

IMSA Staff Repopulation Survey

Summary of Findings

September 14-18, 2020

Executive Summary

IMSA is committed to gathering as much information and input as possible from all stakeholders through a series of surveys regarding how to repopulate the IMSA community on campus. Thus, the purpose of the IMSA Staff Repopulation Survey was to gather feedback from all staff, including faculty, on how they felt about various scenarios for the repopulation of the IMSA campus. In accordance with the May 20th Board of Trustees' decision, a return to campus would be possible when the entire State of Illinois meets the criteria for the "Restore Illinois" plan and there is a treatment or a vaccine for COVID-19.

The IMSA Staff Repopulation Survey was administered from Monday, September 14, 2020 through Friday, September 18, 2020. This memo presents a summary of results from 152 total respondents, of which 34% indicated that they are faculty member with the remaining 66% identifying as a non-faculty member. Additional demographic information is provided in the detailed results section below.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

- A large majority of IMSA employees responding to the survey appear to be comfortable following the safety protocols presented during the August 2020 Community Day.
- Over two-thirds of IMSA employees responded that they would be more productive continuing to work from home rather than returning to work on campus on a regular basis.
- A little over 55% of IMSA employees responding to the survey indicated that they are not excited to return to work on campus on a regular basis.
- Approximately 80% of IMSA employees do not trust that students will follow the safety protocols presented during the August 2020 Community Day.
- A large majority of IMSA employees who responded to the survey indicated that they would be willing to receive a COVID-19 test before returning to work on a regular basis and just over 88% of respondents suggested that both students and employees be tested for COVID-19 prior to repopulating the IMSA campus.
- IMSA employees responding to the survey indicated that the greatest benefit of returning to campus was social/emotional for both staff (51%), including faculty, and students (58%).

Faculty Only Quantitative Questions

- Just over 70% of IMSA faculty responding indicated that they did **not** feel confident in their ability to effectively teach in a hybrid format (i.e., some students attending via Zoom and others attending in-person, simultaneously).
- On the other hand, approximately 53% of individuals responded that they felt comfortable with their classes being recorded and/or live streamed for students participating in remote learning.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

- An overwhelming majority of staff, including faculty, indicated that the primary consideration in repopulating the IMSA campus is the health and safety of the entire IMSA community.
- Some mentioned that the benefits associated with returning to campus do not seem to outweigh the current risks of infection.
- Overall, a large number of staff, including faculty, shared their concerns about the ability of all IMSA community members to follow the safety protocols put in place.
- More specifically, numerous staff responses, including faculty, included the concern that IMSA students would not adhere to the safety protocols in place, or would make mistakes, regardless of best intentions.
- While some are excited to return to campus on a regular basis, others would appreciate a more flexible model, which would allow them to continue to work remotely.
- Other staff, including faculty, proposed more of a hybrid model of working asking IMSA to consider, “Flexibility of work hours and being able to work both from home and on campus.”
- Staff, including faculty, offered a few different suggestions about how to repopulate the IMSA campus, including: an all or nothing approach; only seniors or only sophomores return; those with the greatest need of resources come back first; those who are most at-risk financially, academically, and/or emotionally should be considered first.
- Staff, including faculty, also noted some of their anticipated challenges and concerns if IMSA were to adopt a hybrid format (i.e., some students attending via Zoom and others attending in-person, simultaneously). Faculty members expressed their concerns about the hybrid model pointing out the potential of inequities among students and the presence of a higher workload.
- A large number of staff, including faculty, mentioned the need to discuss the containment protocol regarding COVID-19, should anyone become ill from the virus.

Next Steps

The survey findings are being utilized to inform the creation of IMSA’s repopulation plan.

Demographic Information of Respondents

Staff, including faculty, were asked to provide demographic information such as their role at IMSA, length of contract, department or cabinet member, race/ethnicity, and gender identity. For the demographic variables of race/ethnicity and gender identity, respondents were provided a response option of “I prefer not to answer.” (Please refer to *Figures 1 – 5* at the end of this document for complete details.)

Of the 152 IMSA staff members who responded to the survey, 34% were faculty members and 66% were non-faculty members. Similarly, about 57% of respondents indicated that they were a 10-month employee with the remaining 43% indicating that they were a 12-month employee.

When asked to provide their race/ethnicity, staff responses, including faculty, were as follows: 51% White, 10% Black, 6% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 4% Two or More Races, and 24% preferred not to answer. With regard to gender identity, 48% of individuals identified as Female, 26% were Male, 2% Self-Identified, and 24% preferred not to answer.

Quantitative Findings

IMSA staff, including faculty, were asked to respond to a series of statements under the assumption that IMSA is repopulating up to 325 students physically, with the remainder virtual. The scenario also stated that for those on campus, employees and students would be expected to follow the safety protocols presented during the August 2020 Community Day. Individuals were provided with a 4-point Likert-type scale with the response options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Below is a summary of the results (please refer to *Figure 6* at the end of this document for additional information).

- Close to 65% of IMSA employees responding to the survey believed that the appropriate safety protocols would be put in place before returning to work on campus on a regular basis.
 - An overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) indicated that they felt comfortable following the safety protocols presented during the August 2020 Community Day.
 - Responses suggested that 62% of IMSA employees trust their coworkers to adhere to the safety protocols put in place.
 - However, approximately 80% of IMSA employees do not trust that the students will follow the same safety protocols.
- Half of IMSA employees indicated that they would be willing to return to work on campus on a regular basis.
 - A little over 55% of IMSA employees responding to the survey indicated that they are not excited to return to work on campus on a regular basis.
 - Over two-thirds of IMSA employees responded that they would be more productive continuing to work from home rather than returning to work on campus on a regular basis.
 - Slightly over 70% of IMSA employees were fearful of contracting COVID-19 as a result of returning to work on campus on a regular basis.

- Additionally, there were significant differences in the way individuals responded to the repopulation statements above based on the demographic variables of “Role at IMSA” (i.e., faculty or staff) and “Contract Length” (i.e., 10-month or 12-month). *For a more detailed explanation about the significant differences, including the statistical values and charts, please refer to Appendix A at the end of this document.*

Secondly, IMSA staff, including faculty, were asked to respond to a few statements specifically related to the COVID-19 virus. Due to the sensitive nature of these items, individuals were provided with the three response options of Agree, Disagree, and I prefer not to answer/Undecided. Below is a brief summary of the results (please refer to *Figures 7 and 8* for additional information).

- IMSA employees noted that either they themselves were at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 (33%) and/or that they lived with someone who is at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 (45%).
- A large majority of IMSA employees (85%) who responded to the survey indicated that they would be willing to receive a COVID-19 test before returning to work on a regular basis.
- Just under 50% of IMSA employees mentioned that they would be willing to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and/or treatment before returning to work on a regular basis.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) suggested that both students and employees be tested for COVID-19 prior to repopulating the IMSA campus.

