

# Creating Climates Where We All Can Thrive

**Suzanne T. Ortega**  
President

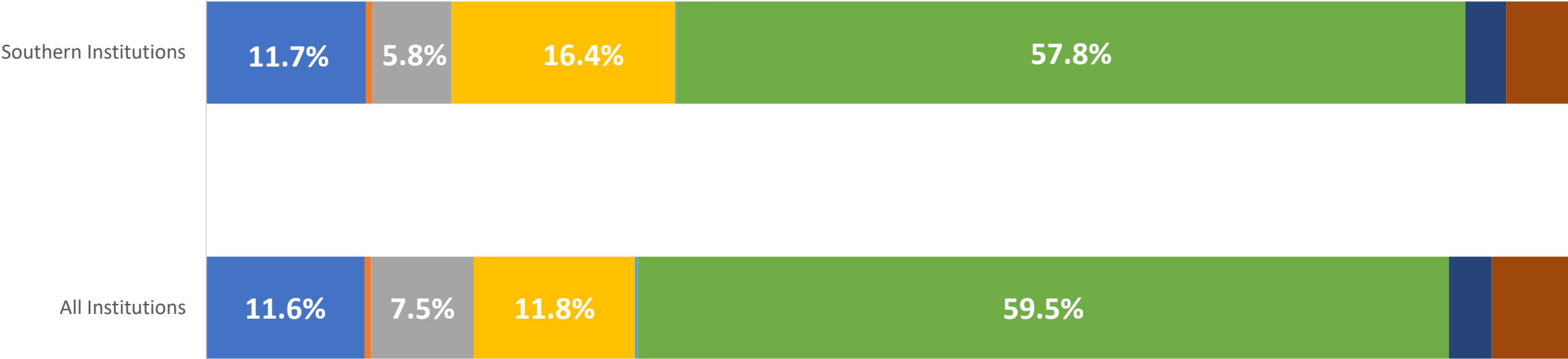
Conference of Southern Graduate Schools  
March 6, 2020

# Takeaways from this Presentation

- Diversity and inclusion are preconditions to graduate program excellence
- Despite progress, there still is a long way to go
- Focused attention must be given to
  - Nurturing future graduate students
  - Mentoring current students, and
  - Improving student well-being

# In Fall 2018, the share of U.S. domestic URM first-time enrollment at Southern graduate schools was similar to the national figure.

Comparison of U.S. Domestic, First-time Graduate Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2018, All Institutions v. Southern Institutions



■ Hispanic/Latino ■ American Indian/Alaska Native ■ Asian ■ Black/African American ■ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ■ White ■ Two or More Races ■ Race/Ethnicity Unknown

# Nurturing Interest in and Preparation for Graduate School

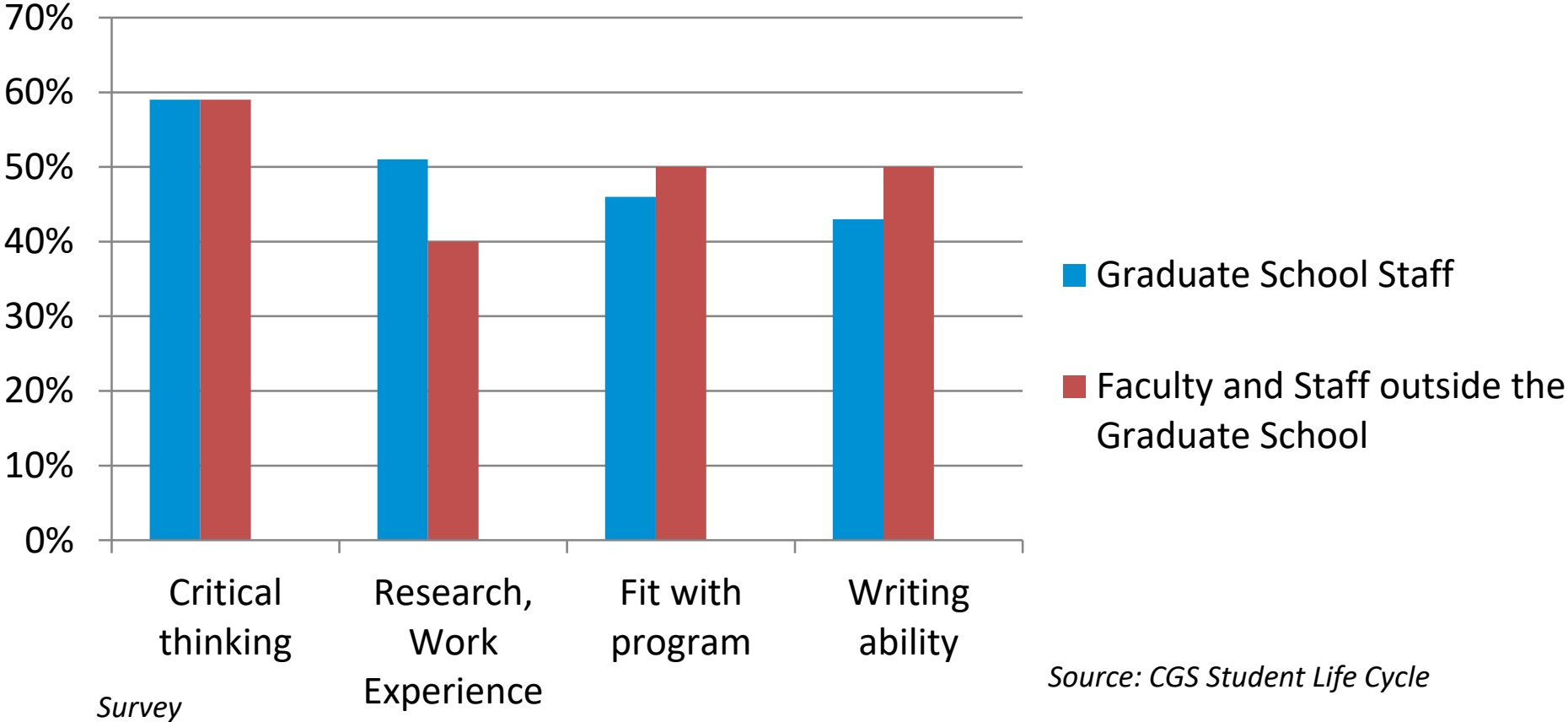
- Undergraduate mentoring and research matters

