

GALLUP®

2U®

2019 Graduate Outcomes Benchmark Report

GREAT EXPERIENCES, GREAT JOBS AND GREAT LIVES



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Foreword



A Letter From Our CEO

Chip Paucek, 2U Co-Founder & CEO

As a partner to many of the world's best nonprofit universities, 2U has spent over a decade helping these transformative institutions bring their graduate degree programs online.

Although we see first-hand the positive experiences and outcomes that students are having in our partners' online degree programs, we recognize that, for some, there are still questions about whether online degrees can measure up to the quality of traditional, campus-based programs.

To understand and benchmark the quality of programs and the experiences of students who received their graduate degree online from one of our partners, we turned to Gallup to conduct qualitative and quantitative research. The result is the first-ever Gallup-2U Outcomes Benchmark Report. Gallup surveyed alumni who graduated from a 2U-powered online degree program to better understand their experiences while in school and after graduation. Those findings were then compared against Gallup's existing graduate program alumni benchmarks, which include graduates who received their degrees from on-campus, online or blended programs.

We believe the inaugural Gallup-2U Graduate Outcomes Benchmark Report tells a clear and compelling story about the quality of our participating partners' online degree programs. When it comes to the views of alumni on the quality and relevance of their programs and curriculum, their connections to classmates, faculty and school, or their post-graduation work satisfaction, graduates from our partners' online degree programs have experiences that are comparable to — and in some cases better than — alumni in Gallup's broader graduate database. These findings are a powerful proof point that online degrees offered by great nonprofit universities can be of high quality.

As the world of work continues to transform — and lifelong learning becomes a requirement, not a luxury — higher education is more important than ever. The need for greater transparency for students and policymakers regarding the quality, relevance and return on investment of higher education is also important.

We believe our Gallup-2U Outcomes Benchmark Report is an important step in providing greater information and transparency about the online degree programs that our partners offer. Not only will this research help students make more informed choices, it will help 2U and our partners find ways to make their online programs even better.

Great Experiences, Great Jobs and Great Lives

Since 2U was founded in 2008, the company has partnered with top-tier nonprofit universities in the U.S. to bring their graduate degree programs online. To better understand how the quality and student outcomes of its partners' online degree programs compare with those of graduate students across the U.S., 2U turned to Gallup. Over the past decade, Gallup has studied links between higher education experiences and outcomes after graduation.

In 2019, 2U commissioned Gallup to perform quantitative and qualitative studies of recent graduates from its partners' online graduate degree programs. Gallup surveyed 368 alumni about the quality of their experiences as students and asked them about their career and lifetime outcomes after graduation.

WHAT DID GALLUP LEARN?

The Gallup-2U Graduate Outcomes Study found that, when compared with national benchmarks of graduate school alumni who received their degrees in 2010 or later from any university, in an on-campus or online setting, alumni from 2U partner programs report:

- student experiences that are as good, if not better
- job outcomes that are just as good
- lives and wellbeing that are just as good, and in several instances, even better

KEY FINDINGS

EXPERIENCES IN 2U-POWERED PROGRAMS WERE DIFFERENT IN A GOOD WAY ...

Alumni from 2U partner programs graduated faster.

Eighty-nine percent of alumni graduated from 2U partner programs within two years, compared with 56% of recent national alumni who received their degrees on campus or online.

Alumni from 2U partner programs were more likely than many of their peers to feel they received key support.

Seventy-seven percent of alumni strongly agree they had at least one professor at their graduate institution who made them excited about learning, versus 67% of recent national graduate alumni.

Thirty-eight percent of alumni strongly agree that their institution prepared them well for life after earning their degree, higher than the 27% among recent graduate degree holders nationally.

... AND GRADUATES HAVE GREAT JOBS TODAY ...

Alumni from 2U partner programs are just as likely as national graduates to have good jobs.

Eighty-five percent of alumni from 2U partner schools are currently working full time for an employer. This employment rate is similar to the rate for recent graduate alumni nationally (84%).

Alumni from 2U partner programs are just as likely as their peers to have great jobs — and be engaged at work.

Nearly half of employed alumni (48%) are engaged at work, compared with 43% of employed, recent national graduate alumni.

... AND THEY ARE LIVING GREAT LIVES

The majority of alumni from 2U partner programs are thriving in at least one area of their lives.

Eighty-six percent are thriving in at least one of the five elements of wellbeing. Although just 14% of 2U partner program alumni can claim the hard-to-reach goal of thriving in all five elements, that is considerably higher than the 9% of recent graduate alumni nationally for whom this is true.

