

MATRIX
Marketing Research Group

AASCU Presidents Perceptions Study:
Future Outlook and
Community Contributions

Presented to:
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and CRT/tanaka commissioned an online survey with Matrix Marketing Research Group. The study objective was to gauge the perceptions and assessments of AASCU member presidents and chancellors regarding the current and future state of their local communities in a post-recessionary environment.

The study also asked about the contributions their institutions make in the communities where they are located, and their views and expectations regarding how much and the extent to which their schools will support their communities in the future.

The AASCU Presidents Perceptions Study included a separate survey designed to gather specific factual information from each president's Institutional Research staff. The results of this secondary survey are presented in a separate document.

The AASCU Presidents Study included the following specific objectives:

- Looking forward: ranking the issues;
- Looking forward: expectations for the future;
- Future of the local job market;
- Future of the local economy;
- Areas of community impact;
- Arts and culture;
- Economic impact on the community;
- Applied sciences/knowledge transfer;
- Preparing students for careers;
- Community service; and,
- Public service.

This report presents key findings from the study, as well as details of the survey methodology and an executive summary.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Technique

The Presidents Perception Study was conducted by online survey. AASCU presently has a membership of approximately 420 college and university presidents and chancellors. All members were invited by email to participate. A copy of the questionnaire is provided at the end of this report.

Each emailed invitation contained a request that the president forward the email invitation to an Institutional Research staff member of choice to complete a second online survey. The second survey, referred to as the “IR Survey” was designed to gather factual information about each school and its impact on the local community. The results were tabulated and provided to AASCU by Matrix in a separate document.

For the survey, presidents received an initial email invitation plus two “reminder” emails. As a final request, a separate email was sent to administrative assistants of the presidents who had not yet responded, asking for their assistance in having the survey completed by their president.

Sample Source

An electronic listing of the email addresses for AASCU member presidents and chancellors, as well as their Administrative Assistants was provided to Matrix by AASCU. Matrix processed the lists to eliminate duplicates as well as any incomplete or non-working email addresses. A total of 422 listings were ultimately used for the study.

Survey Questionnaire

The presidents’ survey questionnaire was custom designed for this study and was approximately 12 minutes in length. The IR survey was approximately 15 minutes in length. A copy of the presidents’ questionnaire is provided at the end of this report.

Sample Size and Statistical Sampling Error

A total of 112 interviews were completed by AASCU presidents and chancellors. This response represents a participation rate of 27%. A sample size of 112 has a maximum statistical margin of error of $\pm 9.3\%$ at the 95% level of confidence.

Statistical margin of error reflects the reliability of a response to an individual survey question. When a response is said to have a *maximum error of ±9.3% at the 95% level of confidence*, it means we are 95% confident the response is accurate to within plus or minus nine percentage points of what would be found if the total population of all AASCU presidents and chancellors was surveyed.

Timing

All interviewing among AASCU presidents and chancellors was conducted from February 14 - March 11, 2011.

The final “respond by” date for the IR survey was March 18, 2011.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Among seven potential areas of concern ranked for receiving attention in the coming year, AASCU presidents rank two issues in a virtual tie: *the local economy* and *quality of K-12 education*. The lowest-ranked issues are also virtually tied: *local crime rate* and *local cost of housing*.
- For the next 12 months, AASCU presidents are most optimistic about their *local crime rate* and most pessimistic about the *quality of K-12 education* and *opportunities for youth*.
- AASCU presidents have a positive outlook for the next 12 months when it comes to jobs in their local market, with the majority of presidents (60%) feeling the number of jobs will *grow* in that time frame by nearly three percent .
- AASCU presidents also express definite optimism for their local general economy, with nearly two-thirds expecting the local economy to *grow* (63%), also by approximately three percent
- At virtually all AASCU schools, presidents provide their local community access to experiences in the arts and culture in the form of *lectures* (97%), *exhibitions* (96%) and *galleries* (94%). Somewhat fewer schools provide access to *films* (77%), *museums* (64%) and *online exhibitions* (52%).
- As a community employer, a large majority of AASCU presidents rank their school as a “Top 5” local employer (71%), and virtually all rank themselves as a “Top 20” local employer (99%).
- Based on their school’s *Economic Impact Statement* (or other economic impact data), AASCU presidents report an average local dollar impact of \$533.7 million per school in 2009.

- Virtually all AASCU presidents have programs that focus on researching state-of-the-art programs and future directions in the areas of *education* (94%), *science* (94%) and *the environment* (90%). A large number of presidents also report programs for *sustainability* (78%) and *energy* (63%).
- The “top three” areas of study in which presidents feel their schools will experience the most growth over the next 10 to 15 years are *business* (61%), *science* (49%) and *medicine/nursing* (41%). The lowest growth expectations are voiced for study in *education* (23%), *energy/environment* (22%), *engineering* (20%) and *criminology/forensics* (18%).
- For virtually all schools, AASCU presidents currently sponsor programs or innovations that they feel make *positive contributions* to the local community they serve (98%), have taken on a role to improve the *K-12 educational infrastructure and student outcomes* within the community (96%) and provide *training or educational opportunities* for community residents who are not necessarily the institution's traditional students (90%).
- Among six methods of student career preparation (outside of academics), AASCU presidents cite near-universal use levels for *internships* (98%), *career counseling* (95%), *career fairs* (93%), *on-campus job interviews* (90%) and *alumni networking* (89%). Least widely used are *co-ops* (51%).
- Virtually all AASCU presidents provide local community service through *student volunteerism* (99%), *student participation* in community service projects (97%), *faculty/staff participation* in community service projects (96%), *faculty/staff volunteerism* in the community (96%) and with *donations of goods* (89%).
- AASCU presidents report near-universal engagement by their institutions in promoting community awareness of important contemporary issues such as *healthcare, housing, and education* (96%).

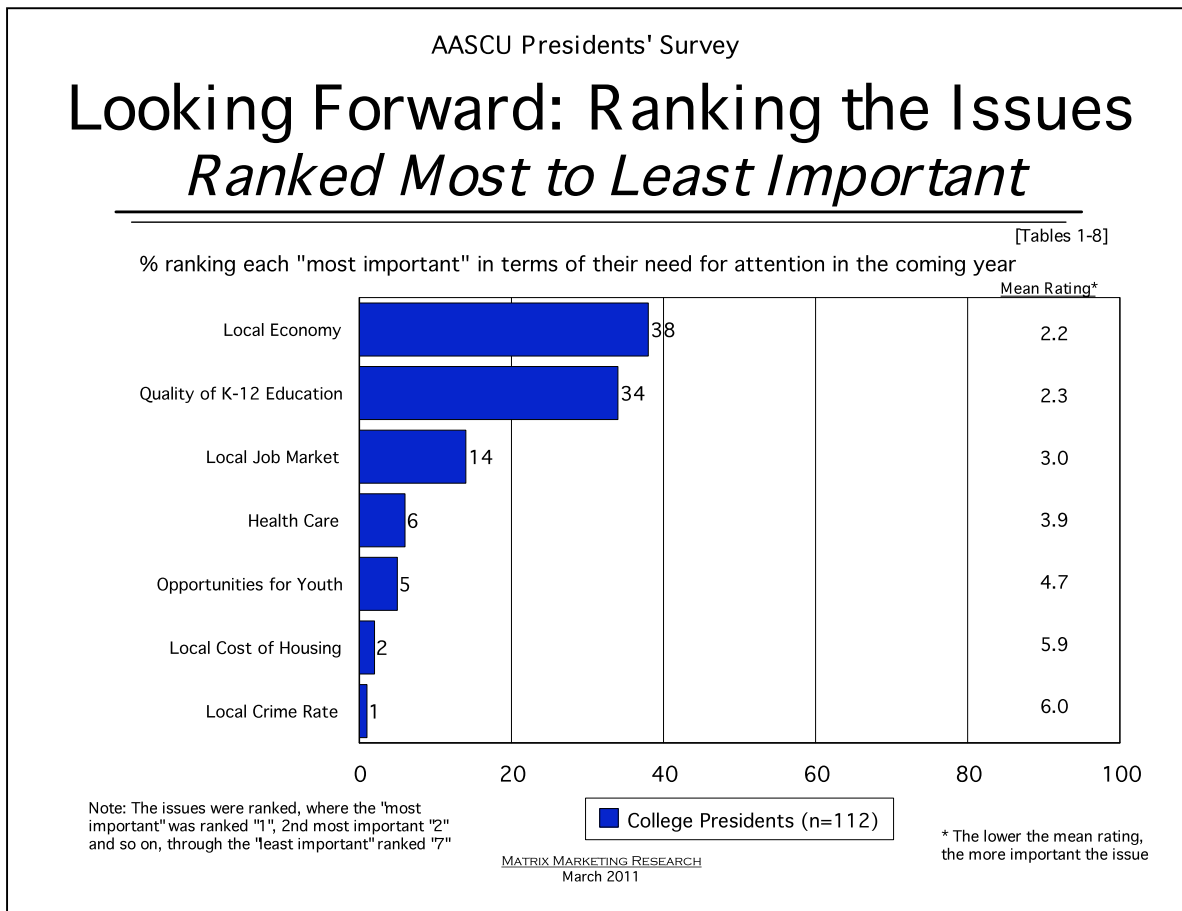
DETAILED FINDINGS

Looking Forward: Ranking the Issues

Presidents were reminded that leaders everywhere are facing a wide range of concerns, yet with the limitations of time and resources, there is a need to carefully set priorities. Each was asked to rank seven pre-selected concerns using a forced-ranking with no “ties” permitted, based on their perceived need for attention in the coming year.

