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## Preview of 2022 **Brand Assessment findings**

June 10, 2022  
Presented by: Cathy Lucas and Jim Ylisela

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# Today's Agenda

- I. Assignment
- II. Research Findings
- III. Key Insights
- IV. Brand personality, vivid descriptors and positioning statement
- V. Next Steps
- VI. Questions



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# Assignment



- **Assess current understandings, perceptions and beliefs** about UNC among its internal and external audiences
- Better **define the UNC brand**
- **Highlight the value of a UNC degree** and its powerful impact on the Greeley community, the state of Colorado, and beyond
- Evaluate the **effectiveness and consistency** of its communications channels and content
- Recommend **marketing and public relations strategies**, with key messaging, based on our research findings



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# Methodology



- **23 discovery** meetings
- **Six focus groups** with 25 participants
  - faculty, staff, current students, alumni, community & employers
- **35 In-depth interviews** with stakeholders
  - faculty, staff, deans, donors, trustees, lobbyist, business and community representatives, alumni and prospective students
- Survey
  - Sent to **17,794 individuals**, **926 responses**
  - With a **5.2% response** rate



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# Survey Findings

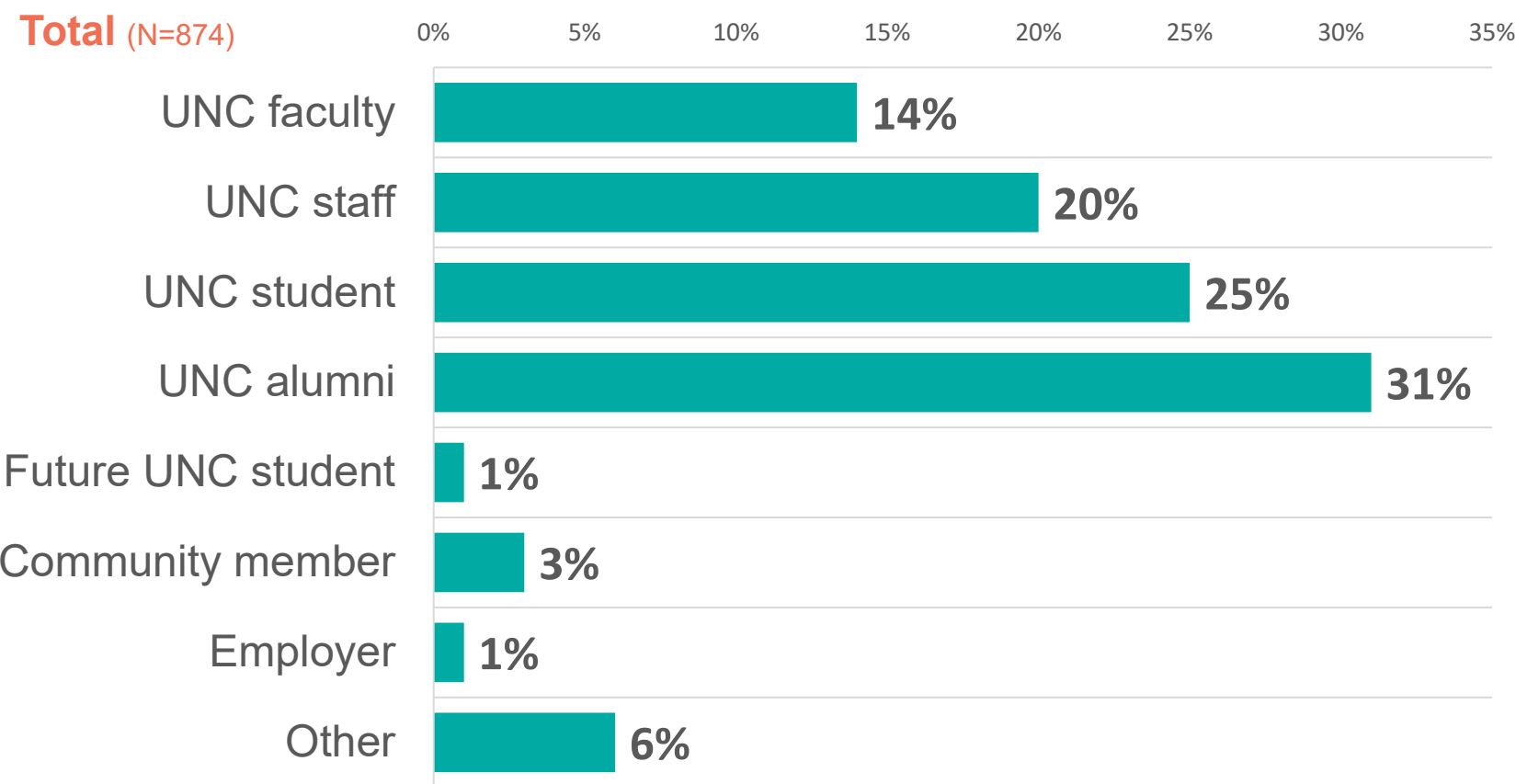


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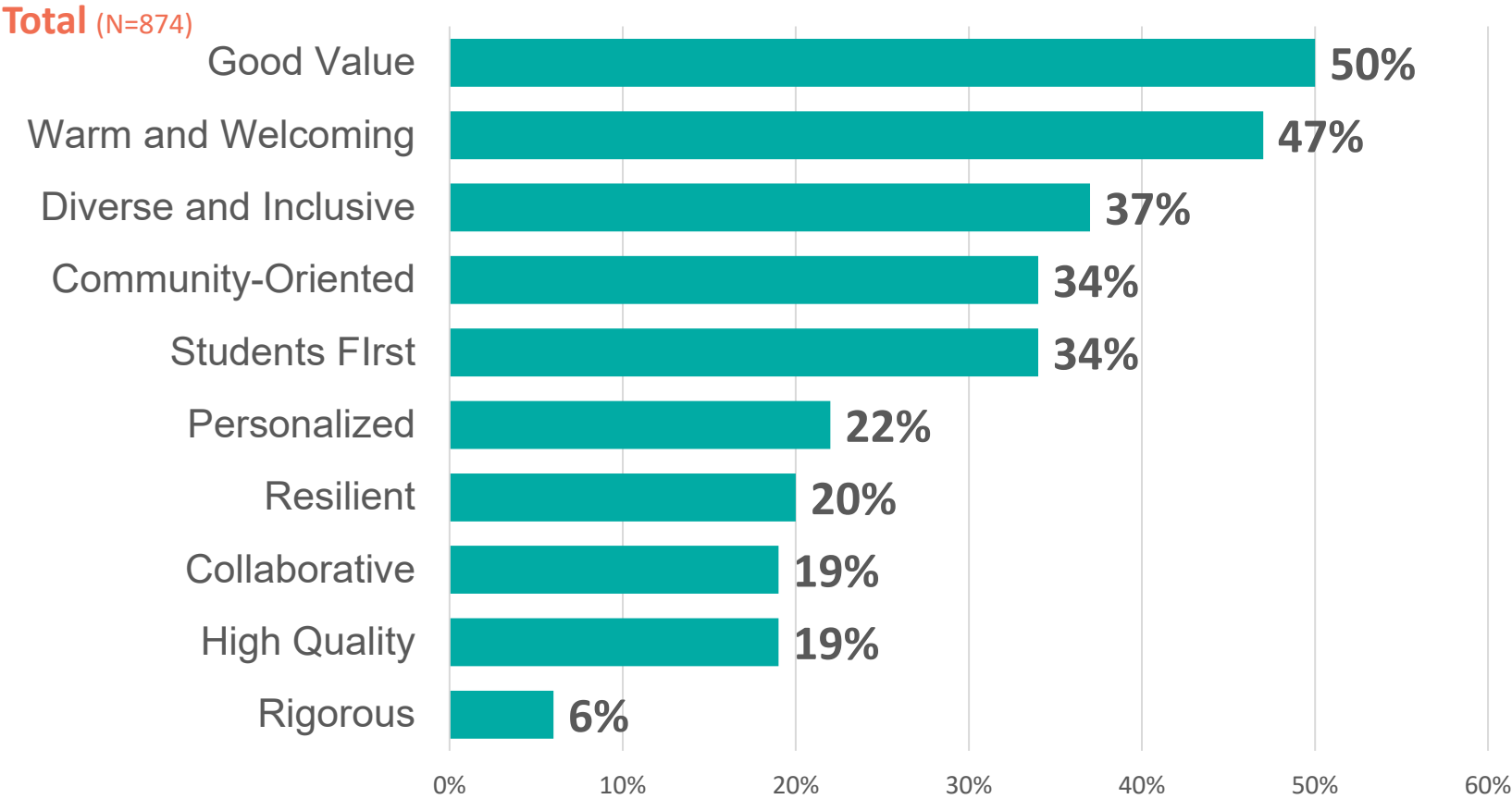
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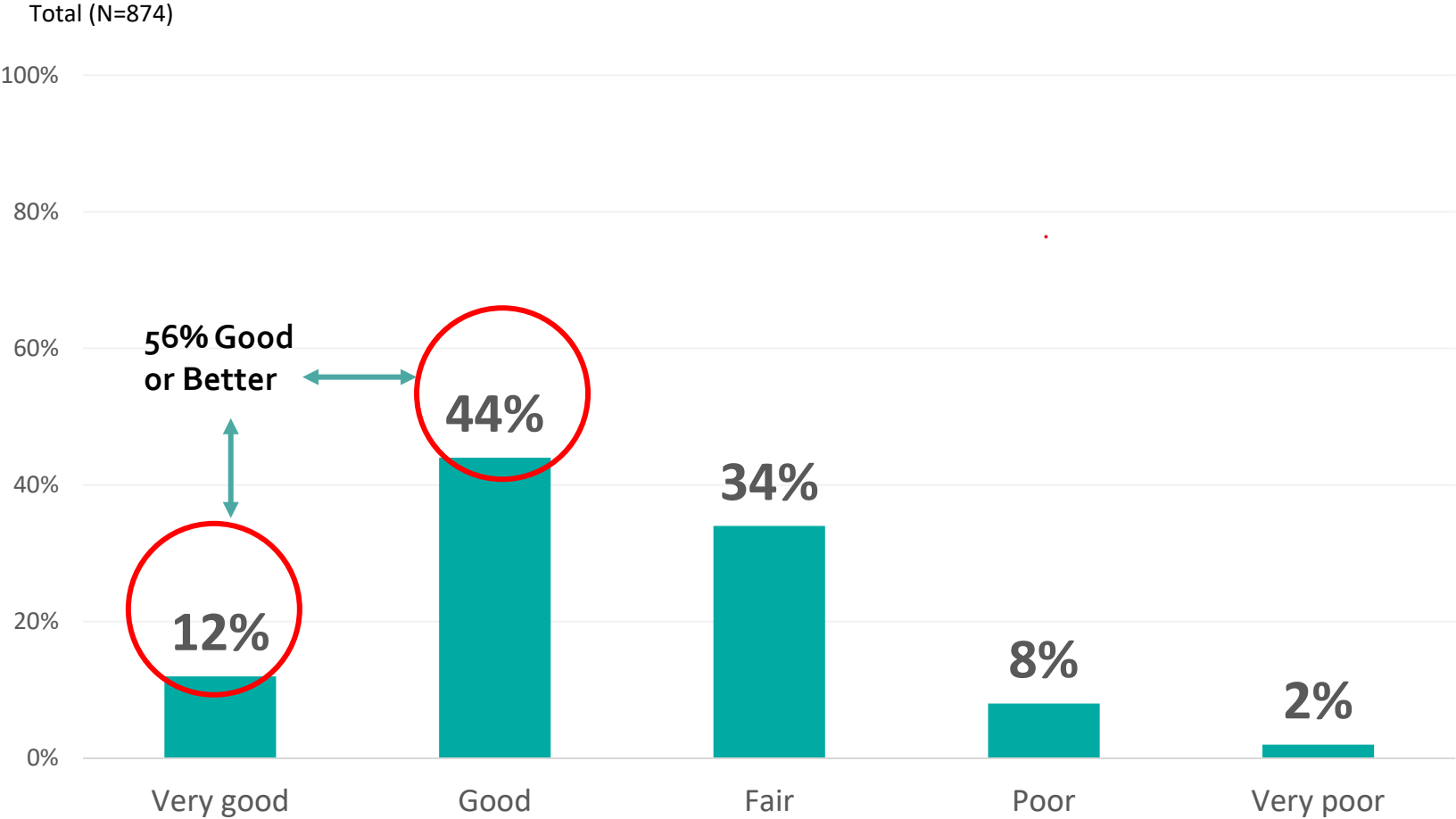
Q26. Which of the following best describes your current role?



