

Provosts, Pedagogy and Digital Learning

The 2017 ACAO Survey of Provosts
and Chief Academic Officers



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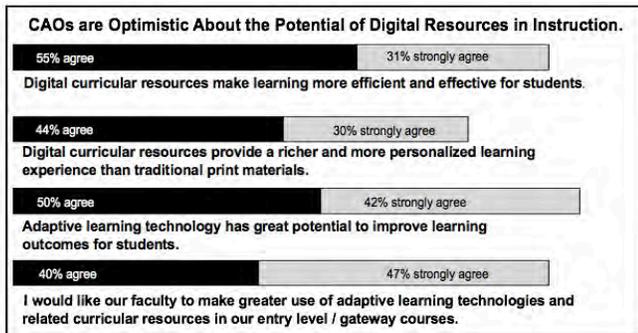
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from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

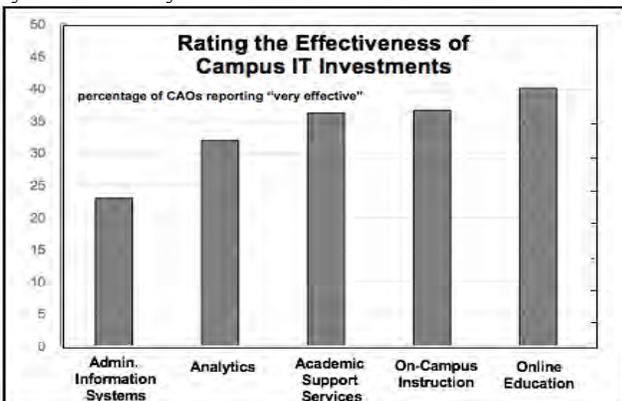
CAO Perspectives on Digital Learning

OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE POTENTIAL, DISAPPOINTED WITH THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Chief academic officers (CAOs) at the nation’s two- and four-year colleges and universities are optimistic about the potential of information technology and digital learning resources to enhance and transform the learning experience of undergraduates. As a group, CAOs overwhelmingly affirm that “digital learning resources make learning more efficient and effective for students” (86 percent agree/strongly agree) and that “adaptive learning technology has great potential to improve learning outcomes for students” (92 percent agree/strongly agree). Almost 90 percent would like to see their faculty make greater use of adaptive learning technologies in entry level and gateway courses.

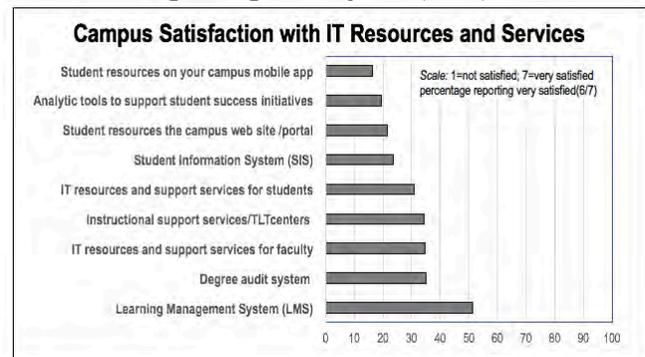


However, CAOs are far less effusive when asked to assess the effectiveness of current campus investments in IT resources and when asked questions about the general campus satisfaction with key IT applications and services. Less than a third of the CAOs who participated in the fall *Provosts, Pedagogy, and Digital Learning Survey* report that the campus investment in “data analysis and managerial analytics” and “IT resources and support services” for students and faculty has been very effective; barely a fourth view the campus investment in administrative information systems as “very effective.”



The investment in IT to support online and on-campus instruction fares only marginally better: just over a third (37 percent) report the campus investment IT to support on-campus instruction has been “very effective,” a number that rises to two-fifths (40 percent) for online education.

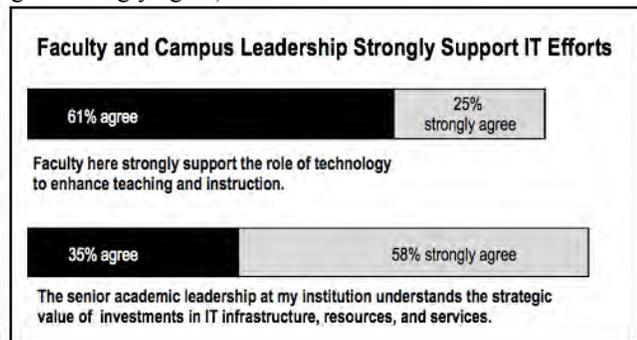
Similarly, CAOs report that the general level of institutional satisfaction with many key IT resources and services are low: just a fifth report a general campus assessment of “very satisfied” for analytic tools to support student success efforts, and student resources on mobile apps and campus web sites. About a fourth report their campus is “very satisfied” with the current the Student Information System (SIS), while only a third indicate their campus is “very satisfied” with IT resources and support services for both students and faculty, and campus instructional support centers (“TLT Centers”) that assist faculty efforts with IT initiatives and course redesign. Interestingly, given what often seems to be endemic complaints across most institutions, about half the CAOs report their campus is “very satisfied” with the institution’s current Learning Management System (LMS).



