


Who Are These People, What Are They Doing And Why Are They Here?

Characteristics, aspirations, attitudes,
beliefs and experiences of
Oberlin students

The background of the slide features several decorative elements consisting of concentric circles in various shades of blue, resembling ripples in water. These circles are scattered across the lower half of the slide, with a prominent one in the bottom center and others towards the bottom right and bottom left.

Survey of American Freshmen

- Administered at Oberlin since 1973 formally at the beginning of Orientation. Now via web a few weeks before arrival
- Baseline data on experiences, expectations, aspirations and traits
- Comparison with other four-year very highly selective private colleges

Freshmen Survey Highlights Through The Years

Compared to students at peer colleges, our students are generally more likely to

- to be searching for meaning and purpose in life
- to engage in self-reflection
- to view themselves as creative
- to believe they have a good sense of self-understanding
- to have come late to class in high school
- to have participated in an organized demonstration in high school
- to have felt overwhelmed by all they had to do in high school
- to aspire to a PhD and less likely to a professional degree
- to go to college to learn more things and become a cultured person
- to aspire towards writing original works, creating artistic work, developing a meaningful philosophy of life, influencing social values and political structure and improving understanding of other countries and cultures
- and of course to consider themselves liberal or far left

Freshmen Survey Highlights Through The Years

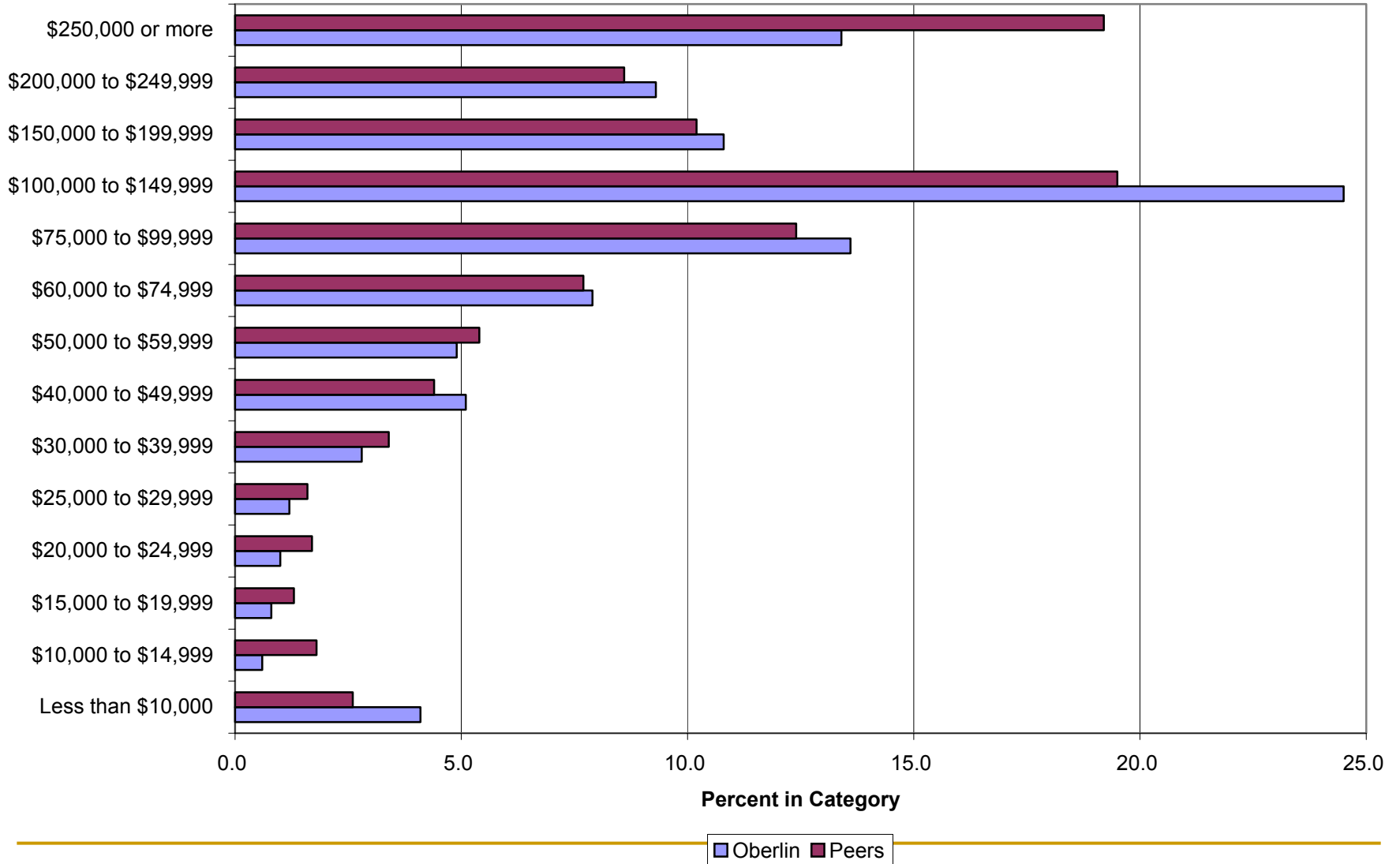
And they are generally less likely to

- to describe themselves as cooperative
- to describe themselves as driven to achieve
- to describe themselves as persistent
- to believe they possess leadership ability
- to go to college to get a better job, make more money or prepare for graduate school
- to choose Oberlin for its academic reputation but more likely to choose Oberlin for its social reputation
- to aspire towards raising a family, becoming well off financially, becoming a community leader and having administrative responsibility
- to have a specific career aspiration
- to participate in organized clubs and activities in high school
- to identify with a specific religion

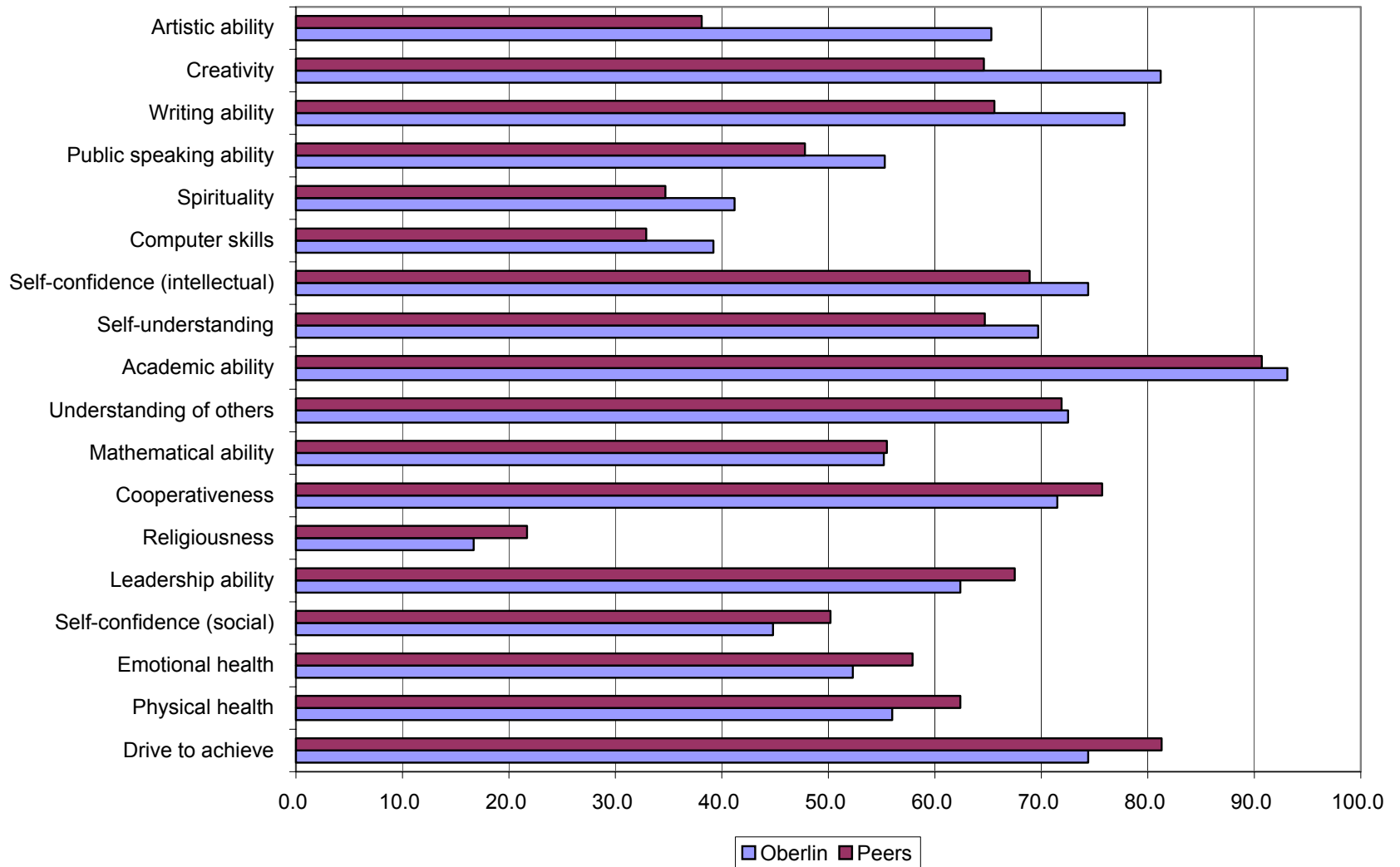
In Sum

- Oberlin students enter college wanting to learn more 'stuff', rather than to follow a pre-defined path to a pre-defined outcome
- They are bright, intellectually engaged, politically and socially active and creative
- They are less engaged in 'traditional' activities and communities and therefore do not bond with institutions in the same way as many of their peers
- More difficult to retain and require more help in focusing their academic and career goals.