Q1. Pick three words that best describe the University of Northern Colorado (UNC):



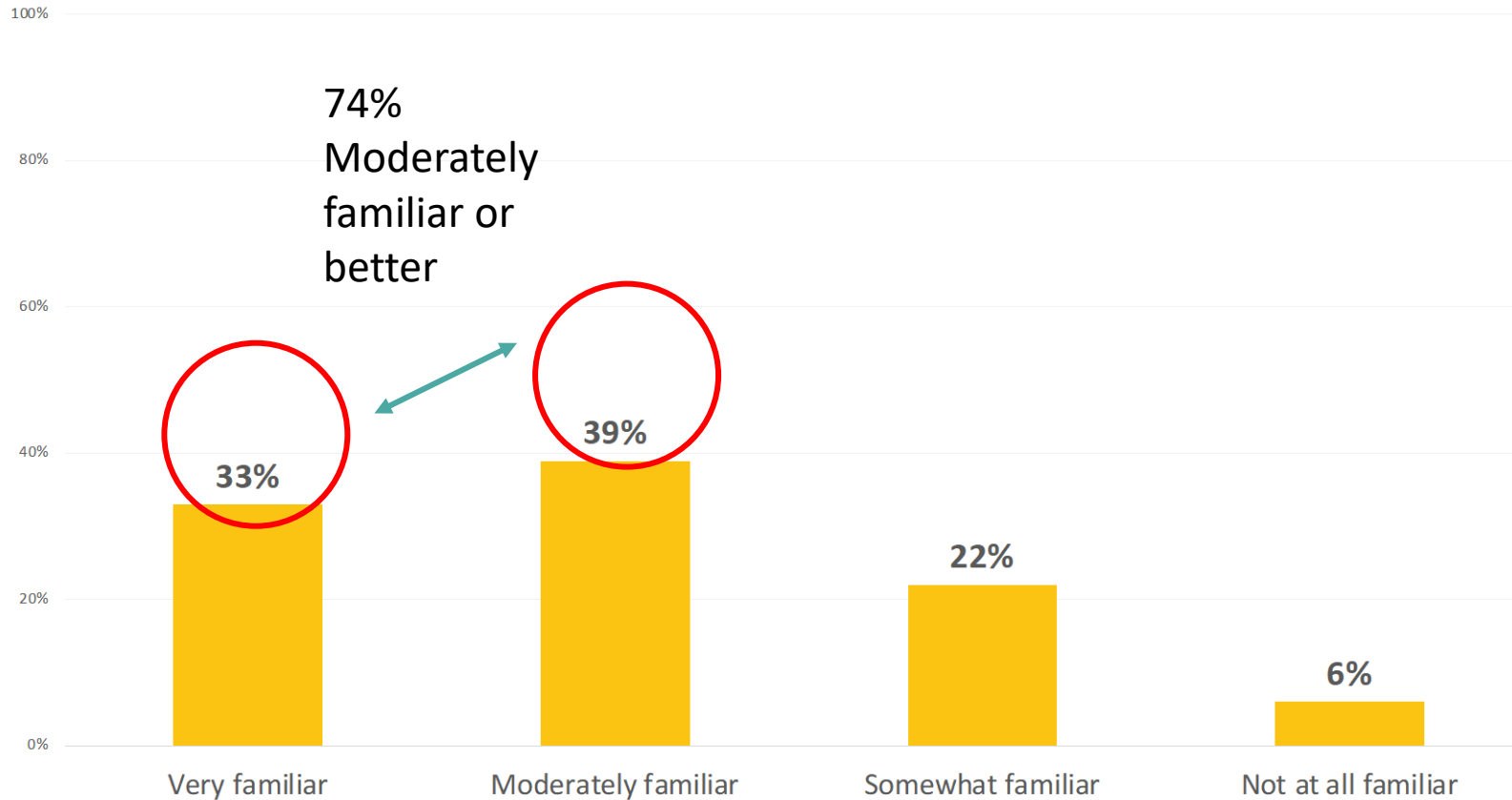
Q2. How would you describe UNC's overall reputation in Colorado?