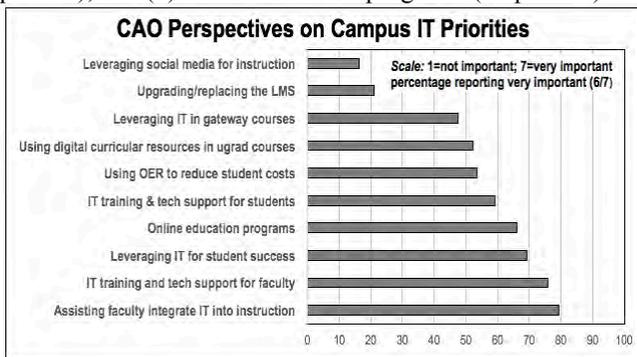
“Provosts have come of age personally, professionally, and professorially with the technologies that are now ubiquitous in the consumer market and on campus. The data suggest that CAOs have great faith in the power of information technology and digital course resources to transform the student learning experience,” says Kenneth C. Green, who conducted the *Provosts, Pedagogy, and Digital Learning Survey* for the Association of Chief Academic Officers (ACAO). “At the same time, the survey highlights important questions about how CAOs assess the effectiveness of campus investments in IT for instruction and operations, and also the current campus level of satisfaction with key IT resources and services.”

CAOs report strong faculty support for the “role of technology to enhance teaching and instruction” (86 percent

agree/strongly agree). Additionally, they believe that the senior leadership at their own institution “understands the strategic value in investments in IT infrastructure, institutional resources, and services” (93 percent agree/strongly agree).



The survey data also reveal CAOs’ top four IT priorities: (a) the instructional integration of information technology (79 percent report “very important”); (b) IT training and support for faculty (76 percent) (c) leveraging IT investments and resources for student success initiatives (69 percent); and (d) online education programs (66 percent).

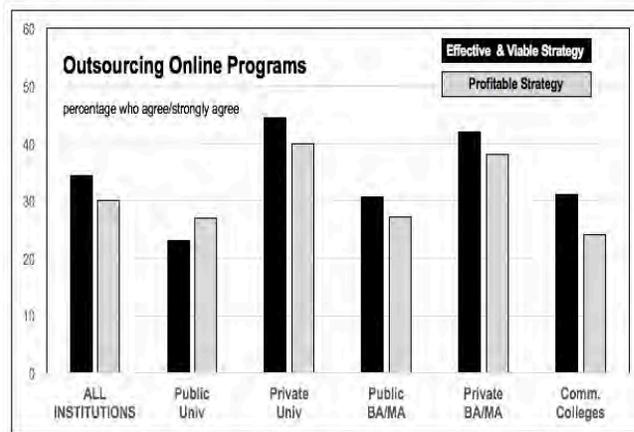


Although CAO priorities emphasize instruction and support for faculty, and despite the rising public and campus discussion about “going digital” in higher education, only three-fifths of the survey participants report that their institution has a campus plan “to leverage the use of digital learning technologies to improve student learning and campus instruction.” Concurrently, fully two-fifths of the survey participants report that campus efforts to go “more digital” or “all digital” are “impeded by the fact that many of our students do not own the digital devices they need to access” digital content and online course resources.

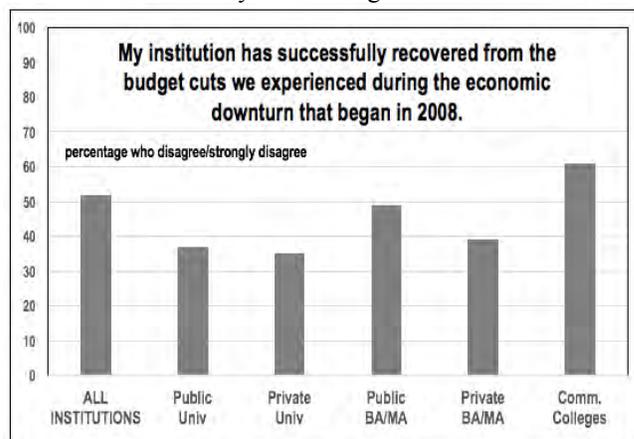
“Owning a digital device – a laptop or tablet – really is essential for digital access,” says Green. “Although well-intended, extended hours in campus computer labs do not adequately serve the needs or the schedules of full- and part-time students who have families, jobs, and other commitments beyond their college coursework.”

Although CAOs identify online programs as a top institutional priority, a large majority of the survey participants appear to oppose outsourcing the management of their institution’s online activities. Specifically, only a third indicate that they view outsourcing online programs as either a viable or a profitable strategy for their campus.

Large numbers of CAOs report that their institutions *have not* fully recovered from the economic upheaval routinely referred to as the “Great Recession.” However, the aggregated number of CAOs who report their campus is still



struggling (52 percent) masks major differences across sectors and segments. The survey data reveal that half of public BA/MA institutions and three-fifths of community colleges have not fully recovered, compared to less than 40 percent of public and private universities and private BA/MA institutions. But whether these data about recovering from the Great Recession are aggregated for all the survey participants or disaggregated by sector, the underlying issue is the same: large numbers CAOs believe their institutions are still struggling even as other sectors of the American economy have emerged from the downturn.



