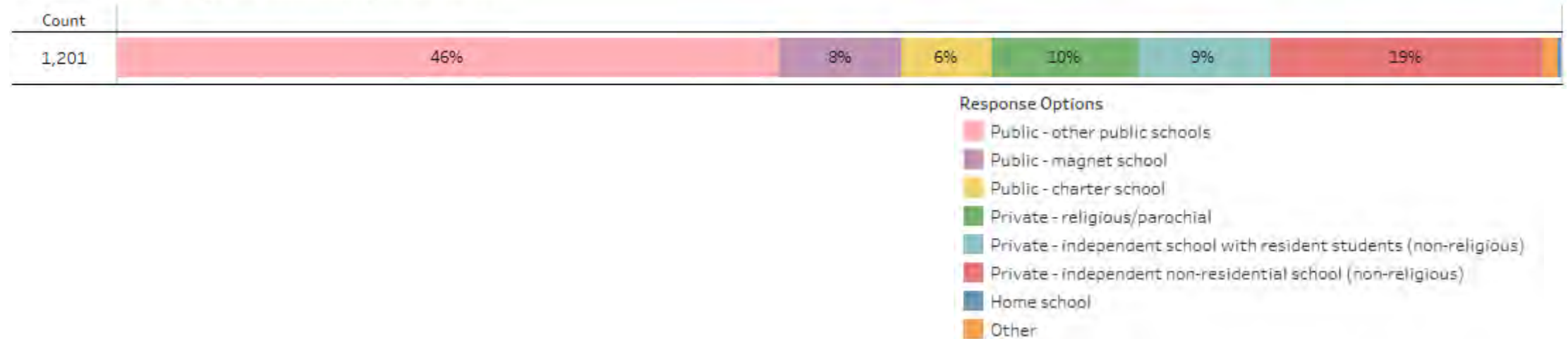
Do you currently intend to pursue a graduate or professional degree after you complete your bachelor’s degree?





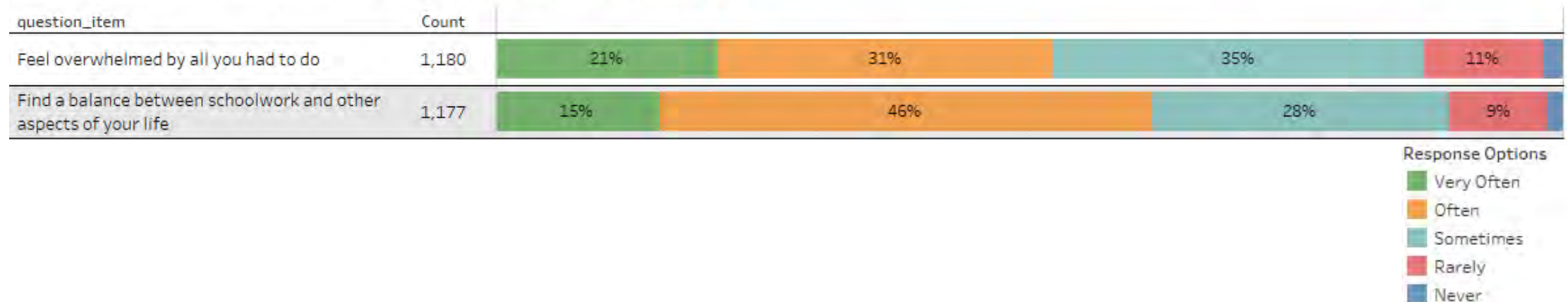
# Nearly half of incoming students attended a traditional public high school.

What kind of high school did you attend?



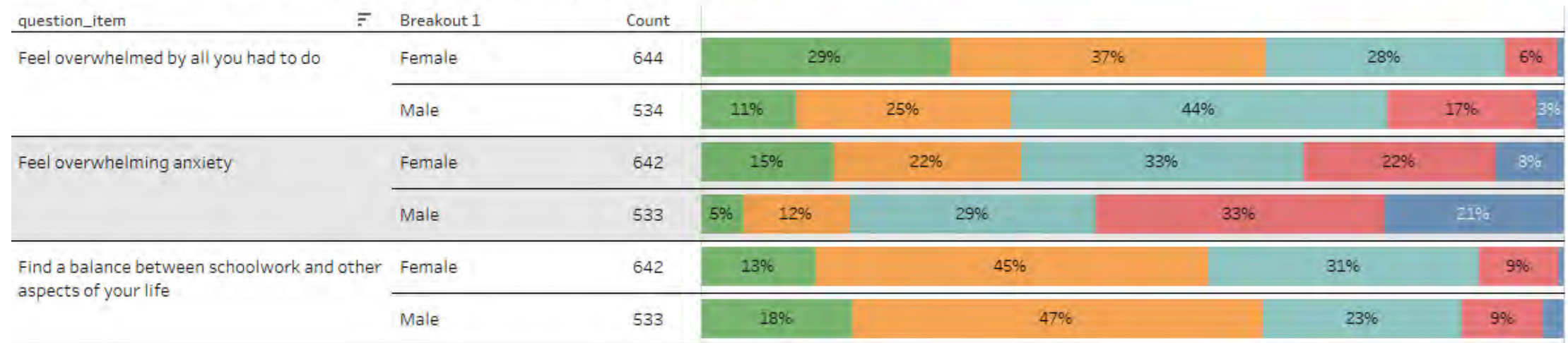
A majority of students said they often found school/life balance, but also a majority often felt overwhelmed by all they had to do.