Next, all IMSA staff, including faculty, were asked two questions about what they perceived as the greatest benefit for staff and students, respectively, to return to campus.

- Social/emotional appeared to be the greatest benefit for staff, including faculty, to return to campus (51%).
 - Responses shared within the “Other” category regarding the greatest benefit for staff, including faculty, included some mentions about being able to teach more effectively on campus in addition to statements about how the benefits of returning to campus do not outweigh the potential risks, thus disagreeing with the overall question.
- IMSA employees also felt that the social/emotional aspect was the greatest benefit for students to return to campus (58%), followed by academics (20%).
 - Responses discussed within the “Other” category regarding the greatest benefit for students included several IMSA employees mentioning “All of the above” (i.e., academics, college preparedness, facility resources, and social/emotional). Other responses seemed to echo the previous feeling that the benefits for students returning to campus, again, did not outweigh the potential risks.

Faculty Only Questions

In addition to the information provided above, IMSA faculty members were presented with five additional questions specifically related to classroom instruction. Below is a brief summary of the results (please refer to *Figures 11 and 12* for additional information).

- Just over 70% of IMSA faculty responding indicated that they did **not** feel confident in their ability to effectively teach in a hybrid format (i.e., some students attending via Zoom and others attending in-person, simultaneously).
- On the other hand, approximately 53% of individuals responded that they felt comfortable with their classes being recorded and/or live streamed for students participating in remote learning.
- Of the faculty members who responded, 60% agreed that face-to-face instruction is necessary for optimal teaching and learning to occur within their classroom.
- Slightly over half of IMSA faculty noted that they were looking forward to teaching on campus (face-to-face) when IMSA reopens under the provided guidelines.

Faculty were also asked to consider different ways to accomplish separate in-person and remote learning. In *Figure 12* below, the responses from 45 faculty members are summarized accounting for 77 total responses (i.e., faculty members could select more than one option and thus are represented in more than one group). The two most endorsed options were: (1) Alternating in-person and remote learning days, and (2) Reducing or modifying the amount of time a course meets to blend synchronous face-to-face and asynchronous online learning.

Qualitative Findings

In addition to the quantitative survey questions, staff, including faculty, were asked to respond to the following open-ended question: “What factors/concerns do you think are the most important for IMSA to consider in the repopulation plan?” Below are the themes from the open-ended responses.

Safety First

A majority of staff responding, including faculty, indicated that the primary consideration in the repopulation plan should be the health and safety of the IMSA community. Some mentioned that the benefit of returning to campus does not seem to outweigh the current risks of infection. A handful of others raised concerns about IMSA’s ventilation system and the ability of that system to maintain clean, breathable air for the duration of the school/work day. Below are some examples of the types of responses received:

- “I don’t see the benefit of returning to campus if COVID-19 is a threat.”
- “I want to go back to campus, but only when it’s safe for the students and myself.”
- “IMSA’s main building has a very old and questionable ventilation system and no windows that can open. How can you ensure faculty and staff will be safe working in the main building?”
- “Not all faculty and staff have the same risk level...We focus on equity and that needs to be considered when decided what to do.”

Another theme within the larger safety category was the topic of a vaccine and/or treatment. Below are some examples of responses, many of which were echoed among other staff members, including faculty.

- “Is the existence of a vaccine different than widespread access and availability of the vaccine? We need to have access to the vaccine before repopulation.”
- “If people refuse a vaccine, would they be allowed back?”
- “Whether people will be comfortable taking a vaccine that may not be as fully tested and could have side effects that haven’t yet been discovered.”
- “Honestly, at this moment I am not confident in the vaccination process and/or being one of the first wave of people to receive the vaccine.”

Protocols

Overall, a large number of staff, including faculty, shared their concerns about the ability of all IMSA community members to follow the safety protocols put in place. Additionally, many staff, including faculty, pointed out the need for clear expectations and consequences for not following these protocols. One example comment was “All following the safety guidelines and knowing what the disciplinary actions are if not followed.”

Several other staff responses, including faculty, included comments about how to maintain safety on campus with individuals coming and leaving on a regular basis. One individual stated, “Among other things, figuring out how to allow students (and staff/faculty) to safely leave and re-enter campus any time they need to go home for holidays, sickness, and/or other family events.” Some felt that regular testing is key along with the response protocol of IMSA to contain the virus if anyone becomes ill.

- “Any plan to reopen should include a plan for regular testing. Everyone must get tested multiple times a week to be safe.”
- “What would happen if someone is found to test positive? What type of support would occur if I test positive and am sick (paid leave, medical coverage pair for, etc.)?”
- “Safety and the ability to remain safe. Appropriate number of tests to be sure the IMSA community can be proactive in testing someone with symptoms.”
- “Both students and staff returning home and then coming back to campus not knowing they have it.”
- “We need students and parents/guardians to be honest with their child’s symptoms if they are ill. Not disclosing an actual illness could be life threatening to those around them.”

More specifically, numerous staff responses, including faculty, included the concern that IMSA students would not adhere to the safety protocols in place, or would make mistakes, regardless of best intentions. A small number of comments mentioned our residential environment and the enforcement of protocols “after hours.”

- “How do you plan to limit student interaction within their living spaces? No updates have been made to the res halls...”
- “I think the biggest issue we have is students living on campus.”
- “My only concern is safely monitoring student interactions/contact in the dorms as living in close proximity with one another might put the students at greater risk than the staff.”

Flexibility of Work

A small number of staff responses, including faculty, mentioned a sense of flexibility in how to complete their work. A few responses agreed that, “If employees in specific positions are able to do their work effectively, 100% remotely, they should be offered that opportunity. There is no reason to increase the risk of exposure.” Other staff, including faculty, proposed more of a hybrid model asking IMSA to consider, “Flexibility of work hours and being able to work both from home and on campus.” Finally, a handful of responses raised a concern that, “Many parents must stay home due to their kids schools being virtual.”

Repopulation Considerations

Staff, including faculty, offered a few different suggestions about how to repopulate the IMSA campus, one of which included an all or nothing approach. Other comments recommended that only seniors or only sophomores return, with others recommending those with the greatest need of resources come back first. Another individual stated that those who are most at-risk financially, academically, or emotionally should be considered first. As one person mentioned, “If we bring some back and not all, who come[s] back? All have arguments for returning.”

Staff, including faculty, also noted some of their anticipated challenges and concerns if IMSA were to adopt a hybrid format (i.e., some students attending via Zoom and others attending in-person, simultaneously). Among their concerns was the inequities that would be created among students and the heavier workload for faculty that would arise as a consequence of the new format. Others asked whether IMSA had sufficient technology and resources to support a hybrid model, including additional faculty or substitutes which would be needed to cover for classes if a faculty member becomes exposed.

