

# **Auraria Participatory Budgeting 2018 Research and Evaluation Report**

Prepared by Vincent Russell, MA, and Therese Gardner  
The University of Colorado Boulder  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As a tri-institutional process, the Auraria Participatory Budgeting project had many goals to accomplish within a 4-month period, including promoting collaboration across the three schools on campus, fostering widespread participation in the process from students, and addressing larger social inequalities. With a narrow period to develop and implement Auraria's first participatory budgeting (PB) cycle, there were many barriers to overcome to successfully make this project work. Some of the barriers faced as project proposals were developed and vetted involved: getting accurate cost estimates for some projects, anticipating conditions that could delay project implementation, accounting for the institution's engineering standards, and other structural elements that could limit the possibility of a project. In spite of these barriers, Auraria PB participants were flexible, open-minded, and prepared to develop other strategies that would ensure projects met all legal requirements and were feasible by AHEC and other campus advisors to be implemented. As a pilot PB project, Auraria PB had both roadblocks and successes that will benefit the process in the next cycle of PB.

## EVALUATORS

This PB process, as a community-based research project, was evaluated to document who participates, how they participate, and the impact of the process on participants. The evaluation was designed to provide data and analysis to This Machine Has a Soul (TMHS) to meet funders' evaluation requirements by assessing the quality of community participation, documenting the strengths and weaknesses of the PB process, and analyzing its impacts on participants. While the evaluation was a coordinated effort between the principal researcher, community members, and organizers of TMHS, it was primarily conducted by Vincent Russell (principal researcher) and Therese Gardner (assistant researcher) for TMHS. Vincent Russell is a doctoral student in the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado Boulder currently studying the ways communicative practices promote social justice. He was the president of Participatory Budgeting Greensboro where he worked to secure the city's first PB process in 2015. Therese Gardner is an undergraduate student in the Department of Communication and assisted with the evaluation to gain experience conducting research and to learn about activist social change campaigns for social justice.

## KEY FINDINGS

Overall, the research shows that participants of the Auraria Participatory Budgeting project felt empowered to influence the decisions that directly affect their lives in a manner many of them had never been afforded. Survey questionnaire responses, interview remarks, and participant observations were used throughout this report to document the impacts both in numbers and participant perspectives and provided evidence for the following findings:

- 1. Auraria PB increased student involvement and campus/community engagement.** Of the 540 individuals who voted, including steering committee members and budget delegate members, 54% of respondents had not previously worked with others in the past year to address a

campus/community problem, demonstrating that APB attracted the involvement of students who are not typically involved in public affairs.

2. **Auraria PB was successful in representing, and at times over-representing, historically marginalized communities, including people of color and low-income residents,** demonstrating that participants were mostly representative of campus demographics in ethnicity, income, and gender. Of the 540 respondents who voted in PB, 71% reported a household income less than \$50,000, demonstrating that Auraria PB voters were disproportionately lower income. In addition, Auraria PB voters proportionally represented women, African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics.
3. **Auraria PB was well-received by participants,** with 92% of PB voters believing the process should continue after the first cycle.
4. **Auraria PB empowered people to get involved in other forms of community engagement,** including running for student government, joining clubs on campus, and attending public hearings related to the campus budget. Other indirect effects of the process included some student projects being implemented outside of PB, including a bike rental program and a cigarette butt disposal program.
5. **Auraria PB allowed participants a unique means of engagement,** in which participants were able to engage in public affairs that differed from traditional forms of community involvement or civic participation. Participants saw PB as uniquely beneficial for teaching them how to advance social change in their communities.

*“It [PB] also provided me with the opportunity to become more engaged on campus and develop a sense of community.” - Steering Committee Member*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As the first cycle, Auraria PB succeeded in developing project proposals to later be implemented, despite many obstacles that materialized throughout the process and needed to be handled before moving forward. There were several challenges faced due to time and budget that must be considered fully if the process continues in the future.

1. **Institutionalize funding from sources that increase the amount of money allocated annually.** We recommend more money be invested into Auraria PB to empower students and strengthen the process in a way that effectively engages the campus community and advances equity and inclusion. We recommend that Auraria ultimately allocate \$9.85 per student to PB (approximately \$414,000) to bring it on par with per-resident spending of PB processes across North America. No less than \$50,000 should be allocated to Auraria PB to ensure that participants are provided enough resources to accomplish meaningful change on campus.
2. **Increase the timeline of the process to a full academic year.** The first cycle of Auraria PB was planned and implemented in the span of a single semester, and many participants expressed not having enough time to achieve their goals. Future cycles of Auraria PB should start in the fall semester and conclude with a vote at the end of the spring semester, which will bring the length of the process closer in alignment to the national average.