More alumni from 2U partner programs are thriving in the area of financial wellbeing.

More than half (53%) are thriving in this area, versus 35% of recent national graduate alumni.

COMPARISONS IN THIS REPORT

Throughout this report, Gallup compares the results for those who received their online graduate degree from a 2U-powered program with graduates in Gallup's national database who received their graduate degree from any university, either online or on campus, in 2010 or later.

The sample of those who received online graduate degrees from a 2U-powered program is not meant to be representative of alumni of all 2U partner programs; it is representative of only those surveyed.

Great Experiences

The Academic Lives of 2U Partner Program Alumni

One of the most important findings to emerge from Gallup's national studies of post-secondary alumni is that the **types of experiences** students have in school matter more than the type of institution they attend in relation to whether they have great jobs and great lives after graduation.

Alumni from 2U partner programs were just as likely as national graduate alumni who received their degrees on campus or online to have had the kind of positive experiences in school to set them up for success after graduation. In several ways, they were *even more likely* to have had these experiences.

ALUMNI OF 2U PARTNER PROGRAMS:

Were More Likely to Have a Professor Who Excited Them About Learning

Alumni from 2U partner programs are just as likely as national graduate alumni to strongly agree that, in graduate school, they had all three experiences that Gallup finds may strengthen their chances for better workplace and life outcomes.

Eighteen percent strongly agreed with all three of the following:

- 1 they had a professor who cared about them as a person
- 2 they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning
- 3 they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams

A similar one in five (20%) recent national graduate alumni strongly agreed with all three statements.

Support From Faculty and Mentors

% Strongly agree

● 2U Partner Program Alumni ● Recent Graduate Alumni Nationally

I had at least one professor at INSTITUTION who made me excited about learning.



My professors at INSTITUTION cared about me as a person.



While attending INSTITUTION, I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.



Experienced all three



When it comes to having at least one professor at their graduate institution who made them excited about learning, alumni from 2U partner programs stand out. More than three in four (77%) strongly agreed they had this experience, compared with 67% of recent graduate school alumni nationally.

“

I think the teachers that I had were just very knowledgeable in their fields. And most of the teachers I had made it really interesting. I felt like I was learning tools that were very applicable to what I wanted to be doing.

I think I was just more engaged in general, because it was something that I was passionate about. But I felt like I learned from very smart people.”

— Master of Business Analytics Graduate

ALUMNI OF 2U PARTNER PROGRAMS:

Were More Likely to Say Their Alma Mater Was Passionate About Their Success and Prepared Them for Life

When compared with recent graduate school alumni nationally, higher proportions of 2U partner program alumni strongly agree that their institutions were passionate about the long-term success of their students (38% vs. 26%) and prepared them well for life after earning their graduate degrees (38% vs. 27%).

Graduated Faster

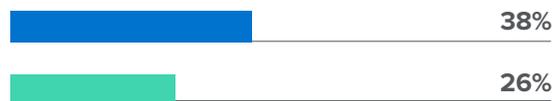
Although about half of alumni (49%) from 2U partner programs took at least six years off between pursuing their undergraduate and graduate degrees, and nearly all (91%) took their undergraduate courses on campus rather than online, they finished their graduate degrees much faster — which may reflect efficiencies within 2U’s partner programs or the high focus of these graduates. Nearly nine in 10 (89%) 2U partner program alumni graduated from their programs within two years, compared with 56% of recent national graduate alumni.

Alma Mater Passionate About Success, Prepared Them for Life

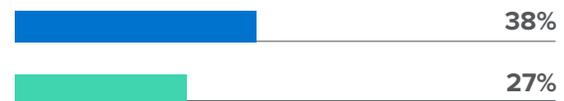
% Strongly agree

● 2U Partner Program Alumni ● Recent Graduate Alumni Nationally

INSTITUTION is passionate about the long-term success of its students.



INSTITUTION prepared me well for life after earning my graduate degree.



“

They taught me how to be an effective teacher. I learned a lot about myself, but I also had just a better understanding for the classroom and the perspective of the teacher and the students after I finished the program.

I’ve been an administrator before and I’ve been the director of several educational programs, but I never really understood what it meant to be a teacher until I completed this program.”

