

You're in the right place for the AAUP webinar on Teaching Evaluations!

We'll get started at 2:00.

Please make sure your computer volume is on, as that is how you will hear today's presentation.



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# Teaching Evaluation

Trends and AAUP Recommendations



## Gwendolyn Bradley Facilitator

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# Presenter

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Faculty member at the  
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Chair of AAUP Committee of  
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## Presenter

### **Daniel Murphy**

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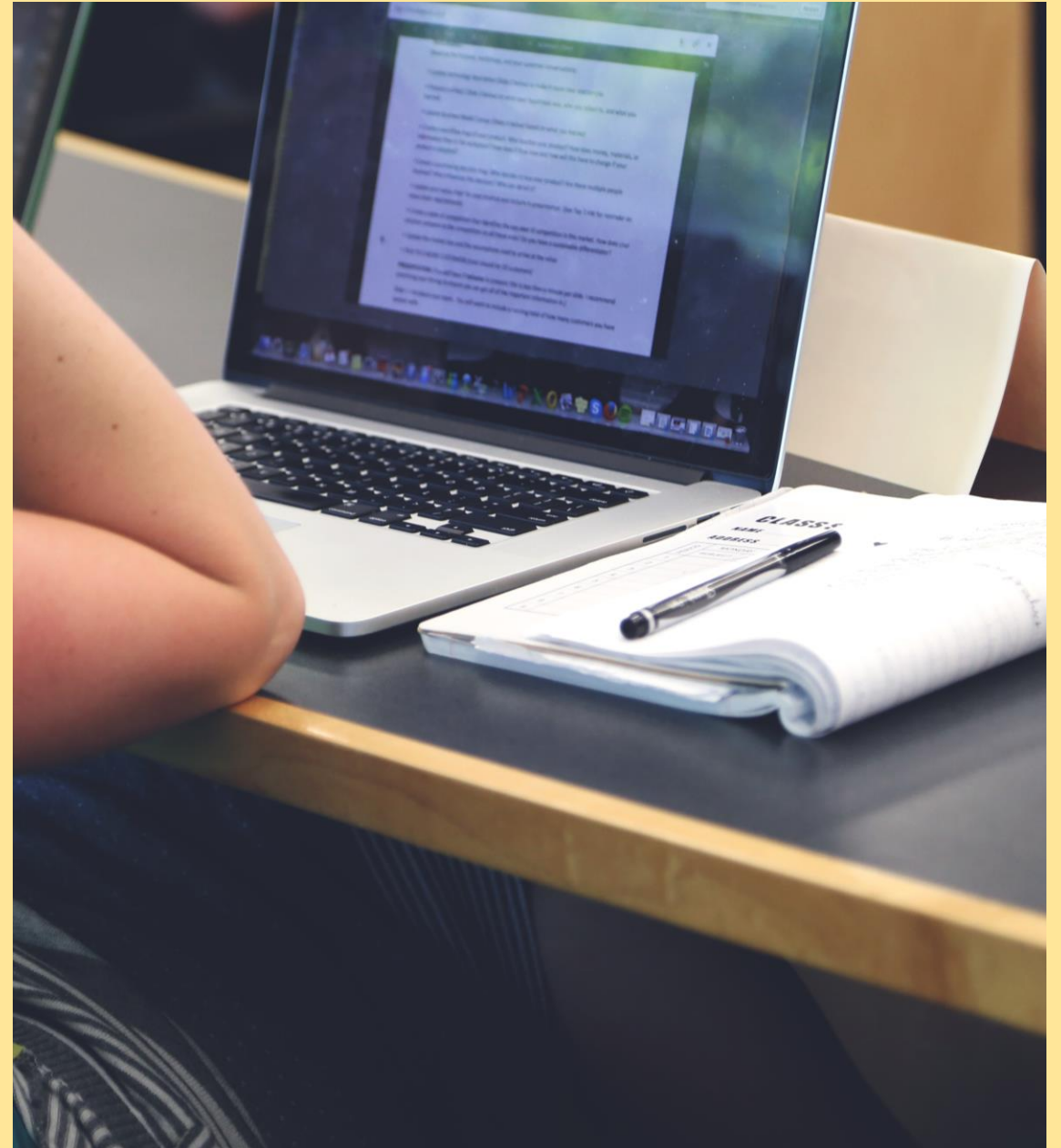