...but what about prospective master's students and returning adults

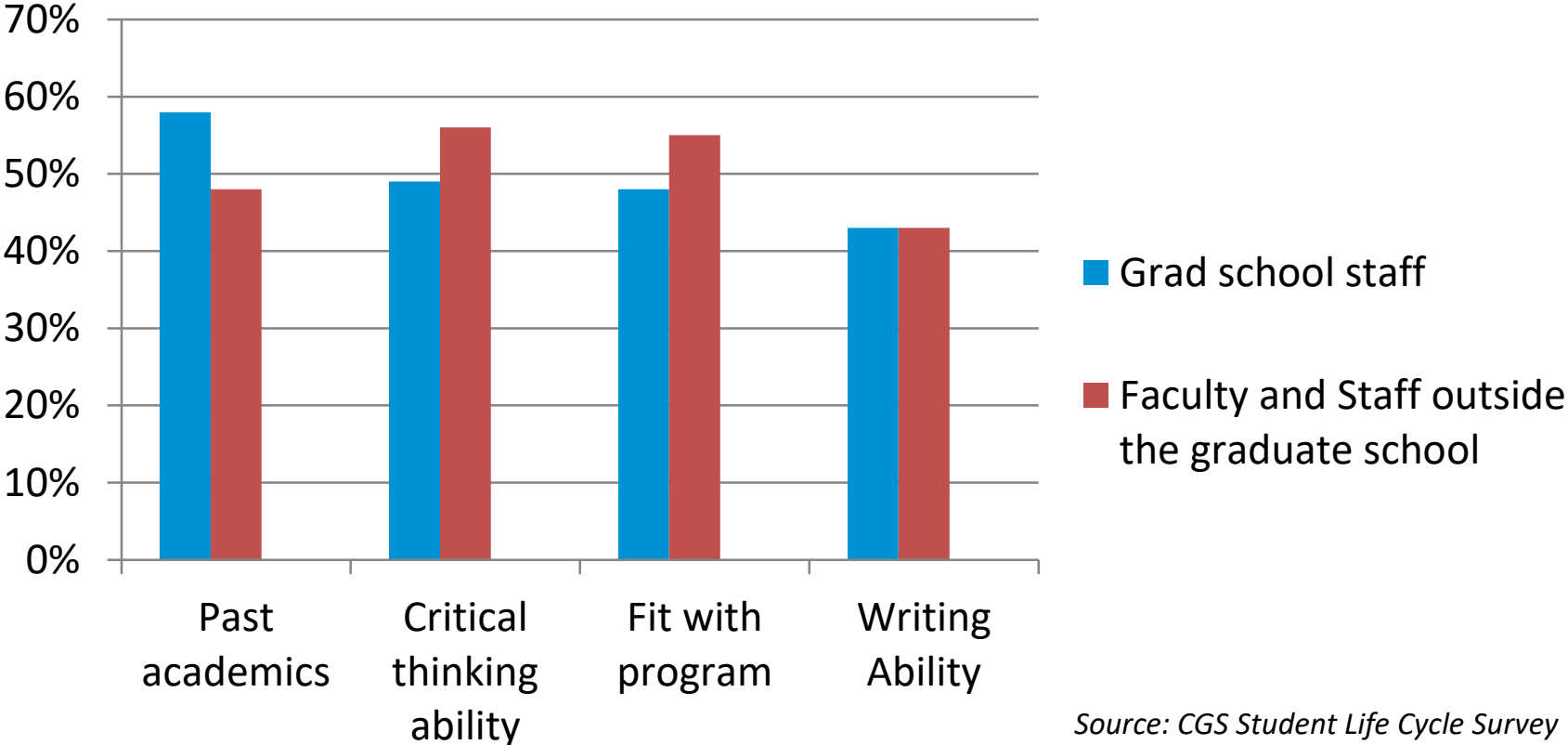
# Admitting a Diverse Graduate Student Body