The “most important” area of concern was given a ranking value of “1” and the least important a ranking value of “7”. A *mean ranking value* was calculated for each area of concern. The maximum mean ranking value an area could receive is therefore a mean of 1.0, meaning it was ranked as the most important among all seven items.

Results indicate that two areas are in a virtual tie as the most important issues among AASCU presidents: *local economy* (mean ranking of 2.2) and *quality of K-12 education* (2.3). The least important issues among the seven ranked are also virtually tied: *local crime rate*, which received a mean ranking of 6.0 and *local cost of housing* (5.9). [Tables 1-9]

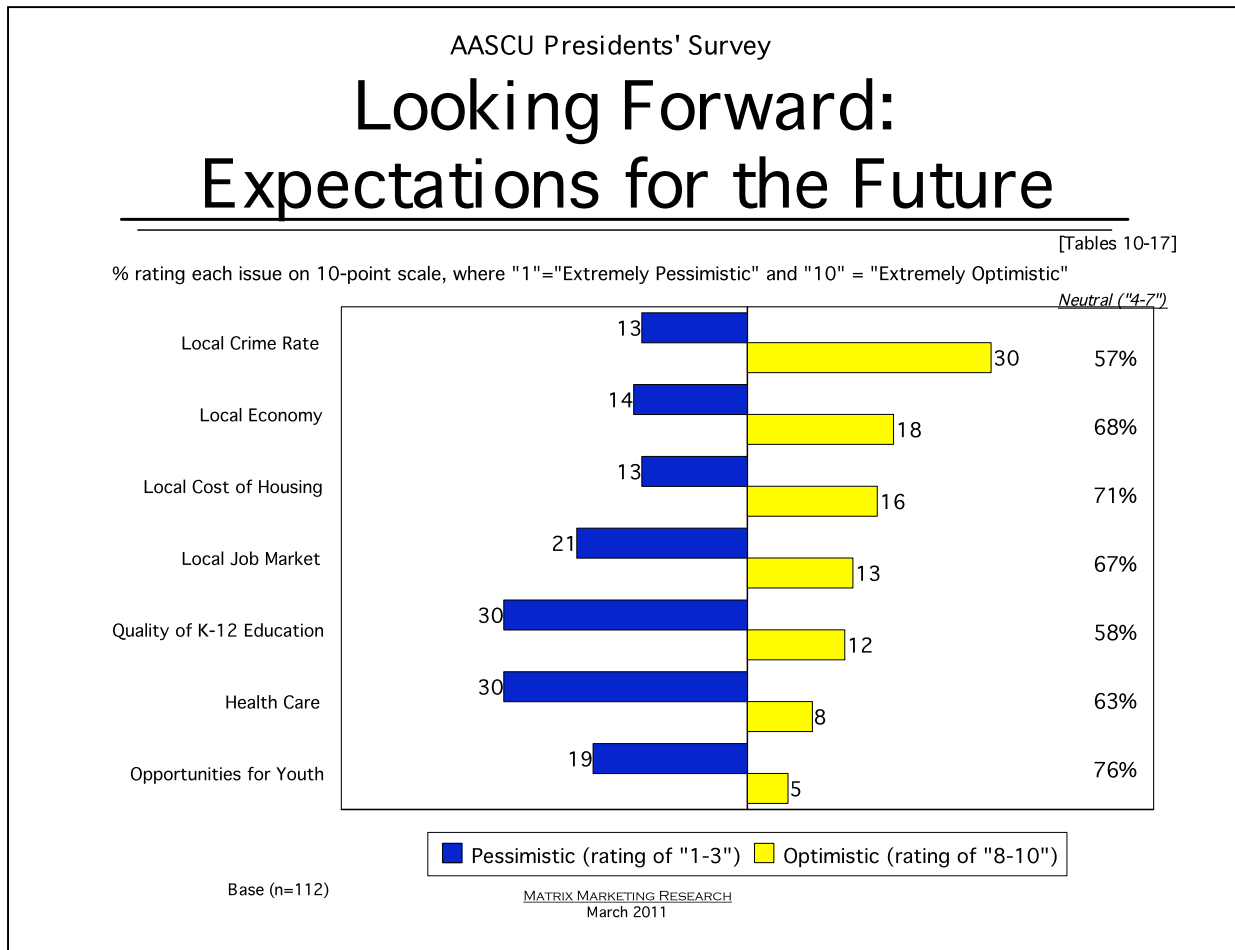


Looking Forward: Expectations for the Future

Asked to look ahead to the next 12 months, presidents considered the same seven areas of concern, this time indicating the degree to which they feel *optimistic* or *pessimistic* about the area based on their perception of current trends and the potential for efforts to be made by appropriate decision-makers to influence them.

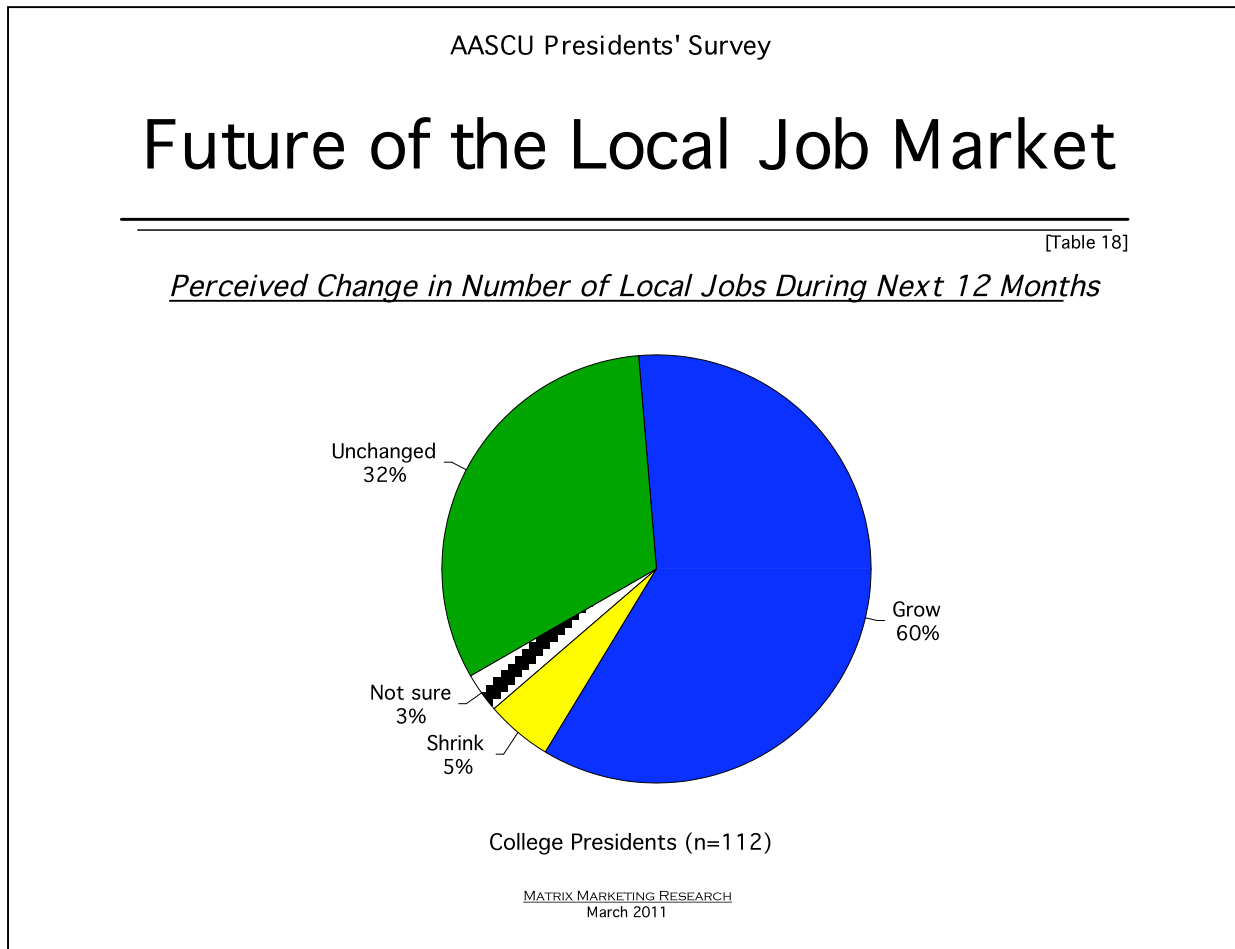
Each area of concern was rated on a ten-point scale. A rating of “1” meant their feeling was “extremely pessimistic” and “10” meant their feeling was “extremely optimistic,” or they could use any number between “1” and “10.”