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# What we'll talk about today

- Trends and areas of concern in teaching evaluation—drawn from a survey of 9,000+ faculty
- AAUP policy in teaching evaluation—drawn from
  - [Statement on Teaching Evaluation](#)
  - [Observations on the Association's Statement on Teaching Evaluation](#)
  - [The Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments](#)
- Questions/comments

# AAUP Survey: Trends and Areas of Concern



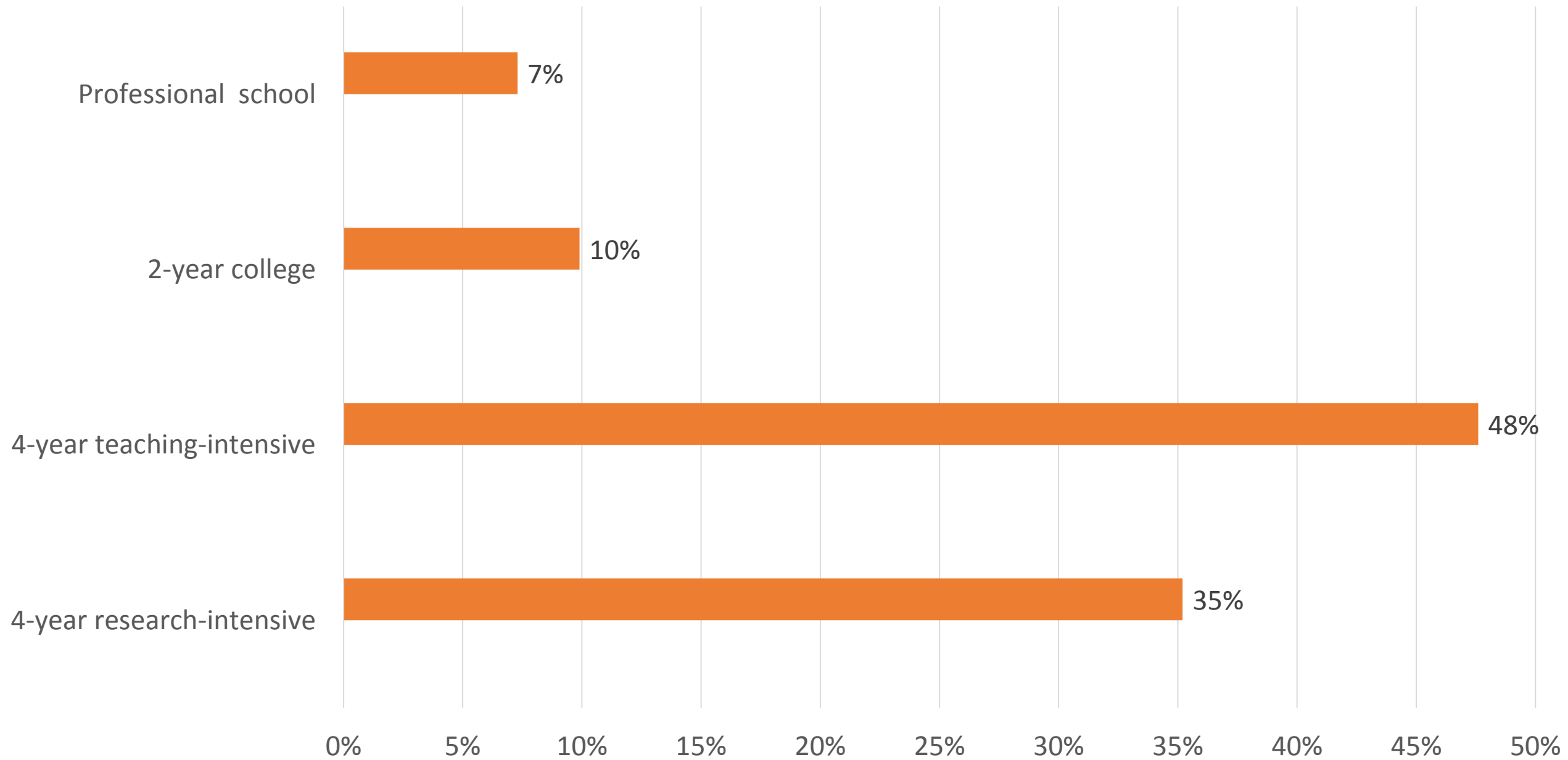


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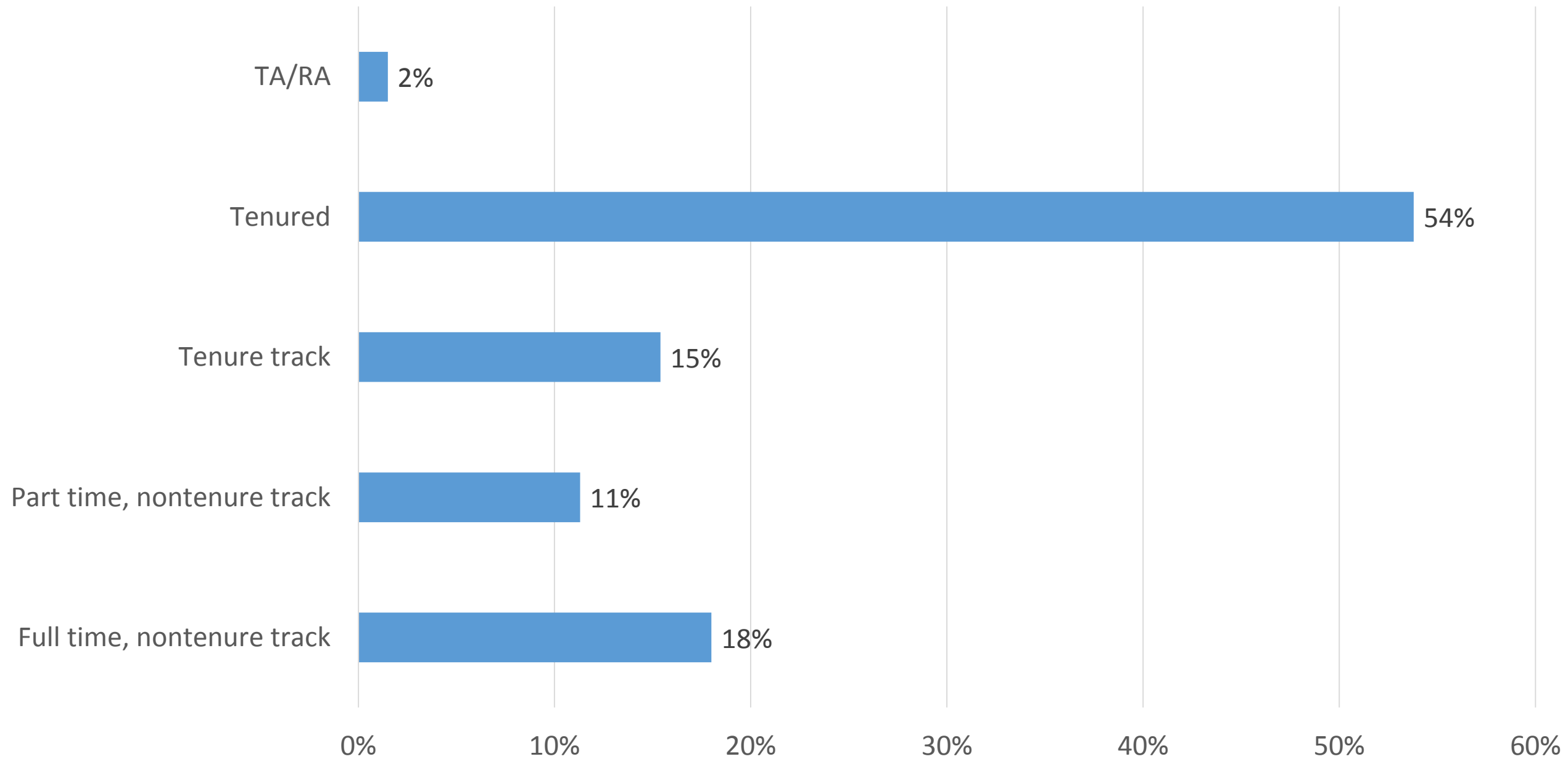
# The Survey