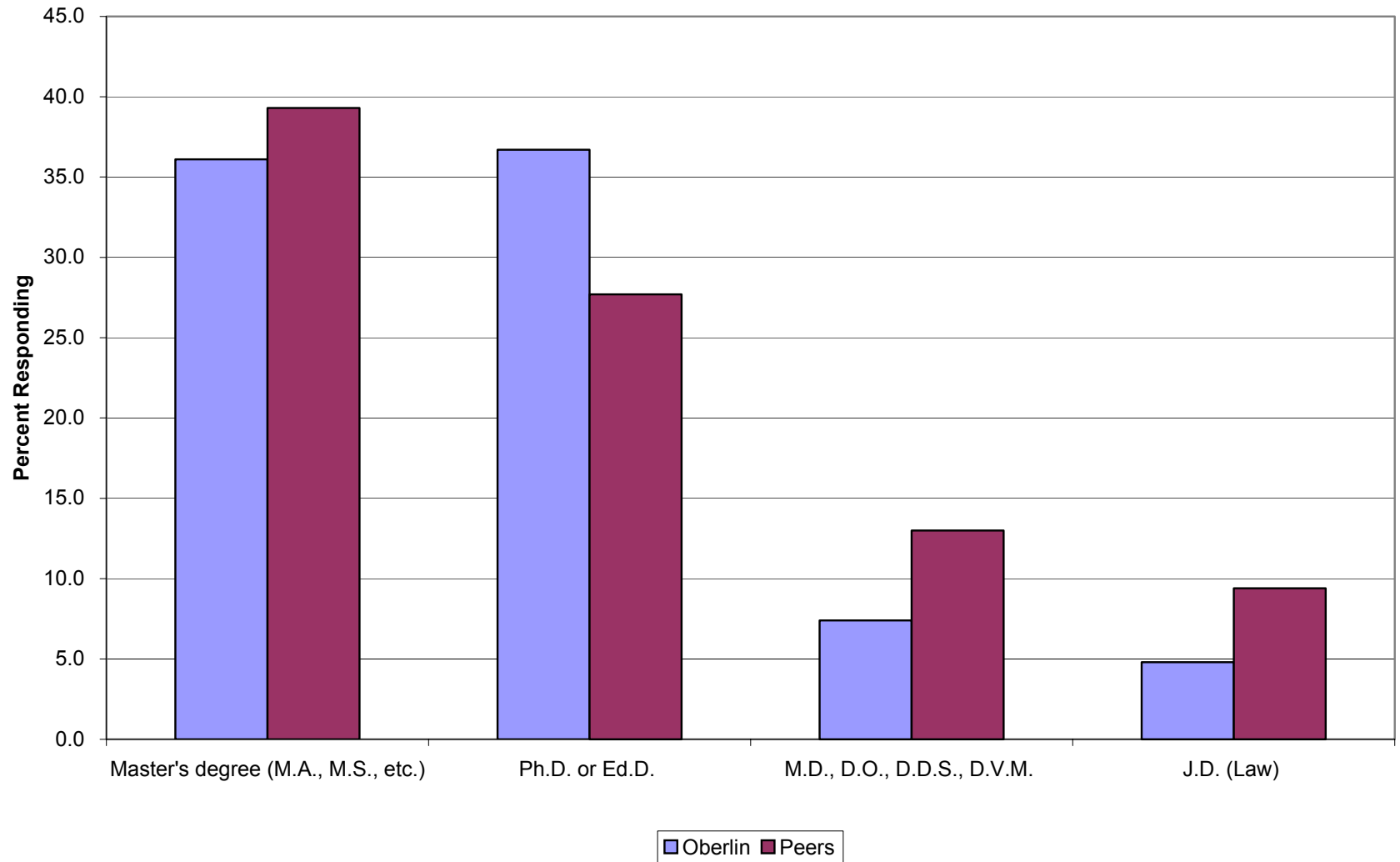
2006 Parent Income Distributions



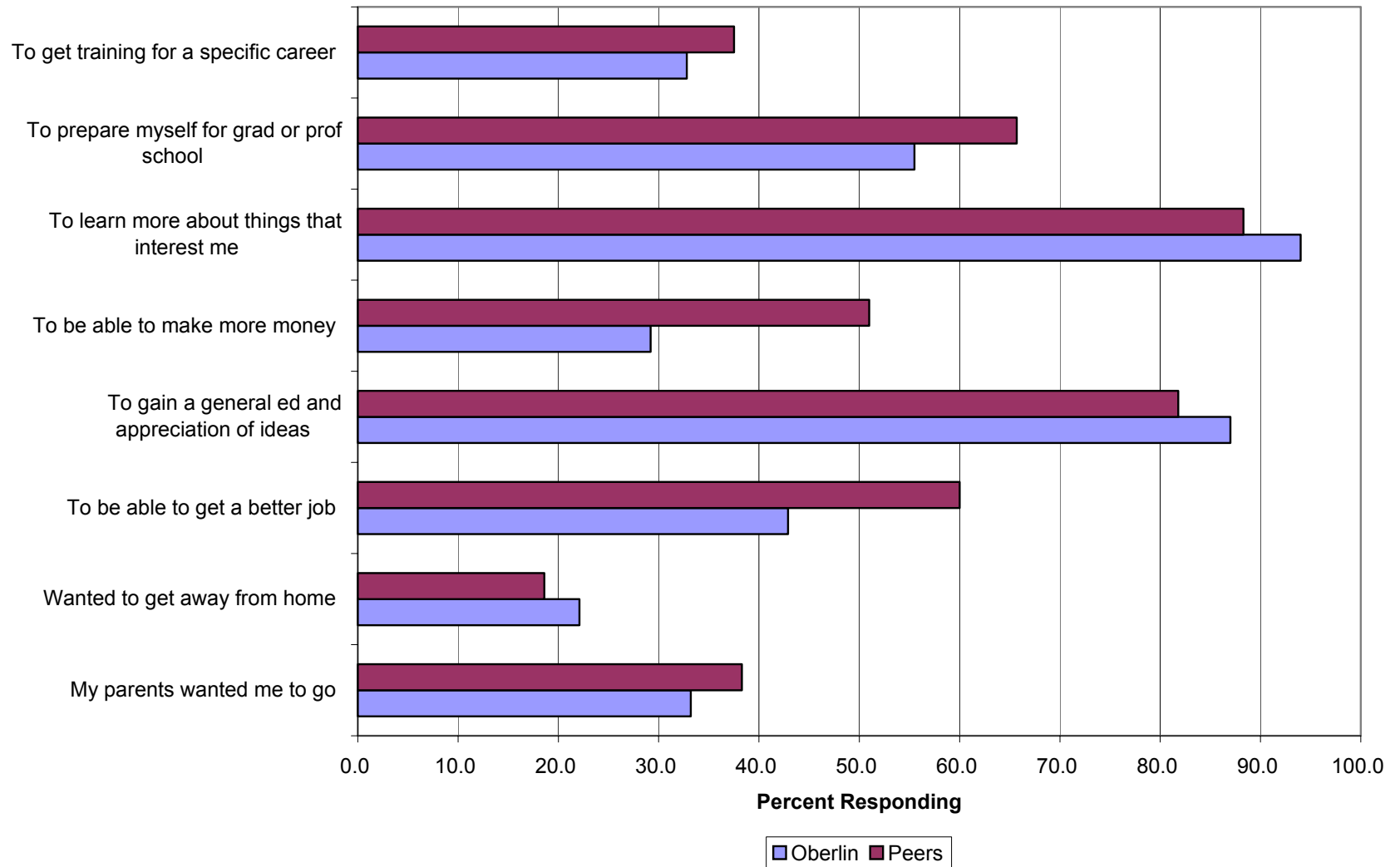
2006 Traits Highest 10%



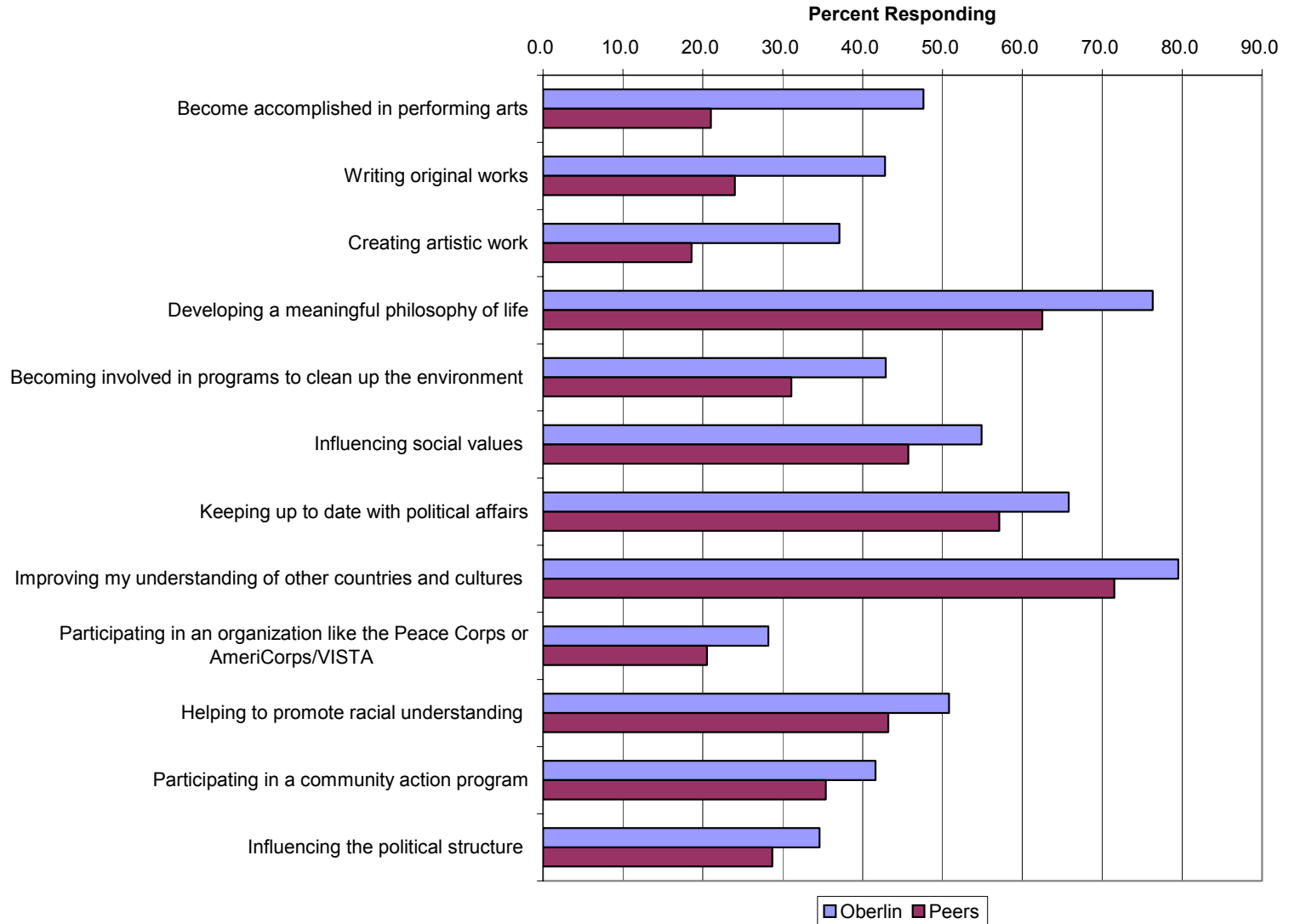
Highest Degree Aspirations



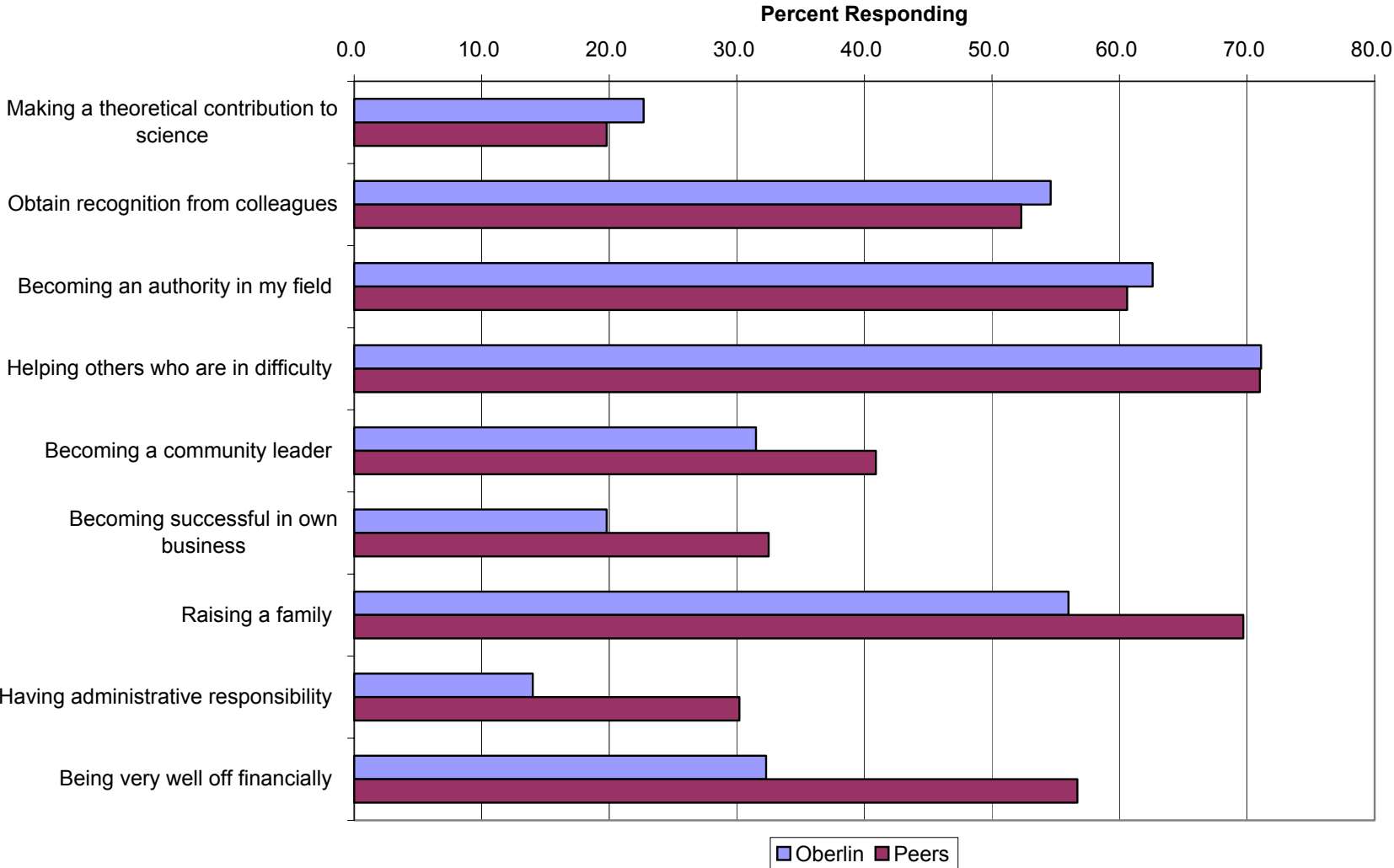
"Very Important" Reasons for Attending College



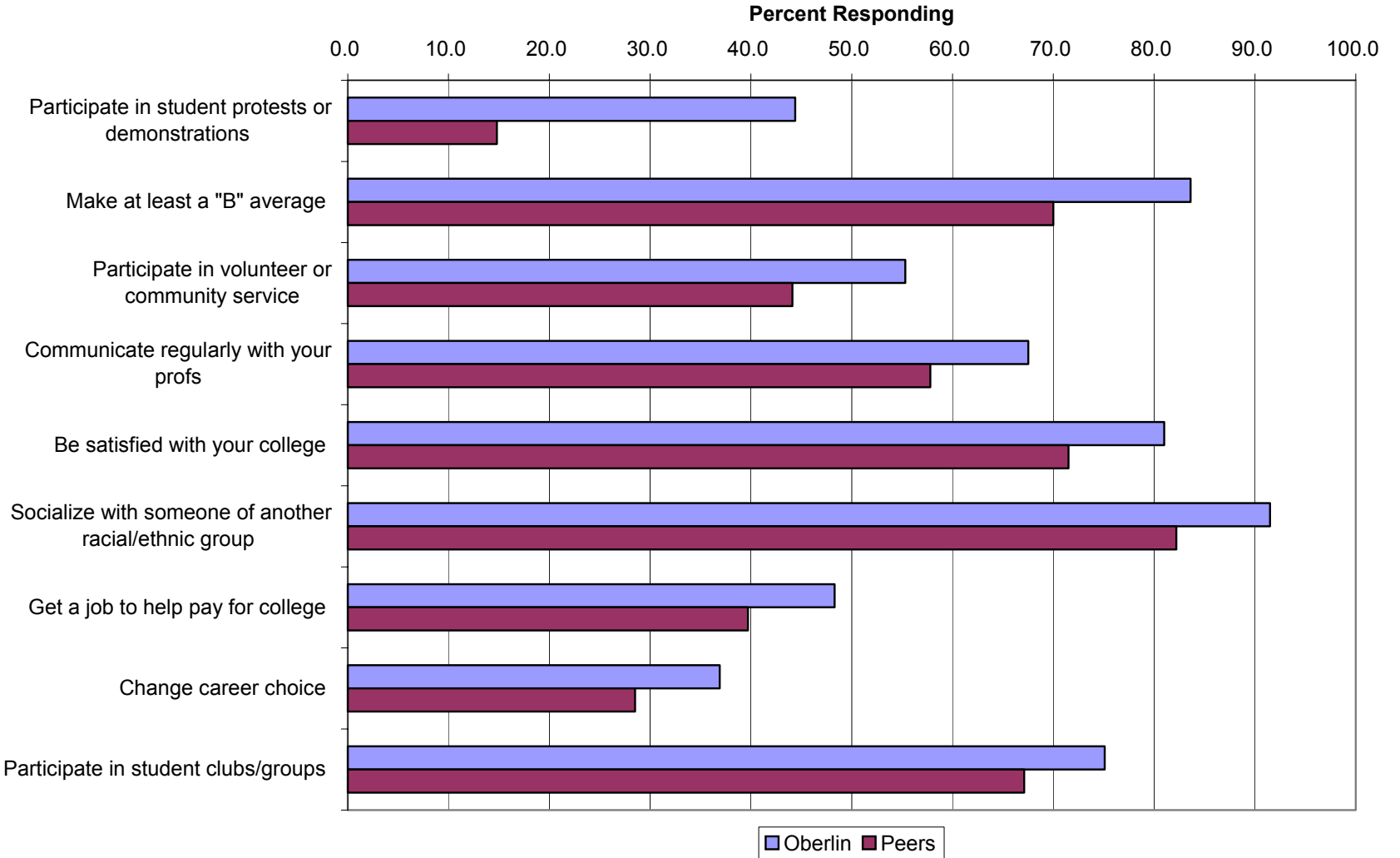
Objectives "Essential" or "Very Important" I