Generally, there are relatively high levels of “neutral” ratings (i.e., 57% to 76% of ratings were in the mid-range from “4” to “7”), indicating that concern among AASCU presidents for these issues is largely moderate. The most optimistic views are found for the *local crime rate* (30% rated their view “8” or higher). The two most pessimistic views are for *quality of K-12 education* (30% gave low ratings of “1” to “3”) and *opportunities for youth* (30%). [Tables 10-17]



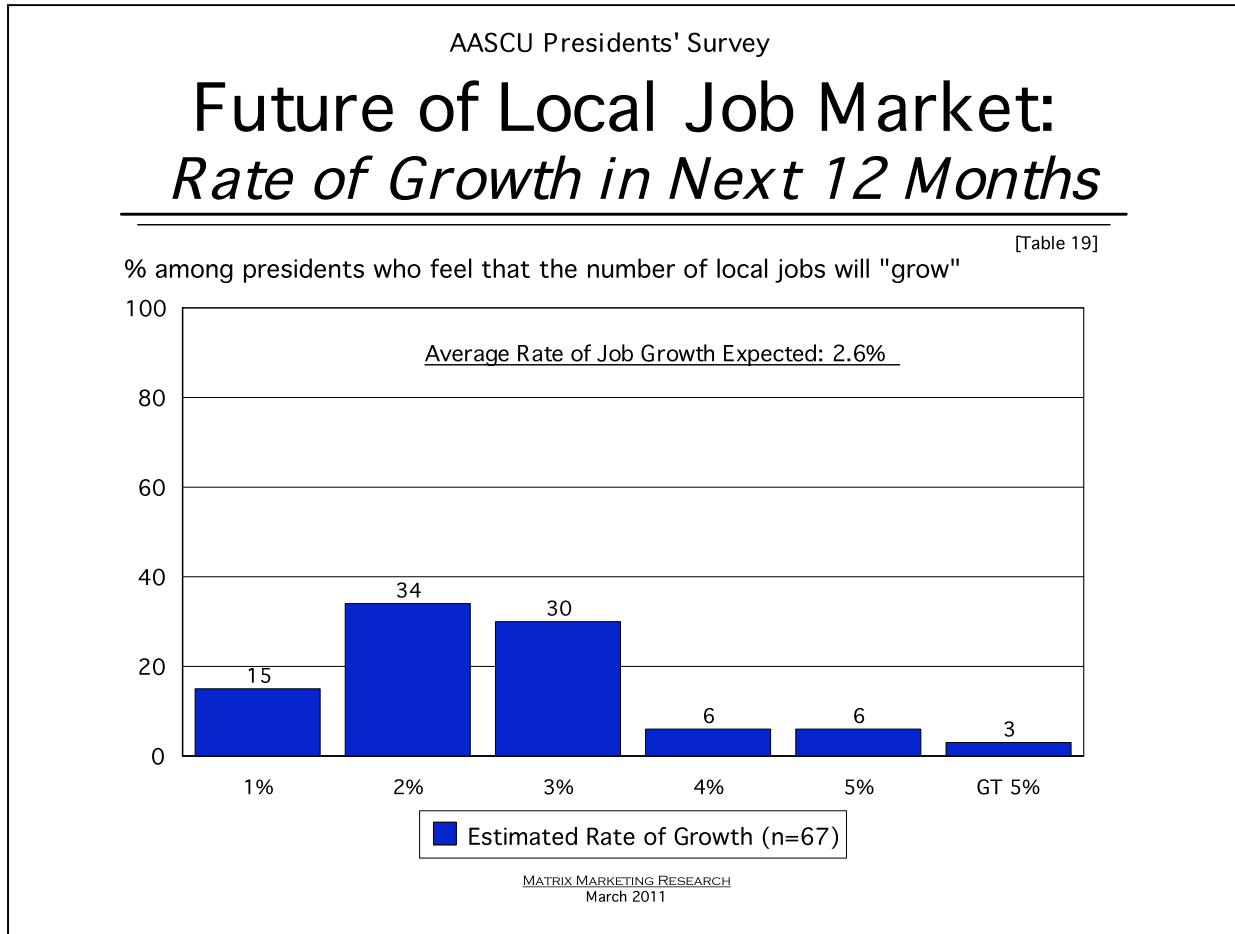
Future of the Local Job Market

AASCU presidents' were asked about their outlook regarding the number of jobs that will be available in the local job market over the next 12 months. The majority of presidents have a positive outlook, saying that they feel the number of jobs in their local market will *grow* over the next 12 months (60%). Most of the remainder expects the local job market to remain *unchanged* (32%). Only 5% of AASCU presidents believe the local job market will *shrink* in the next 12 months. [Table 18]



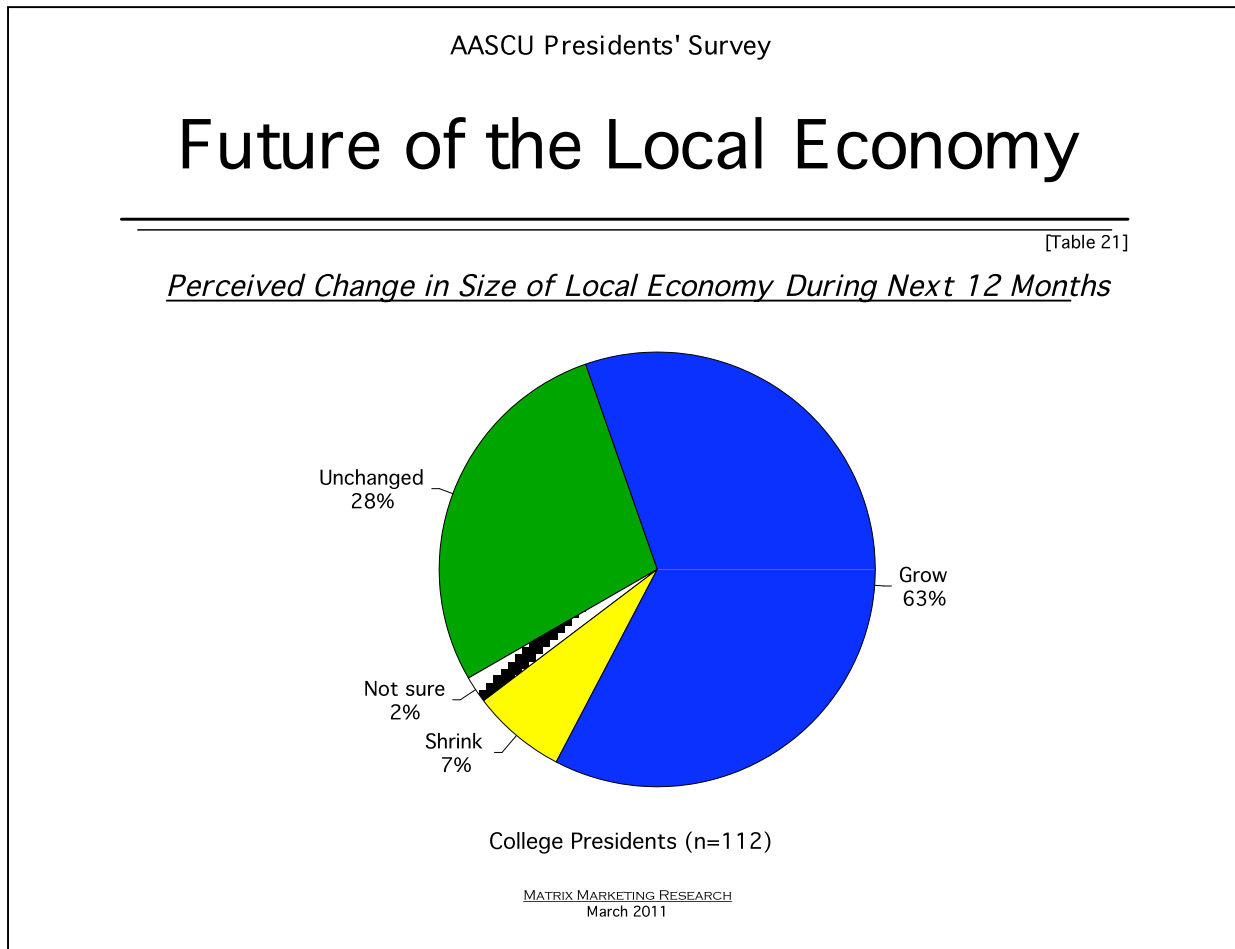
Future of the Local Job Market: Rate of Growth