— *Master of Arts in Teaching Graduate*

Received the Online Support They Needed

Fifty-nine percent of 2U partner program alumni strongly agreed that they were able to get the online technology (learning management system) support they needed from their institution. More than half (52%) rated the use of online technology as excellent, and nearly half (45%) strongly agreed that faculty were easily able to use online technology.

Would Recommend Their Programs

A majority of alumni from 2U partner programs are “promoters” of their institution, based on their likelihood to recommend their graduate institution. More than six in 10 alumni (61%) from 2U partner programs selected a 9 or 10 on a scale where 10 is the highest likelihood to recommend the institution. More than one in four alumni (26%) from 2U partner programs say they have given a financial donation to their graduate institution in the past 12 months.

Universally Say They Would Get a Program Degree Again

If they had the chance to do it all over again, nearly all 2U partner program alumni — 92% — would still obtain a program degree.

Online Technology Easy to Use, Support Readily Available

59% 

I was able to get the online technology (learning management system) support I needed at INSTITUTION. (Strongly agree)

52% 

How would you rate the ease of use of the online technology (learning management system) at INSTITUTION? (Excellent)

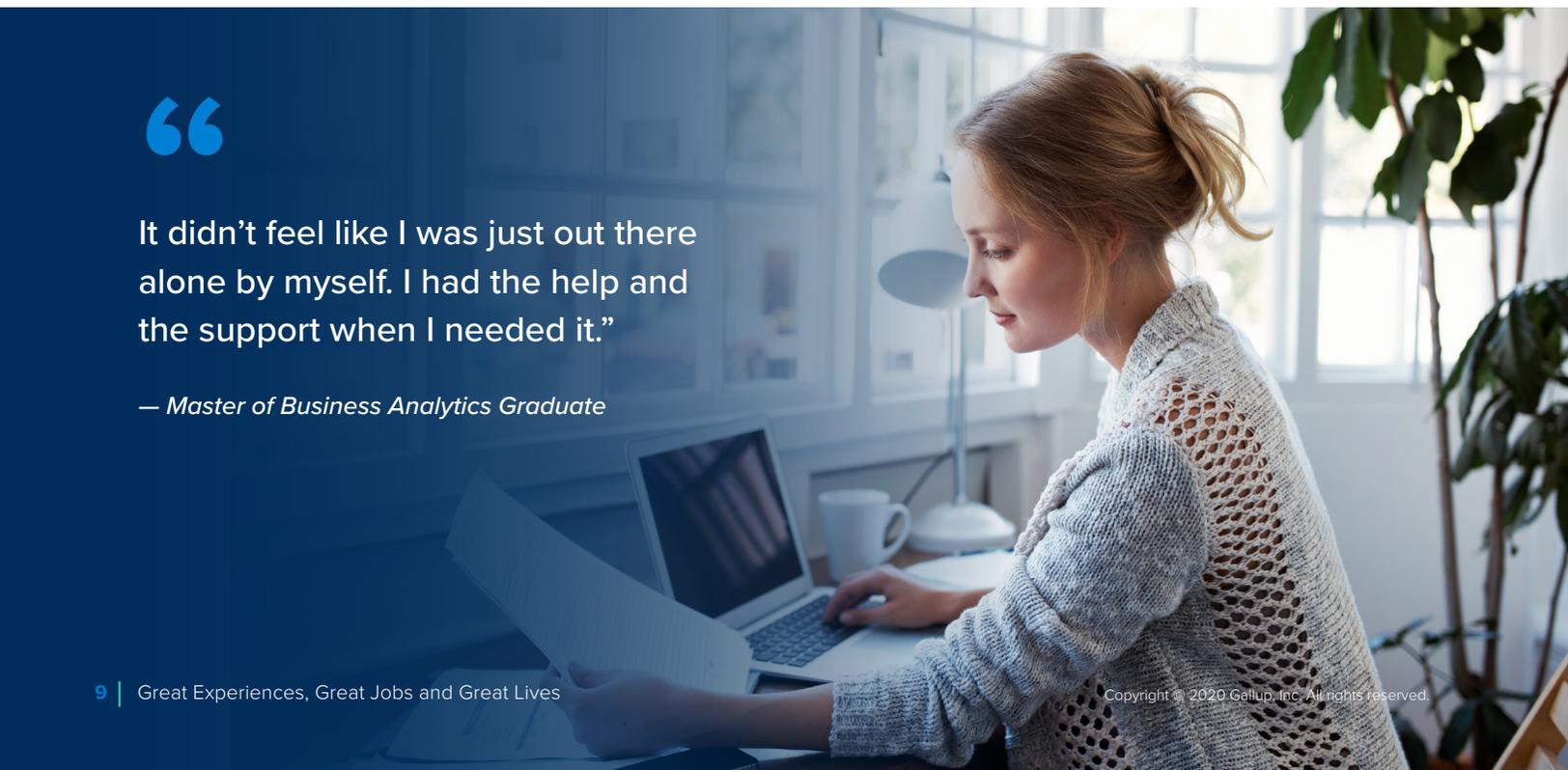
45% 

The faculty was easily able to use the online technology of the program. (Strongly agree)