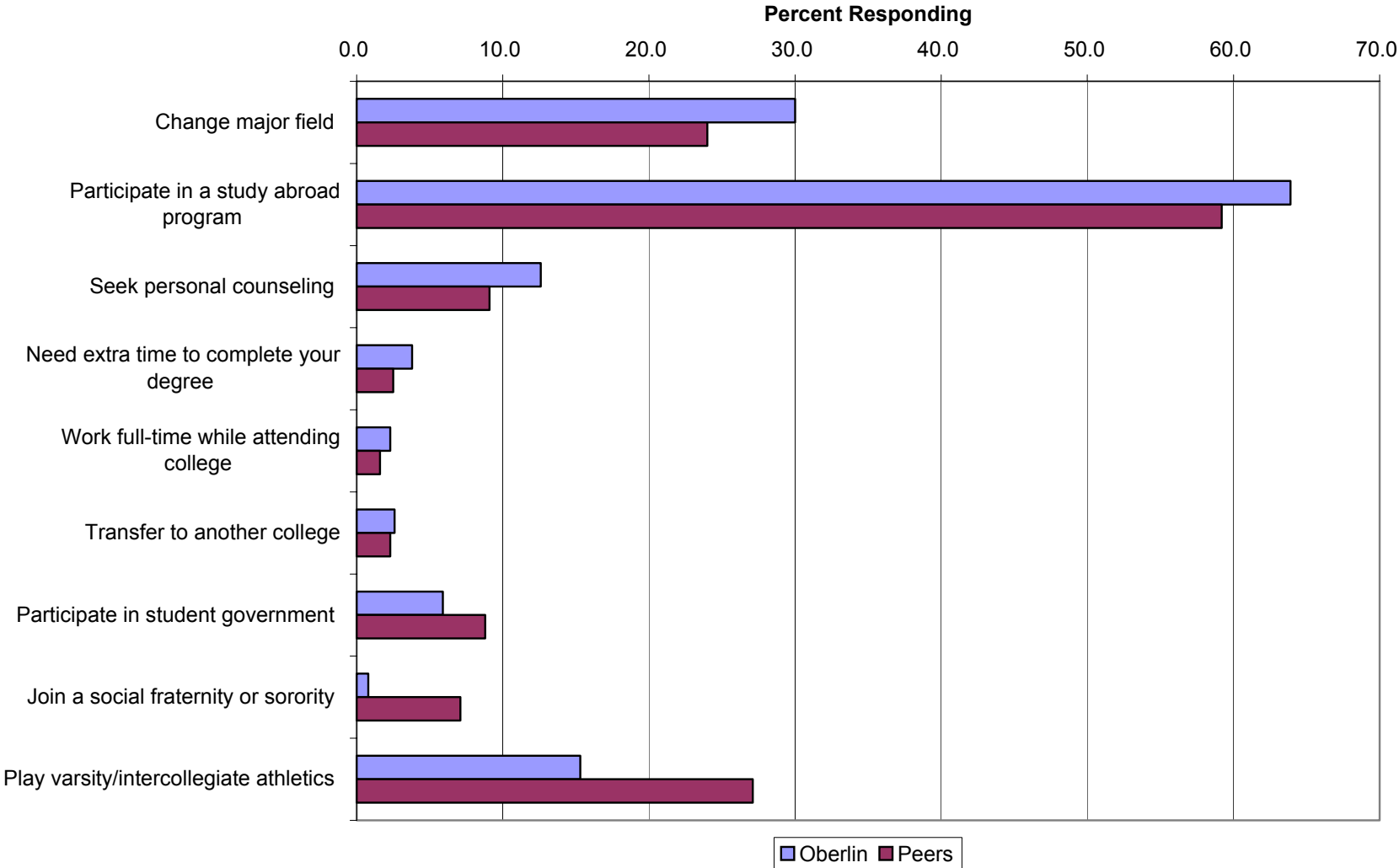
Objectives Considered "Essential" or "Very Important" II