Among the segment of presidents who feel the number of jobs in their local market will *grow* over the coming 12 months, expectations are very modest, reflected by a mean expected rate of growth of 2.6%. This mean reflects that nearly two-thirds (64%) of presidents who expect growth in jobs, feel the growth rate will range from 2% to 3%. [Tables 19 & 20]



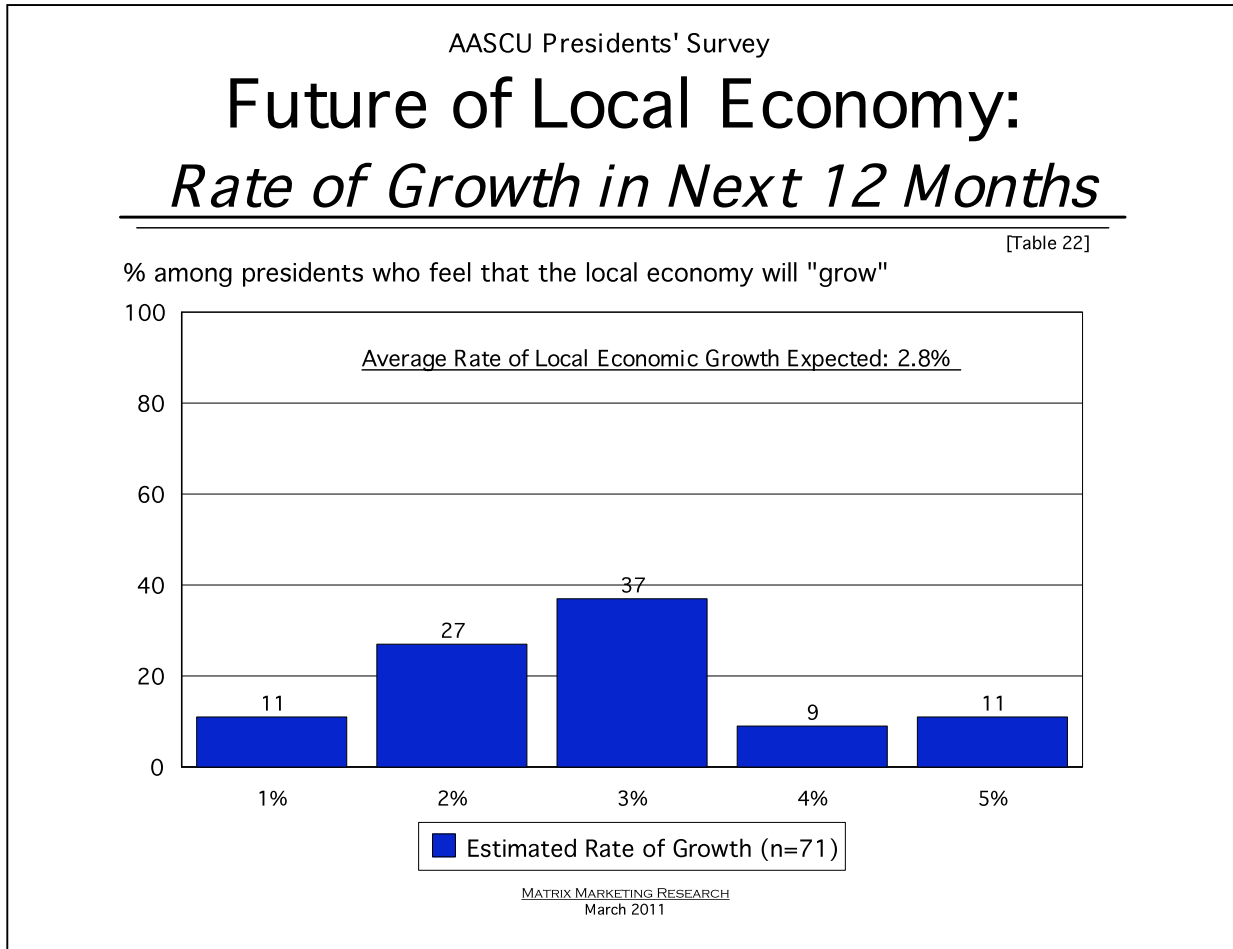
Future of the Local Economy

When asked about the possibilities for expansion or shrinkage of the general local economy in the area of their school's location, AASCU presidents again express definite optimism. Over the next 12 months, nearly two-thirds of presidents feel that the size of the local economy will *grow* (63%). Among the remaining presidents surveyed, one-in-four do not see any changes occurring in the size of their local economy (28% *unchanged*). At the negative end of the spectrum, slightly fewer than one-in-ten presidents feel their area's economy will shrink in the next 12 months (7%). [Table 21]



Future of the Local Economy: Rate of Growth

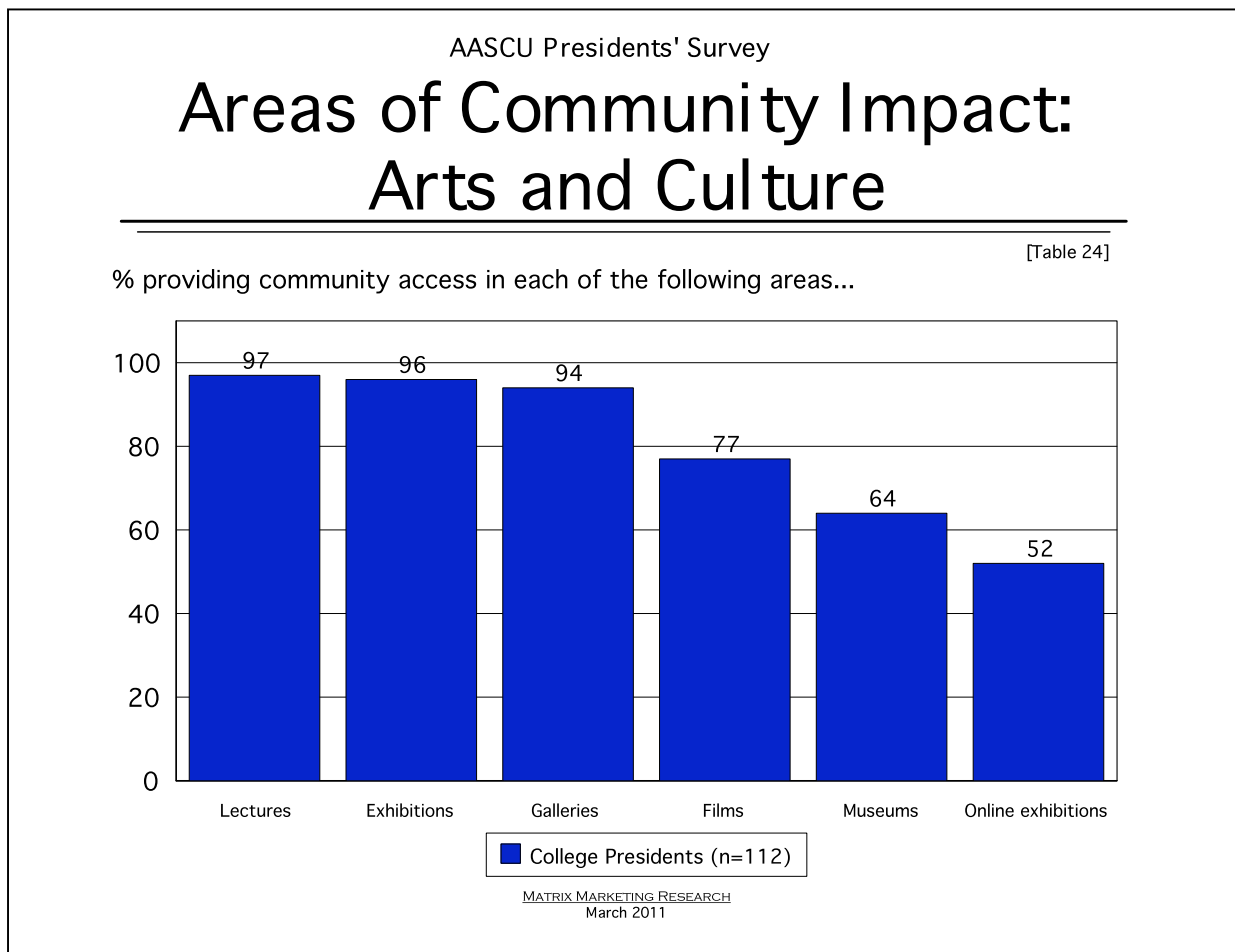
Among the segment of presidents who feel that their local economy will grow over the coming 12 months, expectations are very modest and very similar to their expectations for the “local job market”: a mean expected rate of local economy growth of 2.8%. This mean reflects that nearly two-thirds (64%) of presidents who expect growth in the economy feel the growth rate will range from 2% to 3%. [Table 22]