- In fall 2014, the AAUP's Committee on Teaching, Research, and Publication conducted a survey
- 9,300 responses!
- 75% of respondents were tenured and tenure-track faculty

# Institution Type



# Appointment Type

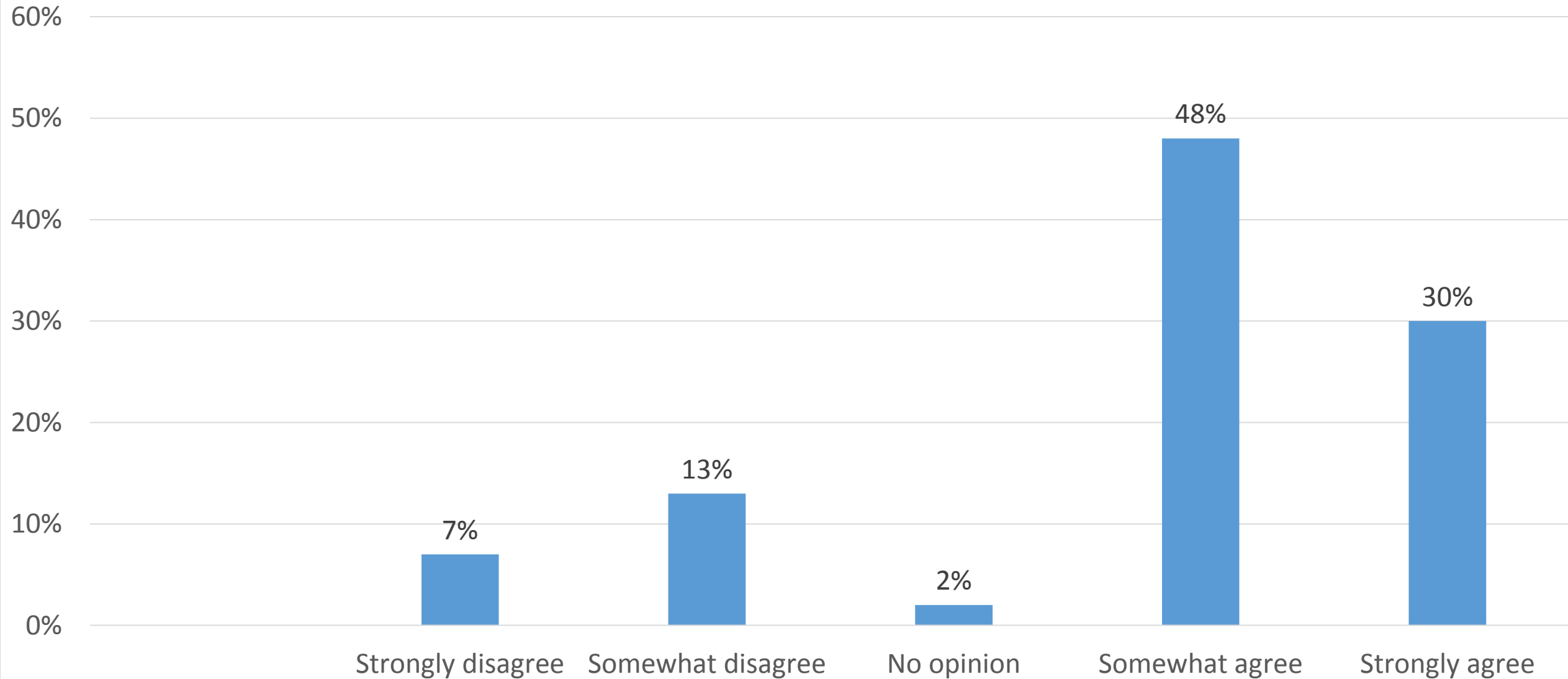


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# Overemphasis on Student Evaluations