Data Points of Interest

Demographic Information of Respondents: Figures 1 – 5

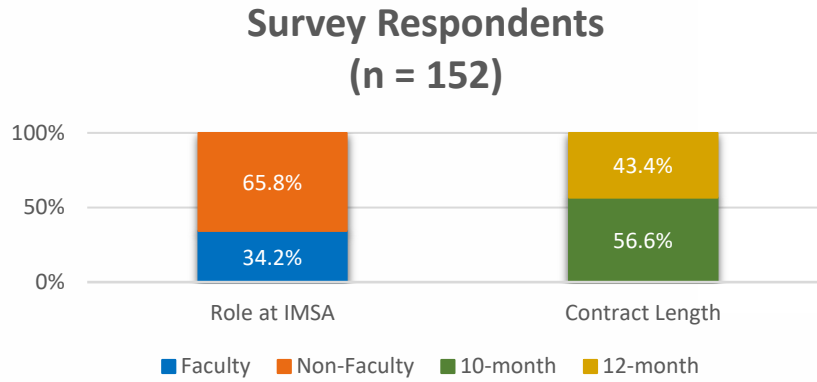


Figure 1

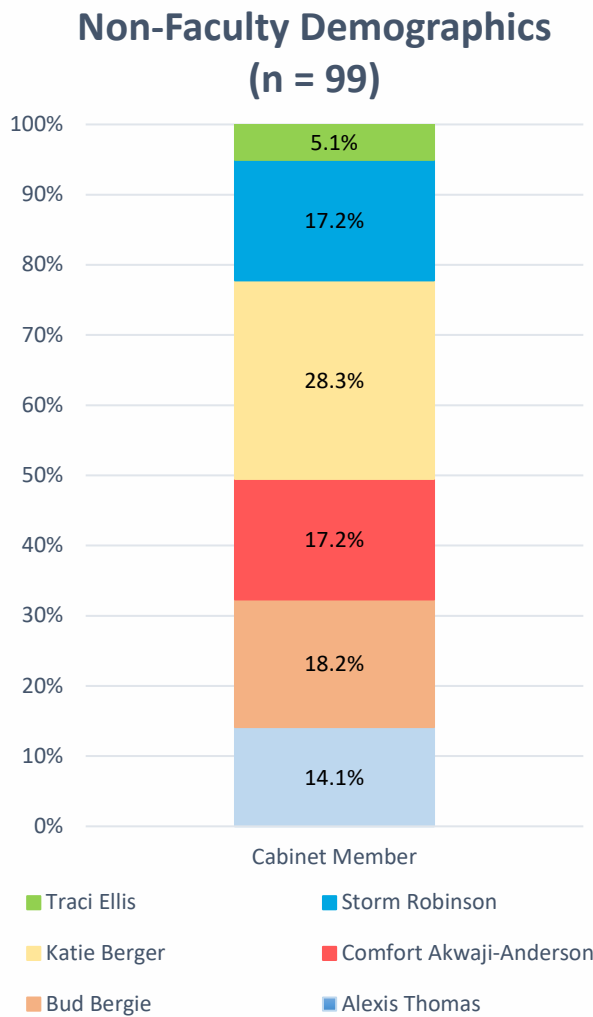


Figure 2

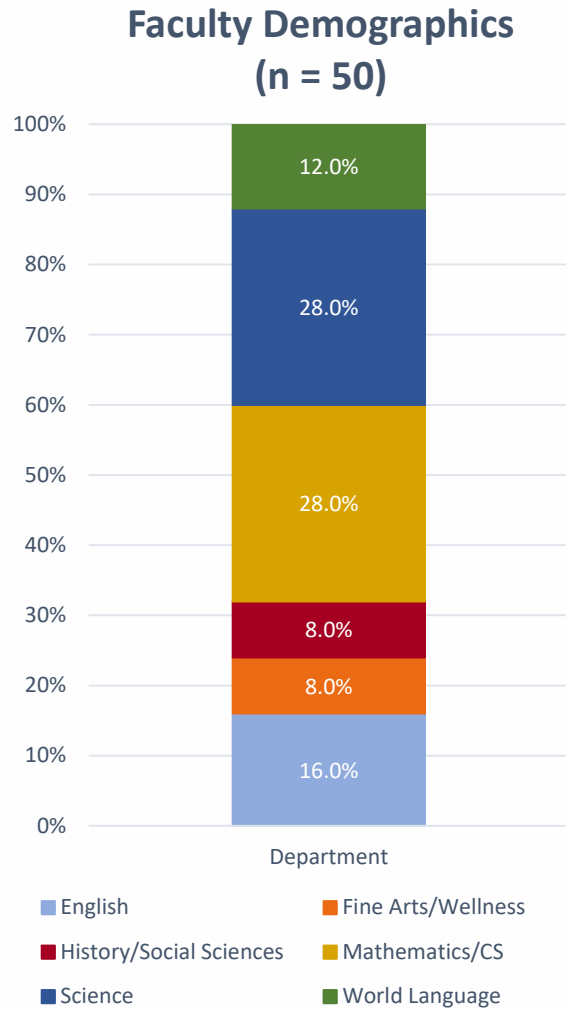


Figure 3

Race/Ethnicity (n = 150)