The fall 2017 *Provosts, Pedagogy, and Digital Learning Survey* was conducted by Kenneth C. Green, founding director of The Campus Computing Project, for the Association of Chief Academic Officers (ACAO). The data are based on the responses provided by the provosts and CAOs at 359 two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities across the United States who participated in an online survey between October 11th and November 3rd, 2017. The survey was supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to ACAO.

The Association of Chief Academic Officers

Chartered in 2013, the vision of ACAO is to provide professional development and networking opportunities to all individuals who are responsible for the leadership of academic affairs at institutions of higher education. The ACAO provides a network for chief academic officers (CAOs) through its e-lists, professional resources, and yearly conference held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Council on Education.

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Why Survey CAOs About Digital Issues?

- **LEADERSHIP:** Is the CAO an advocate, an agnostic, or an antagonist?
- Key role in institutional planning and policy.
- Important perspectives on the effectiveness and value of IT investments.
- Key “client” regarding campus satisfaction with IT resources and services.
- Comparisons with CIOs



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Survey Methodology

Target Population: provosts & CAOs at public and private, non-profit colleges and universities that enroll more than 1000 students

- Mailing list of some 2250 institutions
- Survey cycle: Oct 11 - Nov 3
- 359 survey participants (16 pct. participation rate)

Survey Participants by Campus Type	Dept of Ed N	Survey N	% Pop.
Public Doc/Research Universities	168	34	20
Private, Non-Profit Doc/Research Universities	92	21	23
Public BA/MA	374	62	17
Private, Non-Profit. BA/MA	824	116	14
Community Colleges	1018	118	12

Faculty and Campus Leaders Strongly Support IT

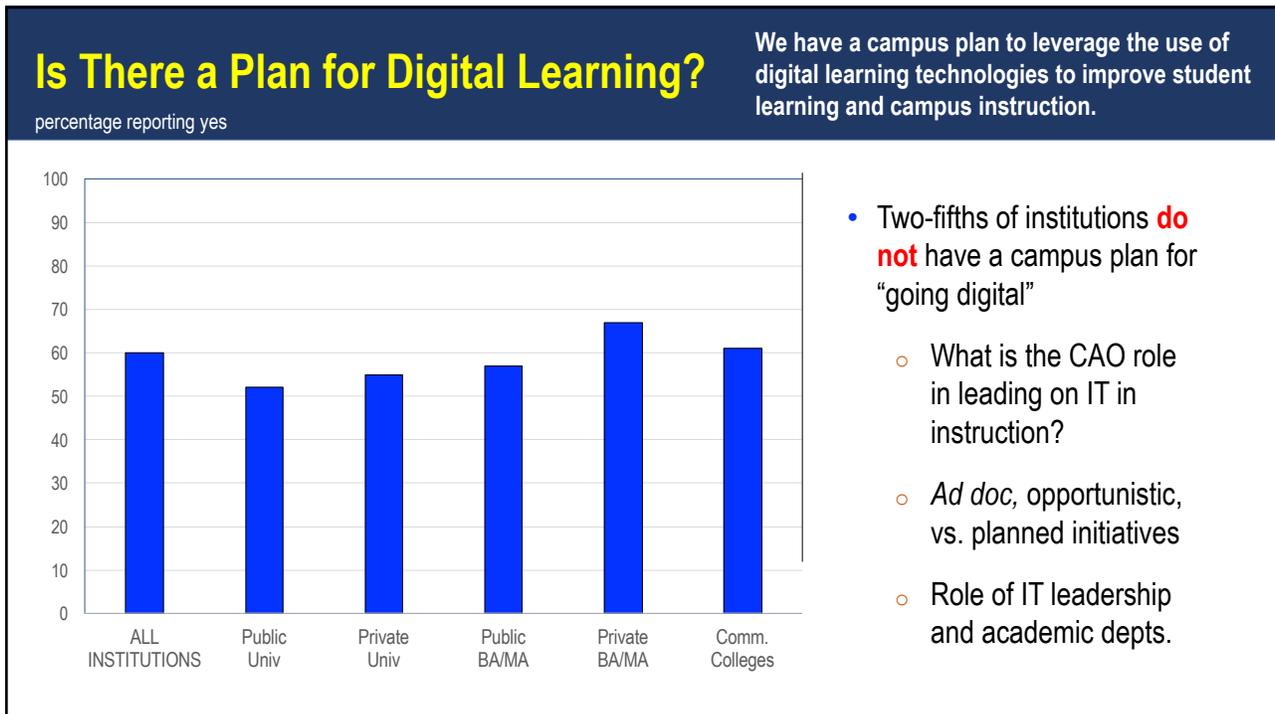
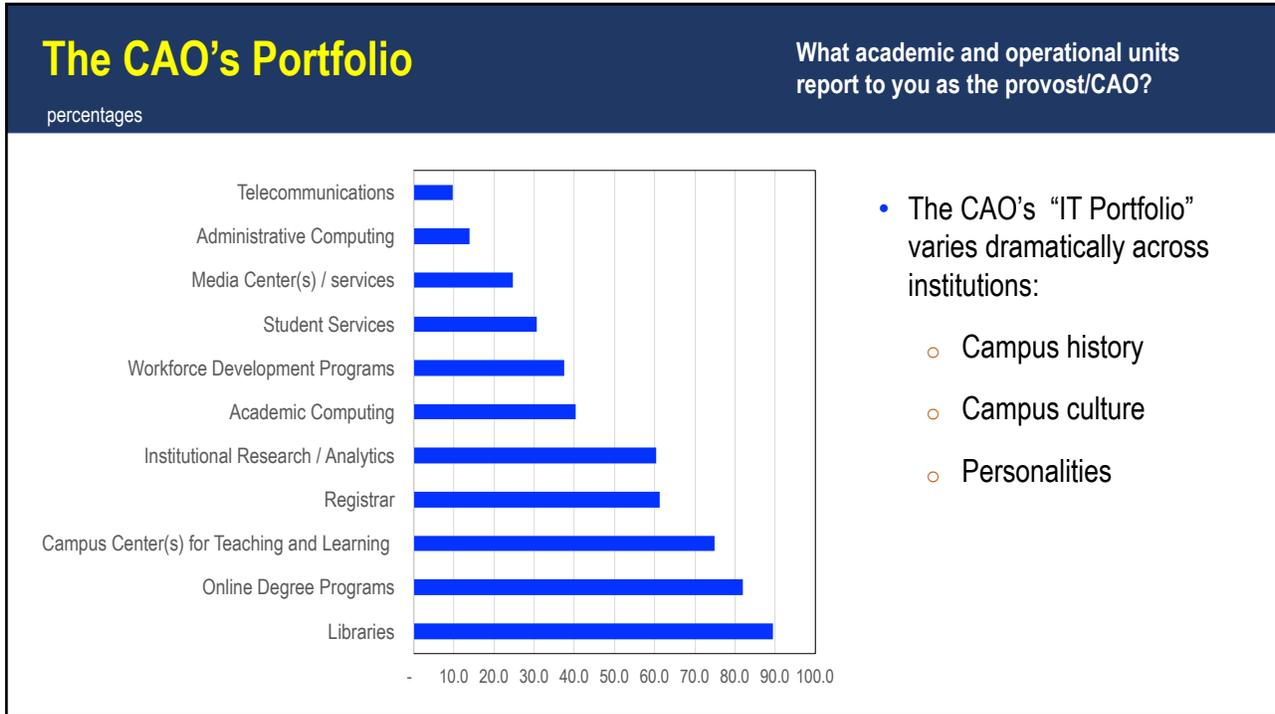
percentage who agree/strongly agree