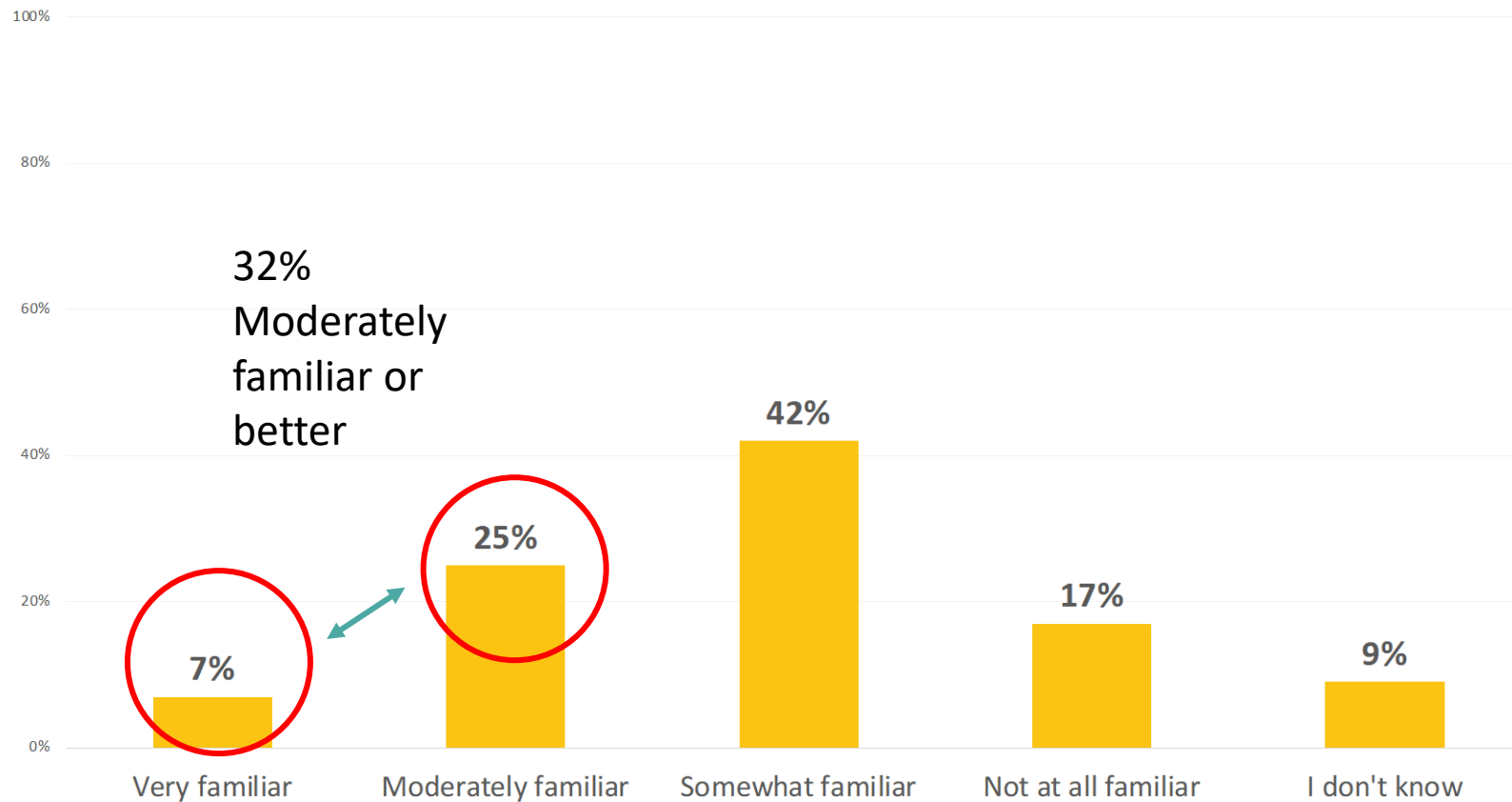
### Q3. How familiar are you with UNC's brand (what it's known for and its strengths)?

Total (N=874)



## Q4. How familiar is UNC's brand beyond Greeley and throughout Colorado?

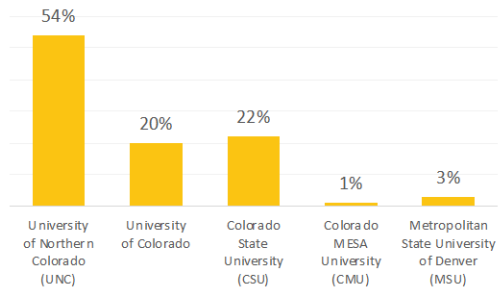
Total (N=874)



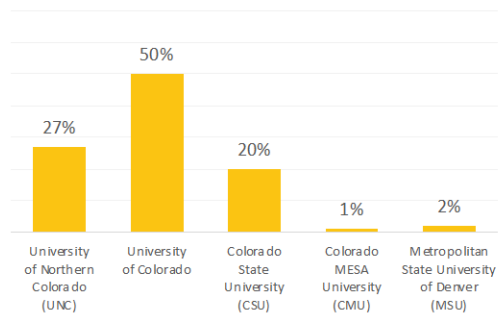
## Q8. In Colorado, which university: (Pick top choice for each.)

**Total** (N=874)

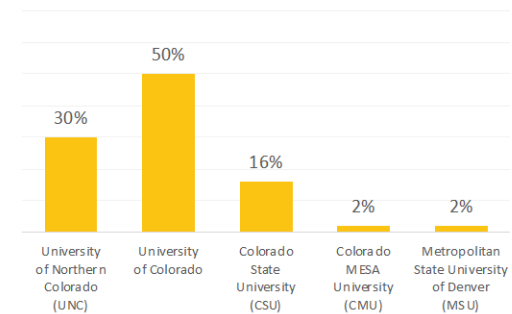
**Is the school you would first recommend to someone seeking a fouryear degree. (N=)**



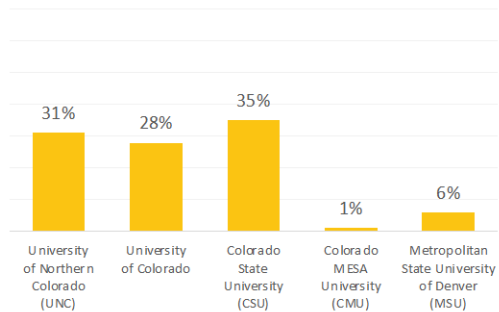
**Provides the highest quality education. (N=)**



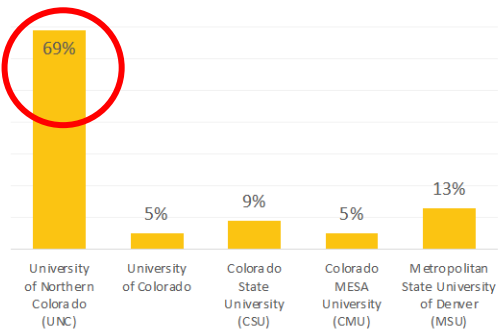
**Has the highest quality faculty. (N=)**