“

It didn't feel like I was just out there alone by myself. I had the help and the support when I needed it.”

— *Master of Business Analytics Graduate*



Great Jobs

The Work Lives of 2U Partner Program Alumni

Alumni from 2U partner programs are just as likely as national graduate alumni to be engaged at work in full-time jobs related to their field of study.

Understanding how alumni occupy their time at work and the extent to which they find their work fulfilling is critical to understanding their long-term outcomes after graduation. And workplace engagement encompasses more than job satisfaction; it also involves the degree to which employees are intellectually and emotionally attached to their organization. Engaged employees thrive in their role because they have the opportunity to do their best work, they enjoy the work they do, and they have someone who cares about their professional development.

A Majority of Alumni Are Working Full Time

More than eight in 10 2U partner program alumni (84%) reported working full time for an employer while they pursued their online degree, which is essentially the same as the 85% who say they are employed in the same capacity today.

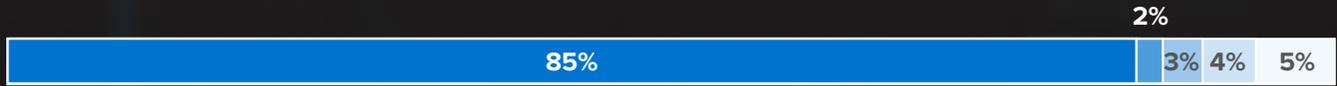
The 85% of 2U partner program alumni who are currently employed full time for an employer is essentially the same as the rate among recent graduate alumni nationally who received their degrees on campus or online (84%).

Like their counterparts nationally, nearly all employed alumni (93%) from 2U partner programs say their current work is somewhat or completely related to their graduate degree.

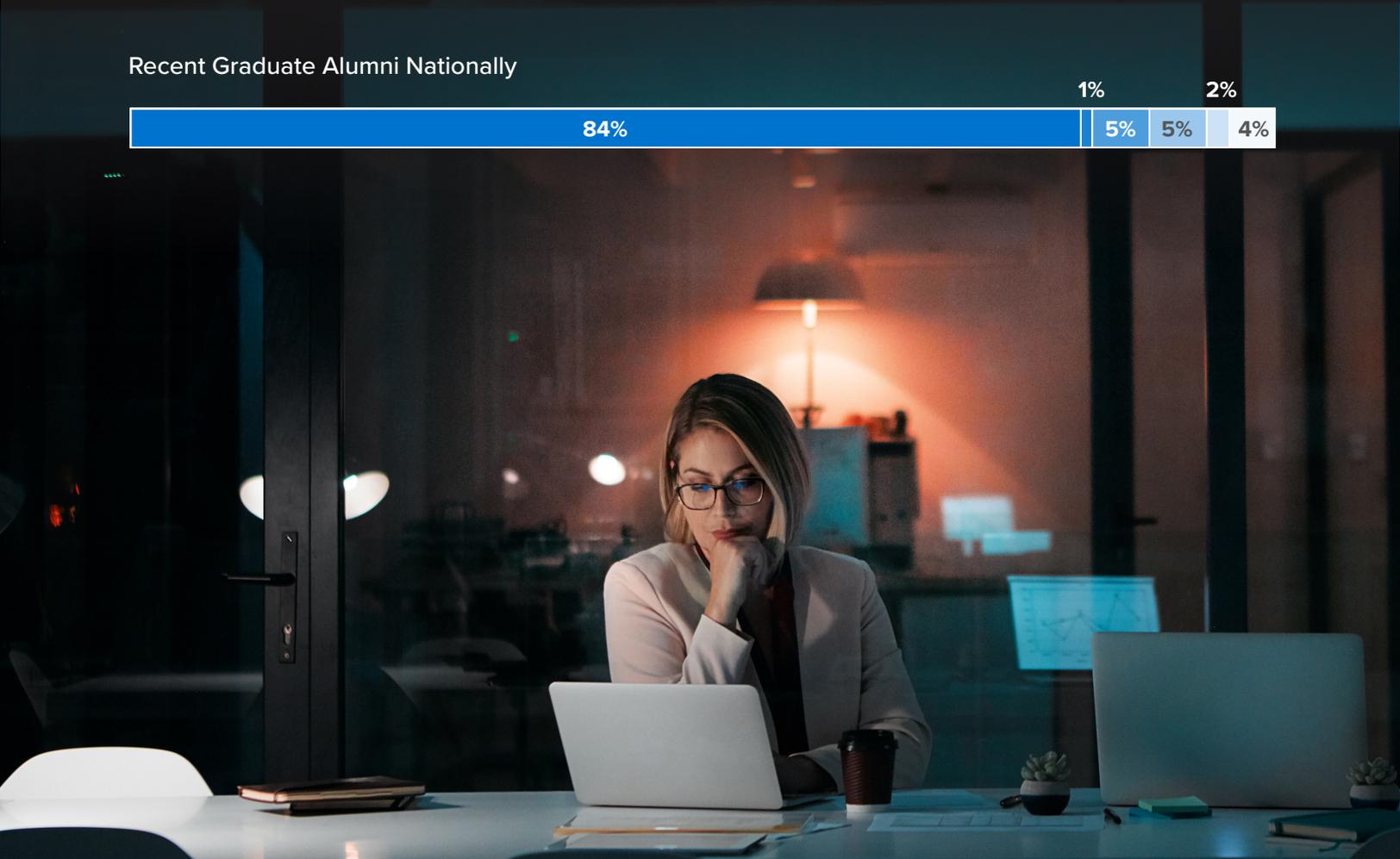
Employment Status of 2U Partner Program Alumni vs. Graduates Nationally