	%
Faculty here strongly support the role of technology to enhance teaching and instruction.	85 (30% Strongly Agree)
The senior academic leadership at my institution understands the strategic value of investments in IT infrastructure, institutional resources, and services	93 (58% Strongly Agree)

- CAOs report strong support for IT efforts and initiatives.
- CIOs offer slightly softer assessments
 - Faculty support: 76%
 - Senior leadership: 79%

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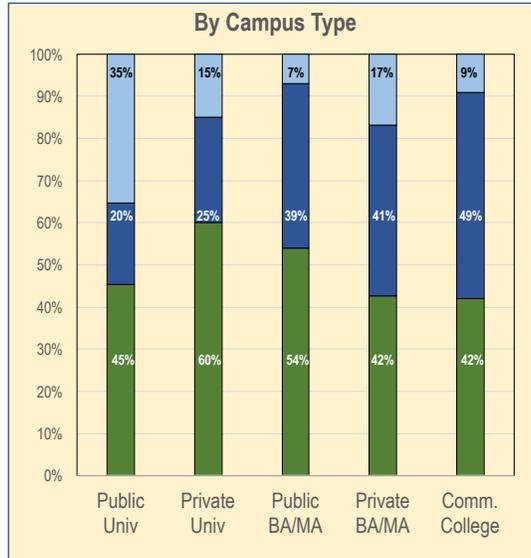
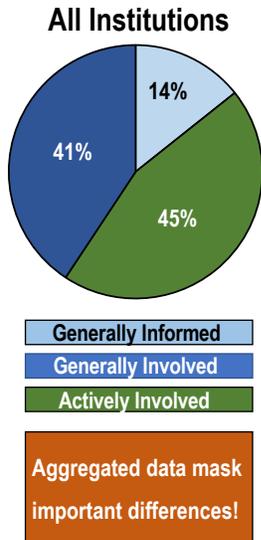
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CAO Involvement in Decisions About Digital Learning