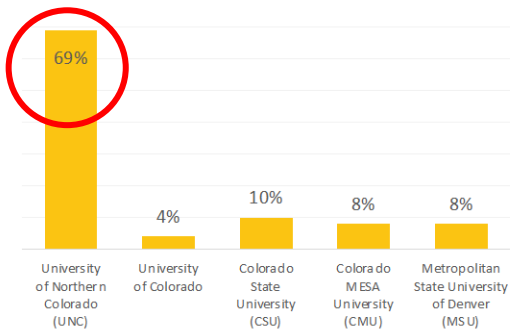
**Offers the most relevant degrees. (N=)**



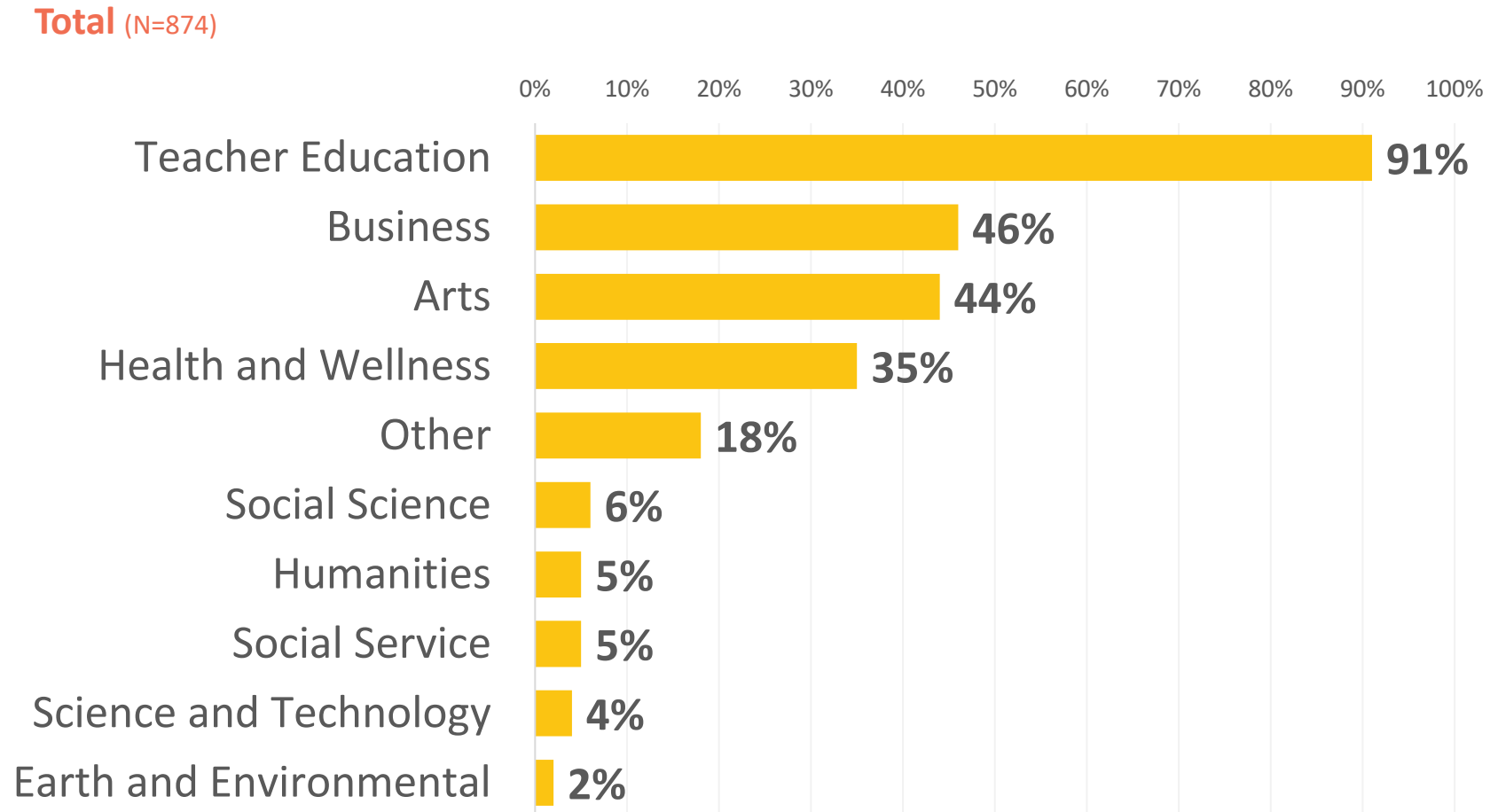
**Is the best educational value. (N=)**



**Offers the most personalized student experience. (N=)**

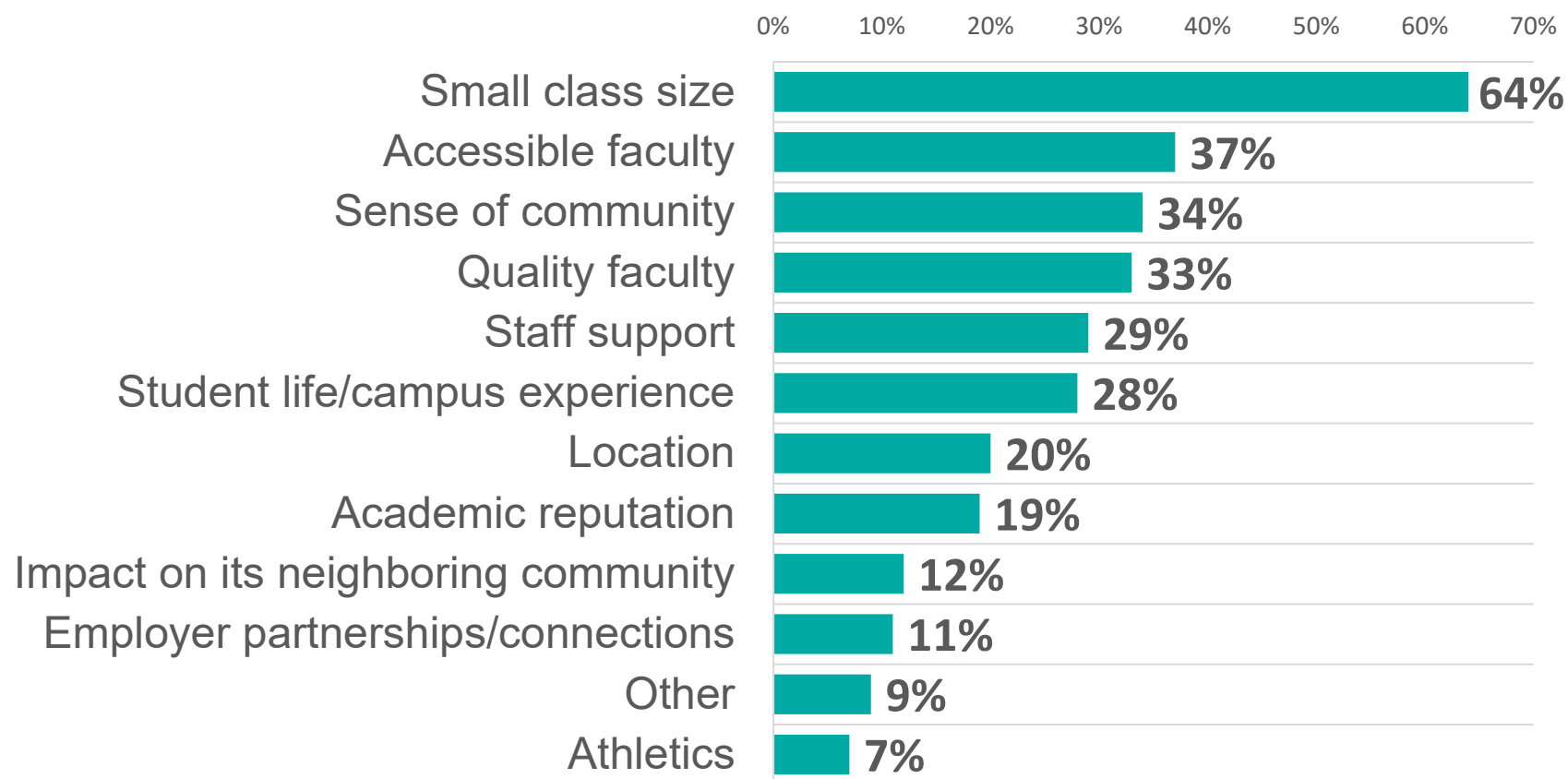