- Too much weight being given to student evaluations of teaching
- Few other factors considered

# Student evaluations should be part of the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.



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# Evaluation Medium

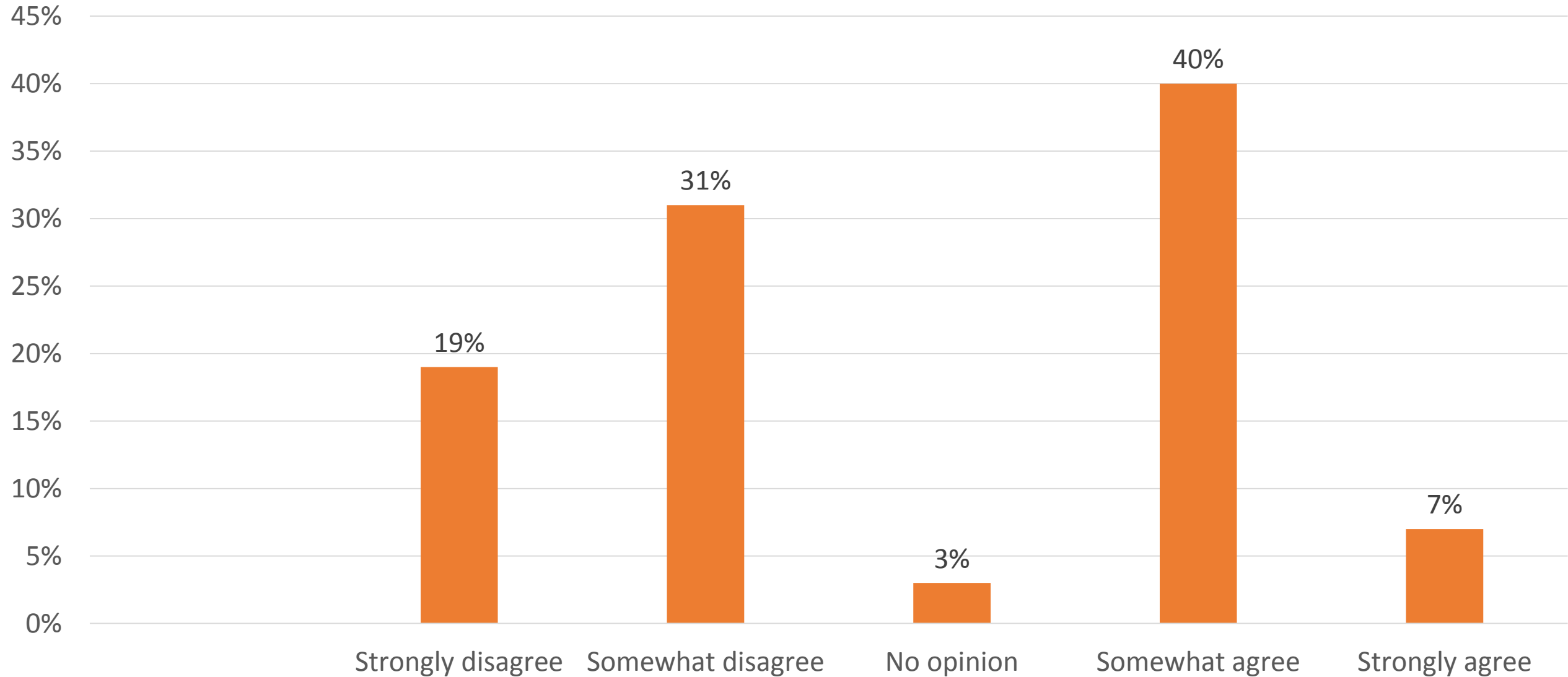
- Paper evaluations (filled out by students in class) being replaced by online evaluations (done outside of class)
- Return rates dropping
- Participating students are on the extremes: very happy or very unhappy