3. **Develop a better relationship with campus staff.** Establishing stronger connections with campus staff would aid in the development of project proposals to better coordinate project proposal and implementation. Additionally, many participants believed administrators' decision-making processes had failed them, so improving communication between campus staff and students would help build trust.
4. **Hire more facilitators that come from community organizing backgrounds.** The first cycle of Auraria PB was led by individuals from community organizing backgrounds. The staff that implement PB should have similar commitments to inclusion, equity, and social justice, for community organizers understand that relationships between community members are necessary to building capacity and power within groups. Hiring such staff will help PB continue to be a unique and empowering form of campus engagement for participants.
5. **Organize and host more structured idea collection events.** By encouraging more structured idea collection events, members will better be able to promote a deeper, more focused discussion of student needs and campus issues. Guided discussion of project ideas will generate higher quality projects and provide opportunities to build connections between students and between students and campus staff.

	Steering Committee	Budget Delegates	Voters	Auraria
<b>Age</b>				
Traditional Age (under 25)	42.86%	64.29%	74%	61%
Non-traditional Age (25+)	57.14%	35.71%	26%	39%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	50%	64%	59%	54%
Male	50%	35.71%	37%	46%
Gender Non-binary	0%	0%	3%	NA*
Prefer to self-describe	0%	0%	1%	NA*
<b>School Affiliation</b>				
Community College of Denver	21.43%	14.29%	14%	23%
Metropolitan State University	28.57%	17.86%	55%	44%
University of Colorado Denver	50%	68%	31%	33%
<b>Household Income</b>				
< \$10,000	57.14%	14.29%	25%	NA
\$10,000-\$24,999	14.29%	25%	17.09%	NA
\$25,000-\$49,999	14.29%	32.14%	29.06%	NA
\$50,000-\$74,999	0%	14.29%	10.26%	NA
\$75,000-\$99,999	7.14%	3.57%	9.19%	NA
\$100,000 or more	7.14%	10.71%	9.40%	NA
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian/Alaska Native	10%	0%	5%	1%
Asian	5%	10%	6%	7%
Black or African American	5%	13%	11%	7%
Arab or Middle Eastern	NA	0%	2%	NA
Hispanic or Latino/a	40%	26%	29%	26%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	2%	0.40%
White	35%	48%	42%	50%
Other	5%	3.23%	3%	9%
<b>Total Surveys Collected</b>	15	28	540	
<b>Response Rate</b>	100%	96.50%	58.80%	
*Gender Non-binary and other gender identity are not included in campus demographics. Therefore, survey respondents who identified this way were excluded from campus comparisons here.				

APB Table At-A-Glance

## TIMELINE

# AURARIA PB 2018-2019

Auraria Campus, Denver, CO

## AUGUST 2018

### DESIGN & IDEA COLLECTION PHASE

- Week 1 & 2: 1-2 more planning meetings
- Week 2 & 3: Finalize budget commitments, if any, and promote idea collection event
- Week 4: Launch & promote online idea collection form, begin tabling for idea collection
- Week 5: In-person campus-wide PB info & idea collection event
- Both Weeks 4 & 5: Recruit "budget delegates" for proposal development committees

## JULY 2018, DESIGN PHASE

- 2-3 meetings to decide on key rules & work on trouble shooting
- Identifying who is missing
- Outreach to key stakeholders: (tri)institutional leadership, missing groups
- Solidify steering committee membership
- Develop social media accounts & online idea collection form
- Exploratory conversations about growing the budget

## SEPTEMBER 2018

### IDEA COLLECTION & PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

- Week 1: Collect final idea, close online idea collection form
- Week 1: Budget delegate training(s), Divide up submitted ideas
- Week 2: Convene & launch first proposal development committees
- Week 3 & 4: Research/Develop ideas into concrete proposals

## OCTOBER 2018

### PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

- Week 1 & 2: Continue proposal research / development in committees
- Week 3 & 4: Committees finalizes proposals for ballot
- Week 2-4: Develop online voting form, Promote in-person voting event

## DECEMBER 2018

### IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- End-of-Cycle Celebration
- Conversations with all institutional stakeholders for implementation

## JANUARY 2019

### IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Steering Committee debrief meeting
- Evaluation interviews with stakeholders
- Begin discussions about Auraria PB for Cycle 2, 2019-2020 school year

## NOVEMBER 2018

### VOTING PHASE

- Week 1: Launch & promote online ballot, start tabling to collect vote
- Week 2: In-person campus-wide PB info & voting event (continue online ballot promotion)
- Week 3: Close online ballot form, tally votes, & announce winning projects

# PB as a Best Practice

Participatory budgeting was created as a process that emphasizes the needs of low-income communities to promote social justice and equity. PB promotes transparency in public budgets and incorporates the voices of marginalized populations often excluded or silenced in government processes. It gives everyday people control over a portion of a city budget and empowers residents to hold elected officials responsible for their actions.<sup>1</sup> PB was created as a democratic process to encourage residents to participate in civic duties by making collective decisions about what is best for their communities. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the Movement for Black Lives, and the World Bank have all endorsed PB as a best practice for democracy.<sup>2</sup> Around the world, PB has emerged as a tool for empowering marginalized communities and advancing social justice concerns through civic participation.