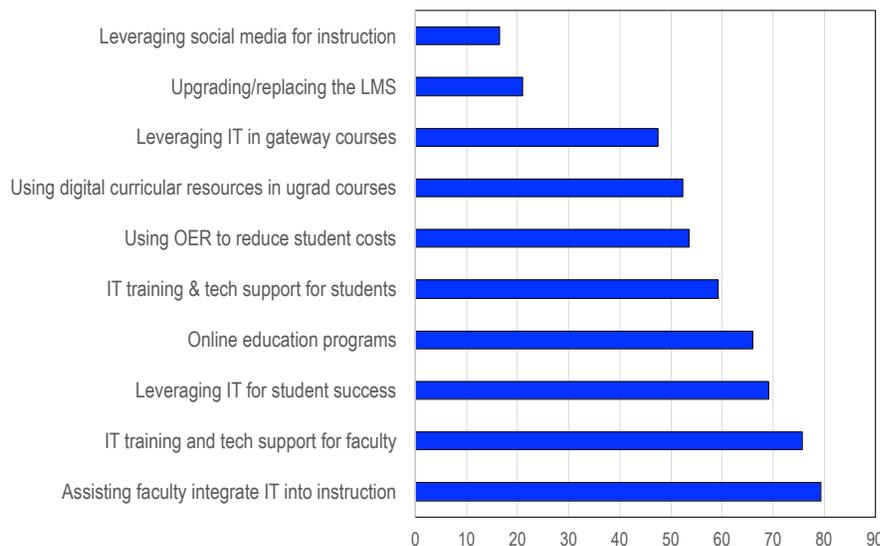


- Not clear if the variations in CAO engagement reflect differences in sectors or simply individual differences in campus cultures and also the individuals who serve as the CAOs at a particular time.

CAOs: Campus IT Priorities

Scale: 1=not important; 7=very important; percentage reporting 6/7

How important are the following digital learning and IT issues and initiatives at your institution over the next two-three years?



- Top CAO priorities focus on instruction, faculty support and student success, and online programs
- Little variation by sector

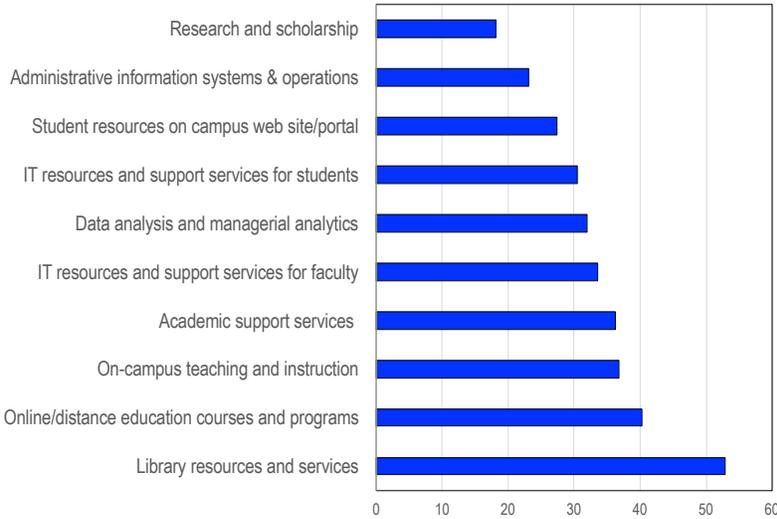
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Rating the Effectiveness of Campus IT Investments

How would you rate the effectiveness of your institution's investment in IT resources and services?

Scale: 1=not effective; 7=very effective; percentage reporting 6/7

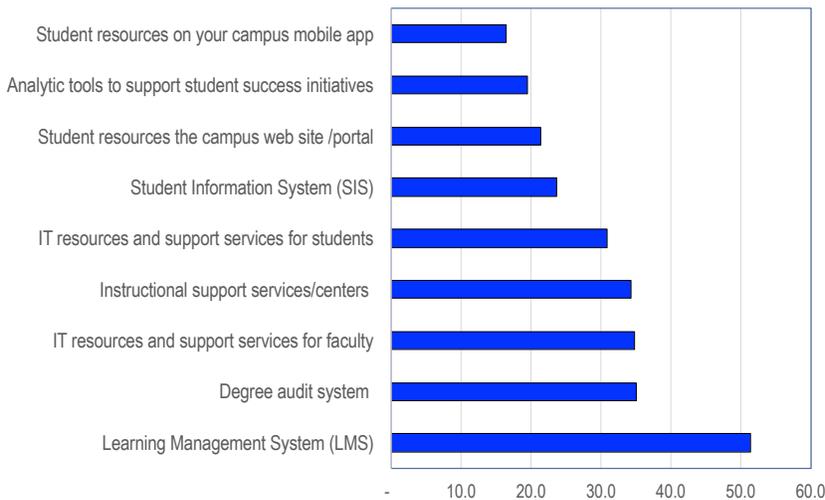


- Disappointing "returns on investment" for many key IT resources and services

Satisfaction with IT Resources and Services

How would you characterize the general level of satisfaction with key IT resources and services?

Scale: 1=not satisfied; 7=very satisfied; percentage reporting 6/7



- **Falling far short of the consumer market experience:** mobile apps and analytics rated lowest for campus satisfaction.
- **NOTE:** The much maligned LMS gets the highest rating!