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# Content of Evaluations

- Common instruments, regardless of topic or class size
- Lack of faculty input into survey instruments

# Student evaluations are an effective means of determining teaching effectiveness.





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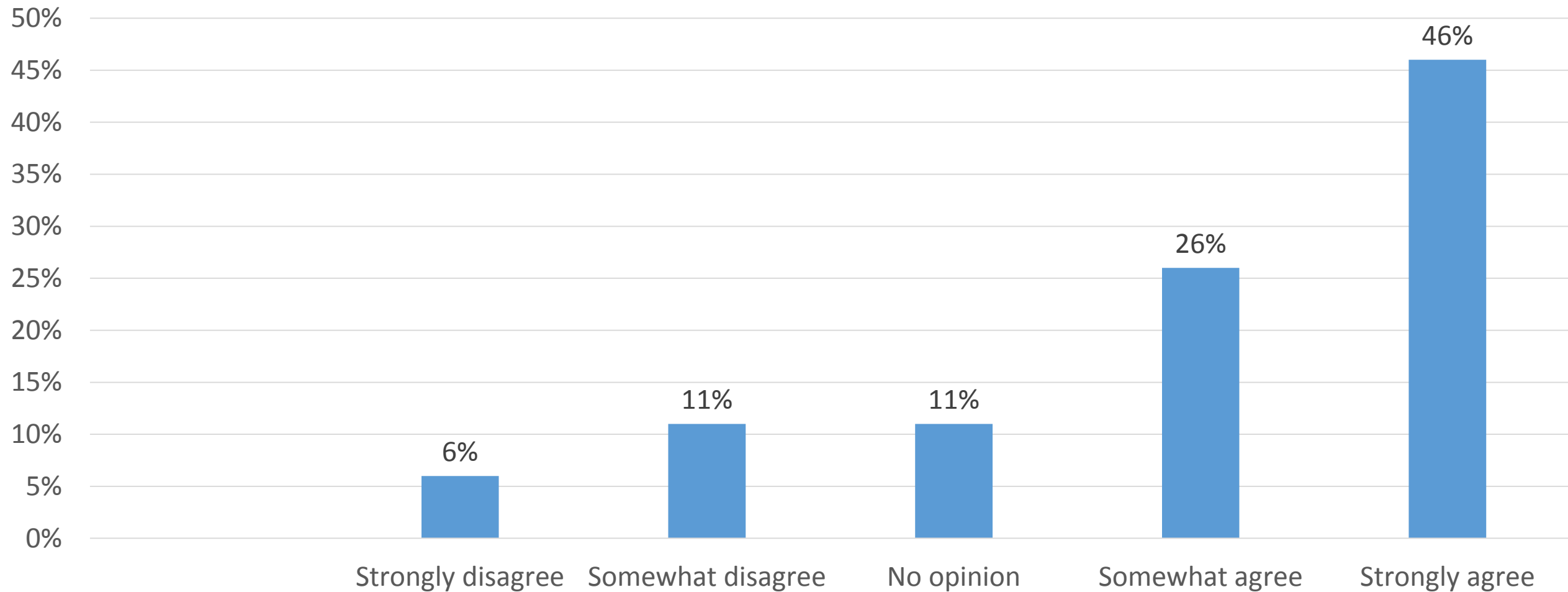
# Concerns about Student Anonymity

- Anonymity often seen as necessary to protect students & ensure honesty

But

- Numerous reports of abusive and bullying tone
- Anonymity may encourage inappropriate & discriminatory comments

Confidentiality of the results of student evaluations is essential to their legitimate pedagogical purpose.