PB has continued to expand across the U.S. and Canada with more than 300 active PB processes worldwide. In 2017, roughly \$299 million in public funding was allocated through PB in 29 cities. As of 2017, more than 400,000 people have participated in PB processes across North America, with more than 1,630 community-generated winning projects.<sup>3</sup> Many of the PB processes within the United States take place in large urban cities, but it is gaining some influence in smaller towns as well.<sup>4</sup> Currently, there are over 50 active PB school processes across the United States and Canada, with an average of \$54,000 allocated for PB in schools and a range of \$5,000-\$25,000 allocated for PB in colleges and/or universities.

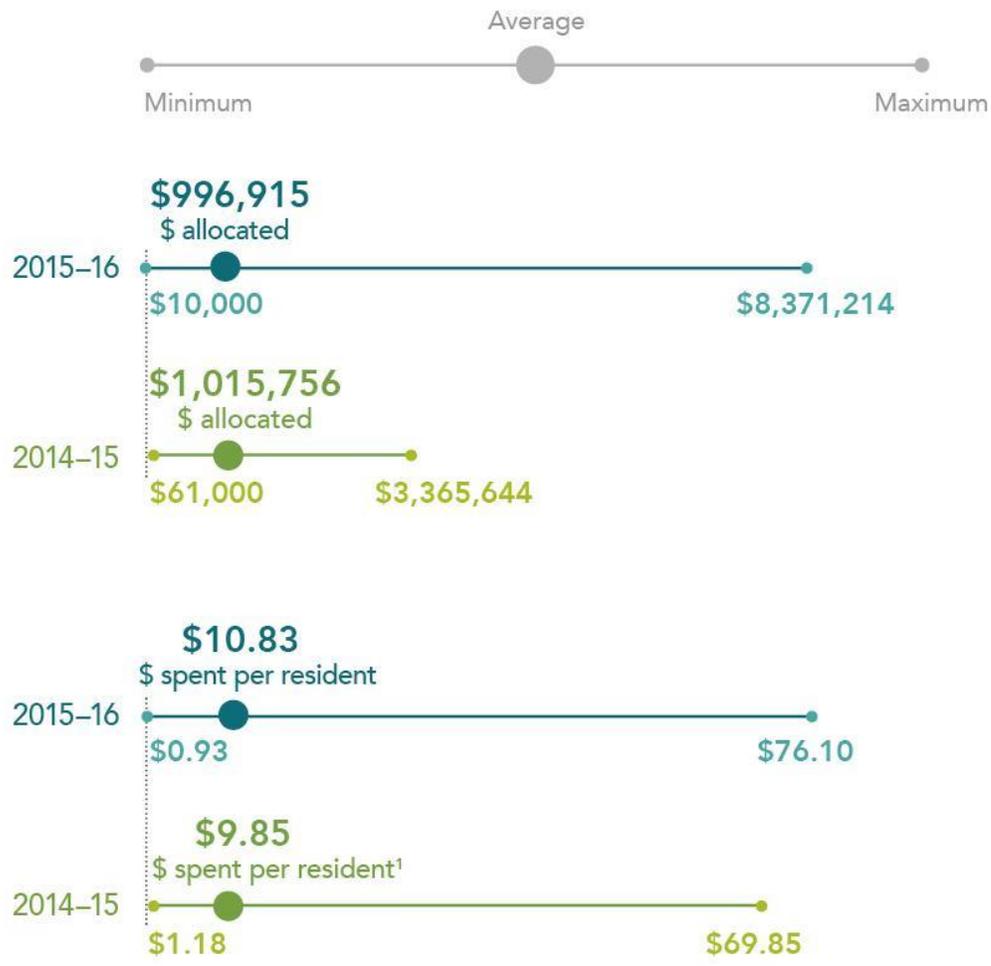
The amount of money allocated in a PB process varies based on the population and budget of the municipal, city, or school doing PB and is often based on dollars allocated to PB per resident. As shown in the graphic below, in 2015–2016 PB processes in North America:

- The average dollars spent per resident was \$9.85
- The minimum dollars spent per resident was \$1.18
- The maximum dollars spent per resident was \$69.85

There have been six other university and college campuses that have implemented participatory budgeting processes in the U.S. On average, student-based PB processes have allocated \$2.03 per student.

Institution	Amount Allocated to PB	Dollars / Student
CUNY		\$1.87
- Brooklyn	\$35,000	\$1.93
- Graduate Center	\$10,000	\$2.46
- Hunter College	\$10,000	\$0.44
- Queens College	\$50,000	\$2.63
Palo Alto College	\$50,000 (½ for students, ½ for employees)	\$2.67/student   \$4.16/employee
<i>Auraria Campus</i>	<i>\$43,500</i>	<i>\$1.04</i>

Total and per-resident U.S. dollar amount officials allocated to PB, averages and ranges by cycle:



2015-16 base: All 61 processes, unless noted otherwise.  
 2014-15 base: All 46 processes, unless noted otherwise.  
<sup>1</sup> 42 processes.  
 Note: Allocations in Canadian PB processes were converted to U.S. dollars to allow for aggregation.