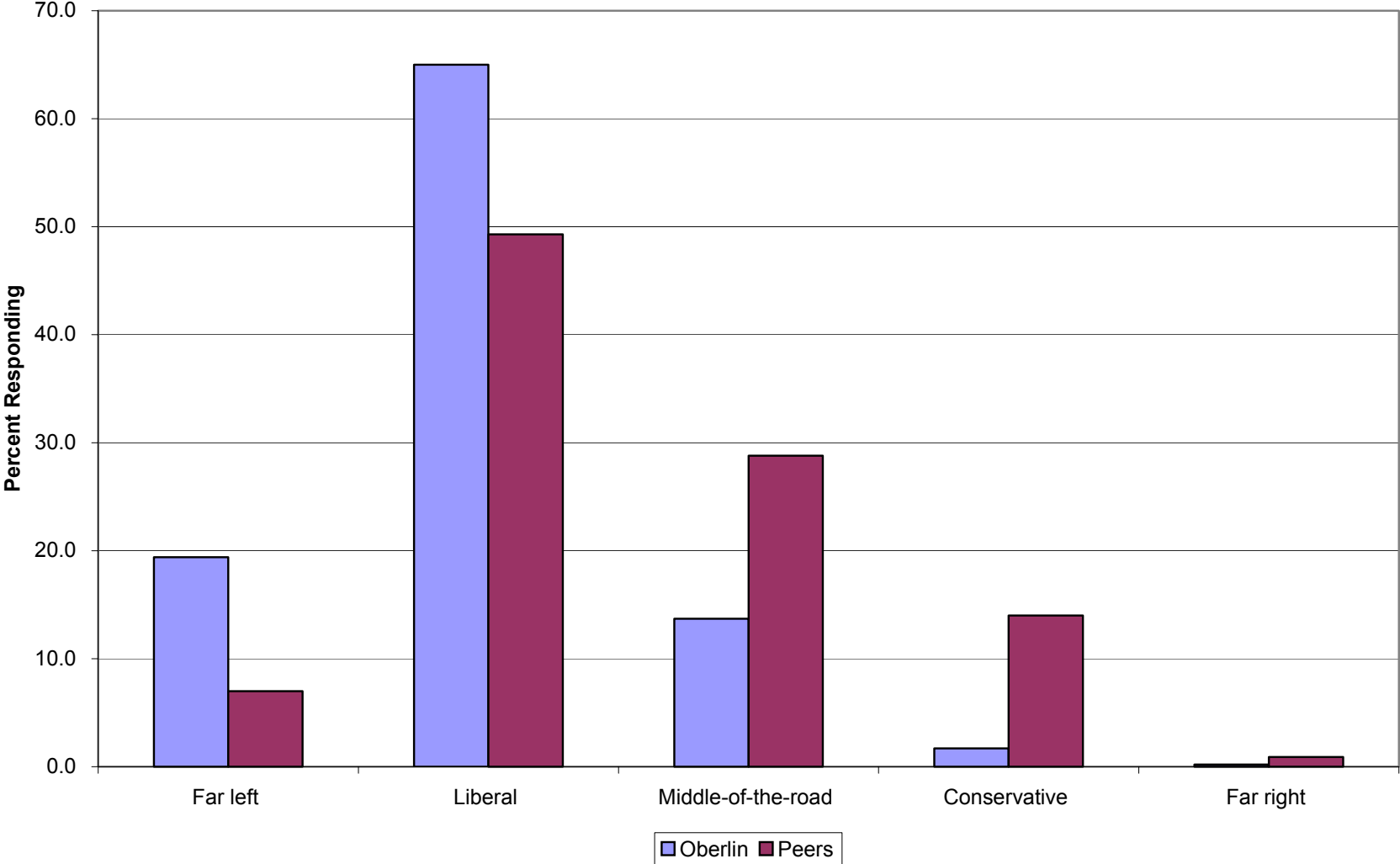
Chances are "Very Good" That I



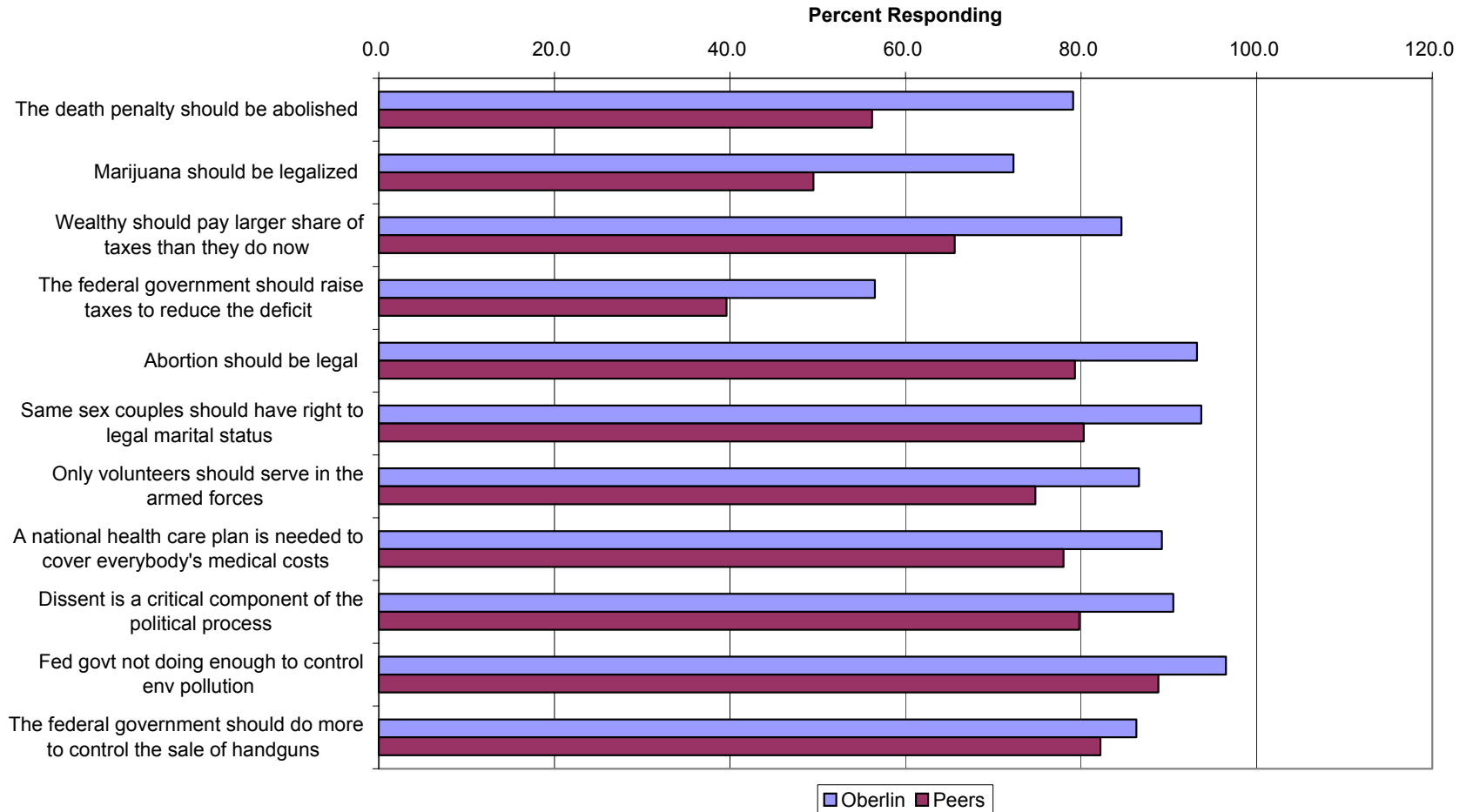
Chances are "Very Good" II



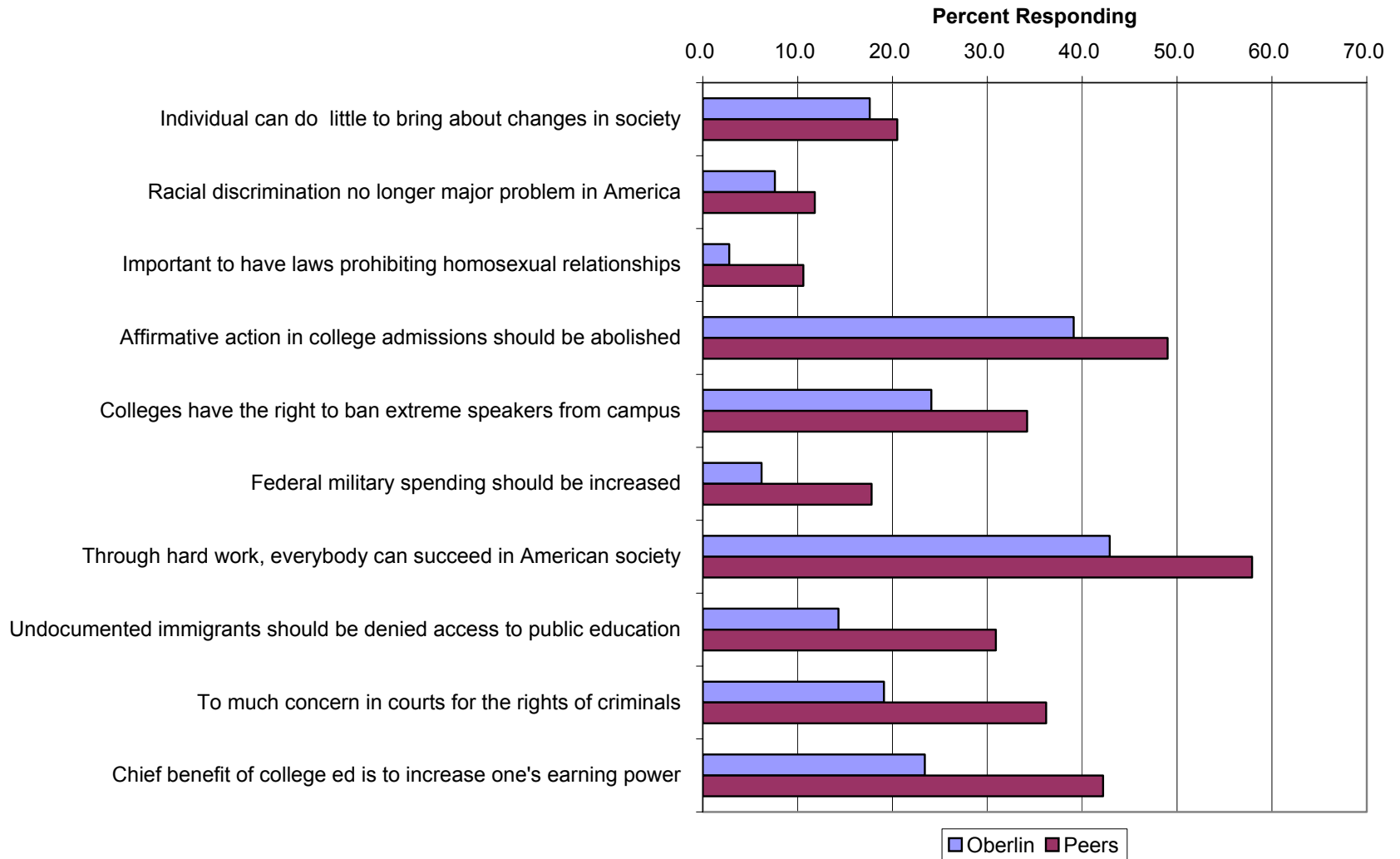
Political Views



Agree "Strongly" or "Somewhat Strongly" I



Agree "Strongly" or "Somewhat Strongly" II



Other Tidbits

- Oberlin students are more likely to be on need-based financial aid than those at peer institutions (except for women's colleges)
- They tend to spend less time on physical recreation, passive activities and organized social activities
- They are more engaged with the faculty and rely on them more heavily for advice of all kinds

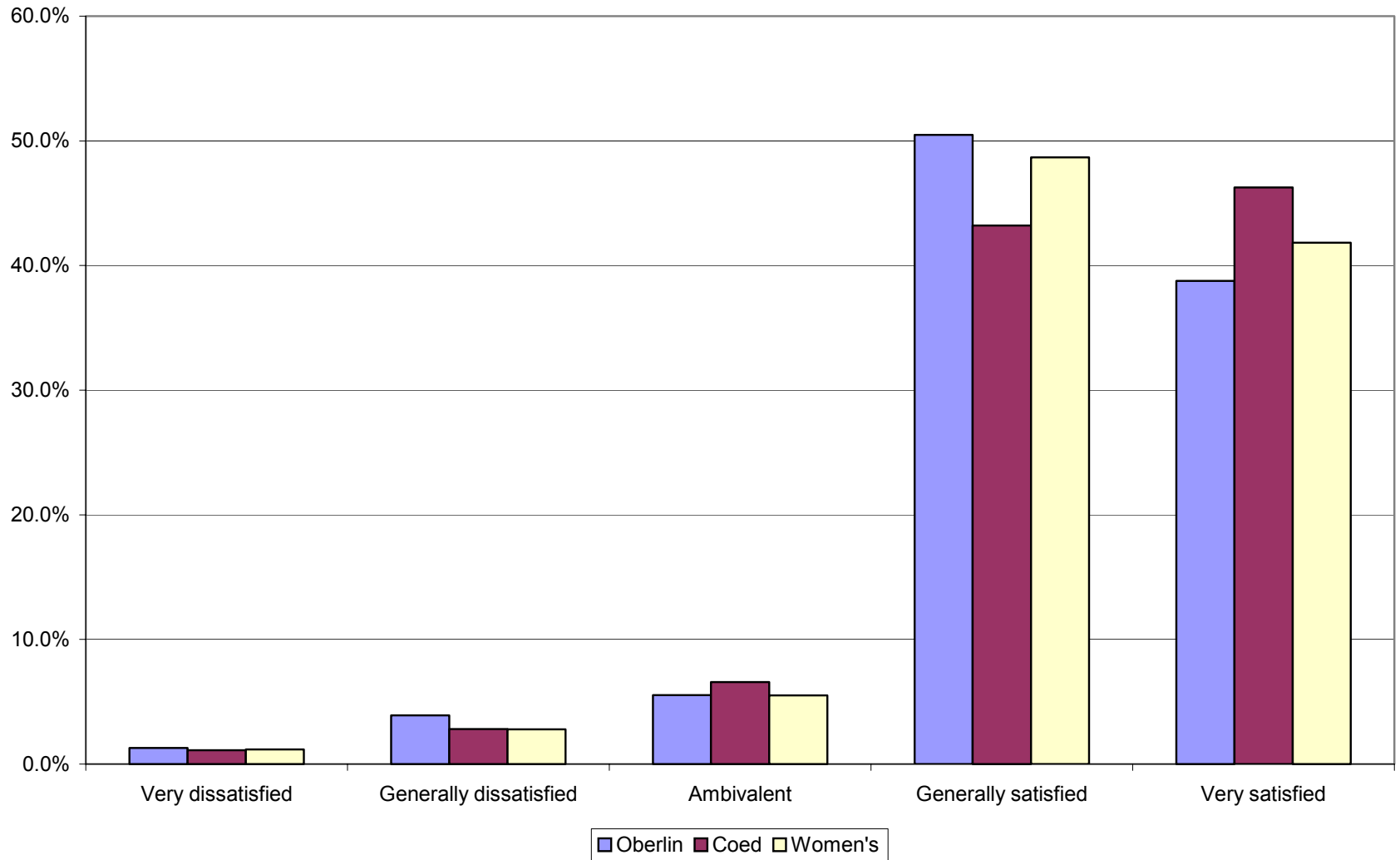
Senior Survey

- First administered in 1994 – generally every two years
- Measures satisfaction, life objectives, college participation, skills/knowledge enhancement, future plans among other things

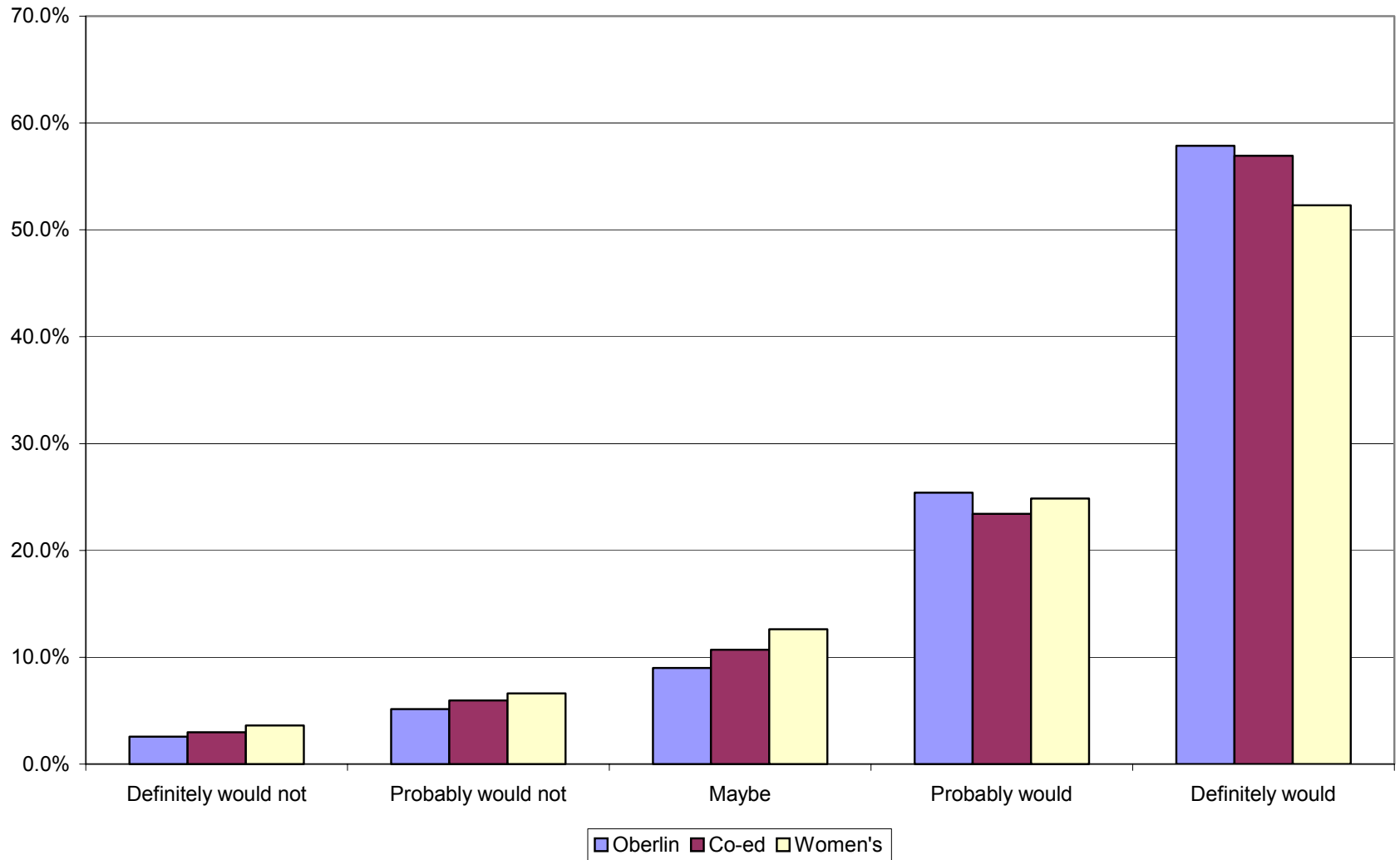
Senior Survey Highlights

- Full-time graduate school attendance has been declining slowly
- Oberlin students not attending graduate school are less likely to have a job in hand or even to have begun searching
- Overall satisfaction has increased since 1994
- Differences in life objectives are consistent with Freshmen Survey data

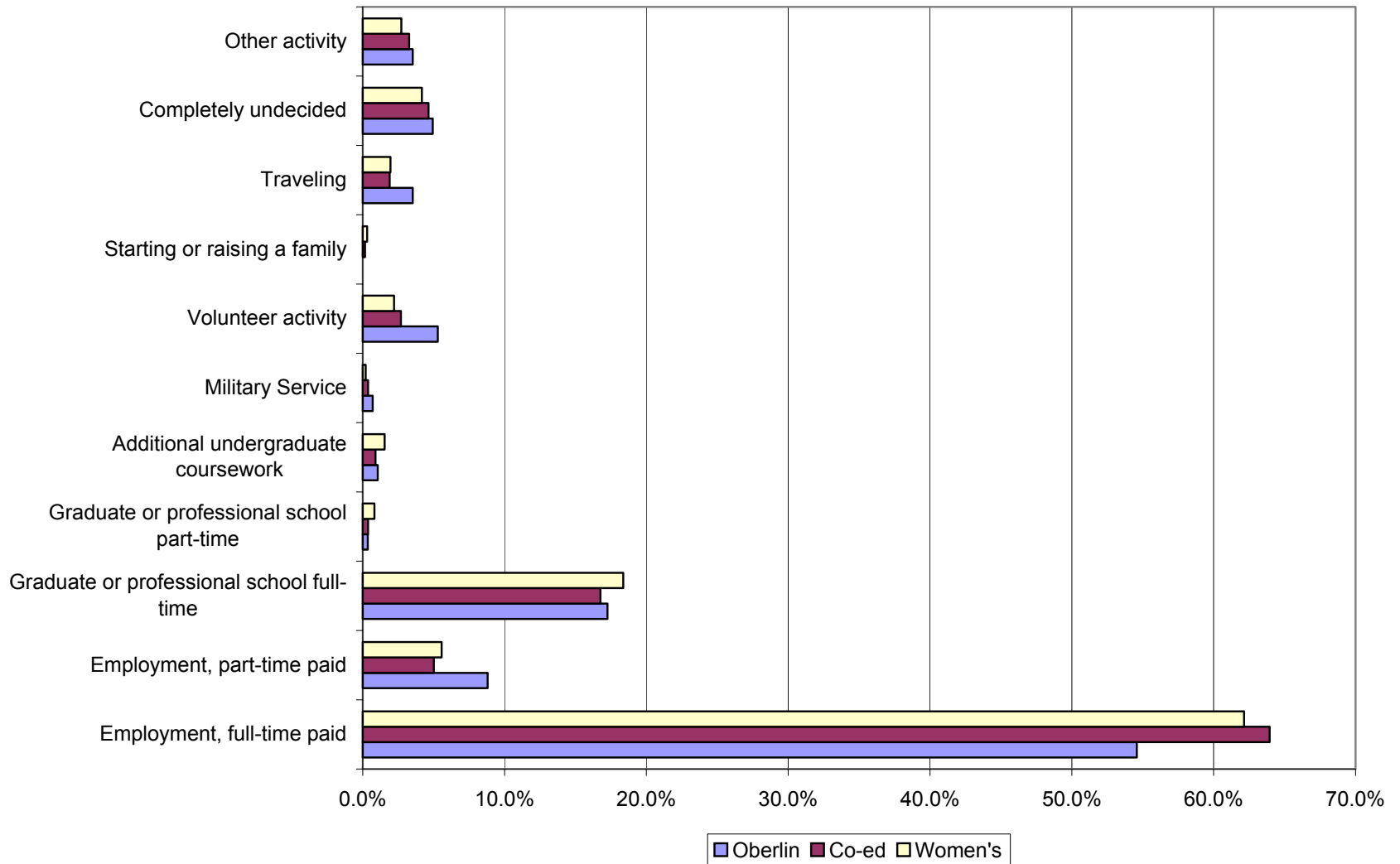
2006 Senior Survey Satisfaction with Undergrad Education