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# Timing

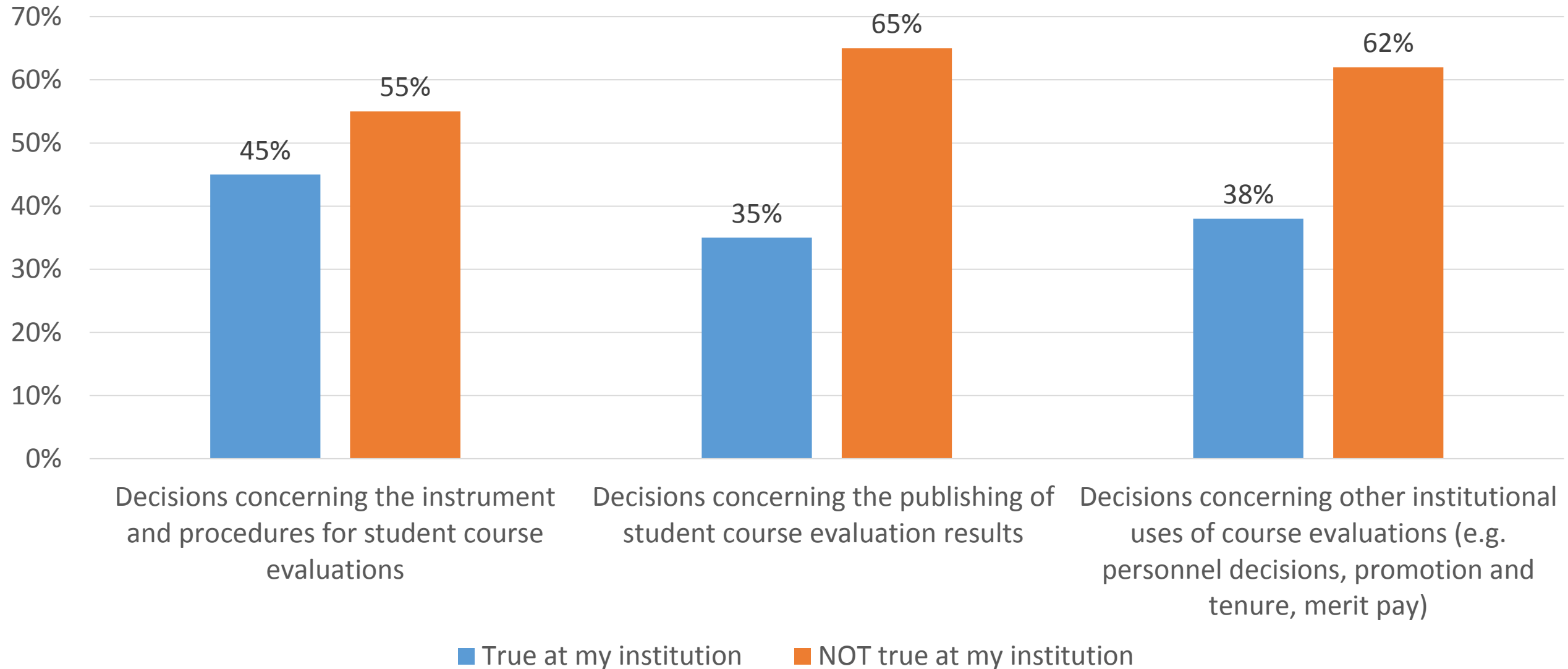
- Most evaluations done in the last weeks of the semester
- Sometimes after students have received their grades

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# How Student Evaluations are Used

- Everything boiled down to a number
- Use of student evaluations in promotion and tenure decisions
  - and decisions on merit salary increases
- Evaluations sometimes published
- Lack of faculty input into how evaluations are used

# Do Decisions About Student Evaluations Lie Chiefly with the Faculty ?



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# Punitive, rather than developmental, use

- Commenters expressed concern that negative evaluations are used merely to “ding” faculty and not to help them improve their teaching

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# Especially for Contingent Faculty

- Significant differences between the way NTT faculty members and TT faculty members are evaluated and the way the evaluations are used
- For faculty in contingent positions, student evaluations often the only measure used
- Evaluations used solely in the context of renewal or nonrenewal of contract
- Even highly favorable student evaluations don't help the status of non-tenure-track faculty members.