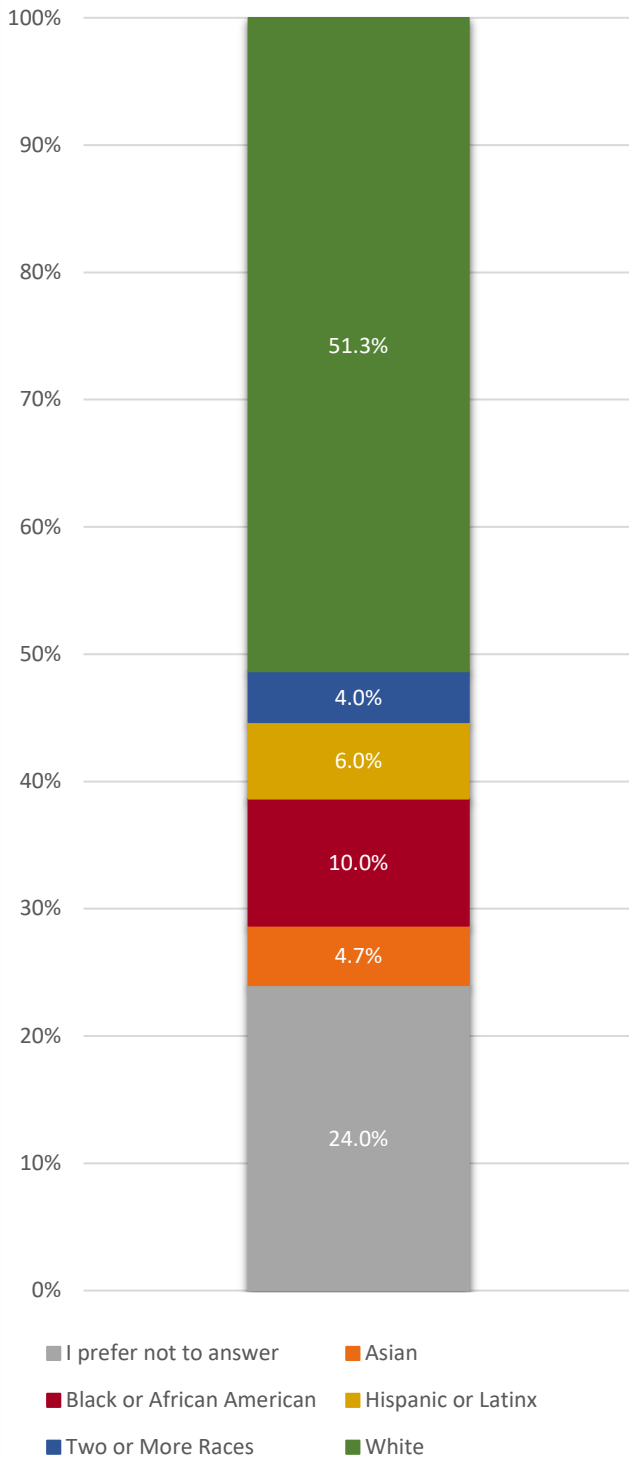


Figure 4

Gender Identity (n = 150)

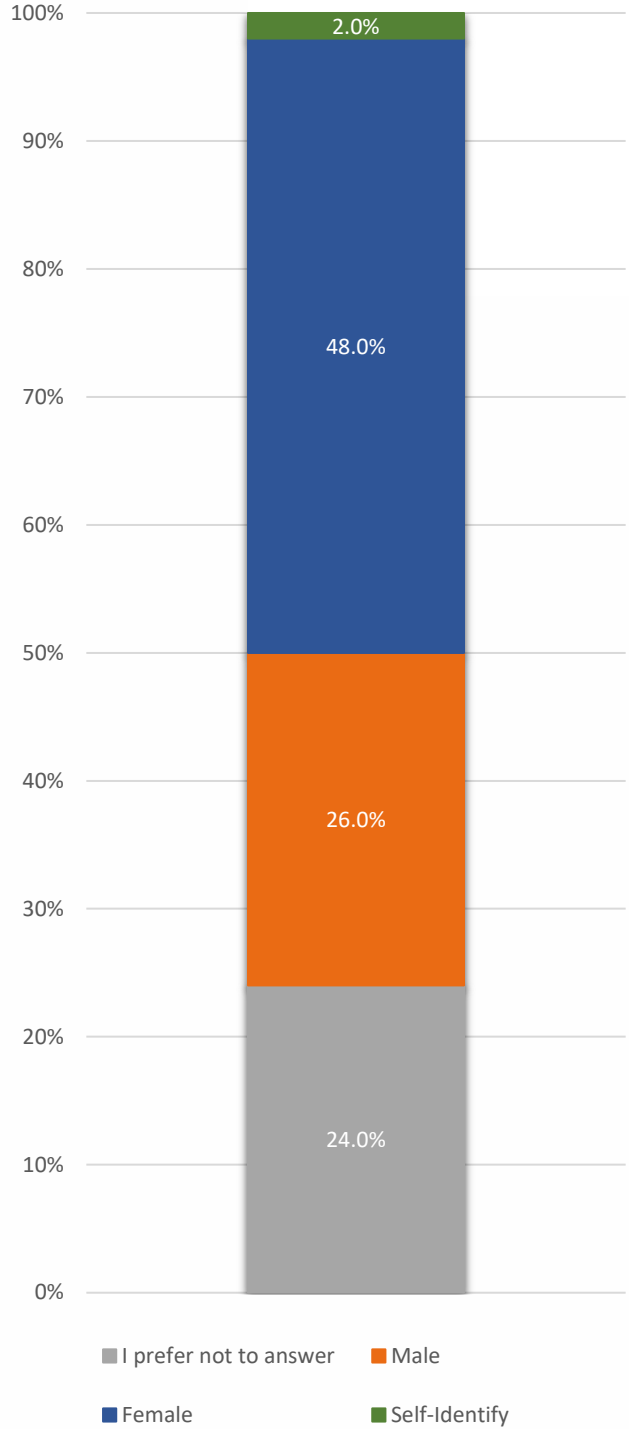


Figure 5

Repopulation Feedback of All Employees (n = 143)