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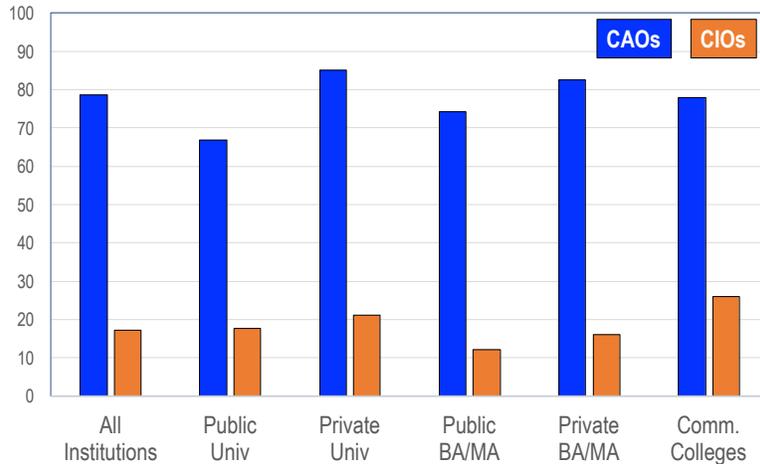
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CAOs vs. CIOs

Recognition and Reward for Faculty

percentage reporting yes

We have a formal program to recognize and reward the faculty use of digital learning and IT as part of the review and promotion process.



- Big differences in the reports from CAOs and CIOs on recognition and reward for faculty
- **INFRASTRUCTURE FOSTERS INNOVATION:** faculty recognition and reward are essential!

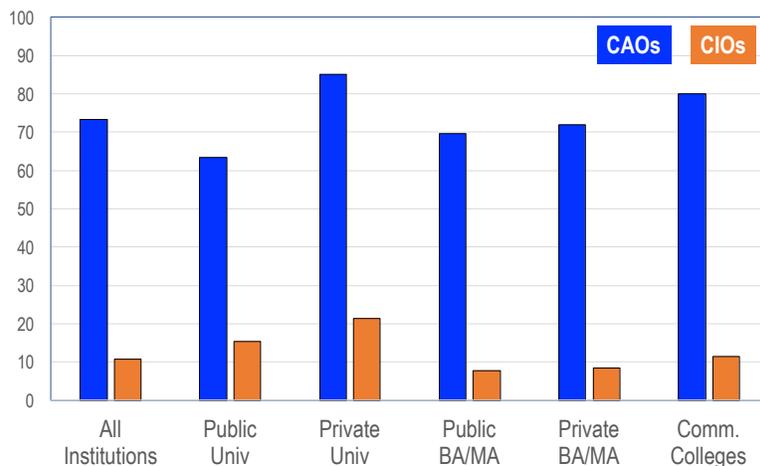
Source: 2017 ACAO CAO Survey
2016 Campus Computing Survey

CAOs vs. CIOs

Do We Assess Our IT Initiatives?

percentage reporting yes

We have a formal program to assess the impact of IT on instruction and learning outcomes.



- Huge differences in the reports from CAOs and CIOs about campus efforts to assess the impact of campus IT investments in instruction and learning outcomes.

Source: 2017 ACAO CAO Survey
2017 Campus Computing Survey

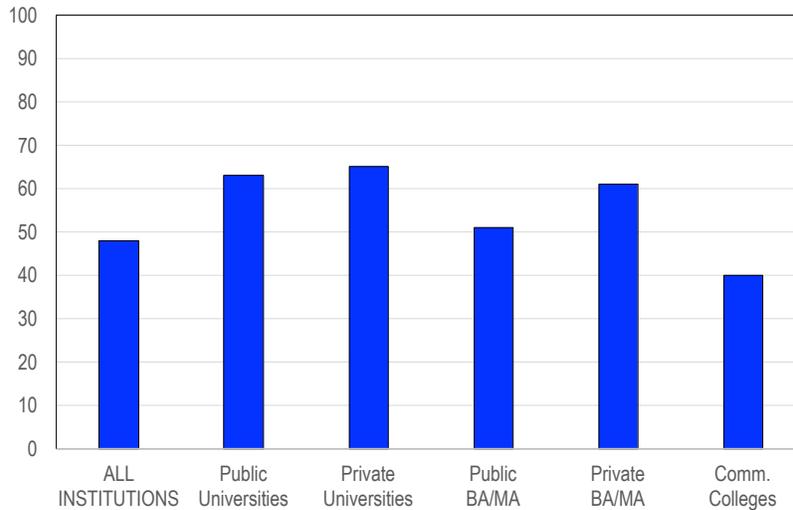
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Still Recovering from the “Great Recession”

percentage who agree/strongly agree

My institution has successfully recovered from the budget cuts we experienced during the economic downturn that began in 2008.



- The continuing impact on academic programs, institutional resources, and campus services
- CIOs report similar numbers: 62 percent say IT has not recovered from the impact of budget cuts over the past 6 years
- The compounding consequences of continuing IT budget cuts and mid-year reductions

Decision-Making and Student Outcomes

percentage who agree/strongly agree

	%
My institution does a good job of using data to aid and inform institutional planning and decision-making.	76 (30% Strongly Agree)
My institution does a good job of identifying and assessing student outcomes.	81 (31% Strongly Agree)

- CAOS believe that their institutions are informed by data and can identify appropriate outcomes.
- Yet many lament the current state of analytics and the data that drive student success efforts

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Why “Go Digital?”

percentage who agree/strongly agree

	%
Digital curricular learning resources make learning more efficient and effective for students.	87 (31% Strongly Agree)
Digital curricular learning resources provide a richer and more personalized learning experience than traditional print materials.	74 (29% Strongly Agree)

Well into the “fourth decade of the IT revolution in higher education,” CAOs remain optimistic about the potential of new technologies transform the student learning experience.