- Employed full time for an employer
- Employed full time for self
- Employed part time; do not want full time
- Employed part time; want full time
- Unemployed
- Not in workforce

2U Partner Program Alumni



Recent Graduate Alumni Nationally



“

I don't know if I would have even gotten my job if I didn't have this degree. My manager kind of eluded to that — that it was very helpful in me getting hired.”

— *Master of Business Analytics Graduate*

2U Partner Program Alumni Just as Likely to Be Engaged at Work

Although full-time employment for an employer often provides graduates with a degree of financial security and the opportunity to gain experience and advance their careers, employment alone is not a complete measure of success. These figures do not reflect whether graduates are intellectually and emotionally connected to their work.

If graduates are also engaged at work, Gallup's workplace engagement research shows they are more likely to be loyal, productive and thriving in their wellbeing, all of which are positive for both alumni and their employers.

Alumni from 2U partner programs are just as likely to be engaged at work as national alumni. Nearly half of employed alumni (48%) from 2U partner programs are engaged at work, compared with 43% of recent alumni from graduate programs nationally.

Workplace Engagement

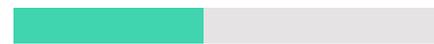
% Engaged employees

48%



2U Partner Program Alumni

43%



Recent Graduate Alumni Nationally

“

I think that doing it all remotely really helps you figure out how you're going to build teams and work collaboratively together from remote locations. I think it very much helps prepare you for the modern global workplace.”

— *Master of Business Administration Graduate*

Great Lives

The Wellbeing of 2U Partner Program Alumni

Although most alumni of 2U partner programs are thriving in at least one area of their wellbeing, collectively they are far more likely than national graduates to be thriving in all five elements — particularly their financial wellbeing.

Gallup's National Health and Well-Being Index measures the important aspects of a life well-lived. Based on decades of Gallup's global research, the index includes 10 questions that measure wellbeing in five interrelated elements that are essential to most people:

CAREER WELLBEING

liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

SOCIAL WELLBEING

having strong and supportive relationships and love in your life

FINANCIAL WELLBEING

managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

Gallup categorizes individuals as “thriving,” “struggling” or “suffering” in each element according to how they respond to the particular questions that relate to that facet of wellbeing:

THRIVING

wellbeing that is strong, consistent and progressing in a particular element

STRUGGLING

wellbeing that is moderate or inconsistent in a particular element

SUFFERING

wellbeing that is very low and at high risk in a particular element

Individuals who have high wellbeing across all five elements are less likely to change employers voluntarily and are more resilient in the face of layoffs or natural catastrophes. They are better able to take care of their own basic needs, to adapt to change, and to contribute to and support the success of their organizations and communities.