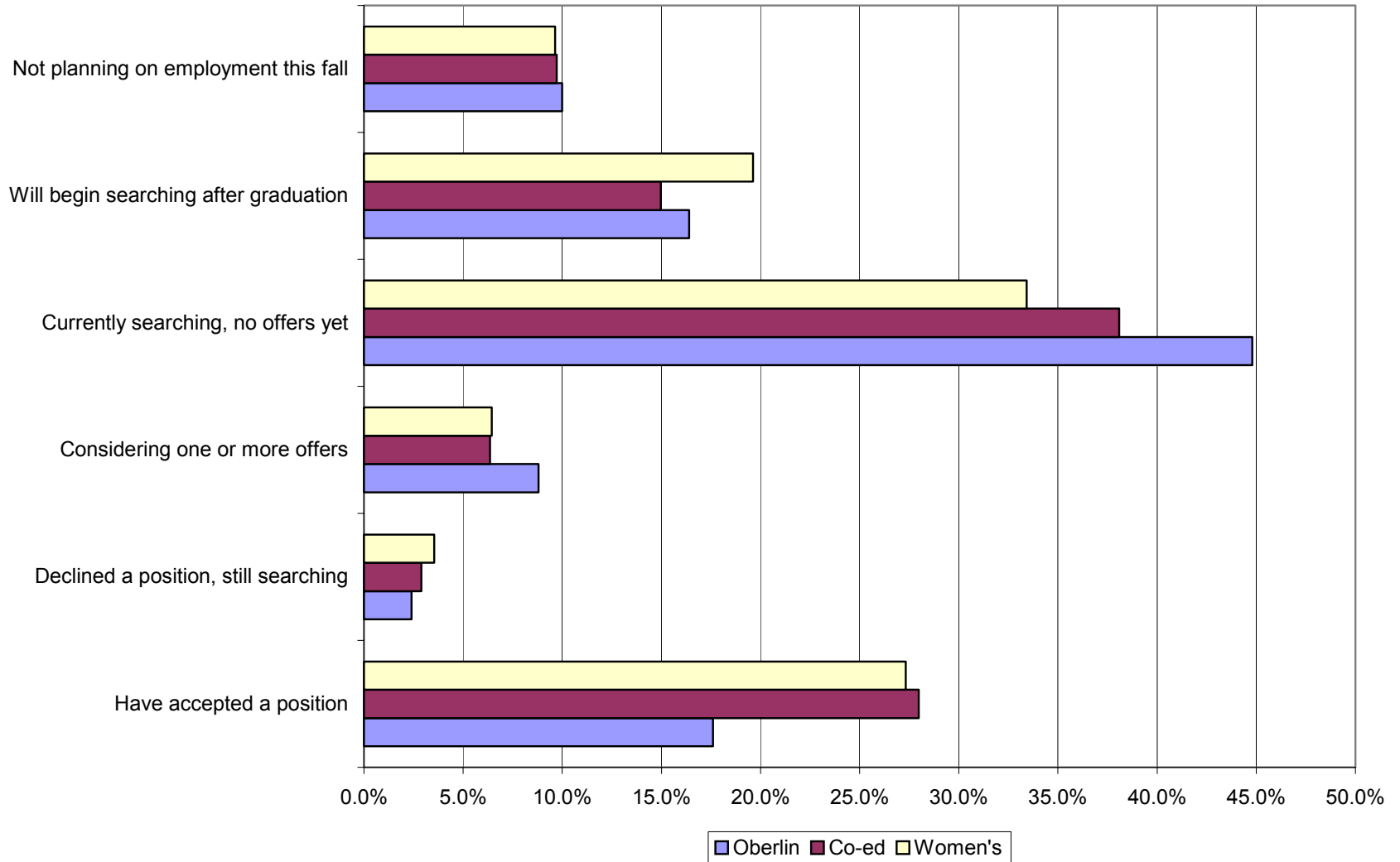
2006 Senior Survey Encourage High School Senior to Attend