## Q9. Which of these academic programs is UNC best known for? (Select all that apply.)



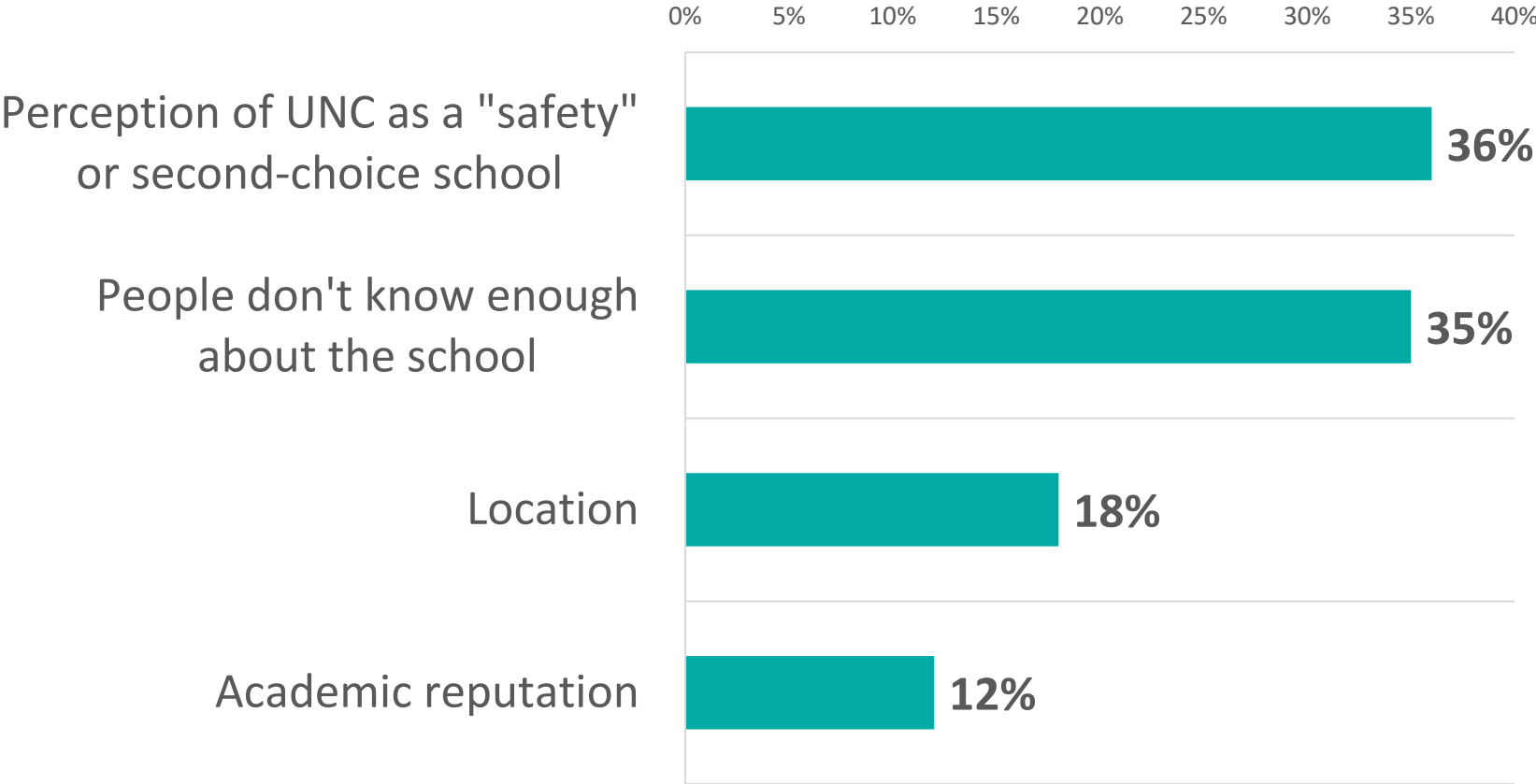
## Q22. In your view, what makes UNC a special school? (Select TOP THREE choices.)