“A process by which programs consider a **broad range of characteristics**, including noncognitive and personal attributes, when reviewing applications for admission.” (CGS, 2016)

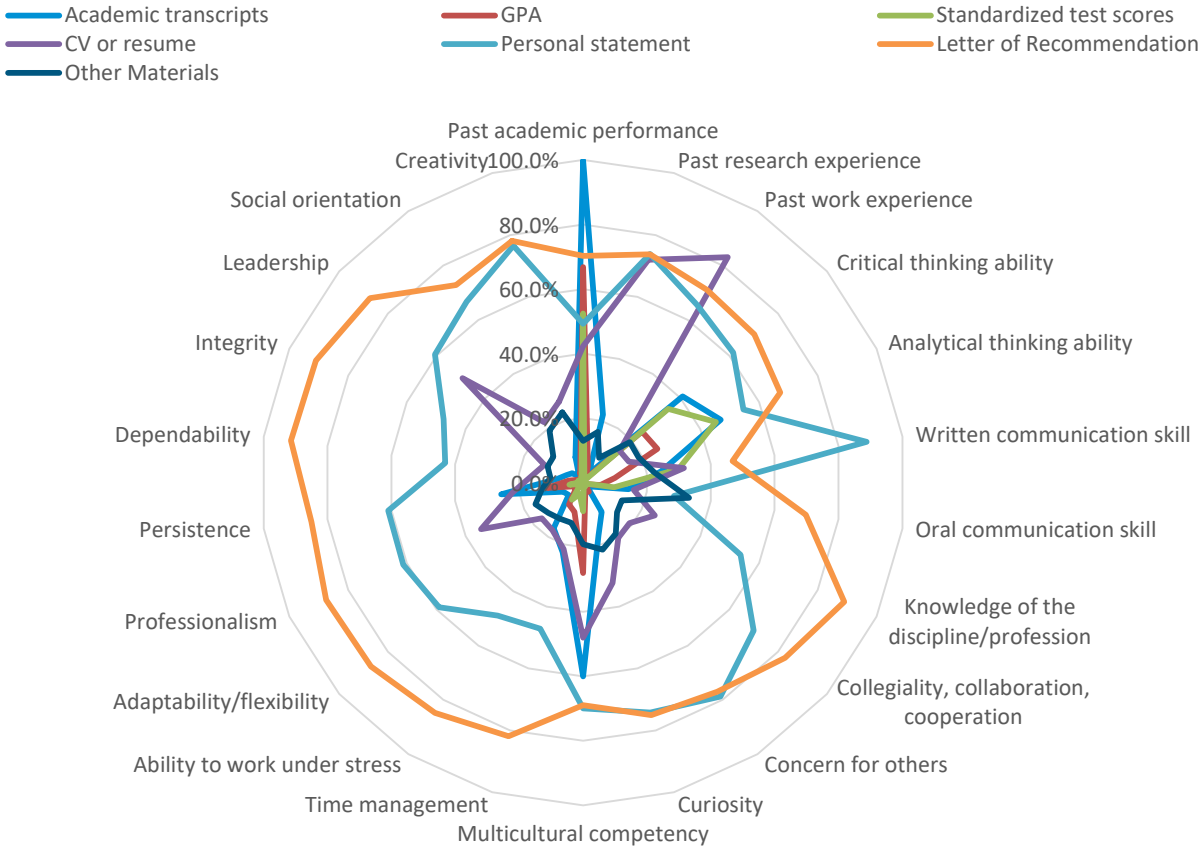
# Qualities Deserving More Attention – Doctoral Admissions