Source: Public Agenda, 2016. [www.publicagenda.org/pages/a-process-of-growth](http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/a-process-of-growth)

## Origins of APB

*This Machine Has A Soul!* (TMHAS) was a community-based project implemented to provide a new framework for understanding how a public budget works by combining participatory budgeting with art and performance. TMHAS developed the first participatory budgeting project in Denver by introducing two processes: one in the Cole neighborhood, and one on the Auraria campus. Both PB processes were organized by non-profit organizations, who became community partners for this evaluation project: Warm Cookies of the Revolution, Project VOYCE, and Project Belay.

The Auraria PB process was led by students from Community College of Denver (CCD), University of Colorado, Denver (UCD), and Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU) on Auraria campus with aid from Project VOYCE staff. Auraria PB allocated \$30,000 in campus-improvement projects due to a grant from several area foundations: ArtPlace America; Arts in Society with the support of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation; Hemera Foundation, and Colorado Creative Industries; and Colorado Art Tank with the support of Denver Arts and Venues and Denver Foundation’s Arts Affinity Group. The pot of money for Auraria PB increased to \$42,000 after MSU donated \$11,000.

The Auraria campus is largely funded by students’ tuition and fees, therefore, all students should be provided a process to decide how that money is used. Auraria PB provides students with the ability to do so—to have a say in how their money is spent. Here’s a breakdown of how much of the operating budget, for each school, is paid by students:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Operating Budget</u>	<u>Amount of Budget Paid by Students</u>	<u>Percentage of Budget Paid by Students</u>
CCD	\$58,686,152	\$26,995,630	<b>46%</b>
MSU	\$223,336,039	\$146,129,836	<b>65%</b>
UCD	\$214,000,000	\$171,200,000	<b>80%</b>
Auraria Total	\$496,022,191	\$344,325,466	<b>69%</b>

*(Based on data available on institutions’ websites, April 2019)*

Considering student dollars provide an overwhelming base of support for each school to operate, students need the opportunity to help improve the campus by focusing on the issues students find most important. Students fund 69% of Auraria’s budget, so by implementing PB at Auraria, students were able to gain control of a portion of the budget to improve campus without increasing student fees or tuition.

# Organizational Structure

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## Auraria PB Steering Committee

The Auraria PB steering committee strove for racial, gender, and campus affiliation equity. This student-comprised committee was tasked with creating the rules for the Auraria PB process as well as serving as ambassadors for the process during its implementation. Members of the steering committee could serve as co-chairs, regular members, or advisory members.

Co-chairs constituted an executive team of the committee and took the lead in planning agendas, scheduling/organizing meetings, and facilitating meetings. They also served as the primary liaisons to other campus bodies, such as student government and various administrative departments. For their

efforts, each co-chair was provided a \$750 stipend. There were six co-chairs, and although the group initially strove for two representatives, a lack of participation from MSU led to only one co-chair from that school, with the open co-chair seat going to a student from UCD.

Regular members attended monthly meetings organized by the co-chairs and provided the backbone of volunteer support to the process. They helped recruit PB participants at various stages of the process, volunteered to table during idea collection and voting events, and participated and voted in deliberations when the committee made decisions about process rules, outreach, and other matters. For their work, regular members were paid a \$250 stipend.

Finally, advisory members of the steering committee were those who wanted to be involved in the process but could not dedicate significant amounts of time to perform the duties expected of regular members or co-chairs. Advisory members were invited to attend as many committee meetings as possible and were kept abreast of various volunteer opportunities. They were allowed to vote on committee decisions if they were present at the meeting when the vote occurred. Advisory members were not compensated during the process.

In total, 14 students served on the steering committee:

- 6 co-chairs, 3 regular members, and 5 advisory members
- 7 were from UCD, 4 were from MSU, and 3 were from CCD
- Committee members were evenly split between men and women
- People of color were overrepresented on the committee, compared to Denver's population
- All committee members were 20–34 years old
- Members were evenly divided between sophomores and seniors. Two graduate students were on the committee, and there were no freshmen

The committee met four times before the start of classes in the fall of 2018 and then met at least monthly starting in September 2018. The steering committee established rules for the PB process that were unique to the Auraria campus but also drew from democratic and social justice principles of PB more generally.

Committee member activity levels were uneven during the process. Although co-chairs worked to plan and facilitate meetings early in the process, the compressed timeline of the Auraria PB process and the co-chairs' other responsibilities caused support staff from Project VOYCE to take the lead in scheduling, planning, and facilitating committee meetings later in the semester. Additionally, many advisory members did not attend meetings once classes started. However, an official roster was not kept because there was no process for removing any steering committee member, nor were their explicit rules about how much one had to contribute to remain on the committee.

### **Auraria PB Rules**

The Auraria PB steering committee invested considerable time to deliberate and vote upon rules for the process.