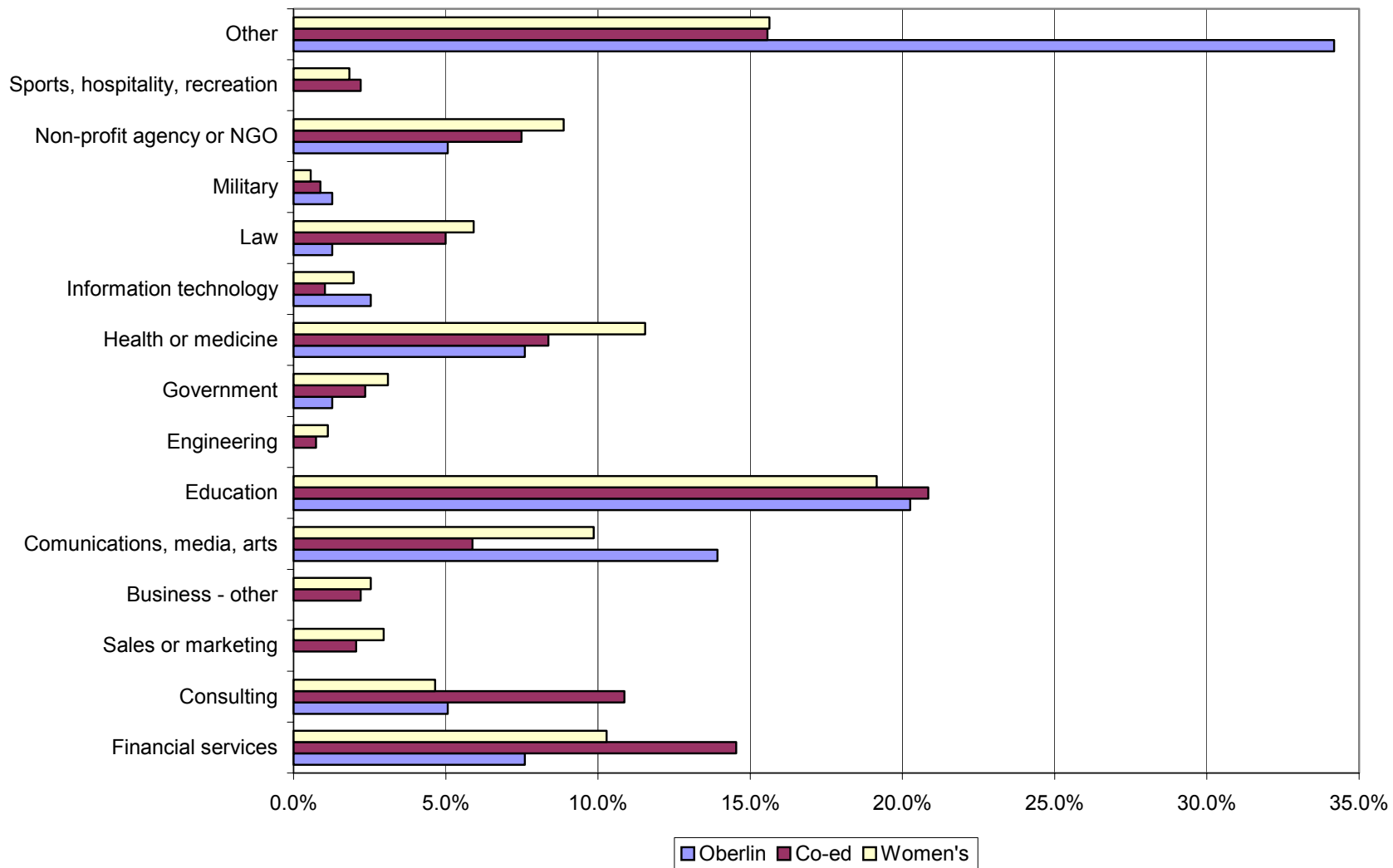
2006 Senior Survey Fall Plans



2006 Senior Survey Job Plans



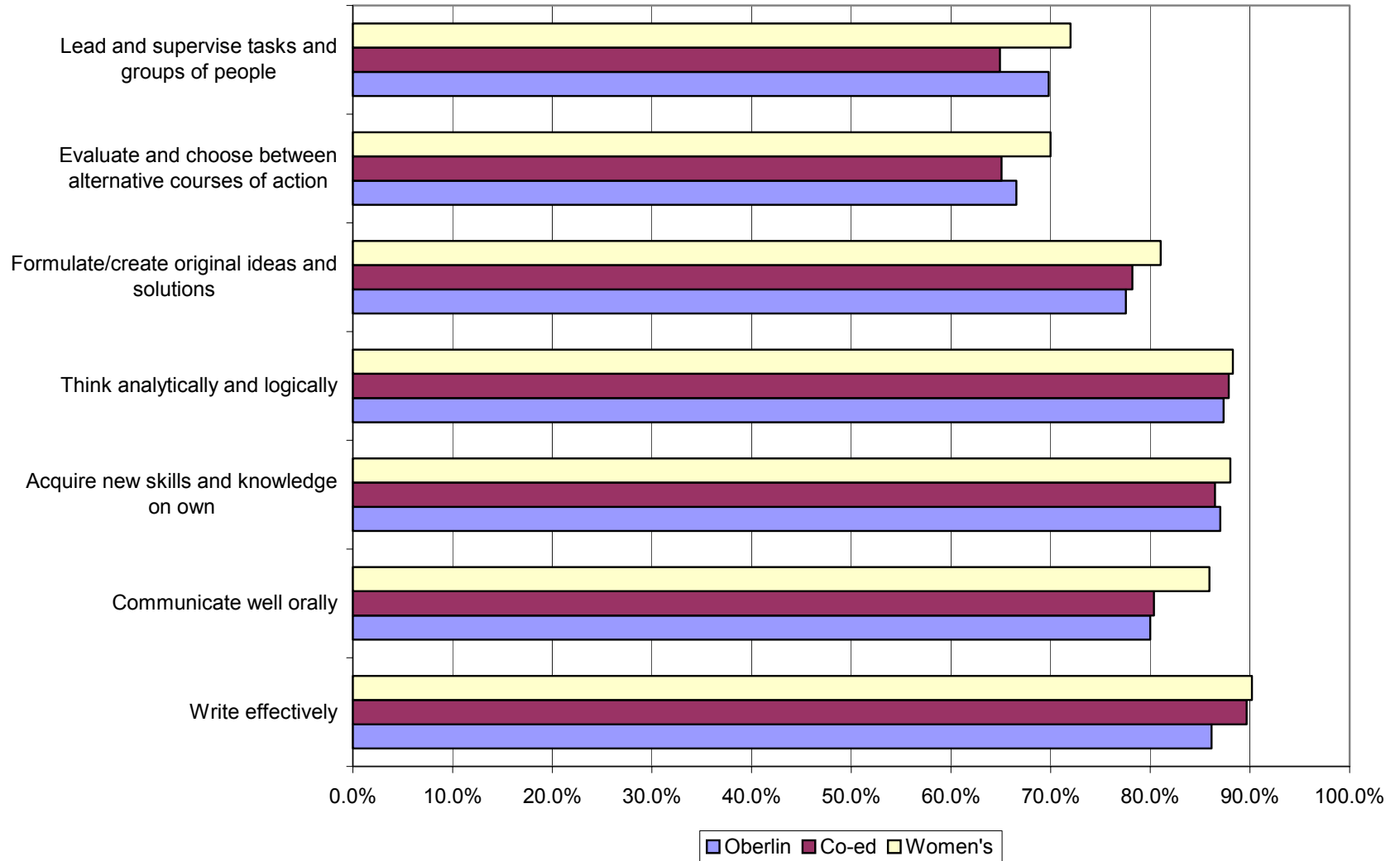
Job Field



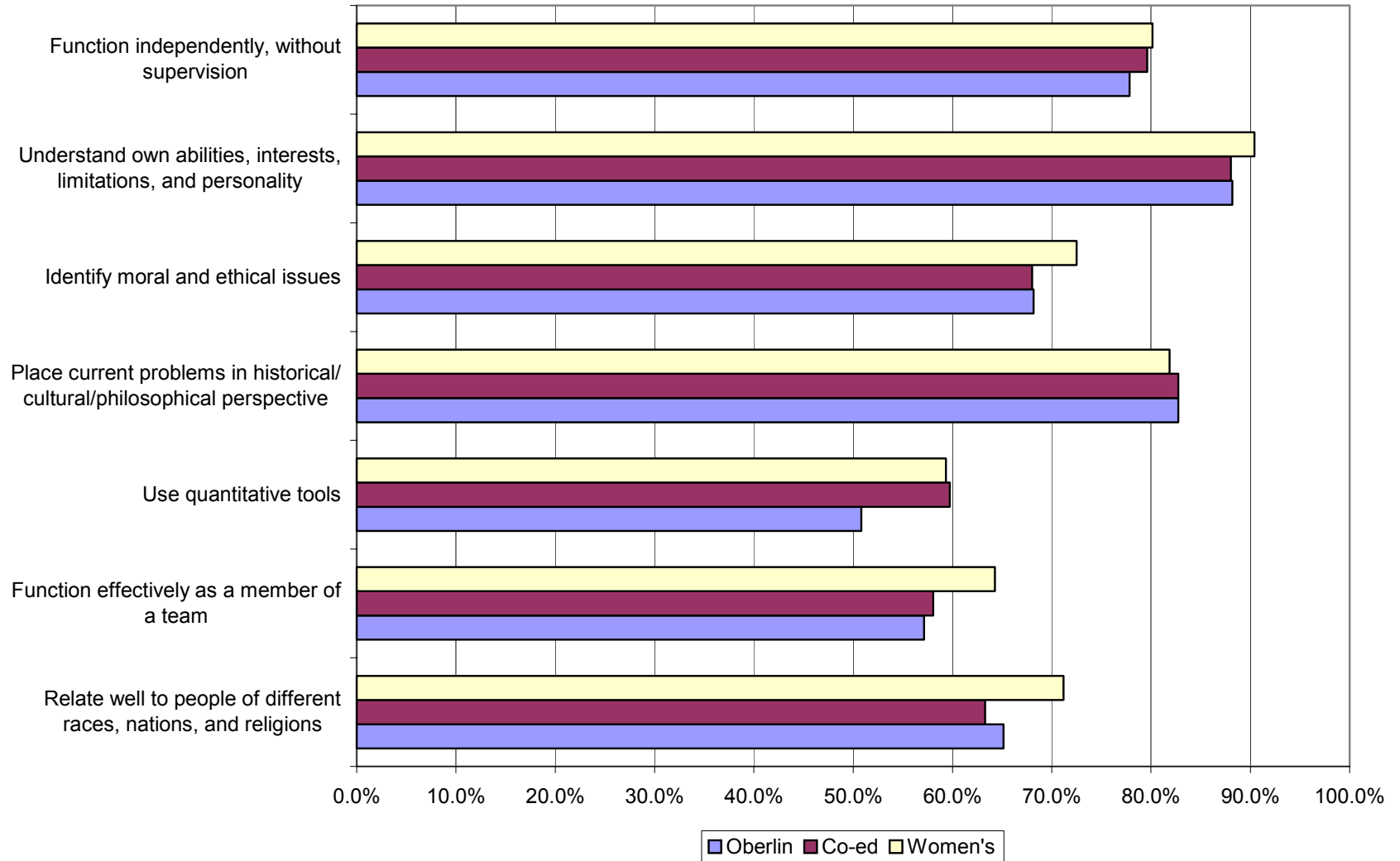
Learning Outcomes

- Senior Survey a good source of indirect assessment, including student learning
- All schools report fairly high gains
- Oberlin consistently lower in scientific and quantitative areas
- Oberlin has recently shown gains in teamwork and oral communication skills

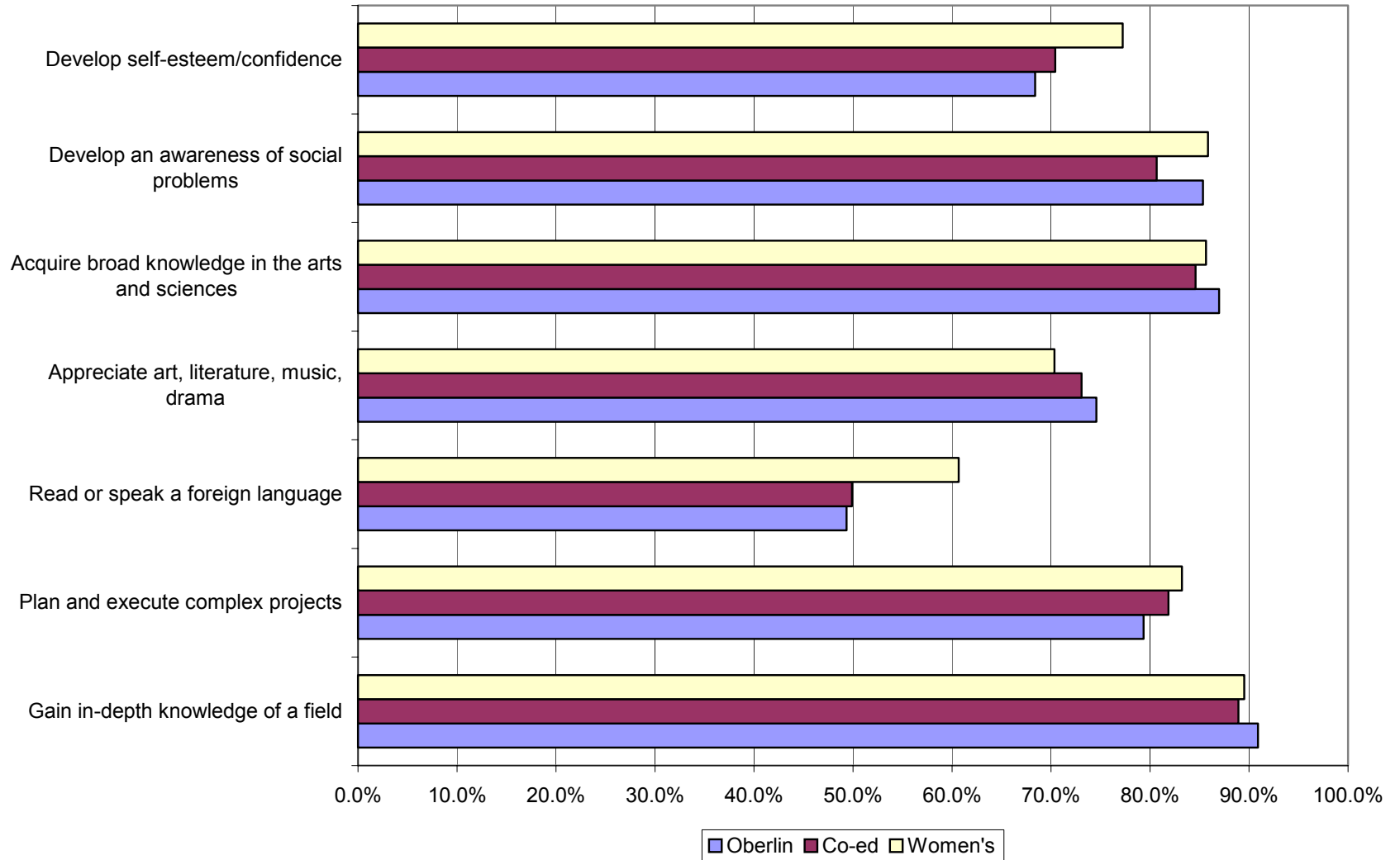
Percent Reporting Stronger/Much Stronger



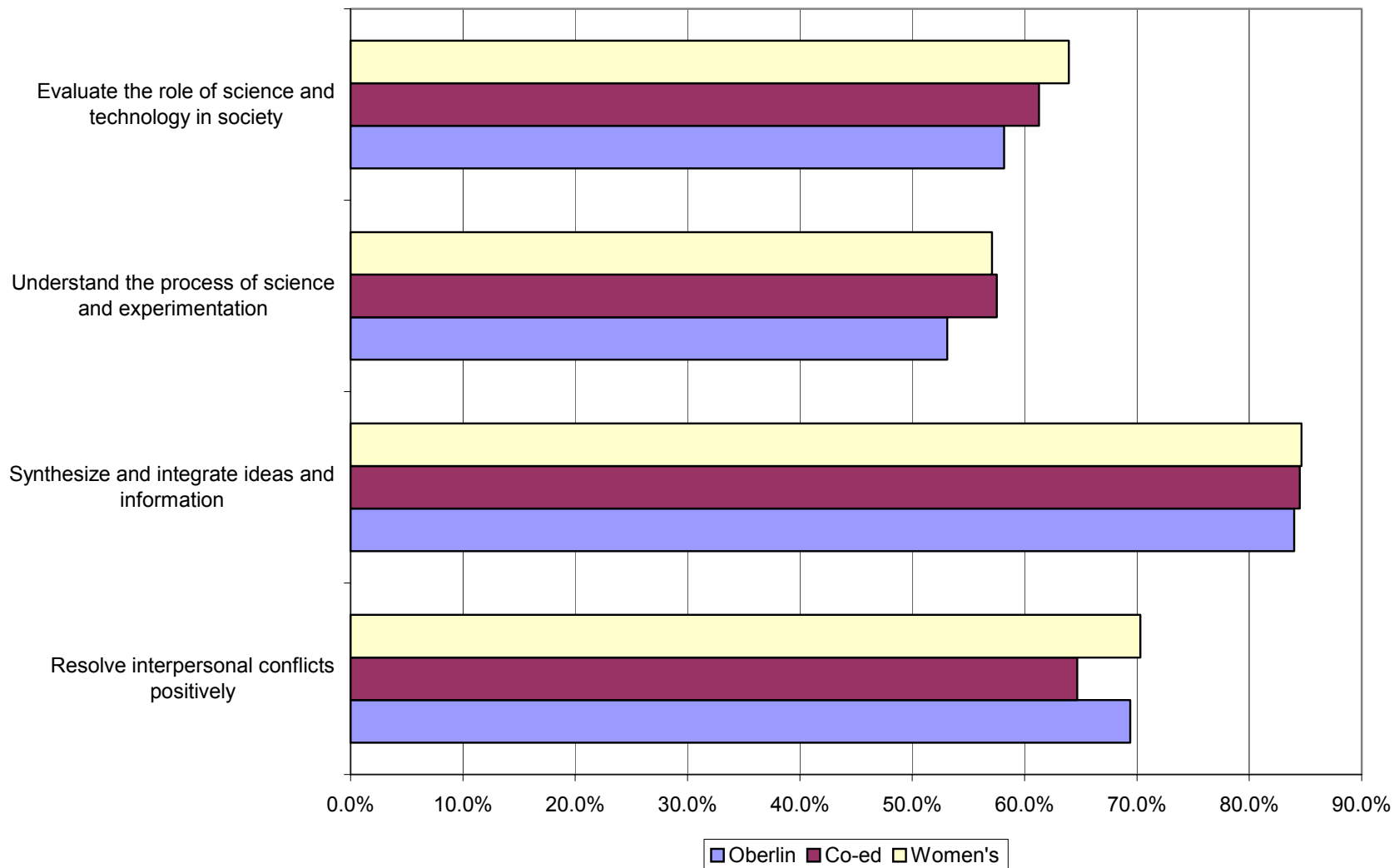
Stronger/Much Stronger



Stronger/Much Stronger



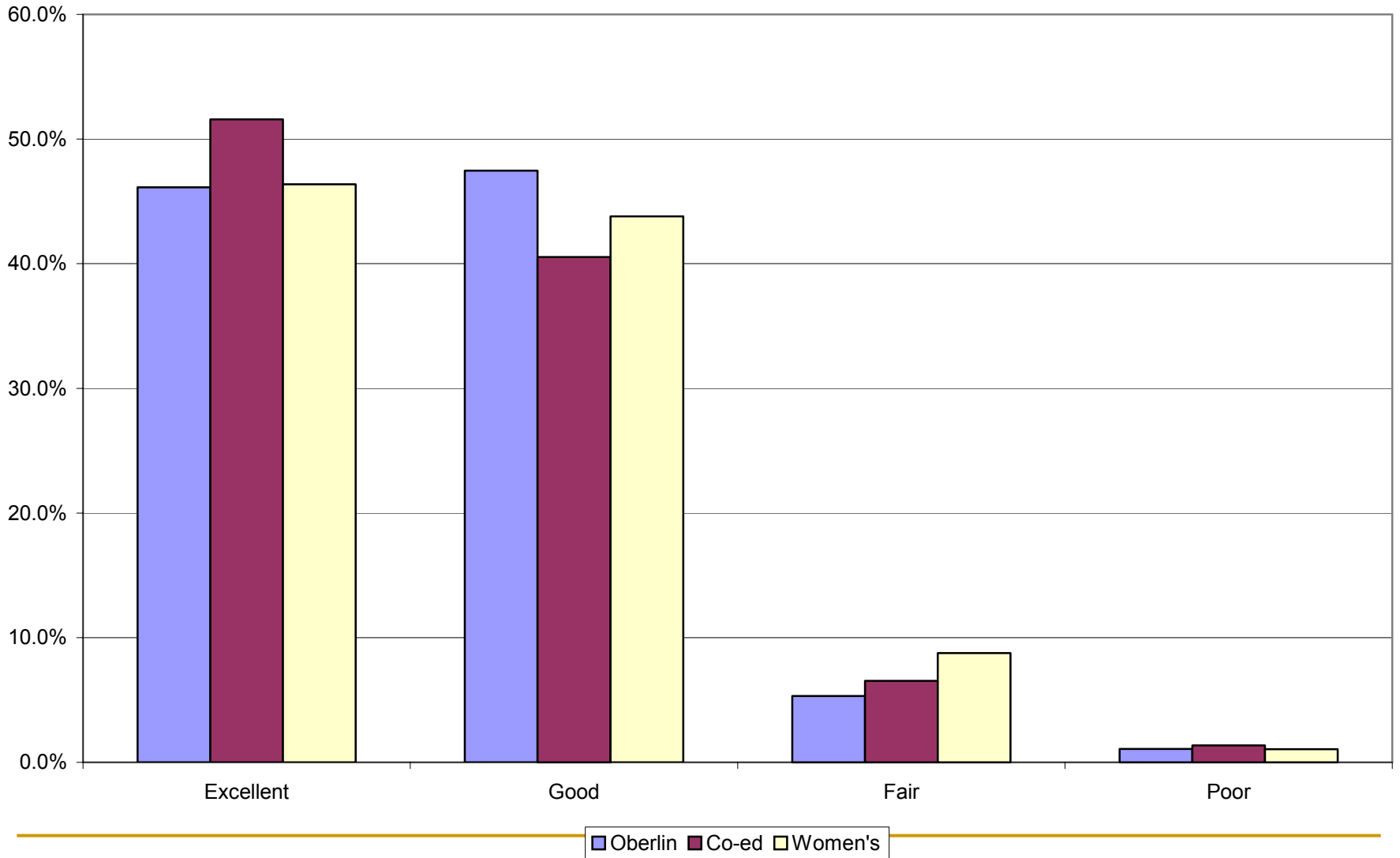
Percent Responding Stronger/Much Stronger