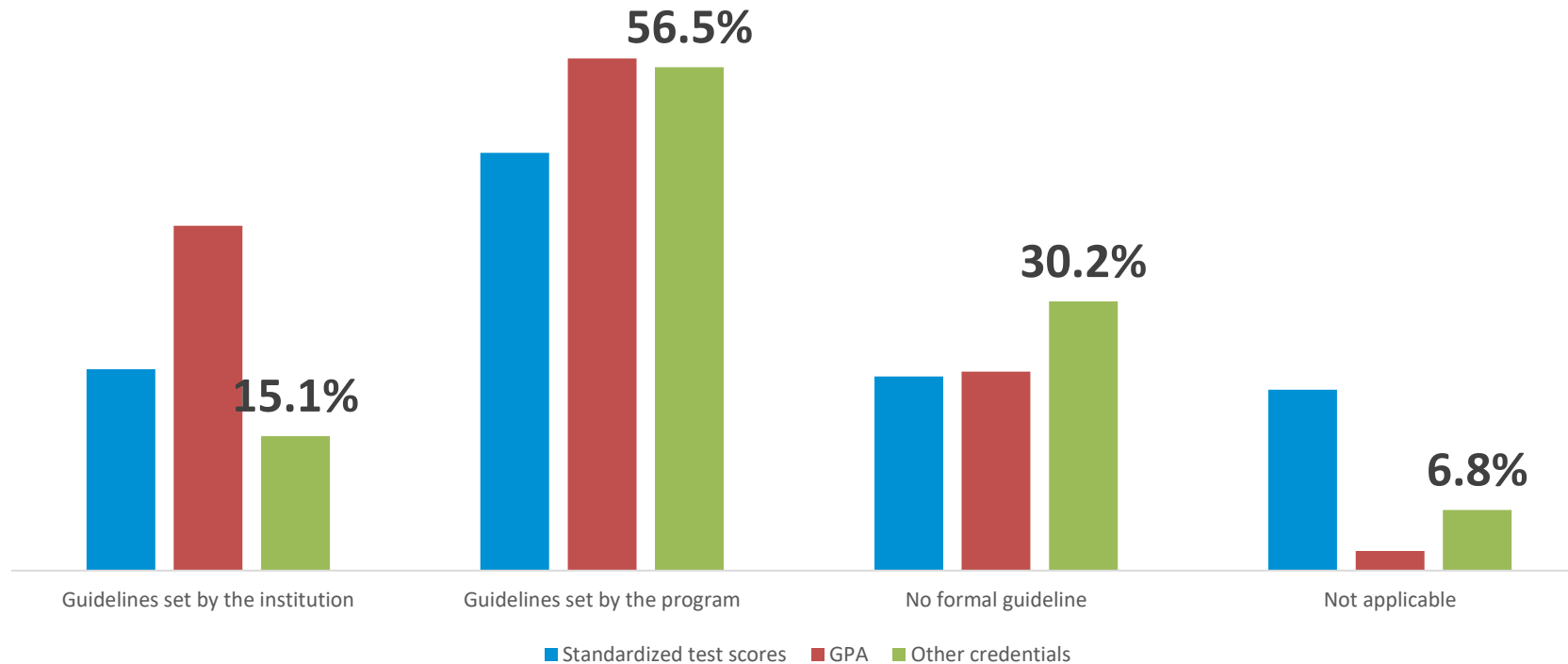
# Qualities Deserving More Attention – Master’s Admissions



# Letters of recommendations and personal statements are used to weigh a wide range of cognitive and non-cognitive attributes in application processes.



# Yet, few graduate schools offer guidelines/rubrics for reviewing LoR or PS, and 30% master's programs have no formal guideline.



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*Given this emphasis on past performance, how can we ensure that students from less privileged backgrounds are not left out?*