#### Phase I: Idea Collection

- Anyone, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members could submit a project idea. No restrictions were placed on age, citizenship/immigration status, or criminal record. Participants could submit project ideas online or in-person.
- Passersby could submit project ideas in person at an Auraria PB table stationed on campus and staffed by student volunteers. Approximately 10 students contributed 16.5 volunteer hours to tabling for idea collection. The locations of the table varied to boost engagement from diverse campus community members.

#### Phase II: Project Proposal Development

- Only students enrolled in classes at the time of the Auraria PB cycle were eligible to be budget delegates
- 29 students volunteered to join 4 budget delegate committees
- Each budget delegate had two student co-chairs who led the committee
- Budget delegates worked collaboratively with various campus staff departments to assess project feasibility and develop a proposed budget for each project
- Eligible projects could not cost more than \$30,000, had to benefit all Auraria students, could be implemented within a year's time, and could not be deemed unfeasible by campus administrators or other campus advisors.

#### Phase III: Voting

- Voting was held in-person and online for 2 weeks in November–December 2018
- Only currently enrolled Auraria students were allowed to vote in the process. No limits were placed on age, immigration/citizenship status, or criminal record
- 12 projects made it onto the ballot, and participants could vote for four projects
- The highest-voted projects received funding until the \$30,000 was exhausted

#### Phase IV: Project Implementation

- Winning projects were submitted to appropriate campus departments so that they could be implemented
- Some budget delegates continued to work with campus staff to help implement the projects
- Project VOYCE staff were tasked with tracking implementation progress and posting updates online

## Methods

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The evaluation utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to holistically assess Auraria's PB process. Data sources included survey questionnaires, field observations, and participant

interviews. The evaluation team also incorporated data from campus reports, City of Denver reports, news articles, and other sources to contextualize the process and its results.

The TMHAS Evaluation Committee was comprised of seven individuals, including a graduate student from the University of Colorado Denver, staff members from the other Denver PB process, a graduate student from Portland State University, a graduate student from the University of Colorado Boulder, and an undergraduate student from the University of Colorado Boulder. The committee included researchers, activists, and practitioners, and they worked collaboratively to create data collection instruments (e.g., survey questionnaires, interview protocols, and observation protocols) in accordance with national standards of PB research established by Public Agenda.<sup>5</sup>

**Background Research**

The research team collected data about Auraria’s budget, the campus population, and PB to understand how Auraria’s process might impact student knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices related to public engagement on campus. Data sources included the American Community Survey, Community College of Denver Spring 2017 Census, University of Colorado Denver Fall 2017 Census, Metropolitan State University Fact Sheet 2018–2019, Auraria Higher Education Center Financial and Compliance Audit, and University of Colorado Denver Student Fee Plan, to name a few.

**Quantitative Data Collection**

PB participants completed surveys across three phases of Auraria’s process: idea collection, project development, and voting. Survey respondents included steering committee members, budget delegates, project idea submitters, and PB voters. All surveys were administered both online and on paper to generate as high of a completion rate as possible.

The survey questionnaires were designed to collect demographic information for PB participants across all phases. Steering committee and budget questionnaires were designed to assess levels of prior civic and campus engagement. Idea submitter and voter questionnaires included questions about attitudes related to PB and campus administrators, prior civic engagement, and how they learned about the PB event where they participated.

**SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSE RATES**

Data Source	Total Responses	Response Rate
Steering Committee	15	100%
Idea Collection events	6	1.5%
Budget Delegates	28	96.50%
Voters	540	58.80%

## Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected from in-depth interviews and participant observations. To ensure multiple viewpoints were collected, a variety of stakeholders were interviewed for the purpose of the evaluation, including steering committee members, idea collection participants, budget delegates, PB organizing staff, and campus staff members. All interviews were conducted individually face-to-face, over the phone, or through email. Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes.

Interview questions were tailored for each stakeholder group and were developed in collaboration with members of the TMHAS Evaluation Committee. In general, interviews were designed to understand how people participated in PB, how PB affected relationships between students and campus staff, and how PB contributed to attitudes and practices of community engagement outside of the process.

Fieldnotes were recorded across all the stages of Auraria’s PB process. Observation protocol for fieldnotes was designed to document and assess the quality of public deliberation at events. Researchers were attentive to points of negotiation, conflict, forms of inclusion, and how authority operated in meetings and public outreach events.

These participant observations allowed for the generation of direct, experiential knowledge that generated of how Auraria PB unfolded through real-time interactions with participants. Fieldnotes included quotes from participants as well as thoughts, ideas, and experiences of researchers as they occurred at PB events. Field observations provided a more nuanced, detailed view of the PB process that could not captured solely through surveys.