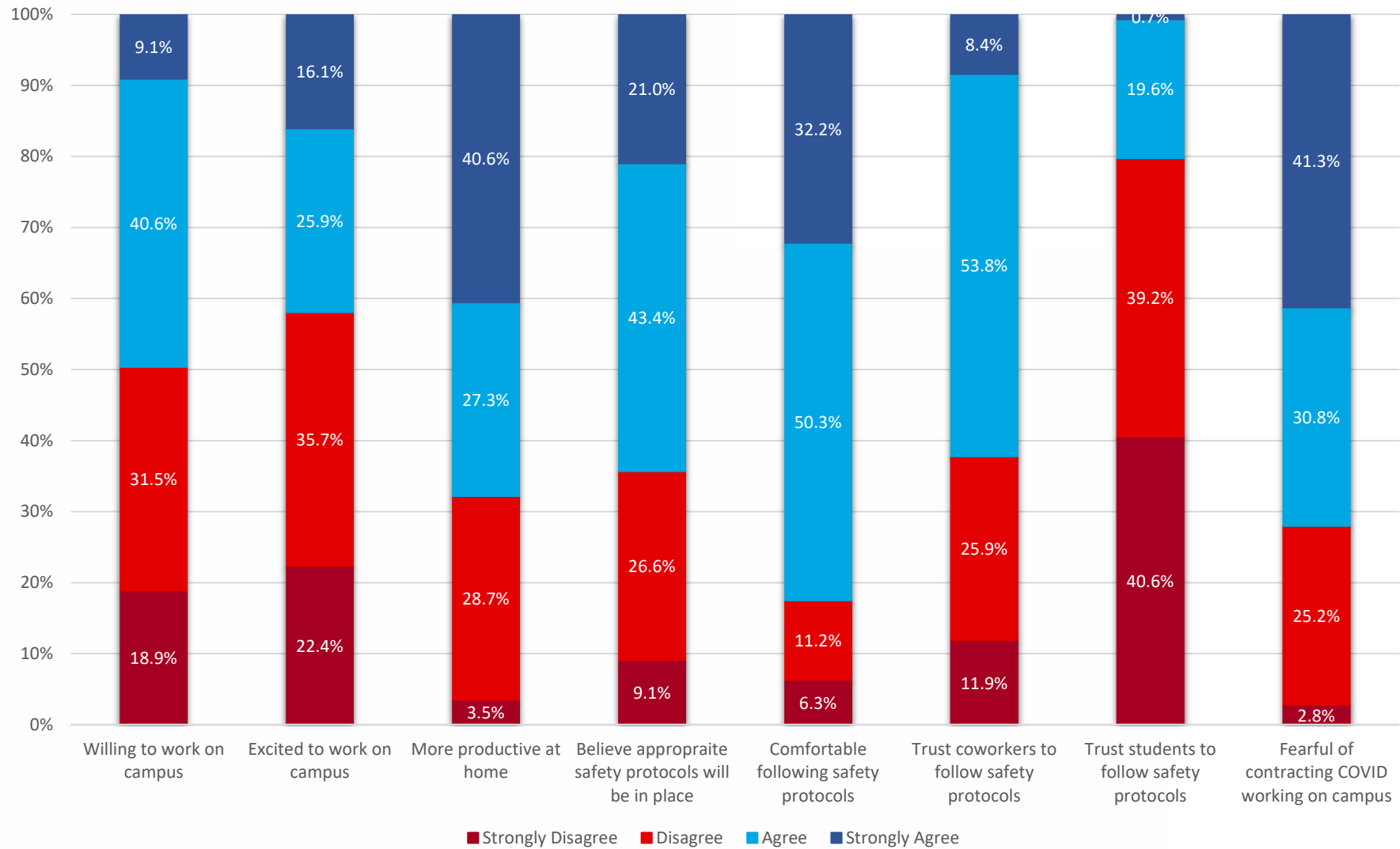


Figure 6

COVID-19 Specific Feedback (n = 139)

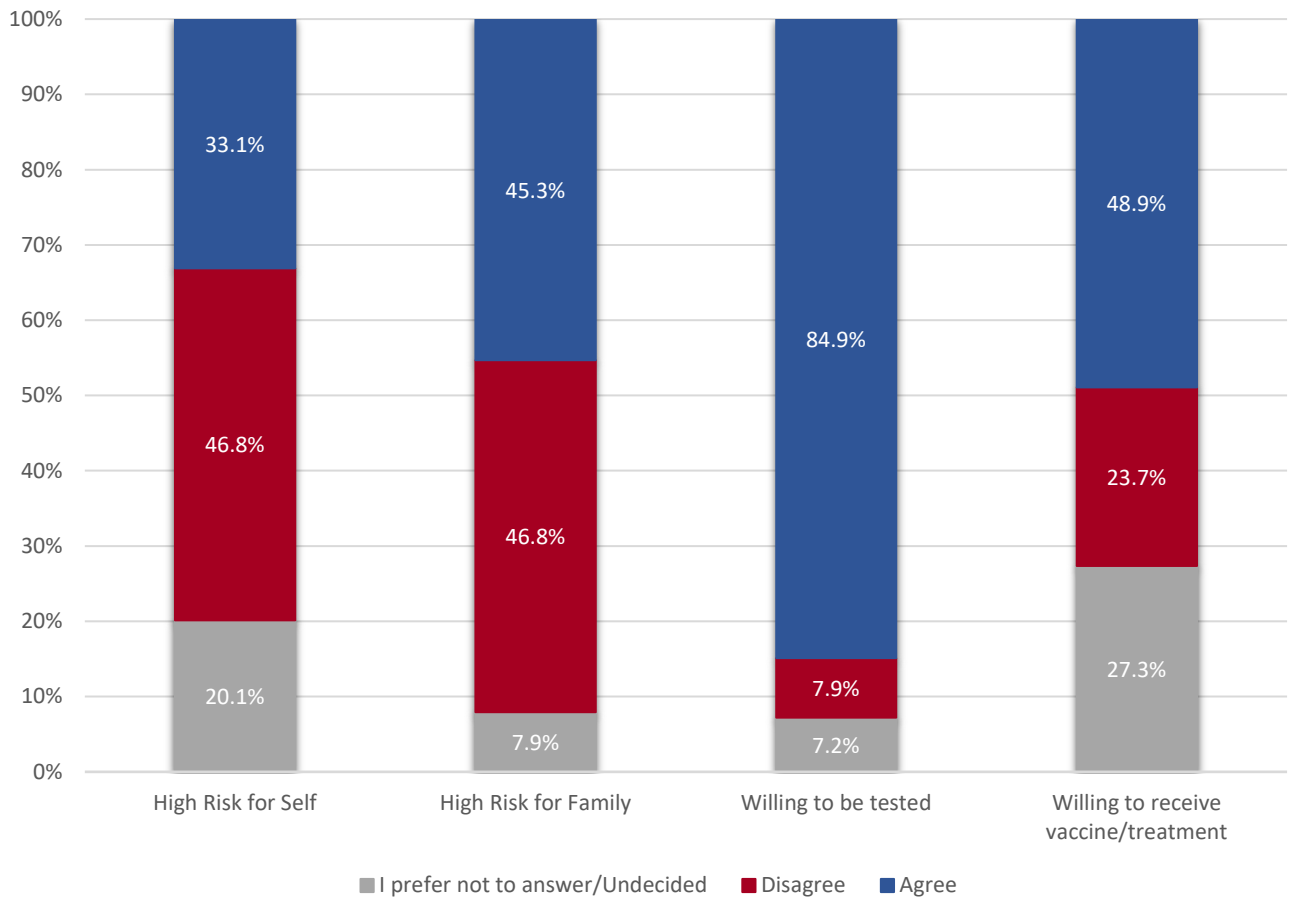


Figure 7

COVID-19 Testing Feedback (n = 139)