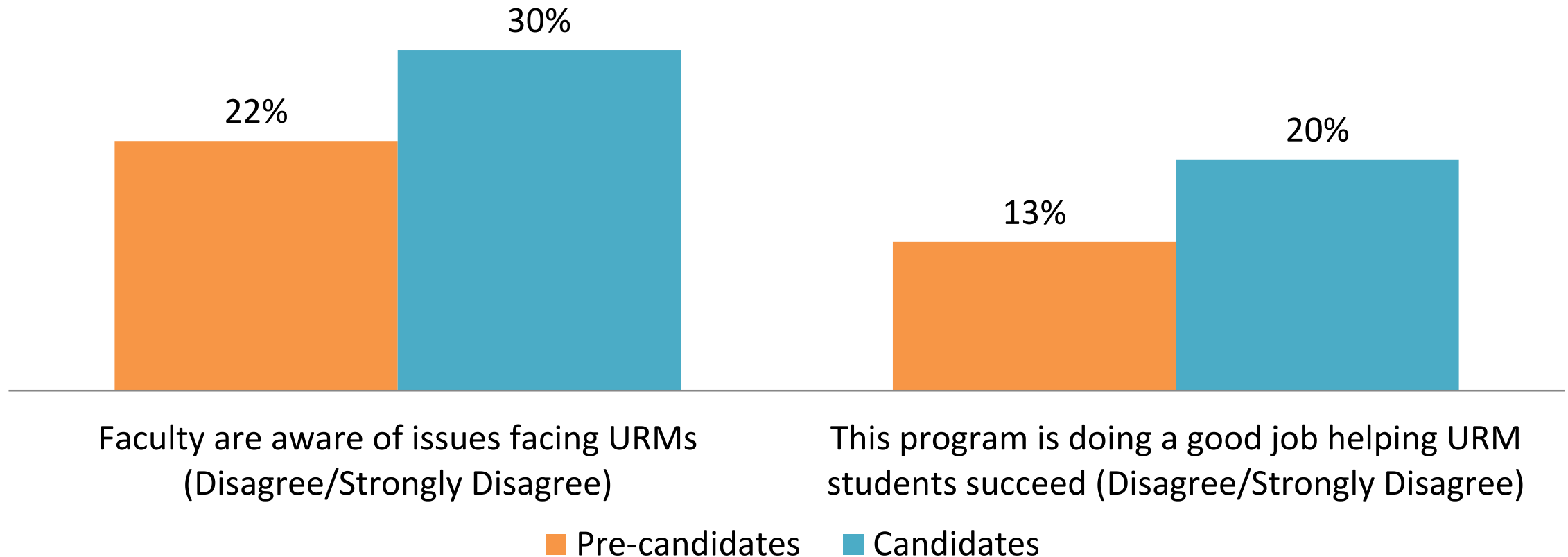
# Selected Promising Practices

- Gather and analyze **department-specific data** on graduate admissions.
- Provide faculty members who make admissions decisions with the **context** needed to evaluate students appropriately.
- Provide faculty with information on the appropriate use of the **Graduate Record Exam (GRE)**.
- Offer guidance on the optimal **sequence** for reviewing application materials.
- Provide faculty with **rubrics** for evaluating applicants so that admissions criteria are more transparent and consistently applied.

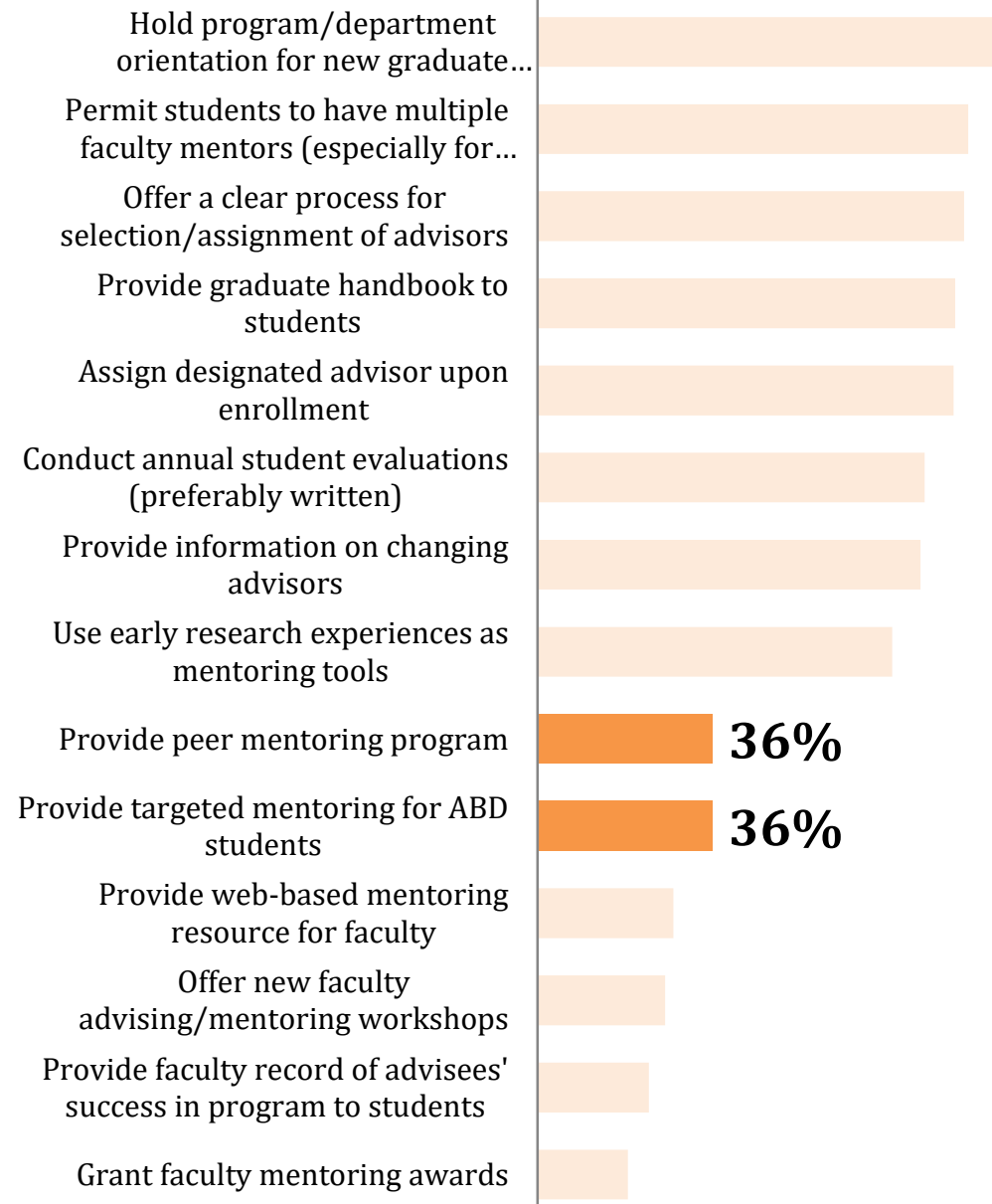
# What do we know about Degree Completion