During your last year of high school, about how often did you...



Female students felt overwhelmed and felt anxious more often than male students. Female found also school/life balance less often than male students.

During your last year of high school, about how often did you...

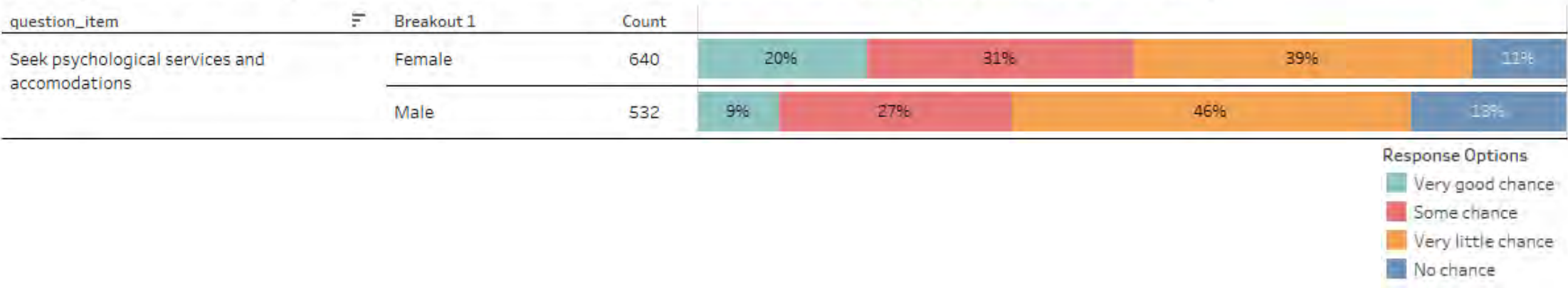


Response Options

- Very Often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

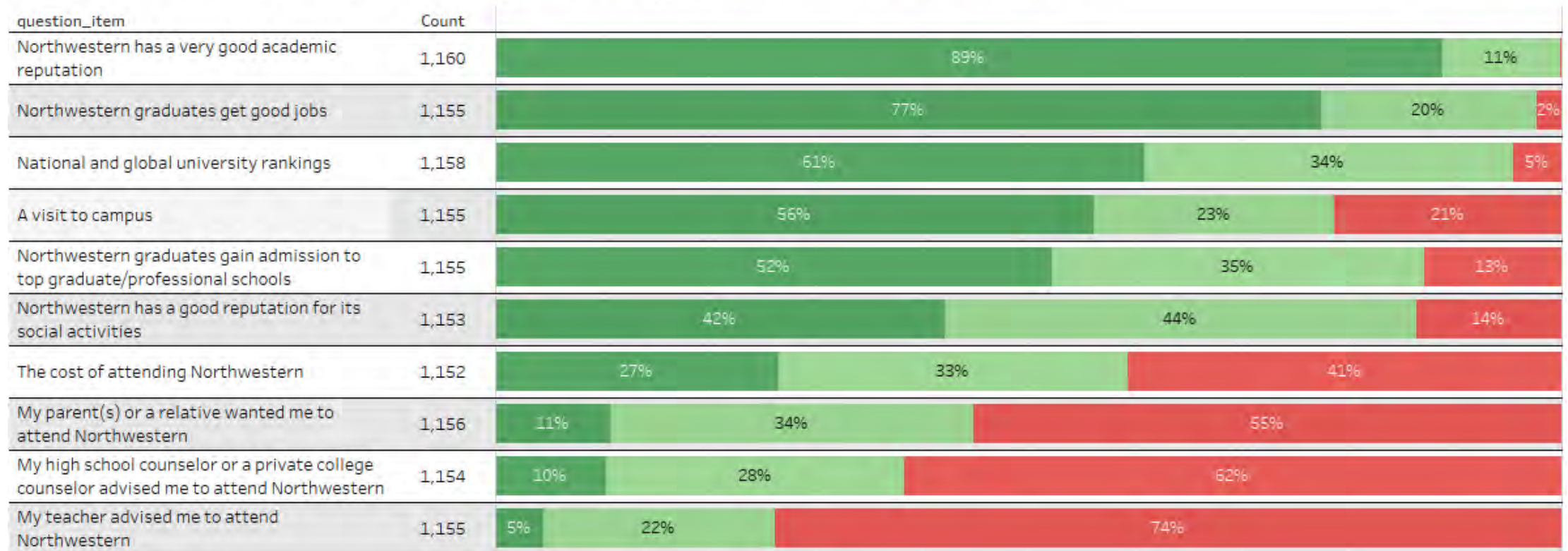
# Female students were more likely to say there is a chance they will seek counseling services while at NU.

While you are an undergraduate at Northwestern, what’s the chance that you will do the following?



# Academic reputation, positive outcomes, rankings, and a visit to campus were ‘Very important’ to in most incoming students decision to attend NU.

How important was each of the following reasons in your decision to attend Northwestern?



Response Options

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important