Areas of Community Impact: Arts and Culture

When asked a series of questions about the impact made by their school on the local community, virtually all presidents responded that the role they have taken includes providing the community access to experiences in arts and culture in the form of *lectures* (97%), *exhibitions* (96%) and *galleries* (94%).

In contrast, fewer presidents say their schools have provided access to *films* (77%), *museums* (64%) and *online exhibitions* (52%). [Table 24]

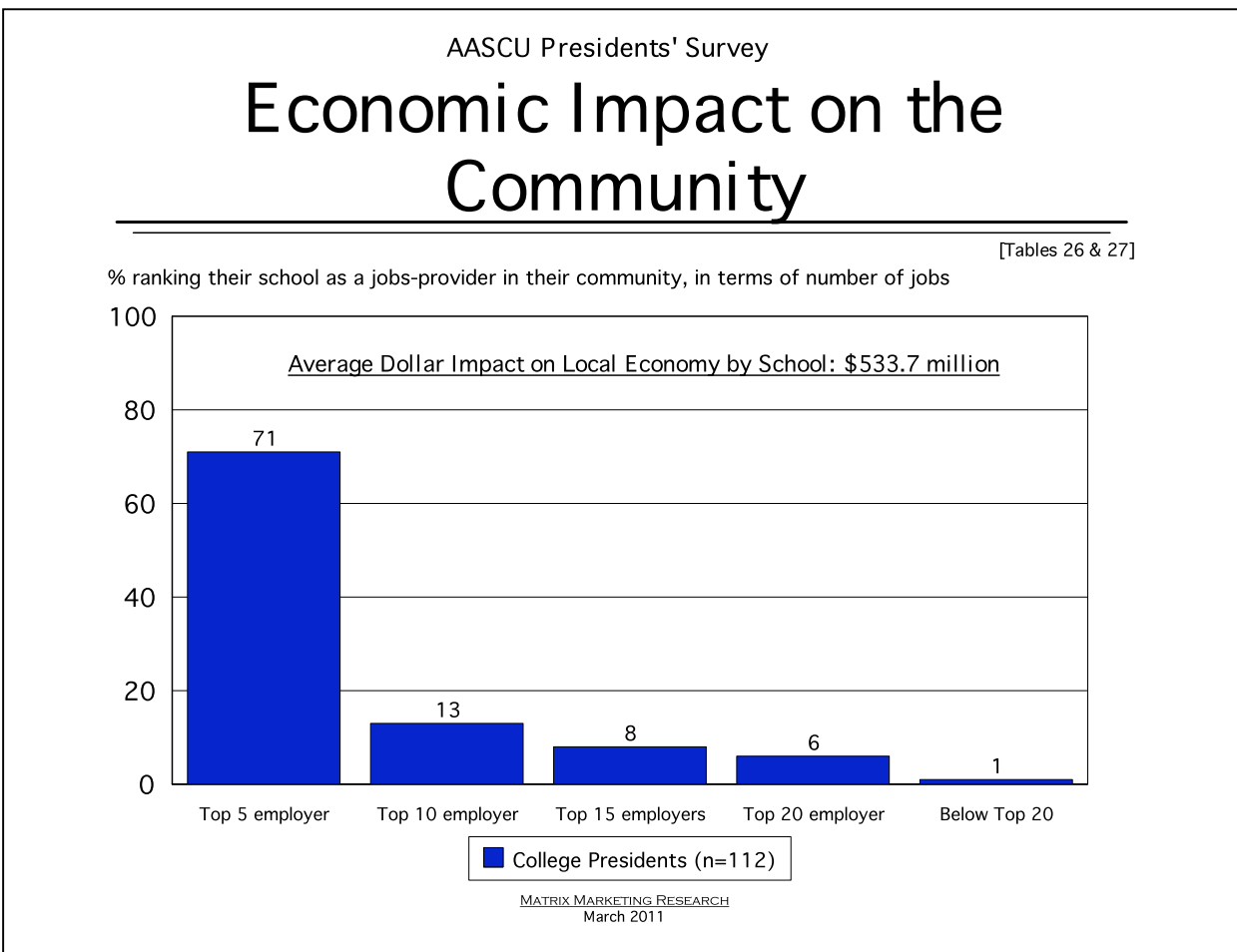


Economic Impact on the Community

One of the most tangible measures of a college's economic impact on the community is its performance as employer, as reflected by the number of on-campus jobs it provides, including both its academic and administrative staff as well as all of its support and services staff.

When asked to rank their school as a jobs-provider in their community, nearly three-fourths of presidents said their school is one of the "top 5" local employers (71%). Virtually all presidents perceive their school to be no less important than a "top 20" employer in their area (99%). [Table 26]