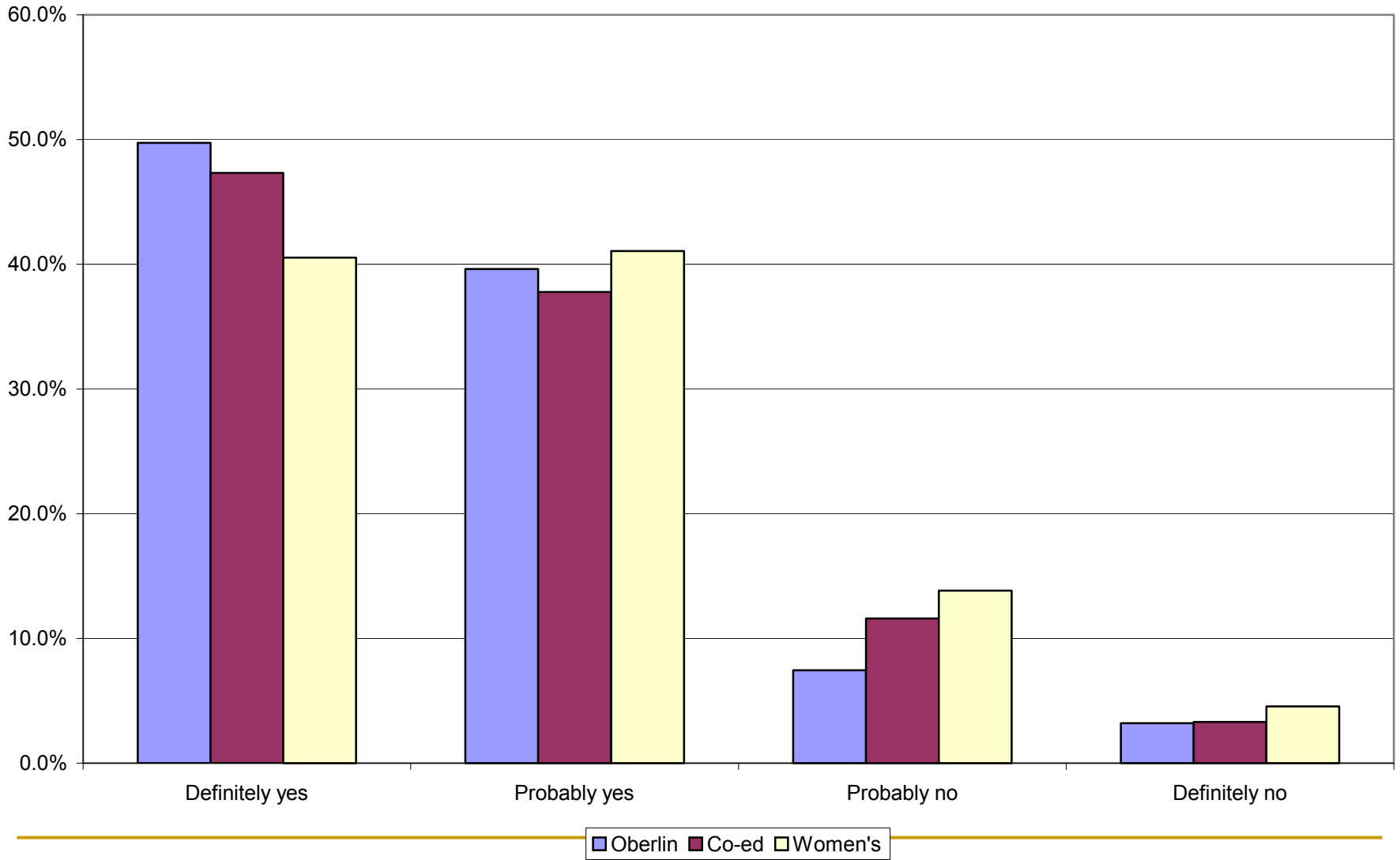
Enrolled Student Surveys

- Generally administered in Senior Survey “off years”
- Favored over NSSE
- Measure much of what the other surveys do but also capture information on learning engagement

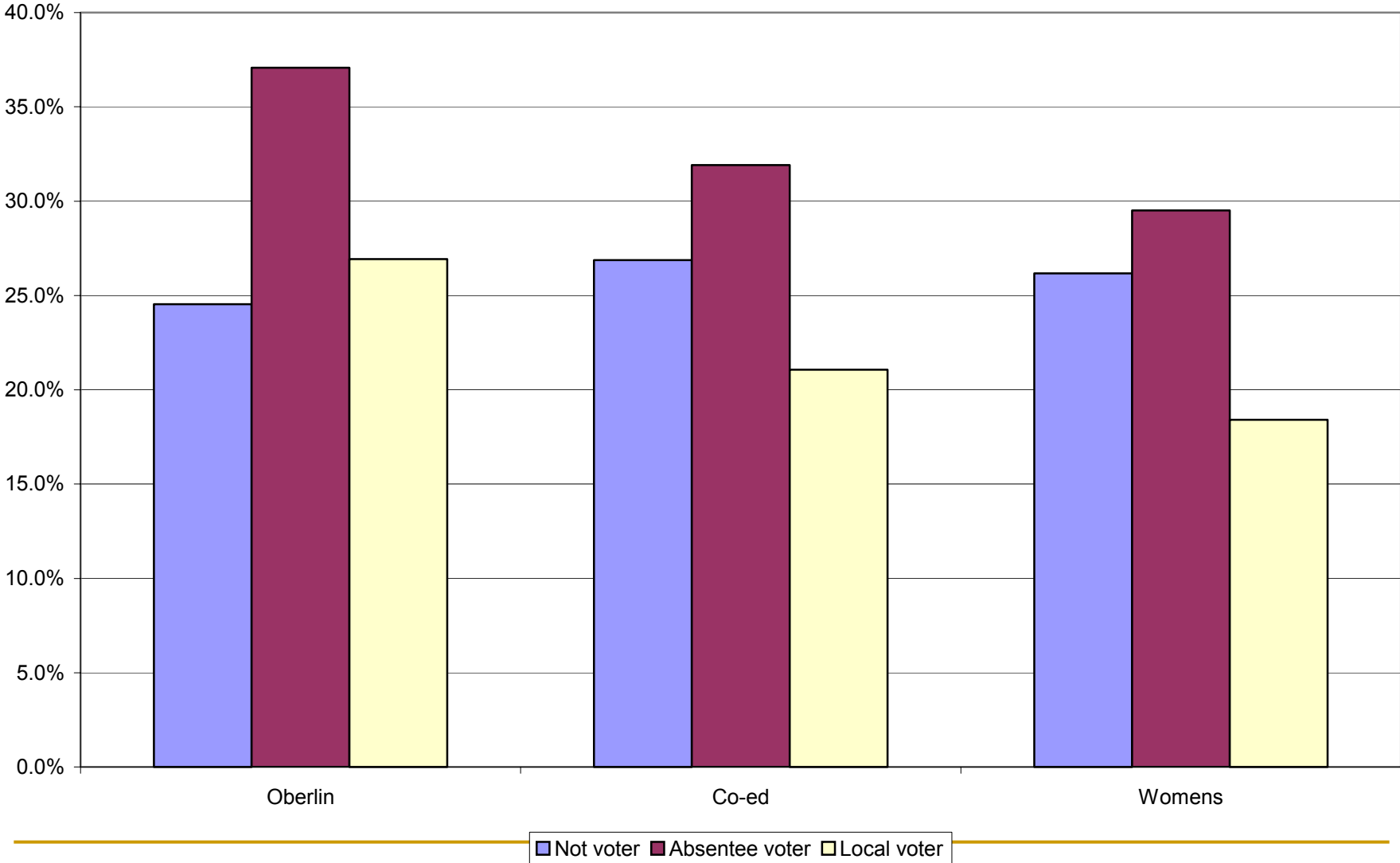
2007 ESS Evaluate Undergrad Education



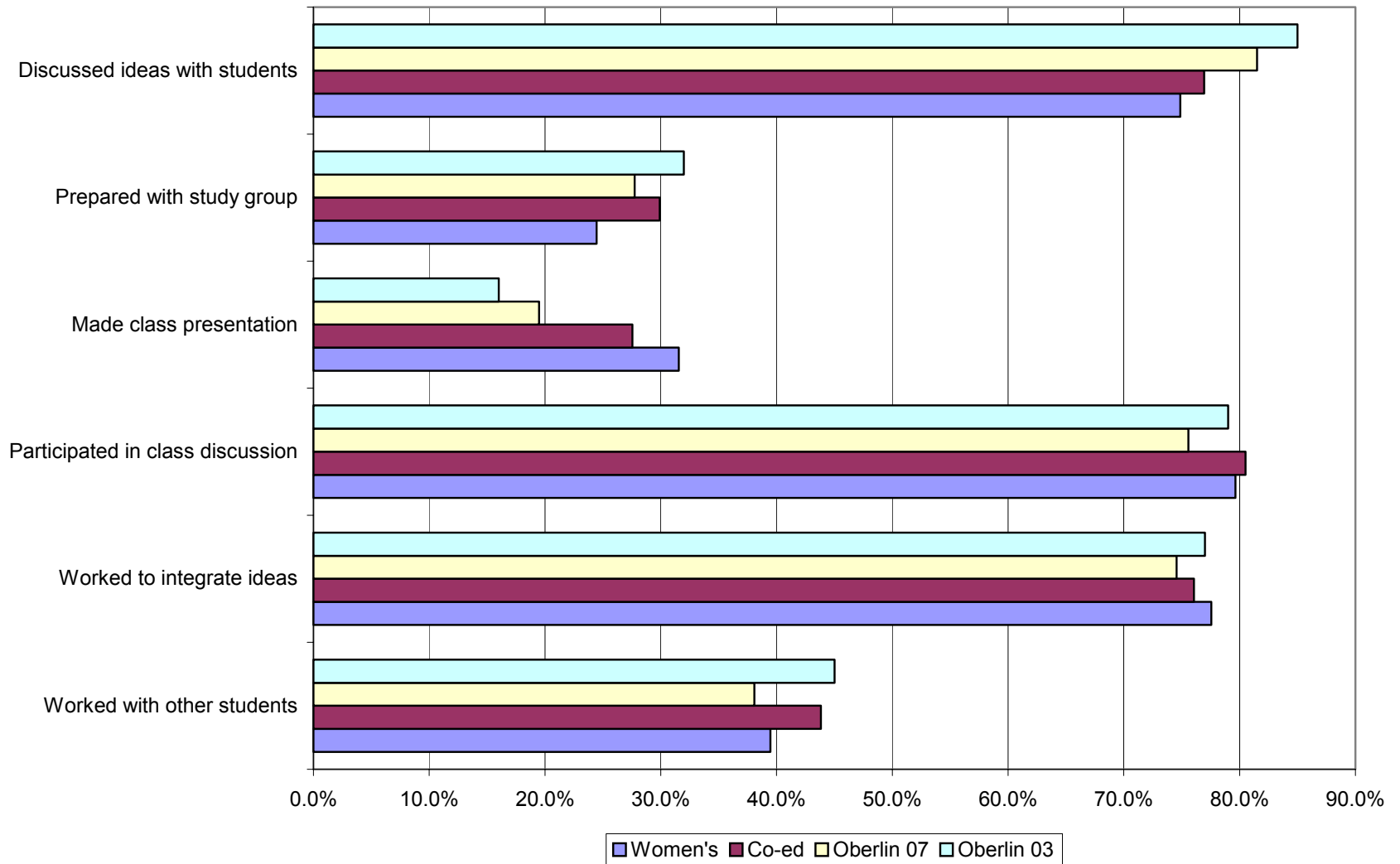
2007 ESS Would You Go Here Again?