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# Lack of Support for Faculty in Contingent Positions

- Non-tenure-track faculty members, including graduate employees, receive significantly less support
- Little support for innovative teaching, instructional development
- No formal recognition of excellence in the classroom
- Often are excluded from participation in mentoring, teaching programs, instructional development, and peer evaluations.



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# AAUP

American Association of University Professors

Policy Documents  
and Reports Eleventh Edition

## AAUP Policy on Teaching Evaluations

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# Clear Expectations

The following should be put in writing and periodically reviewed by all members of the college or department:

- Expectations for teaching
- Weighting of teaching in relation to other expectations such as research & service
- Criteria and procedures by which teaching will be judged
- Timing of the process

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# Parity Among Faculty Categories

Basic requirements for and means of evaluation of faculty members' teaching should be as nearly parallel as possible for faculty members in contingent appointments and full-time tenure-track faculty.

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# Support for Teaching

- Providing the conditions and support necessary to excellent teaching are primary institutional obligations

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# Factual Description

Teaching evaluation should include an accurate description of the individual's teaching work:

- Number of classes taught
- Level of courses
- Kind of classes
- Number of students
- Out-of-classroom teaching activities

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# Firsthand Data from Various Sources

Could include:

- Student perceptions
- Syllabi, tests, other course materials
- Teaching observations by colleagues
- Measures of student learning
- Self evaluation
- Outside opinions
- Evidence of concern for teaching such as relevant publications, attendance at meetings, delivery of lectures, and consulting

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# Context

Evaluation of teaching should include consideration of the relation between the teacher's efforts and the institution's and the department's expectations and support

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# Standardization of Student Evaluations

- A common instrument covering a range of teachers & departments has the advantage of yielding useful comparative data.

But:

- Recognize that no one questionnaire or method is suitable to every department or institution.
- “The full dimensions of teaching should not be slighted in the desire to arrive at usable data and systematic practices. ”



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# Content of Student Evaluations

- Relying solely on numerical evaluations is problematic
- Surveys of student perceptions should include a section inviting student to provide written comments, which are often the most useful feedback for instructors

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# Interpreting Student Evaluations

Evaluators must make sure they avoid drawing erroneous conclusions from numerical evaluations. Common mistakes are:

- Rating as inadequate all those whose numbers fall below a certain percentage
- Comparing sets of responses received in very different circumstances

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# Faculty Role in Evaluation (Broadly)

In a broad sense, referring to all procedures used to determine the employability of a faculty member,

- Faculty have both a right to be evaluated by other faculty and a responsibility to evaluate their peers

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# Faculty Role in Evaluation (Teaching)

- Faculty should have a primary (though not exclusive) role in evaluating an individual's teaching, taking into consideration
  - Factual data
  - Student opinion
  - Colleague judgments
  - Materials supplied by the teacher being evaluated
- Faculty review should involve discussion and vote

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# Faculty Role

- Faculty serving in contingent appointments should participate in evaluating their peers (other faculty serving in contingent appointments) in the same fashion that full-time tenure-track faculty participate in the evaluation of their peers.
- But faculty on contingent appointments **may** be restricted from participating in the evaluation of tenured and tenure-track faculty.

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# Administrative Role

- If the department does not have final authority, the department faculty's judgment should be the basic recommendation to the next level of responsibility
- The dean's function, where separate from that of a chair or division head, is typically one of review and recommendation.
- If the dean's recommendation is contrary to that of the department chair or faculty, opportunity should be provided for discussion with the chair or faculty before a formal recommendation is made.

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# Administrative Role

Final decisions should be made in accordance with the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*: “The governing board and president should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.”

Evaluation of teaching that relies only administrative judgment is against AAUP recommended policy

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# Development of Teachers

- Responsible evaluation of teaching should be employed for the development of the teacher and enhancement of instruction
- Should not only be used for promotion/advancement
- Should be sensitive to different kinds and styles of teaching



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Thank you!

# Questions?

- Visit us at [www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org)
- [gbradley@aaup.org](mailto:gbradley@aaup.org)