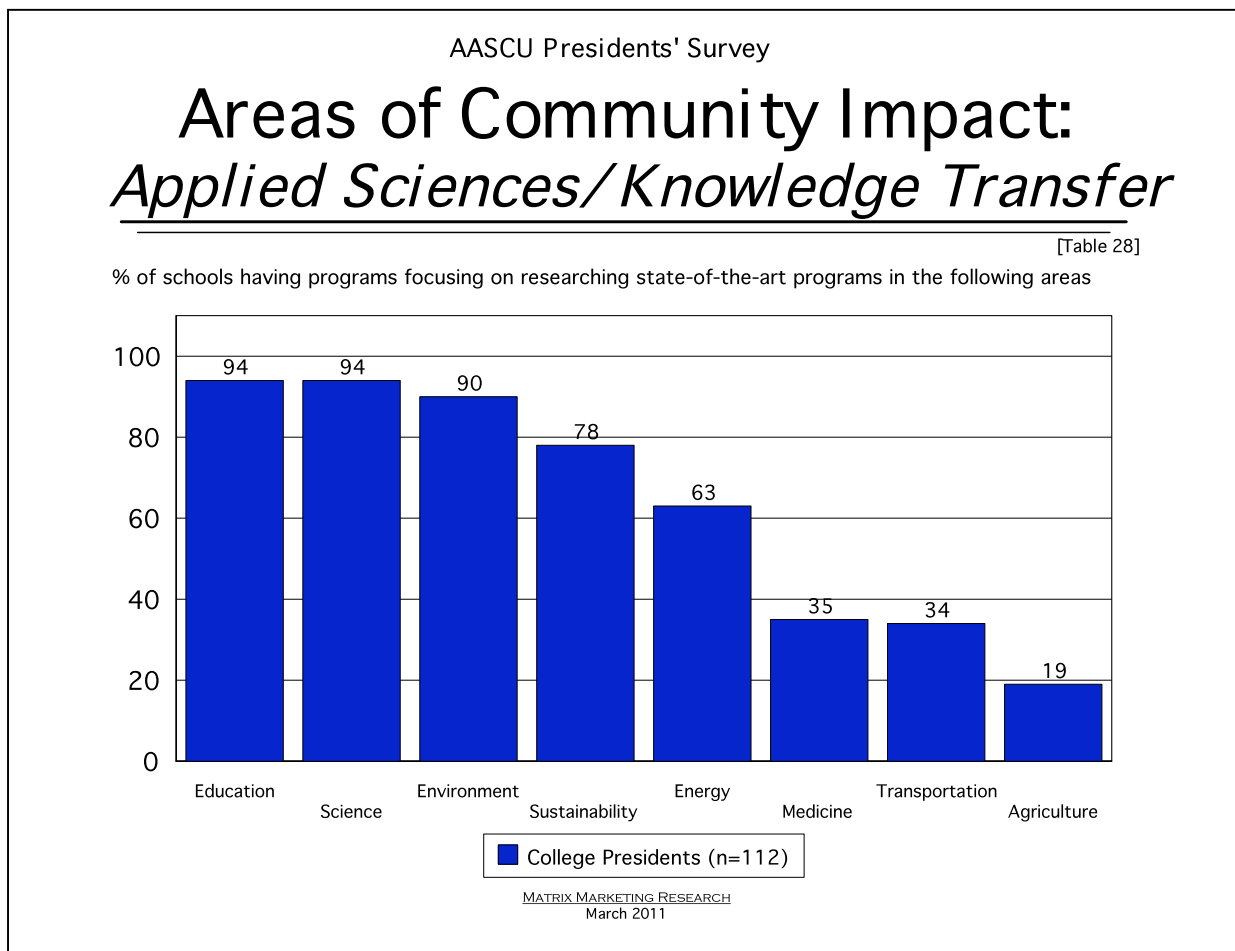
When asked to provide the approximate dollar impact on the local economy by their school as reported in their school's *Economic Impact Statement* or other economic impact data, the average dollar impact for **the year 2009** for the schools who participated in the survey was \$533.7 million per school. [Table 27]



Economic Impact on the Community: Applied Sciences/Knowledge Transfer

The AASCU Presidents Perceptions Study also asked how their institutions addressed the social, business and civic issues faced by the communities they serve. Virtually all presidents report that their schools currently have programs that specifically focus on researching state-of-the-art programs and future directions in the areas of *education* (94%), *science* (94%) and *the environment* (90%). From eight-in-ten to nearly two-thirds of presidents also report programs for *sustainability* (78%) and *energy* (63%).

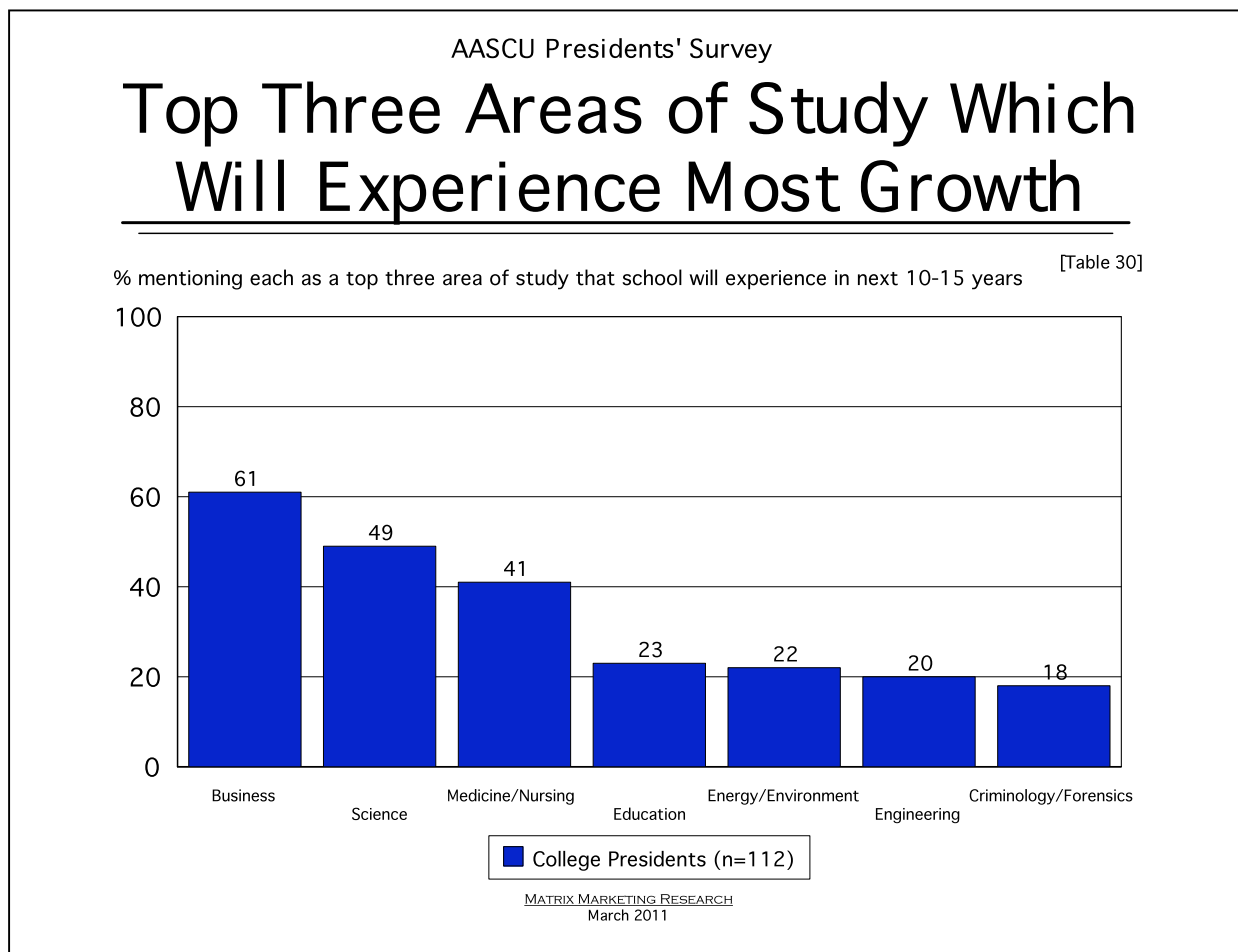
Currently less widely addressed are the areas of *medicine* (35%), *transportation* (34%) and *agriculture* (19%). [Table 28]



Areas of Study Expected to Experience Growth in the Future

When asked to look to the future and cite the “top three” areas of study where they feel their schools will experience the most *growth* in the next 10 to 15 years, a clear majority of AASCU presidents cite *business* (61%) as the growth leader. Following *business* studies are *science* which occupies second-place (49%), and *medicine/nursing* taking a clear third-place position (41%).