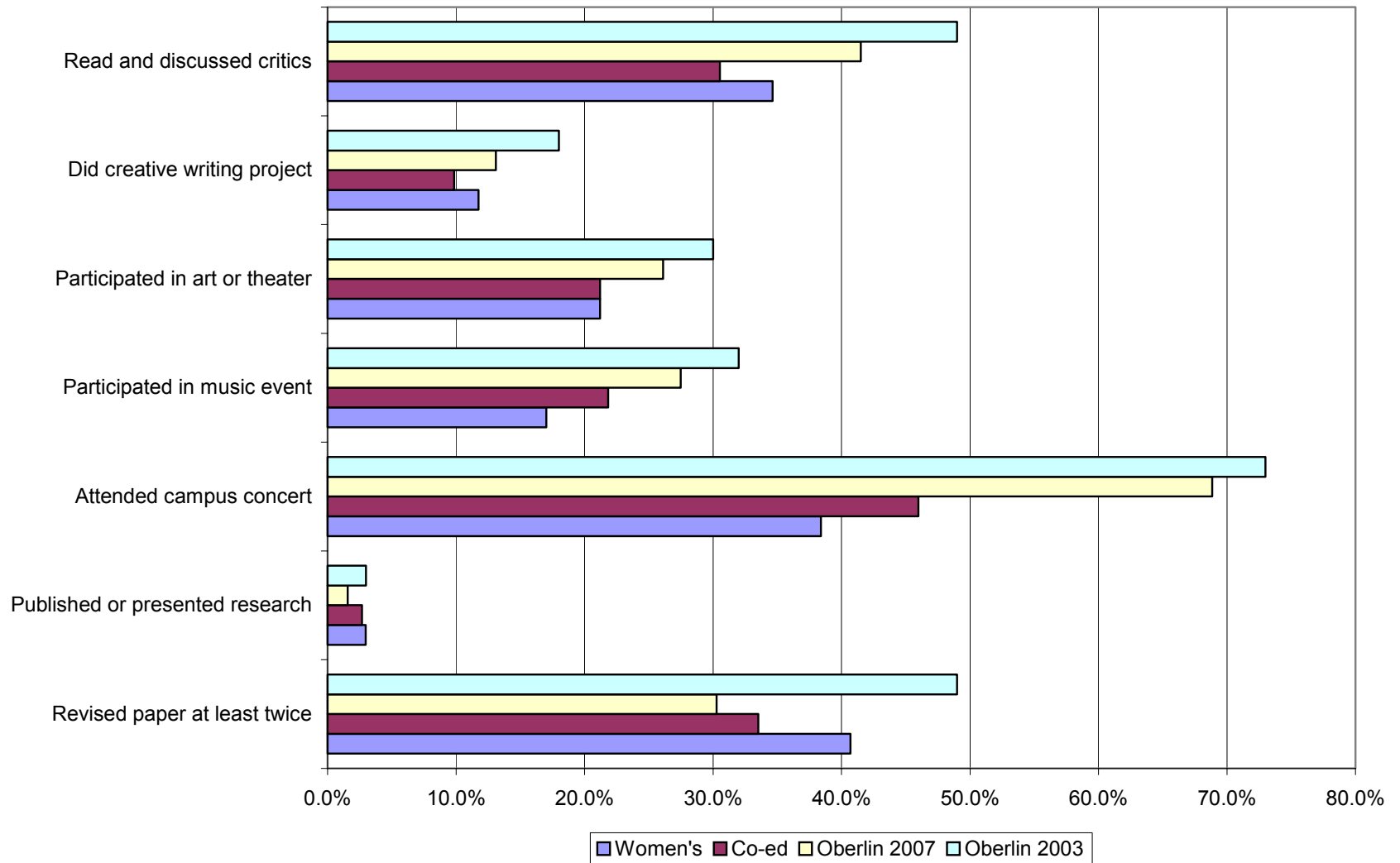
2007 ESS Most Recent Election



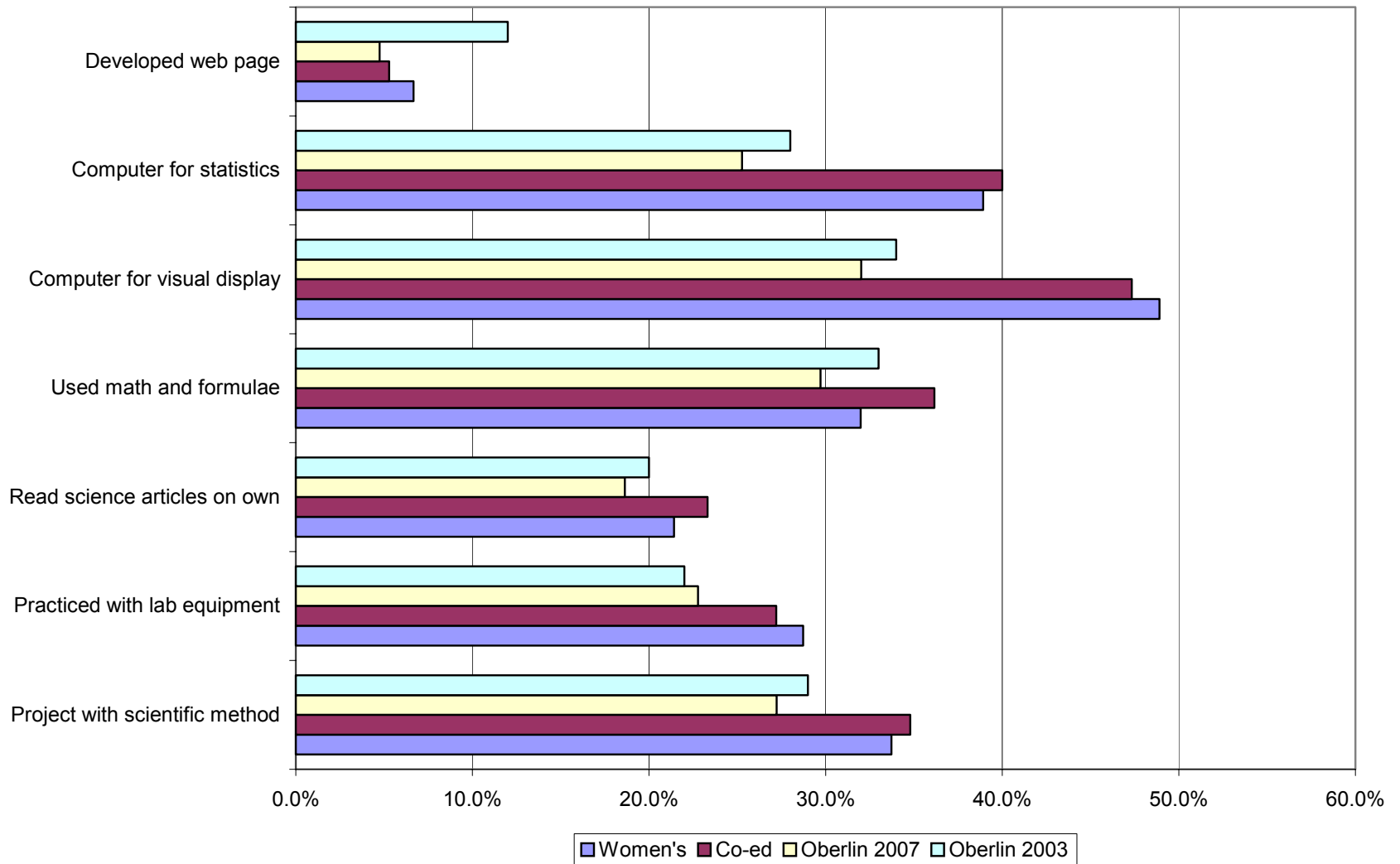
Enrolled Student Survey Often/Very Often



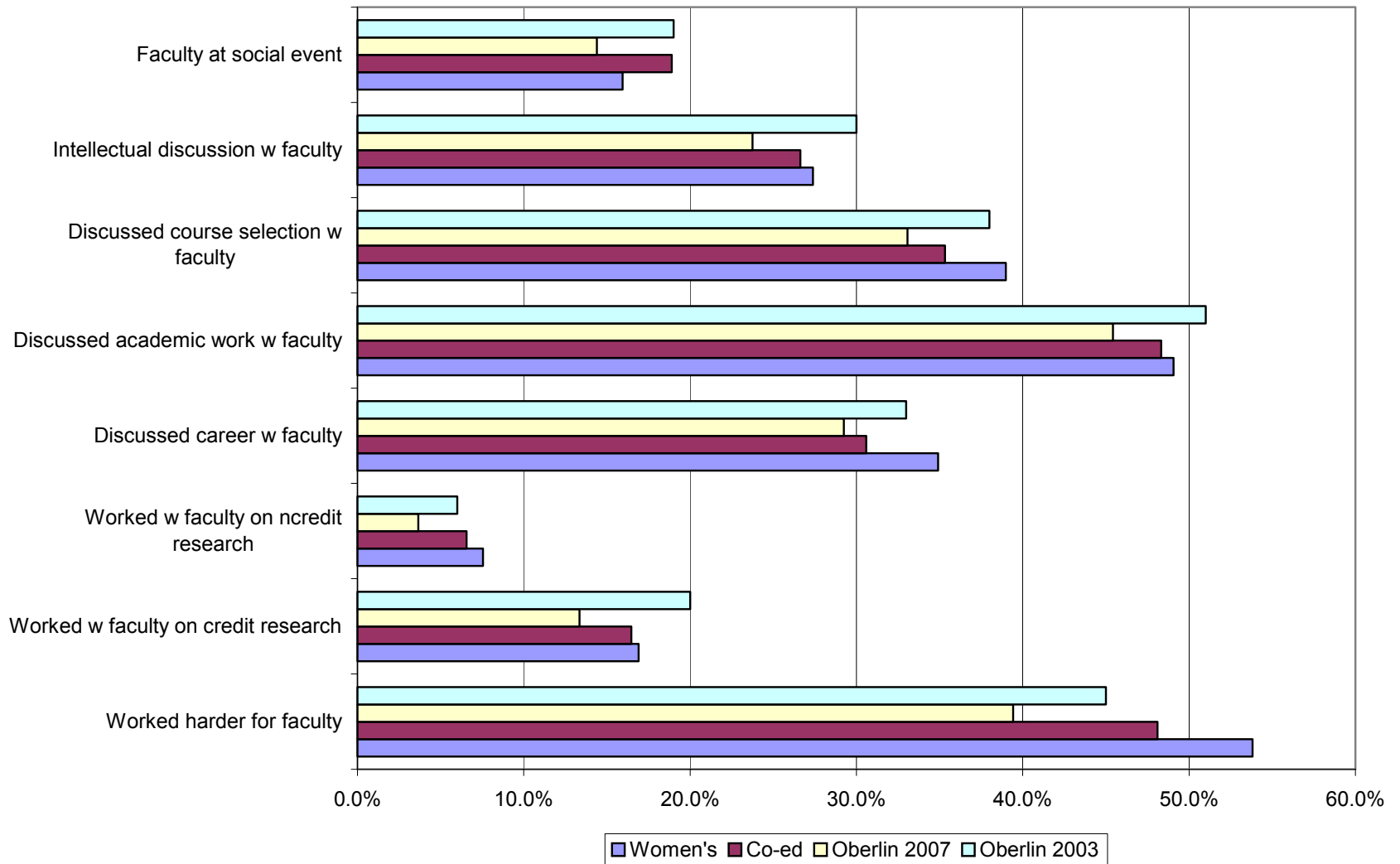
Enrolled Student Survey Often/Very Often



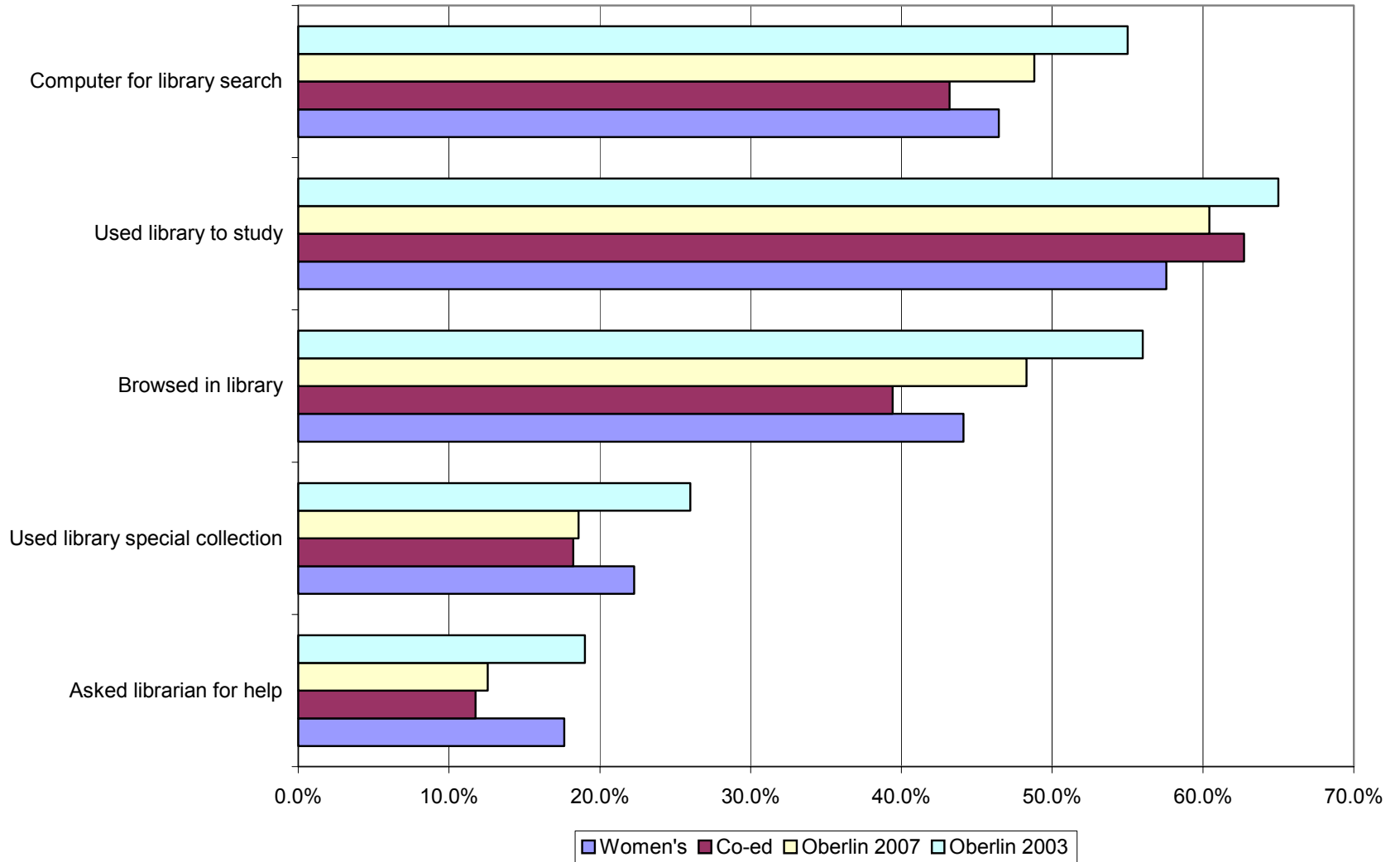
Enrolled Student Survey Often/Very Often



Enrolled Student Survey Often/Very Often



Enrolled Student Survey Often/Very Often



Other Surveys

- Student Life First Year Initiative (YFCY)
- National survey of faculty attitudes, expectations, experiences
- Parent Surveys
- Alumni Surveys
- Departmental major surveys
- Results posted on IR web site
<http://oberlin.edu/instres/irhome/assessment>

What Do We Do With All This?

- Fold into planning and self study processes
- We need to help our students focus their educational and career goals (strategic planning)
- Take pride in the seriousness with which our students approach education
- Use in conjunction with direct measures to assess student learning