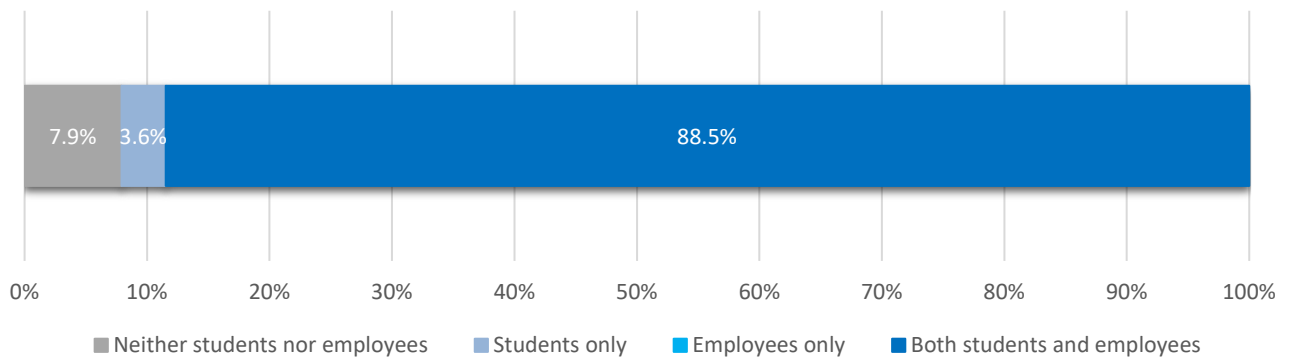


Figure 8

**Greatest Benefit for Staff,
Including Faculty, to Return
(n = 139)**

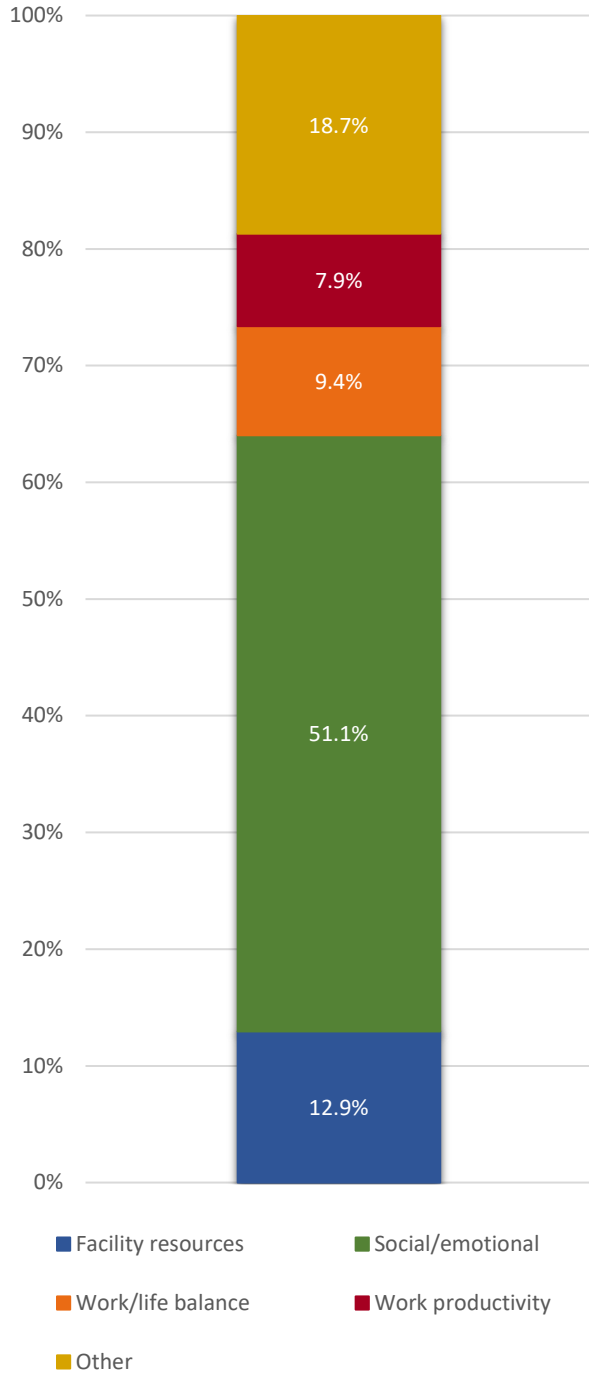


Figure 9

**Greatest Benefit for
Students to Return
(n = 139)**

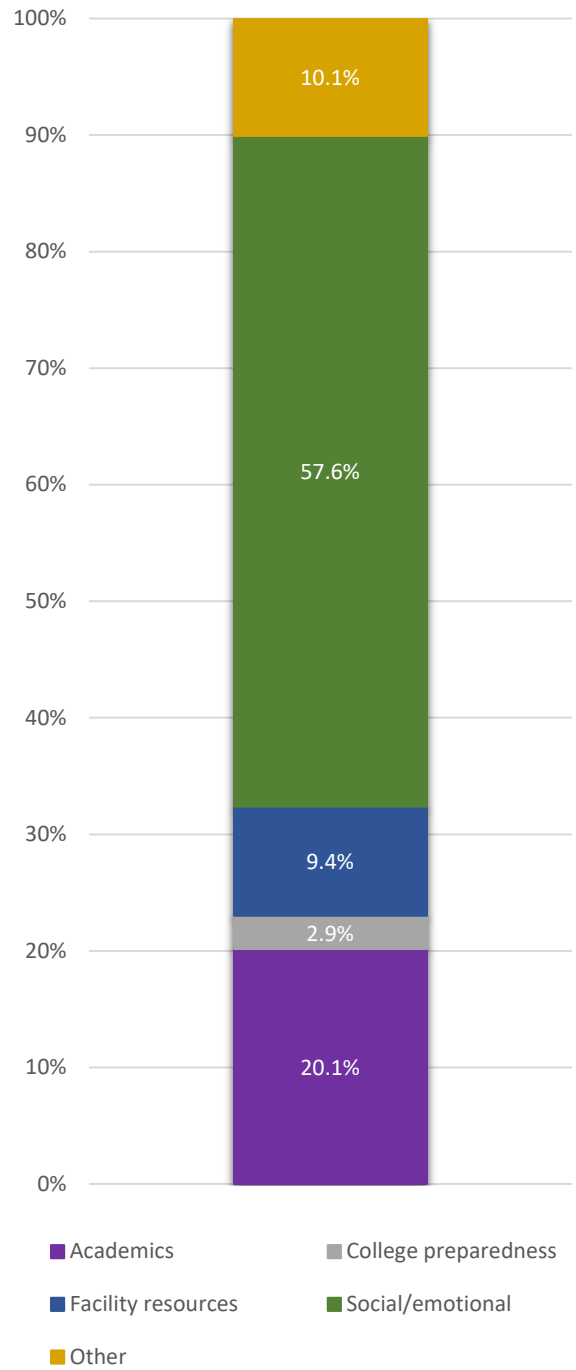


Figure 10

Instructional Feedback from Faculty (n = 45)