- Ten-year completion rate: 54%
- In STEM Masters programs, 64% of white students complete in four years; only 55% and 60% of African American and Latinx students do so
- Median time to attrition: ~24 months
- Career uncertainty and the “discouraged dissertator”

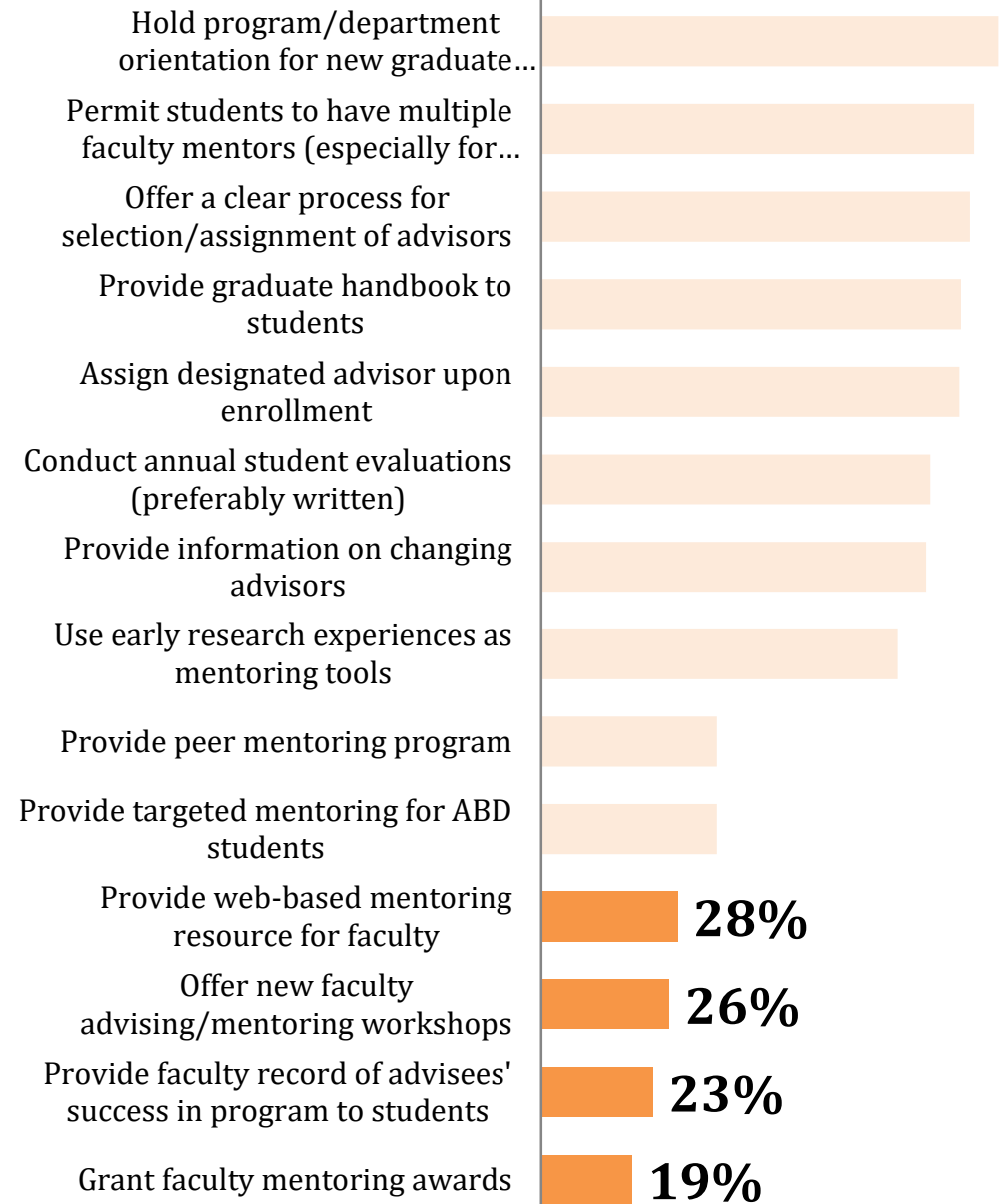
# As URM students progress in their doctoral studies, they become more skeptical.