### AURARIA PB TOTALS

	Steering Committee	Budget Delegate	Idea Collection/Vote	Community Partner/Staff	Totals
Number of Events Collected Field Notes	13	8	2	N/A	23
Number of Pages of Field Notes	147	95	6	N/A	248
Number of Interviews	1	3	1	4	9

# Phase I: Idea Collection Analysis

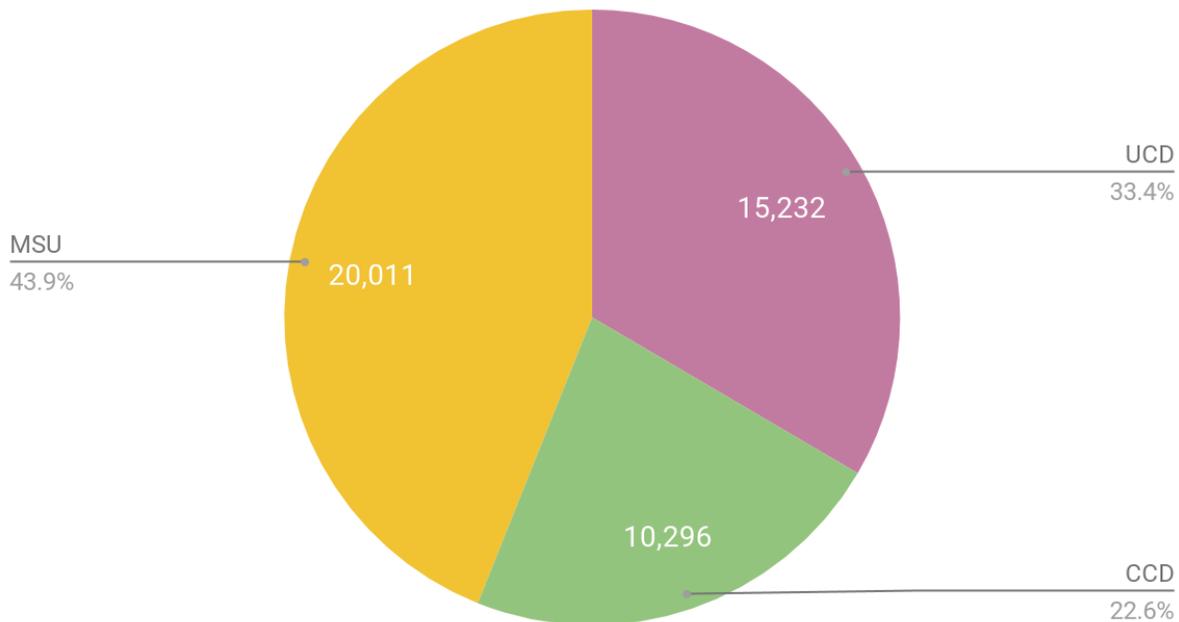
What follows is an analysis of the data collected from participants who submitted project ideas between August and September 2018 as part of Auraria Participatory Budgeting. Only six idea collection participants completed surveys, and only one idea submitted completed an interview about their experience. Therefore, limited analysis could be performed on who submitted project ideas and what the process meant to them. Instead, our analysis focused on the number of participants, the number of ideas, and the types of ideas collected.

*“[PB] makes you feel like you have a claim in the campus, even if it’s just pitching an idea. It gives you a sense of ownership of the campus, which feels so, like, monolithic at times.” -Auraria PB Idea Submitter*

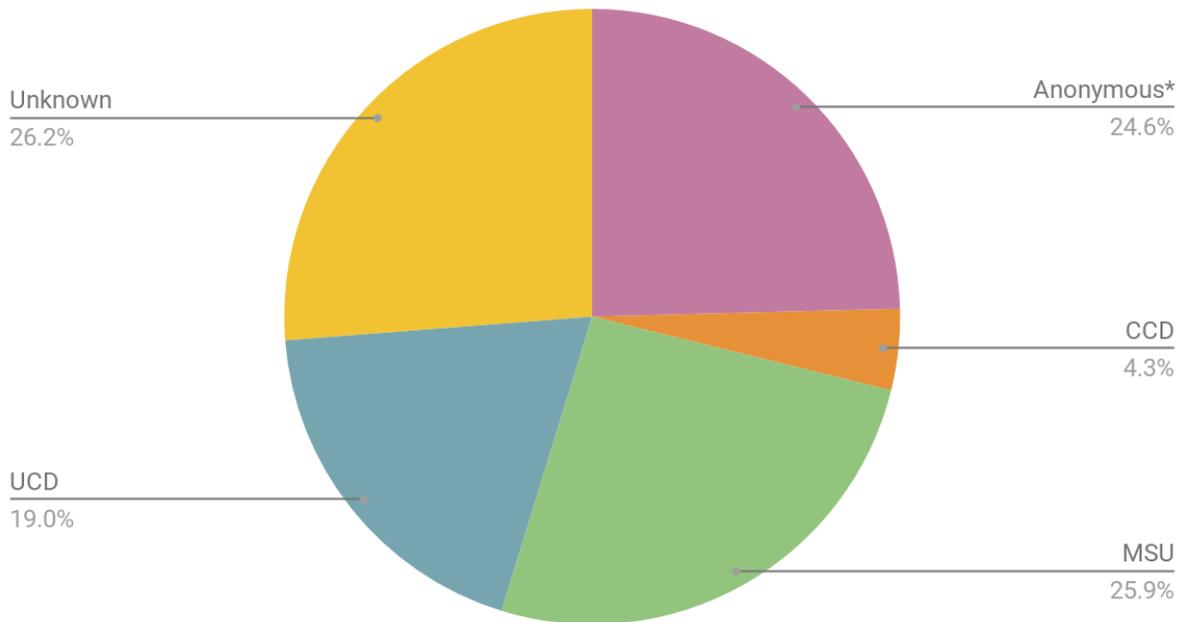
## Number of Participants and Ideas

- 423 ideas submitted
  - 403 ideas were submitted in person
  - 20 ideas were submitted online
- Approximately 400 individuals submitted project ideas<sup>6</sup>