The Lure of Adaptive Learning Technology

percentage who agree/strongly agree

	%
Adaptive learning technology has great potential to improve learning outcomes for students.	92 (42% Strongly Agree)
I would like our faculty to make greater use of adaptive learning technologies and related curricular resources in our entry level / gateway courses	87 (47% Strongly Agree)

- Great faith in the potential of adaptive learning
- Great eagerness to expand the use of adoptive technology in entry-level and gateway courses

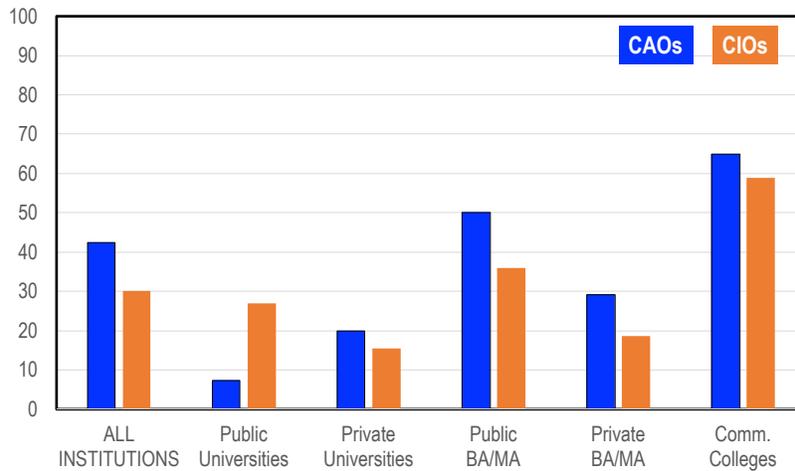
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Challenges to “Going Digital”

percentage who agree/strongly agree

Our efforts to go “all digital” with course materials are impeded by the fact that many of our students do not own digital devices needed to access course resources.



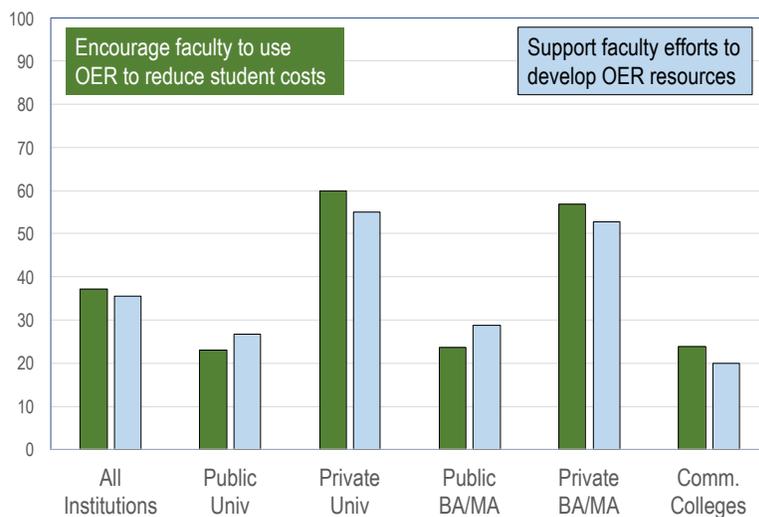
Sources: 2017 ACAO CAO Survey
2017 Campus Computing Survey
2016 Going Digital Survey

Student access to digital devices remains a major issue across almost all sectors:

- Three-fifths of CAOs view device access as a problem for their students.
- One fourth of faculty and a third of CIOs say their students don't have access to digital devices essential for “going digital.”

Encouraging the Use of Open Education Resources (OER)

percentage reporting yes



OER has become part of the campus strategy to address costs:

- 72 pct. of CAOs expect OER to be a major source of curricular content in five years
- **Faculty issue:** student cost vs. faculty choice of course materials
- **Faculty concern:** quality

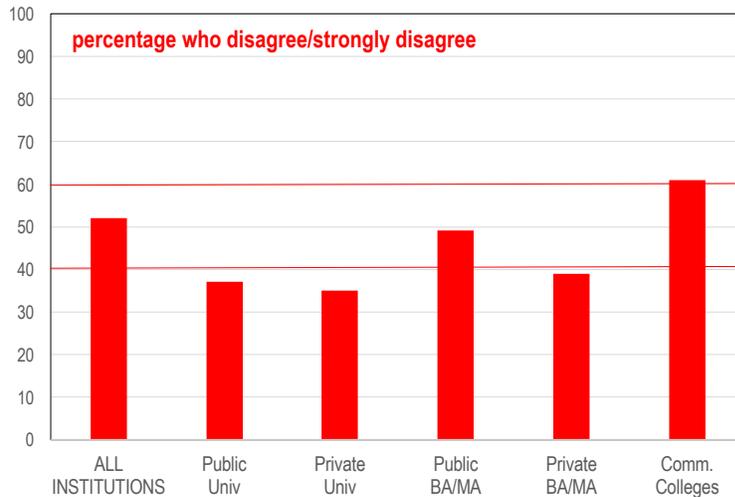
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The Continuing Impact of the “Great Recession”

percentage who disagree/strongly disagree

My institution has successfully recovered from the budget cuts we experienced during the economic downturn that began in 2008.