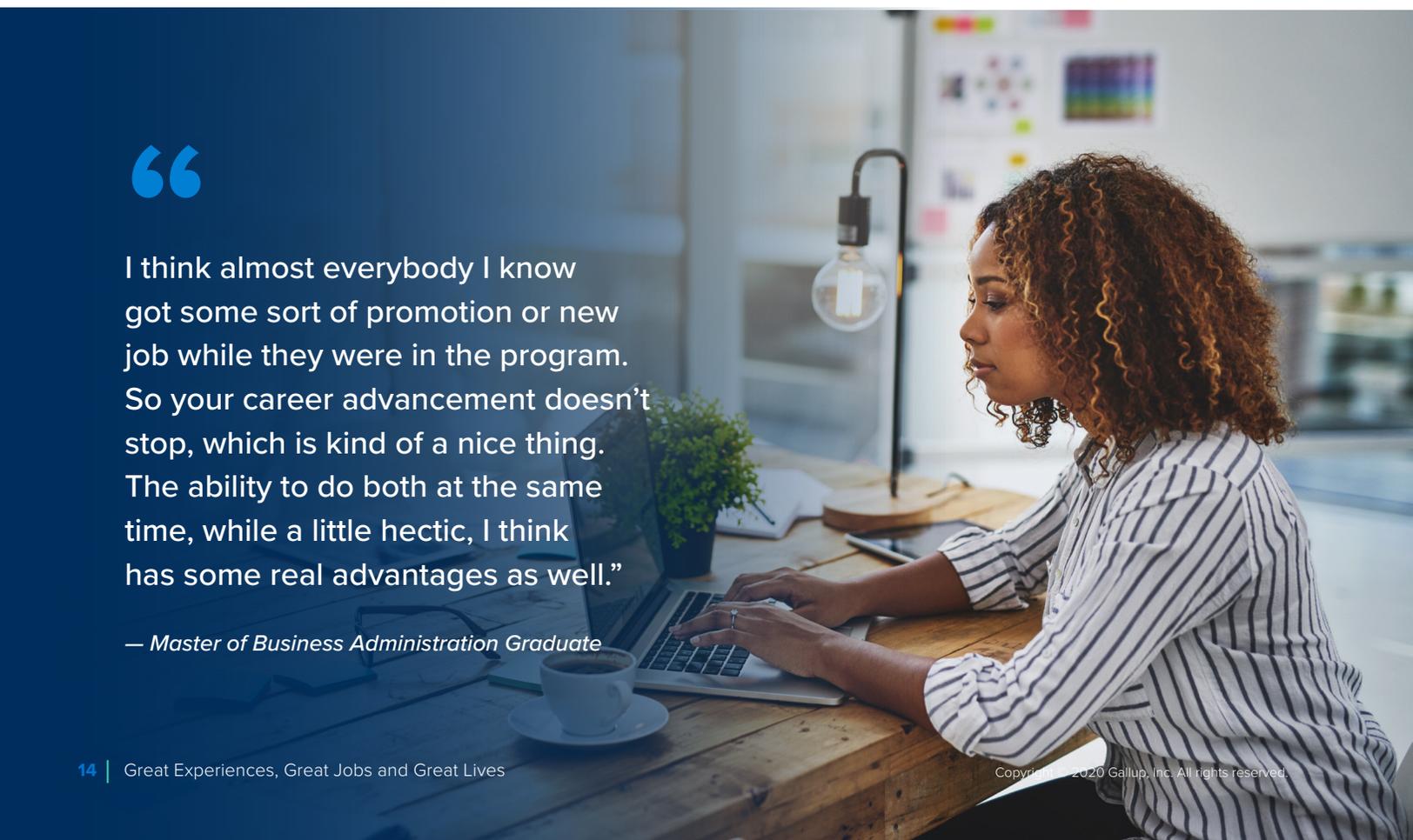
Majority of Alumni From 2U Partner Programs Are Thriving in at Least in One Area of Their Lives

Most alumni (87%) from 2U partner programs are thriving in at least one area of their lives, but notably 14% are thriving in all five elements of wellbeing, which is a high bar to reach. For example, the rate among alumni of 2U partner programs is twice the average for all U.S. adults (7%) and five percentage points higher than recent graduate alumni nationally who received their degrees on campus or online (9%).