## Auraria Student Population by Institution (Fall 2018)



## Participants by Institution



### Idea Collection Events

Auraria PB student volunteers collected ideas from the campus community for four days on campus. Project ideas could also be submitted online, but the vast majority of submissions were done in-person, a testament to the hard work of the student volunteers to recruit participants. 13 students volunteered to work the table during idea collection, which totaled 8.5 hours.

Auraria PB did not hold structured idea collection events called neighborhood assemblies. Instead, project ideas were solicited from passersby on campus, while student volunteers performed outreach from a table at several areas of campus that had large quantities of pedestrian traffic. During our observation of an idea collection shift, we found the Auraria PB demonstrated a high degree of initiative, often walking up to people and inviting them to submit a project idea. Students strove to be inclusive, often doing targeted outreach to attract minorities and engage first-year students. Tabling occurred during the first week of class, and Auraria PB volunteers helped people find classroom buildings and/or get acquainted with campus.

However, the volunteers had varying levels of confidence in their abilities to do outreach. For example, one volunteer previously worked for a political campaign and had no problems approaching strangers and talking to them about the PB process. However, another volunteer had limited experience doing this kind of outreach and took a more passive role, only talking to people if they spoke to her first.

The active and engaged outreach of student volunteers was a significant factor in drawing in the participation of nearly 400 people in just four days (almost 100 people a day). In one day, volunteers handed out nearly 800 flyers to people on campus.

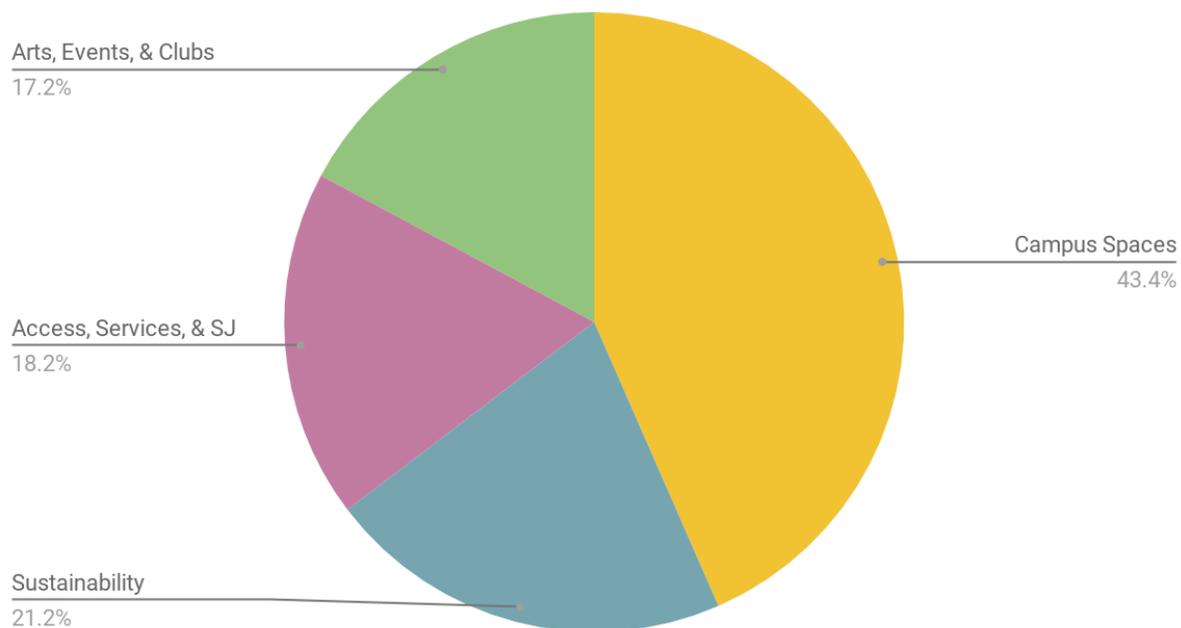
*“[With PB], there was immediate action you could take that was relatively time conservative. That’s different from other budgeting that is often so complex. I appreciated that there was immediate action.”*  
-Auraria PB Idea Submitter

## Idea Categories

After the idea collection time period ended, steering committee members eliminated some blatantly ineligible project ideas and grouped the remaining project ideas into three broad categories, each with sub categories: campus spaces and shared resources ( $n = 122$ ); sustainability, wellness, and transportation ( $n = 59$ ); access, services, and social justice ( $n = 51$ ); and arts, events, and clubs ( $n = 49$ ). These categories provided a rough snapshot of the needs and desires of the Auraria campus community.