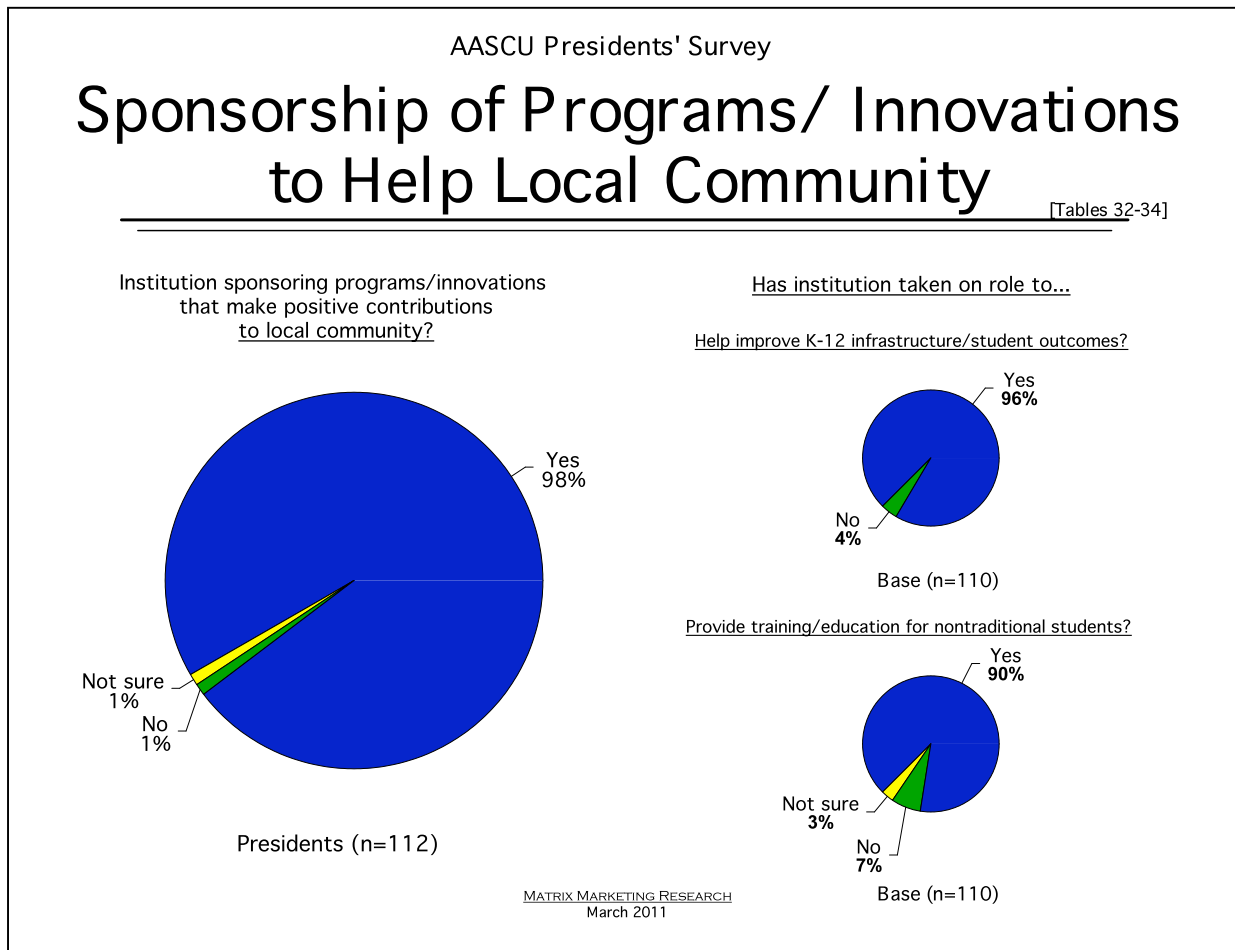
Trailing the top three as future growth areas of study are *education* (23%), *energy/environment* (22%), *engineering* (20%) and *criminology/ forensics* (18%). [Table 30]



(Note: percentages reflect that up to three responses could be given for this question by each respondent)

Incidence of Sponsoring Programs and Innovations for the Community

Virtually all AASCU presidents report that their institution currently sponsors programs or innovations that they feel are making positive contributions to the local community they serve (98%). Further, virtually all of those who do, also report that their institution has taken on a role to help improve the *K-12 educational infrastructure and student outcomes* within the community (96%) and nine-in-ten have taken on a role to provide *training or educational opportunities* for community residents who are not necessarily the institution's traditional students (90%). [Tables 32-34]

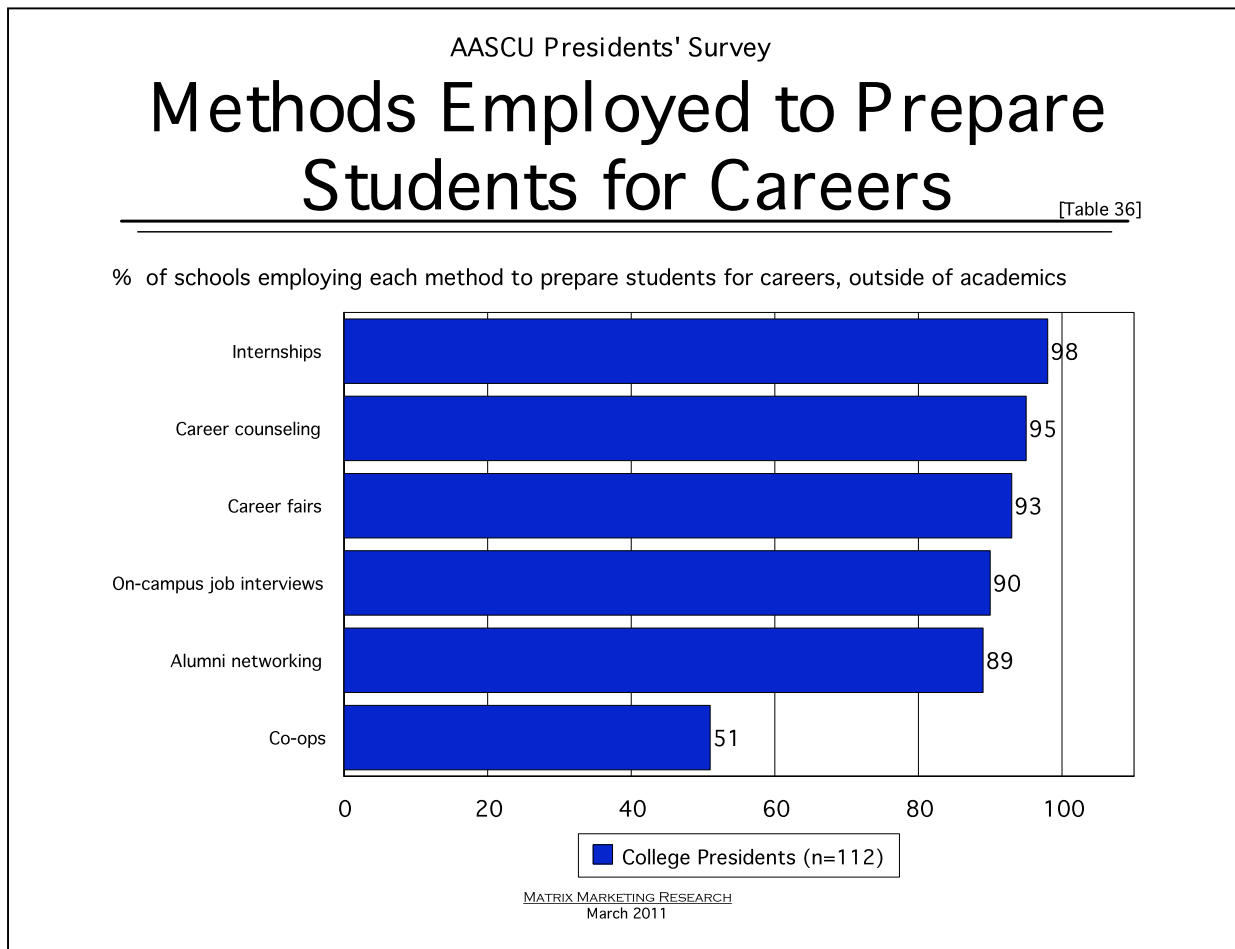


When asked to mention other significant programs or innovations their school sponsors, a very wide range of individual programs were mentioned by presidents. These are listed in no particular order (due to the uniqueness of the program names and descriptions) in Table 35.