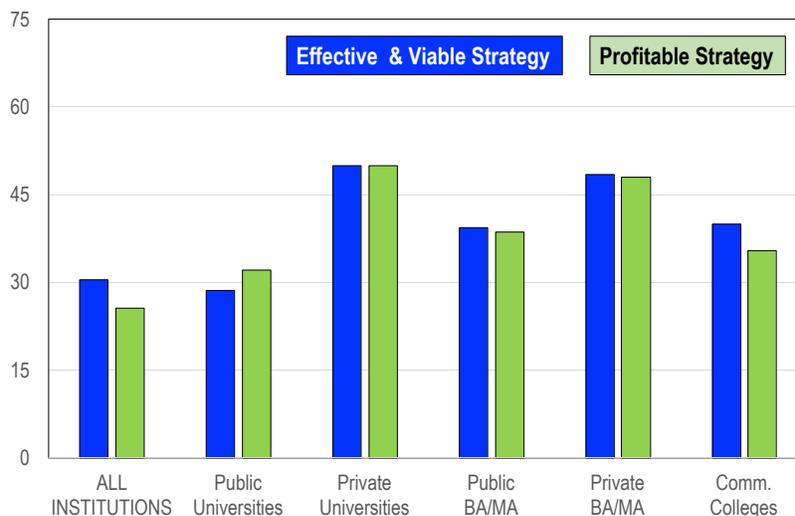


Budget cuts have compounding consequences.

- About half of campuses still feeling the impact of budget cuts that began in 2008
- Three-fifths of community colleges are still struggling.
- Three-fifths of CIOs report that their IT units have not recovered from a continuing cycle of annual and mid-year budget cuts

Outsourcing Online Programs

percentage who agree/strongly agree



In aggregate, the majority of CAOs appear to oppose outsourcing online programs:

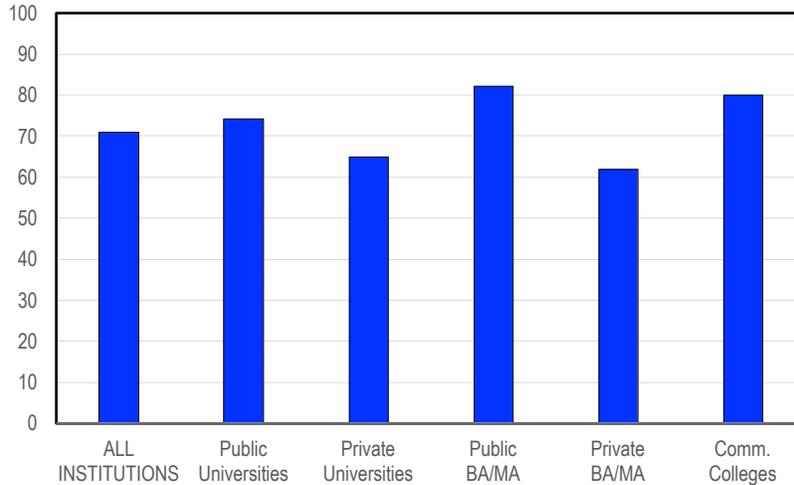
- Outsourcing generally viewed as neither a viable nor a profitable campus strategy
- CIOs offer similar assessments

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Addressing Digital Accessibility

percentage who agree/strongly agree



My institution does a good job of addressing digital accessibility issues for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.

- CAOs believe their institutions are going well on digital accessibility:
- In contrast, just a fifth of CIOs rate accessibility resources and services as excellent



Attention Must Be Paid

- Where's the plan for going digital?" (And who leads the planning initiatives?)
- Gap in the aspirations for new technologies vs. the experience with current tech resources
- Analytic angst
- Many students need still need digital devices!
- CAOs vs. CIOs: Big differences on efforts to assess IT initiatives and provide recognition & reward for faculty
- Digital accessibility (still) looms large for all institutions.
- Lingering impact of the "Great Recession"



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Casey Green is the founding director of The Campus Computing Project, the largest continuing study of the role of eLearning and information technology in American colleges and universities. The project is widely cited by campus officials and corporate executives as a definitive source for data, information, and insight about IT planning and policy issues affecting higher education.

The author or editor of some 20 books and published research reports and more than 100 articles and commentaries that have appeared in academic journals and professional publications, Green also serves as the moderator and co-producer for *To a Degree*, the postsecondary success podcast of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Additionally, he directs the Digital Fellows Program for the Association of Chief Academic Officers. His *Digital Tweed* blog is published by *Inside Higher Ed*.

In 2002 Green received the first EDUCAUSE Award for Leadership in Public Policy and Practice. The EDUCAUSE award cites his work in creating The Campus Computing Project and recognizes his "prominence in the arena of national and international technology agendas, and the linking of higher education to those agendas."

A graduate of New College (FL), Green earned his Ph.D. in higher education and public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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