**Total** (N=874)



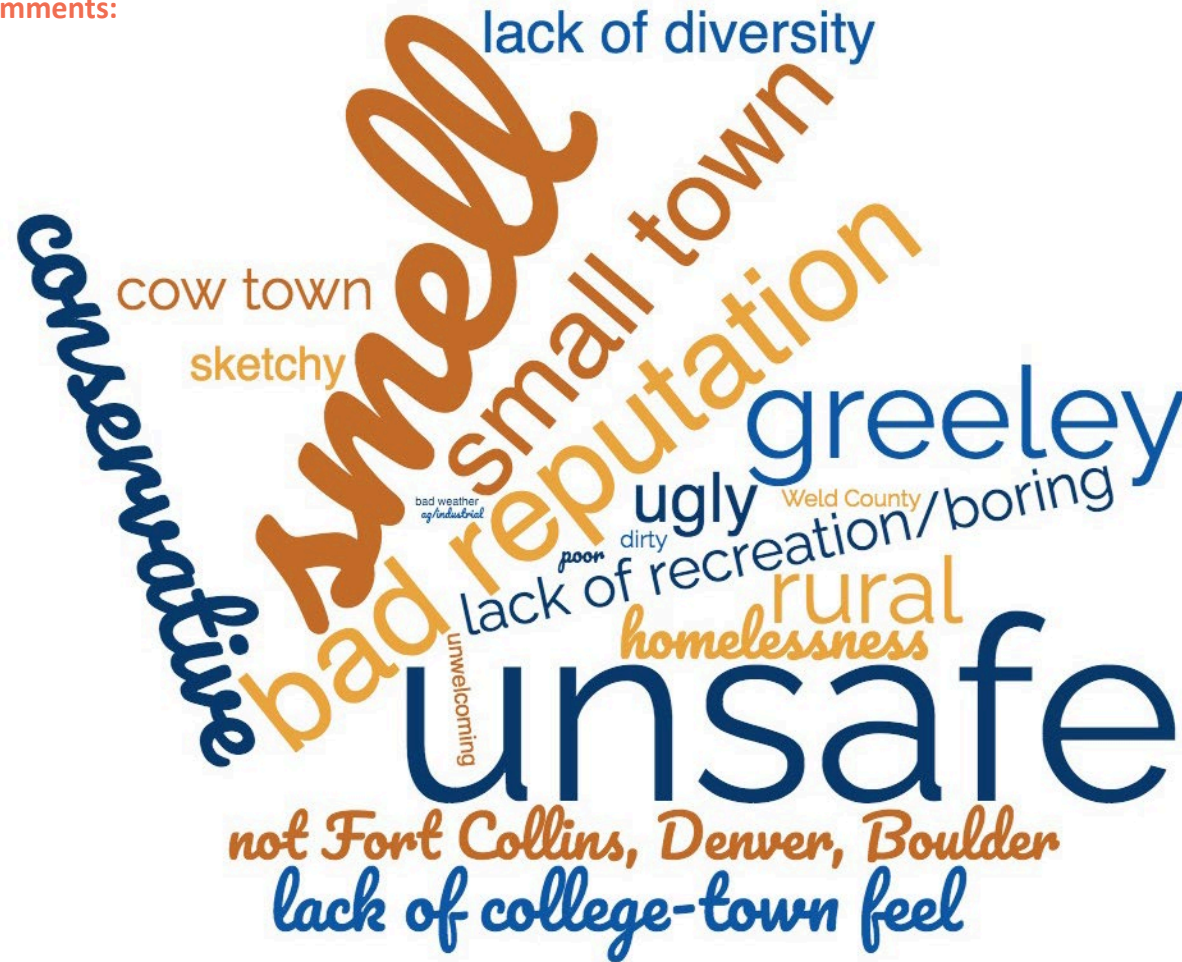
Q23. In your view, what holds UNC back? (Select TOP choice.)

Total (N=874)



## Q24. What about the location holds UNC back?

Themes based on 205 open-ended comments:





## Key Finding #1:

UNC's brand identity  
is muddled –



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*“Declare who you are and  
stick with it.”* - UNC Alum

**Define the UNC brand**

**Integrate key brand traits, and craft a  
personality that clearly demonstrates the  
core elements of your identity**

Academically, you're known for:

- **Teacher Education**
- **Business**
- **Theater**
- **Nursing**
- **And, Graduate programs**
  - UNC is described as a *smart place*  
to get your Master's

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## Key Finding #1 (cont.):

UNC's brand identity  
is muddled.



## Key ingredients in your secret sauce:

- Small class size
- Accessible and quality faculty
- Sense of community
- Staff support
- Student life/campus experience

-**Own your Upward Mobility ranking** and share it widely. You are a leader in serving the **Next Generation of Students!**

-**Demonstrate** the wide breadth and depth of **diversity on the UNC campus**

-**Flip the narrative** that UNC is a second choice or safety school and **frame it as a University of choice**  
-**72% of your students said** UNC is their top choice

## Key Finding #1 (cont.):

UNC's brand identity  
is muddled.