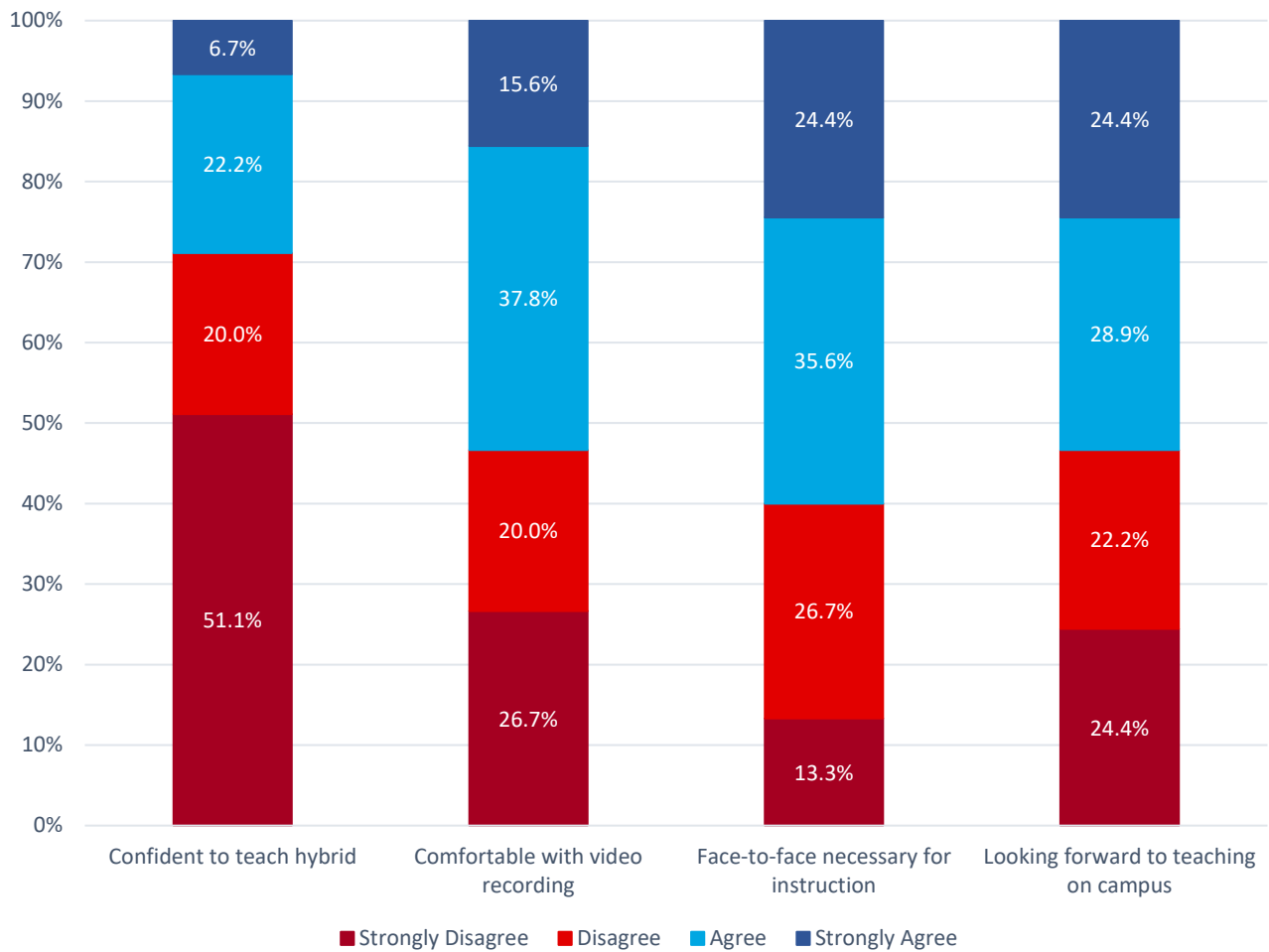


Figure 11

Considerations for Separate Learning (n = 45)