“

I think almost everybody I know got some sort of promotion or new job while they were in the program. So your career advancement doesn't stop, which is kind of a nice thing. The ability to do both at the same time, while a little hectic, I think has some real advantages as well.”

— *Master of Business Administration Graduate*



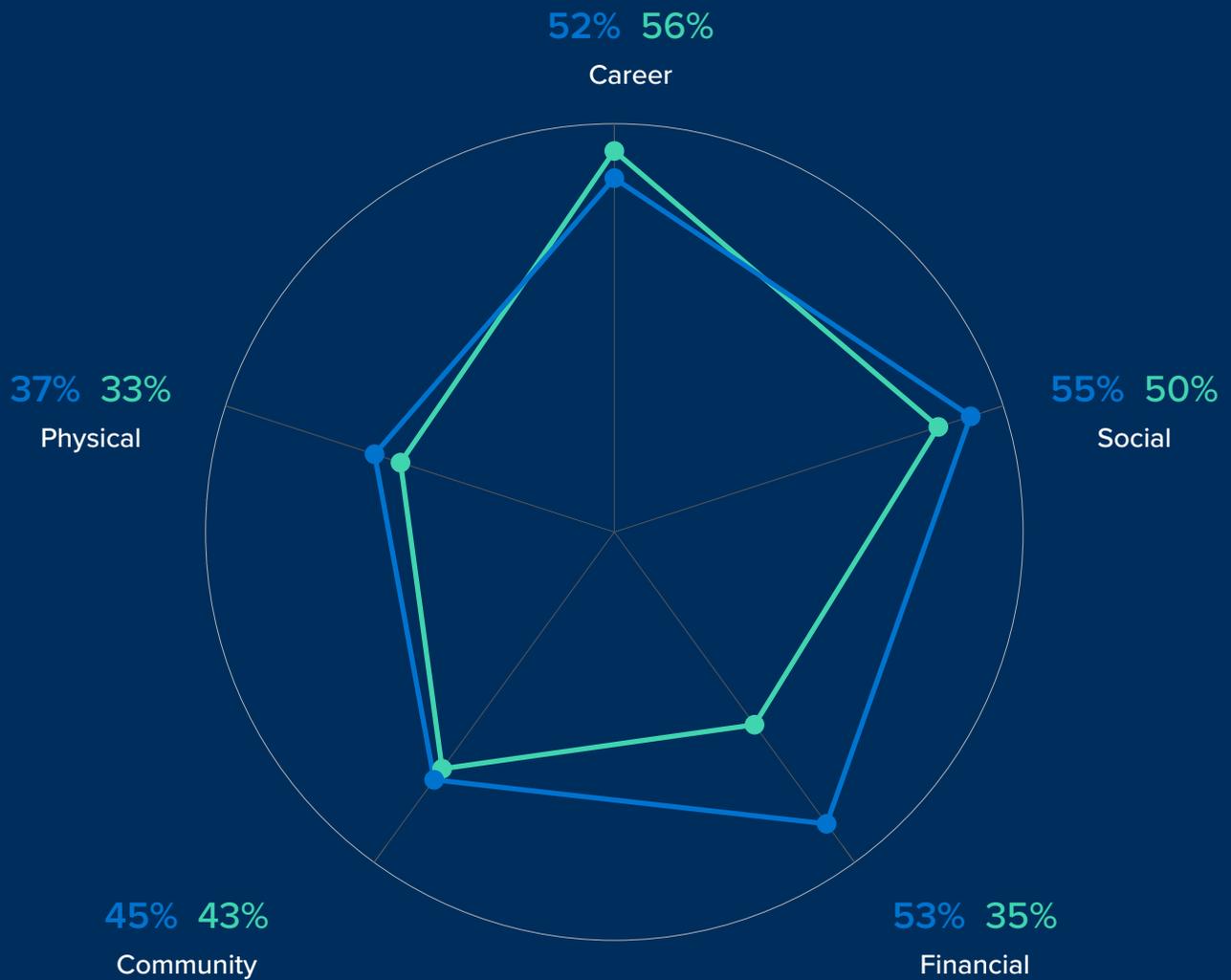
Graduates From 2U Partner Programs Are Thriving in Financial Wellbeing

Majorities of alumni from 2U partner programs are thriving in social (55%), financial (53%) and career (52%) wellbeing. They are relatively less likely to be thriving in the community (45%) and physical (37%) elements of wellbeing.