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*“Build on the momentum happening in Greeley and use it to move your brand forward.”*

- Northern Colorado community member

- Leverage the transformations occurring at both the **City of Greeley and UNC**, while seeking new opportunities for partnerships that are mutually beneficial
  - **Combine forces** to boost awareness, and heighten trust and loyalty through **dual marketing strategies**
  - Weave together a rich tapestry of **co-branded events, marketing materials** and **PR opportunities**

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## Key Finding #2:

UNC's brand has been in hibernation, your story is untold



*"You haven't been out there, and people have forgotten about you."*

- UNC alum

## Competitors have crept into UNC's space

University of  
Colorado

Colorado  
State  
University

CU Denver

CU Colorado  
Springs

Colorado  
Mesa  
University

MSU Denver

Aims  
Community  
College

## Key Finding #2:

UNC's brand has been in hibernation, your story is untold



**It is time to amplify the UNC brand and unabashedly tell your story.**

- Move your branding efforts from **transactional** to **transformational**
- Invest in **long-term marketing and communication strategies** that position UNC as a higher education leader, while working towards recruitment and fundraising goals
  - Invest **more \$\$s into your advertising** campaign
    - Especially in the Latinx market
- **Deepen your marketing and communications bench** to focus on digital marketing, paid and earned media
  - Your website must be your No. 1 investment

# Key Finding #3:

UNC has  
esteem issues among its  
biggest champions

*Faculty and staff tend to apologize for "just" being a teachers college, Greeley and left behind by the others.*

## Be unapologetic!

- Your **students are taught by top-notch educators** and go on to be front-line workers, policy makers, leaders in government, business and in their communities. **Shout this out to anyone who will listen!**
- Share details on the Greeley of today – **fourth fast-growing metropolitan region in the country**
- **Stop worrying about CU and CSU** (as well as other competitors) and proudly focus on what UNC does well

## Key Finding #3 (cont.):

UNC has  
esteem issues among  
its biggest champions



**An external change in your image will only come from an internal culture shift.**

- **Boost your esteem** -- Stop apologizing and start amplifying
- **Define and embrace your brand promise** and brand personality traits that support the brand
  - *Expand on North of the Norm*
- Create and launch a **brand ambassador training program** that empowers and rewards

*“We should be known as a college of choice, not a college of default. If we overcome our own reputational stigmas, this will happen.”*

- Recent UNC graduate



# Key Finding #4:

## The people at UNC are a key brand asset – use them!



**Supportive faculty and staff are top of mind in the student experience.**

- **Rebuild your Faculty expert program** with local and national news media
  - Focus on building a stable of experts in the areas that you're known for and beyond
- Highlight **faculty and staff, as well as students and alumni** in your marketing efforts

*"At UNC, faculty know more about me than just my name. They know what's going on in my life and are committed to my career success."*

- UNC Student

# Key Finding #4:

## The people at UNC are a key brand asset – use them!



President Feinstein's increased visibility and collaborative approach is widely recognized.

- Continue to **build on this momentum**
- **Deepen the leadership bench** that interfaces with external stakeholders to include staff and faculty
- **Build an ambassador base**
  - Create advocates throughout Colorado – starting with Alums

# Your Current Brand Position

## Shift your Position

### What people know you for:

- Teacher's College and/or Nursing school
- Second choice school
- Value
- The Greeley of the past – Cowtown

### What you rightfully own in the market:

- Small college experience
- Educators who put students first
- Personalized attention
- Strong return on your investment
- State leader in upward mobility
- Located in the fourth-fastest growing region in the country
  - There's a lot going on here



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# When probed deeper, **richer concepts emerge**

- **Quality Faculty** (supportive, experienced, attentive, experts in their fields— helping every student find their potential)
- **Small class sizes** (better opportunity for 1:1 contact with faculty and to find their way in a small-knit community)
- **Atypical University** – no label defines the UNC student/North of the Norm (our students are unique, high number of transfers, have a life outside of school, either on campus or in their respective communities)
- It's easy to find your community here
- It's more than a degree, **students feel a sense of belonging** at the University and in the Greeley community

# Brand Values

The essence of  
the brand and the  
code by which the  
brand lives

**B** Belonging  
**E<sup>2</sup>** Excellence and Engage  
**A** Access  
**R** ROI  
**S** Supportive



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# Vivid Descriptors

## UNC's unique features and benefits

### Belonging

It's **more than a degree**, students feel a sense of belonging at UNC. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds and intersecting identities of our campus, while empowering our students to expand their world, and learn from both shared and diverse perspectives.

### Excellence

**Teaching is in our DNA.** Our faculty and staff are top-notch educators who strive for excellence daily, encouraging our student's exploration and learning, while contributing to our students' success.

### Engage

**At UNC, students are a part of Bear Country**, a community of tight-knit relationships, connections with faculty, mentorships with alumni, and a host of opportunities for engaged learning outside of the classroom. Nestled in the fourth fastest-growing region in the country, our strong community connections with education, healthcare, business and nonprofit help prepare and engage our students in their future professions.



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# Vivid Descriptors

## UNC's unique features and benefits

### Access

We not only provide access to an education, but our supportive faculty and staff work to ensure **our students receive opportunities that transform their lives, their families and their communities**. We believe that every student matters, and we are committed to helping them grow.

### ROI

At UNC, **we empower our students to maximize their potential for lifelong success**. When our students graduate, they have more than just a degree – they will have skills to go far and make their lives, their families and their communities better.

### Supportive

**We exist to transform the lives of our students**. Our faculty and staff are personally invested in ensuring a quality experience for every UNC student. We have all of the features of a large university, but our small college feel provides a place for success for anyone who dreams of getting an education.



# Position Statement

What do we do?  
How do we do it?  
Why does it matter?

Located in Greeley, the fourth **fastest-growing region** in the country, the University of Northern Colorado **provides students an exceptional return on investment**. On a campus where everyone belongs, UNC faculty and staff provide a **personalized, excellent educational experience to each unique student in a warm and welcoming environment**.

A **leader in upward mobility**, UNC is the future of higher education, allowing **students of all backgrounds to expand their horizons**, pursue **successful careers** and **change their lives, their families and communities**.



## Next Steps

Create an **organized marketing and communications platform** that incorporates the: vision, audit findings, vivid descriptors, brand personality traits and brand positioning statement

Empower a Marketing Guru to lead these efforts **AND allow space** for the entire Advancement team to focus on the big picture

And, then **AMPLIFY**



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# Thoughts/ Questions?

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[cathy@lucasnarratives.com](mailto:cathy@lucasnarratives.com)  
[www.lucasnarratives.com](http://www.lucasnarratives.com)  
303-916-1002