Methods Used in Preparing Students for Careers

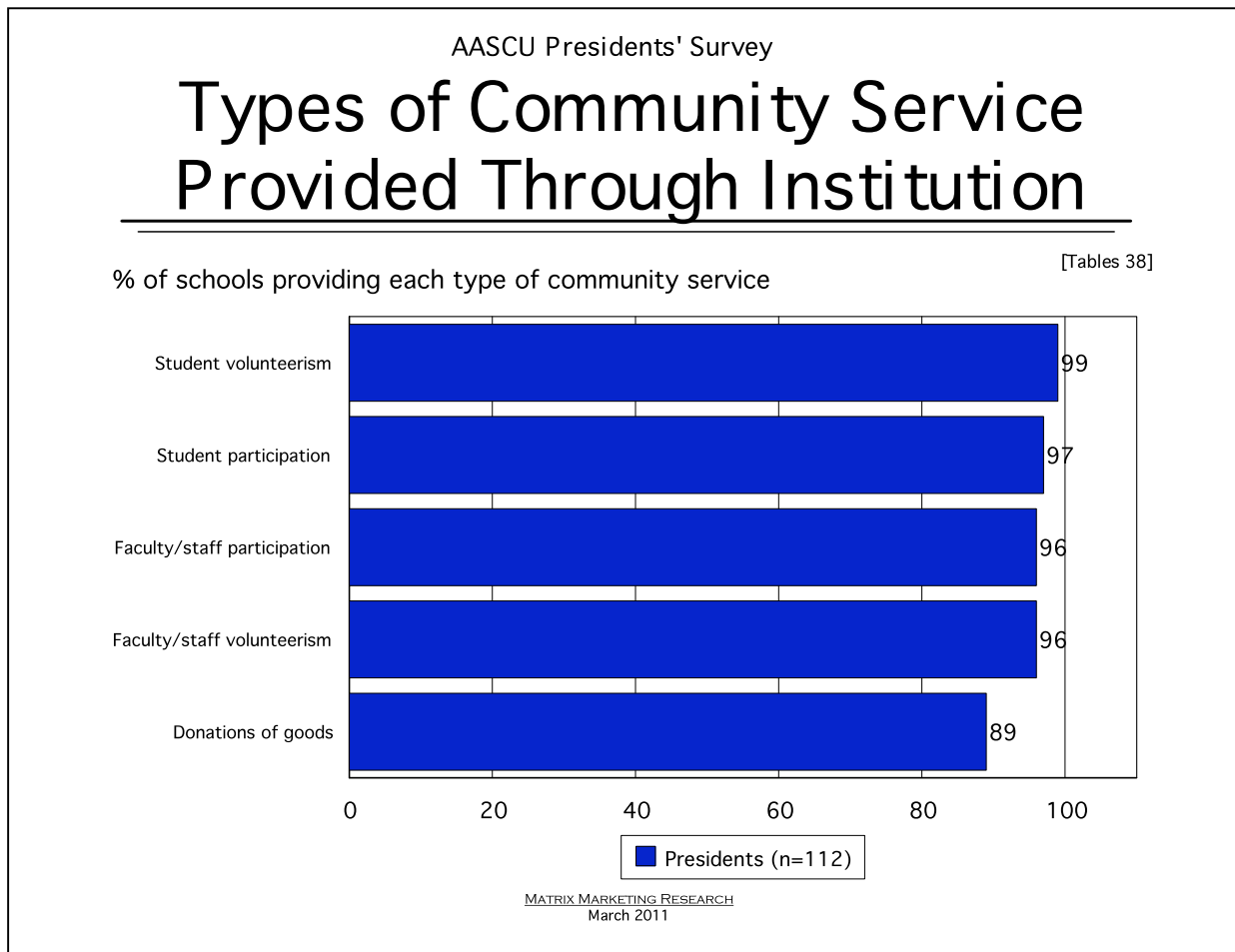
Presidents were asked if their schools employed any of six specific methods outside of academic preparation that are designed to prepare its students for careers. At a near-universal level of use is *internships* (98%), followed closely by *career counseling* (95%) and *career fairs* (93%). Nine-in-ten presidents report utilizing on *campus-job fairs* (90%) and *alumni networking* (89%) to assist in preparing students for careers after graduation.

The least widely used method of preparing students for careers after graduation are *co-ops*, which are currently used by one-half of the schools represented by AASCU presidents who participated in this study (51%). [Table 36]



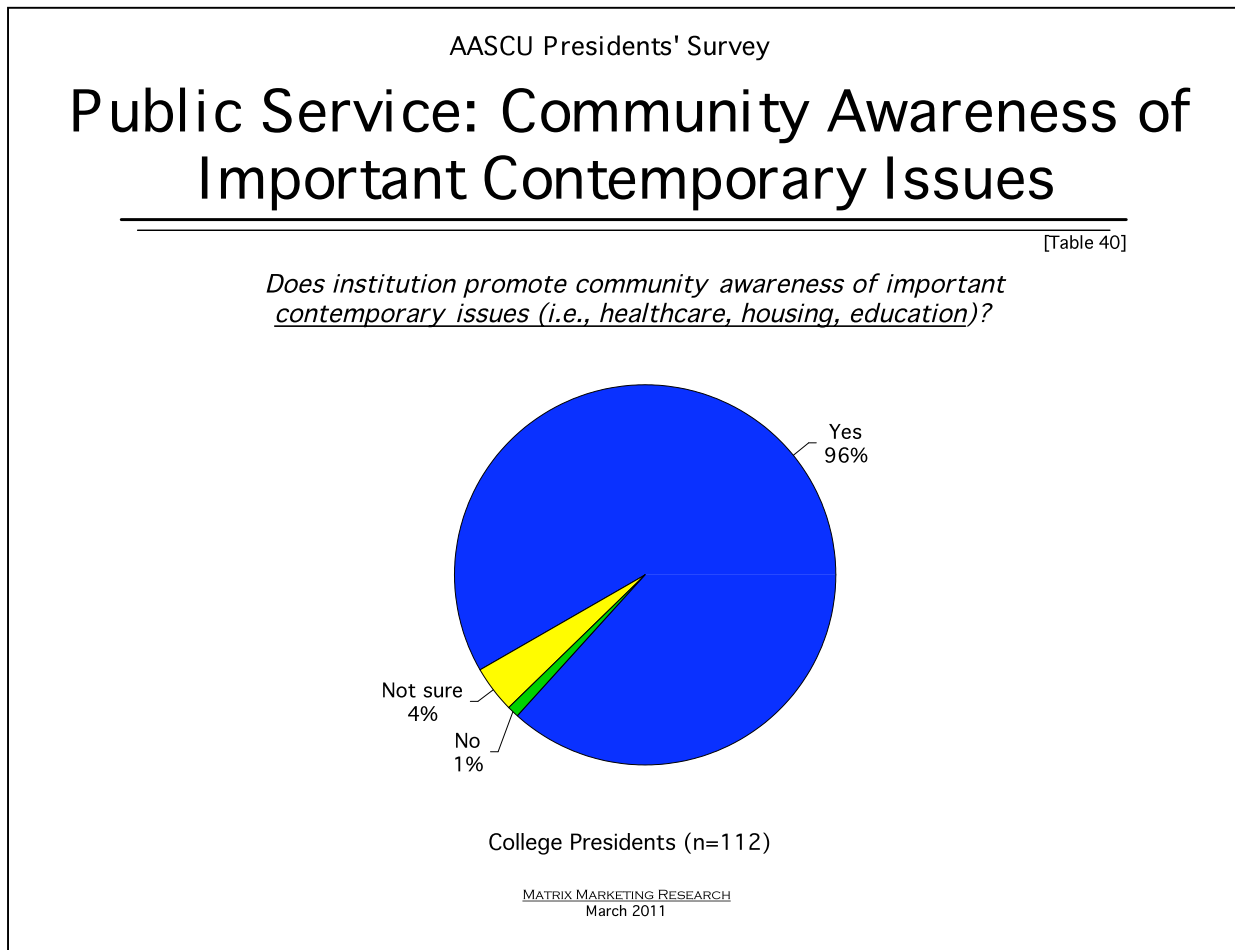
Community Service

Among five specific types of *community service* that a college or university could provide to the local community, nine-in-ten presidents report that their institution currently provides all five of them. There is virtually universal participation by the AASCU presidents' schools in supporting *student volunteerism* (99%), *student participation* in community service projects (97%), *faculty/staff participation* in community service projects (96%), *faculty/staff volunteerism* in the community (96%) and providing their community with *donations of goods* (89%). [Table 38]



Promotion of Community Awareness: Public Service Efforts

AASCU presidents report near-universal engagement in by their institutions in the promotion of community awareness of specific important contemporary issues, such as *healthcare, housing, and education*. A total of 96% of presidents who took part in the AASCU study say that their school is currently active in making the public more aware of these key issues. [Table 40]



When asked to cite some specific actions or initiatives their institution has employed to motivate and support local leadership and grassroots organizations to increase their efforts to improve the quality of life in the local community, AASCU presidents listed a very broad range of individual programs and descriptions which are provided in Table 41.

Study Participant Profile Information

The mean total student body (as of October 15, 2010 or each school's fall census date) reported by participating AASCU presidents was 11,000 students. [Table 42]

Total Student Body Population <i>(2010)</i>	
Less than 2,000	5%
2,000 to 4,999	19%
5,000 to 9,999	36%
10,000 to 14,999	20%
15,000 or more	20%
Total	100%

A listing of the number of AASCU presidents by U.S. state of location is provided in Table 43.