## Yet, fewer doctoral programs focus their efforts for latter stages (e.g., dissertation phase).



# And, even fewer doctoral programs offer mentoring/advising resources for faculty members.



***Good mentoring should help students navigate differences & take advantage of the benefits of diversity.***

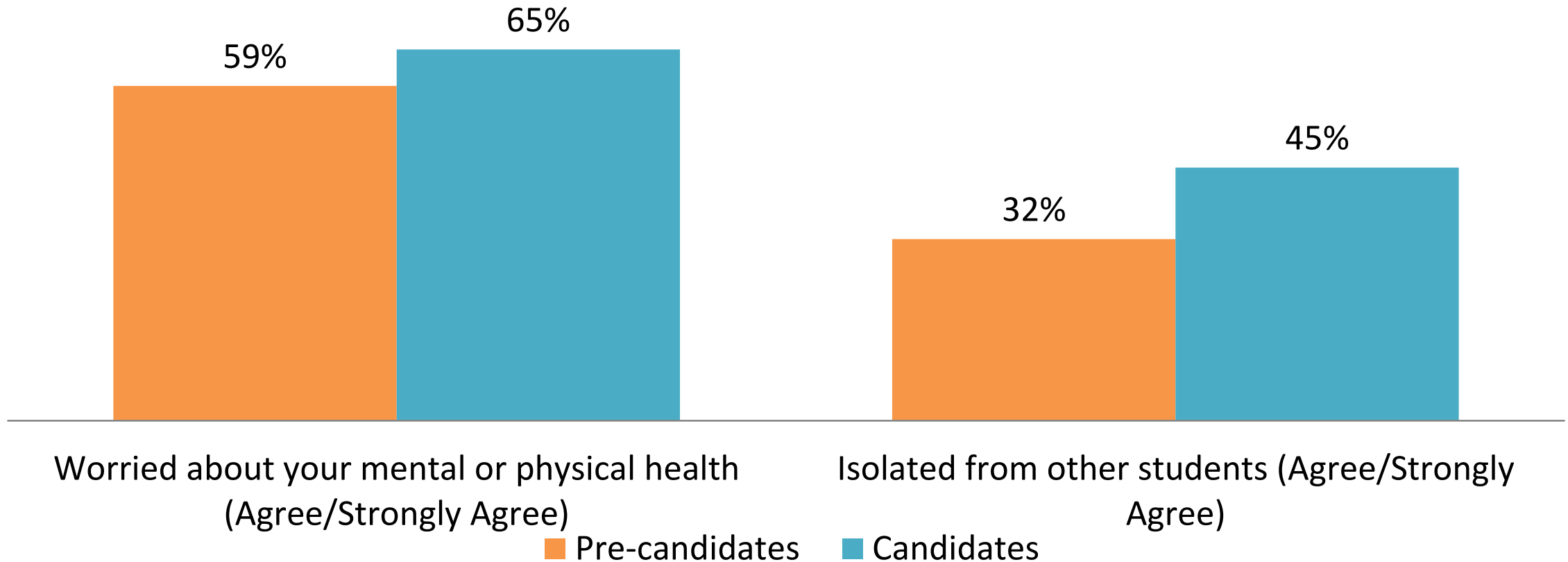
STEM doctoral degree recipient from a research university in Florida