While their wellbeing in most areas is similar to that among national graduate alumni, more than half (53%) of alumni from 2U partner programs are thriving in financial wellbeing, versus 35% of recent graduate alumni nationally. These alumni (21%) are twice as likely as national graduate degree-holders (10%) to strongly agree they have enough money to do what they want to do in life.

Percentage Thriving in Wellbeing Elements

● 2U Partner Program Alumni ● Recent Graduate Alumni Nationally



What Experiences in 2U-Powered Programs Matter Most?

Support and experiential learning are both important, but some experiences matter more than others. 2U has always focused on helping its program partners provide quality experiences for students and solid workforce and lifetime outcomes for graduates.

Gallup's analysis¹ of the drivers of those outcomes reveals areas of strength and ongoing opportunity for 2U partner programs — particularly related to the support alumni feel they received as students.

If graduates from 2U-powered programs felt supported,² they are:

3.6x

more likely to strongly agree their graduate degree was worth the cost

4.1x

more likely to strongly agree completing their graduate education directly resulted in career advancement

4.1x

more likely to be thriving in four or five areas of wellbeing

¹ The analysis accounted for the effects of alumni age, gender, race and ethnicity, and first-generation status. The likelihoods reflect the effects of their 2U experiences above and beyond any demographic differences.

² Respondents strongly agreed that: 1) they had at least one professor who made them excited about learning, 2) they had a professor who cared about them as a person and 3) they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams.

If graduates from 2U-powered programs rate the overall quality of the faculty of their program as excellent, they are:

3.6x

more likely to believe their graduate degree was worth the cost

8.3x

more likely to be a promoter of their graduate institution

If graduates from 2U-powered programs believe their institution was passionate about the long-term success of students, they are:

2.7x

more likely to believe their graduate degree was worth the cost

If graduates from 2U-powered programs strongly agree their coursework at their program prepared them for the jobs they have today, they are:

33.2x

more likely to believe they received the skills and training to advance in their careers

10.3x

more likely to strongly agree completing their graduate education directly resulted in career advancement

9.4x

more likely to be confident in their current job



Conclusion

The experiences of graduates from the online degree programs of 2U's nonprofit partners were comparable — and sometimes better — than those of national graduates who earned their graduate degrees by taking classes on campus, online, or through blended online and in-person instruction. The same is true when it comes to the post-graduation wellbeing of these alumni, as they are just as likely to be engaged on the job as their national counterparts.

Overall, the results from the Gallup-2U Graduate Outcomes Benchmark Report suggest that, when it comes to the outcomes that really count, the type of experiences graduates of 2U partner programs have in school may matter more than their mode of learning.

Methodology

Results for the Gallup-2U Graduate Outcomes Benchmark Report are based on web surveys conducted Oct. 2-31, 2019, with a sample of 368 total respondents who completed online graduate degrees from a 2U-powered online graduate degree program. Alumni were included in the study if 2U had an email address on file and if they did not opt out of being contacted. Gallup-2U Graduate Outcomes Benchmark Report interviews are conducted via the web in English only.

National comparison data comes from Gallup's national graduate database. Comparison data in this report represent all 1,574 respondents from the national graduate database who received their graduate degree in or after 2010. Comparison data include 1,209 graduates who were all or mostly campus-based and 363 graduates who were online-based half-time or more. While comparisons presented in this report represent all national graduate database respondents, 2U partner programs perform as good or better than all or most on-campus programs on many metrics. The respondents all have a graduate degree, are aged 18 and older, with internet access, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Data were collected via the web, in English only. The sample was weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education and region. Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures for the 18-and-older, U.S. bachelor's-degree-or-higher population.

All reported margins of sampling error for recent national graduate alumni include the computed design effects for weighting. For results based on those with a bachelor's degree from any national institution, the margin of sampling error is ± 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For results based on the sample of all or mostly campus-based graduates, the margin of sampling error is ± 4.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For half-time or more online-based graduates, the margin of sampling error is ± 8.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For results based on employee engagement of those with a bachelor's degree from any national institution, the margin of sampling error is ± 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

About 2U

Eliminating the back row in higher education is not just a metaphor — it's our mission. For more than a decade, 2U, Inc., a global leader in education technology, has been a trusted partner and brand steward of great universities. We build, deliver and support more than 400 digital and in-person educational offerings, including graduate degrees, professional certificates, Trilogy-powered boot camps and GetSmarter short courses. Together with our partners, 2U has positively transformed the lives of more than 200,000 students and lifelong learners. To learn more, visit [2U.com](https://2u.com). #NoBackRow

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

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