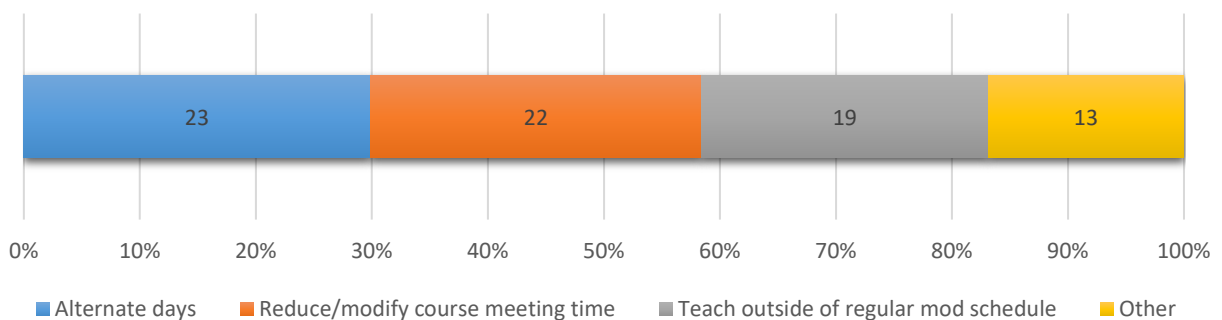


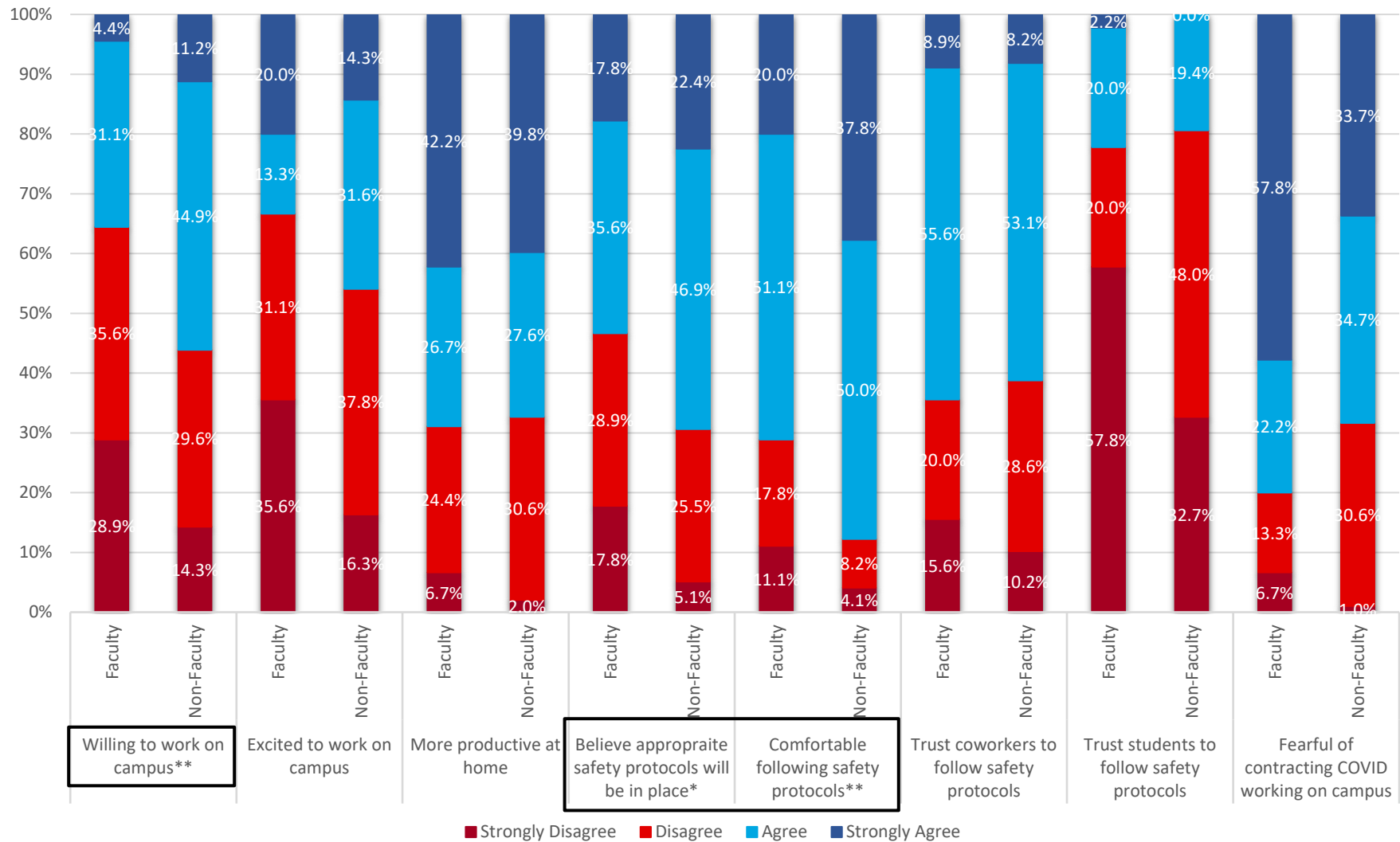
Figure 12

Appendix A

This appendix includes detailed information about the significant differences found on the repopulation statements based on the demographic variables of “Role at IMSA” (*Figure 13*) and “Contract Length” (*Figure 14*).

- Non-faculty responses were significantly more positive regarding several statements compared to faculty responses. Among those statements were:
 - willingness to work on campus on a regular basis ($F_{(1, 141)} = 7.030, p < .01$),
 - believing that appropriate safety protocols will be in place before returning to work on campus on a regular basis ($F_{(1, 141)} = 4.472, p < .05$), and
 - feeling comfortable following the safety protocols ($F_{(1, 141)} = 8.139, p < .01$).
- Similarly, responses from 12-month employees were significantly more positive regarding several statements compared to 10-month employee responses. Among those statements were:
 - willingness to work on campus on a regular basis ($F_{(1, 141)} = 6.227, p < .05$),
 - believing that appropriate safety protocols will be in place before returning to work on campus on a regular basis ($F_{(1, 141)} = 4.822, p < .05$),
 - feeling comfortable following the safety protocols ($F_{(1, 141)} = 4.712, p < .05$), and
 - trusting that coworkers would follow the safety protocols ($F_{(1, 141)} = 4.262, p < .05$).
- Furthermore, **10-month employees were significantly more fearful of contracting COVID-19** from returning to work on campus on a regular basis compared to 12-month employees ($F_{(1, 141)} = 5.266, p < .05$).
- Overall, many responses to the Likert-type scale items seem to be influenced by each individual’s perception about whether or not the students will follow the safety protocols put in place. One example of this is the strong positive correlation ($r = .482, p < .001$) between the way individuals responded to the two statements “I am excited to return to work on campus on a regular basis,” and “I trust IMSA students will follow safety protocols presented above.”

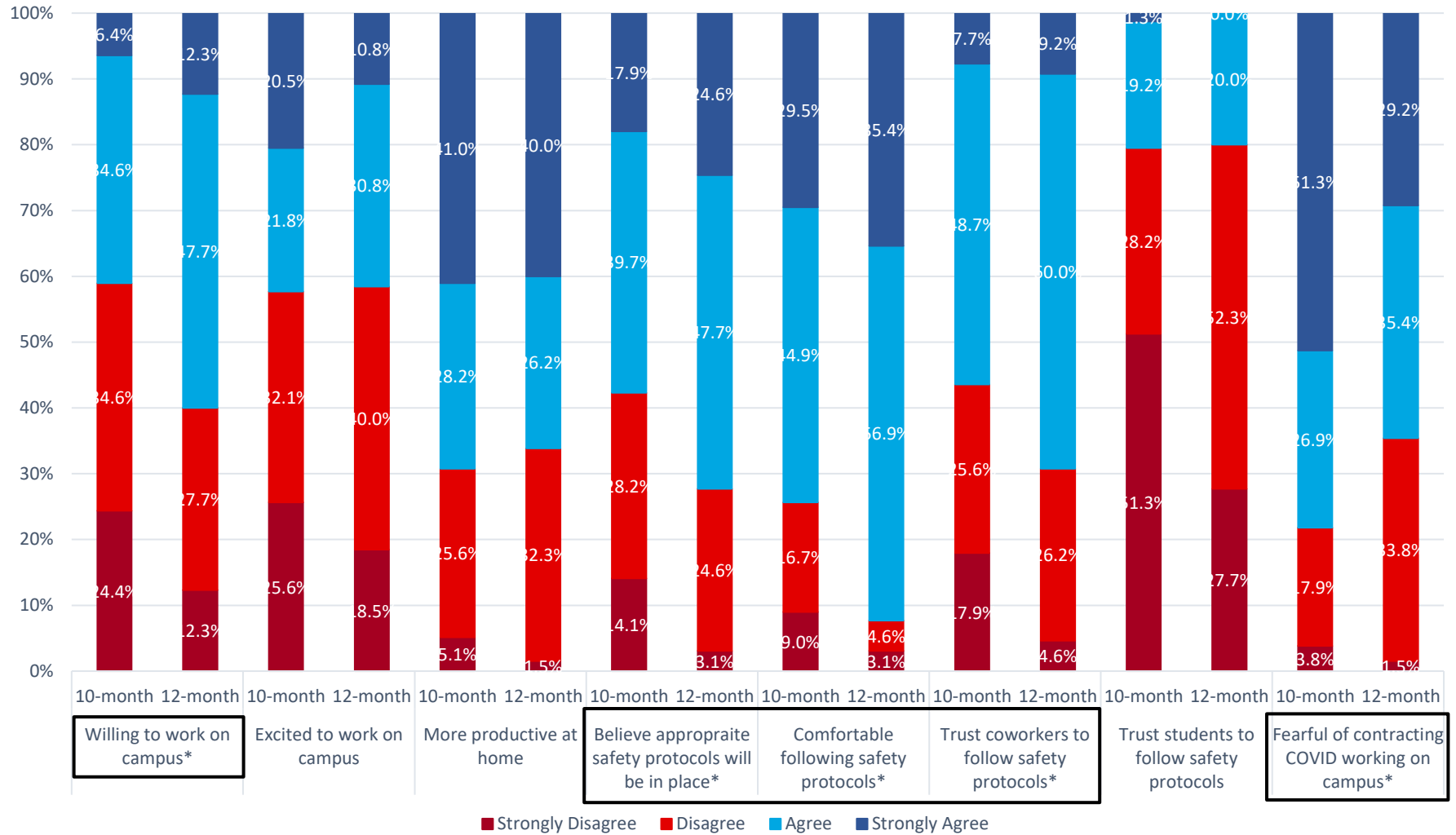
Repopulation Feedback Based on Role at IMSA Faculty (n = 45), Non-Faculty (n = 98)



*p < .05, **p < .01

Figure 13

Repopulation Feedback Based on Contract Length 10-month (n = 78), 12-month (n = 65)



*p < .05

Figure 14