*“Really doesn’t acknowledge that minority students are minority. I wasn’t discriminated against, but I wasn’t acknowledged either. You aren’t going to offend minority students because you acknowledge their background. Don’t treat them differently, but acknowledge them. I felt like the program was color blind...but a color acceptance model might be a better fit for minority students.”*

# Promising Practices for Degree Completion and Student Success

- New orientation models
- Mentoring
- Preparation for diverse careers

# URM students in later stages also feel more isolated and concerned of their mental/physical health.



# Supporting Graduate Student Mental Health and Well-Being



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International Graduate Applications  
and Enrollment: Fall 2019

By Enyu Zhou, Radomir Ray Mitic, Christian P.L. West, and Hironao Okahana  
February 2020



Graduate Enrollment  
and Degrees:  
2008 to 2018



The Fall 2019 Data Collection Cycle for CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment & Degrees is **still open**. If your institution has not completed the survey, please contact [surveys@cgs.nche.edu](mailto:surveys@cgs.nche.edu).


# Resources



**GRADUATE CAREER CONSORTIUM**  
Providing a National Voice for Graduate-Level Career & Professional Development Leaders

**Preparing Future Faculty:  
A Framework for Program  
Design and Evaluation at  
the University Level**

By Kate Winter, Julia Kent, and Ryan Bradshaw



PH.D. COMPLETION AND ATTRITION:  
*Policies and Practices  
to Promote  
Student Success*

**IMAGINEPHD**  
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Council of Graduate Schools

**Completion  
and Attrition  
in STEM  
Master's  
Programs**

PILOT STUDY FINDINGS




Doctoral  
Initiative  
on Minority  
Attrition and  
Completion



Holistic Review in  
Graduate Admissions

A Report from the Council of Graduate Schools



**PhD Career Pathways**  
A PROJECT OF THE COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Closing Gaps in our Knowledge of  
PhD Career Pathways

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**Closing Gaps in Our Knowledge of PhD  
Career Pathways: Job Changes of  
PhD Graduates After Earning Their Degree**

CGS Research in Brief, July 2019  
By Hironao Okahana

Relatively little is known about the job transitions PhD degree holders experience at various stages of their careers. Using data from the Council of Graduate Schools' Understanding PhD Career Pathways for Program Improvement project, this brief looks into current and immediate prior jobs of PhD degree holders who earned their doctorates three years (Cohort A), eight years (Cohort B), and fifteen years (Cohort C) ago. We examined the nature of job transitions that occurred within the last three years.

**Key Findings:**

- Unsurprisingly, most respondents in Cohort A experienced job changes within the last three years. In every broad field of study except Education, over 90% of PhD alumni indicated that they switched to their current jobs within the last three years. In Education, only 80% in Cohort A indicated that they switched to their current jobs within the last three years, likely because some of them have already been employed in relevant jobs while pursuing a doctorate. (Figure 1)
- In contrast, fewer alumni in Cohorts B and C experienced recent job changes. In every broad field of the Life & Health Sciences, approximately one-third of Cohort C reported that they started their current jobs within the last three years. Relative to other broad fields, the Life & Health Sciences saw higher rates of recent job changes in all three cohorts. (Figure 2)
- Most job changes occur within the same sectors; however, some PhD graduates move between sectors of employment. In STEM fields, most inter-sector job changes occur in the first three years post-graduation. For example, 32% of Life & Health Sciences PhDs, 27% of Physical & Earth Sciences PhDs, and 22% of Engineering, Mathematics & Computer Sciences PhDs in Cohort A moved between business/government/non-profit (BGN) sectors and the academy within the last three years. In Arts & Humanities, the movement between BGN sectors and the academy happened rather consistently across different cohorts, ranging between 17-19%. (Figure 3)
- In the majority of cases, these movements are from the academy to BGN sectors, except for the PhDs in Education (all cohorts) and Cohort C PhDs in Physical & Earth Sciences and Engineering, Mathematics, & Computer Sciences. The most BGN-to-academy transitions occurred for PhDs in Education. (Figure 2)
- Although most recent movements from BGN sectors to the academy occur in Cohort A, the majority of those in both Cohorts A and B moved into faculty positions. In contrast, among those who made a change, those in Cohort C were slightly more likely to move into administration positions, rather than faculty jobs. (Figure 3)

## Increasing the Participation of Students of Color in Graduate Education: It's About Faculty Mentorship

# Engage with CGS



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July!*

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