## IDEA CATEGORIES

### Idea Categories



### *Campus Spaces & Shared Resources*

- Classroom & Campus Improvements: 37 ideas
- Spaces for Recreation: 23 ideas
- Wi-Fi: 14 ideas
- Textbooks: 11 ideas

- Student Resources: 11 ideas
- Additional Spaces: 11 ideas
- Additional Ideas: 5 ideas
- Bathrooms: 4 ideas
- Housing: 4 ideas

#### *Access, Services, & Social Justice*

- Programs and Services: 30 ideas
- Textbooks: 10 ideas
- Outreach: 4 ideas
- Housing: 4 ideas
- Education, Training, and Workshops: 3 ideas

#### *Sustainability, Wellness, & Transportation*

- Wellness: 28 ideas
- Transportation: 19 ideas
- Sustainability: 12 ideas

#### *Arts, Events, & Clubs*

- Events: 16 ideas
- Clubs and Teams: 13 ideas
- Art and Music: 11 ideas
- Additional Ideas: 5 ideas

## Phase II: Budget Delegate Analysis

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In the second phase of Auraria PB, budget delegates worked with campus staff members to develop project proposals that would be placed on a ballot for a campus-wide vote. In this section of the report, we provide our findings based off data collected from budget delegates and campus staff members.

The data collected from budget delegates includes 28 survey questionnaires, three interviews, and participant observations. The survey completion rate was 96.5% percent. Between September 2018 and October 2018, the research team attended eight budget delegate events and generated 95 pages of fieldnotes. What follows are findings from budget delegates.

### **Key Findings**

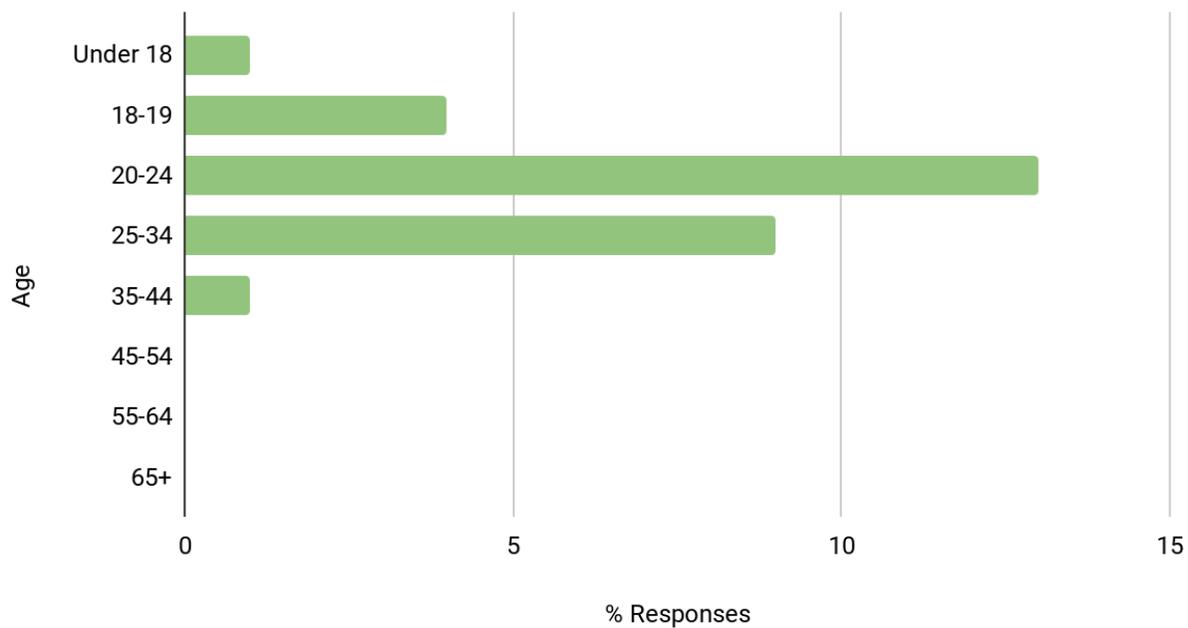
- Budget delegates were mostly comfortable with various civic skills and practices, with 73% of respondents indicating they were very or extremely comfortable making collective decisions and

71% indicating they were very or extremely comfortable expressing their opinions to student government

- However, budget delegates were less comfortable with other democratic practices, as 22% said they were “not at all” or “somewhat” comfortable with negotiating and building agreement, and 22% were “not at all” or “somewhat” comfortable with their ability to influence campus decisions
- Budget delegates were highly engaged in their communities before PB, with three quarters of respondents saying they had worked previously to address a community problem, and almost two thirds reported voting in the 2016 presidential election
- 14% of budget delegates were ineligible to vote, demonstrating PB’s ability to engage people typically excluded from public decision making
- Budget delegates had not participated heavily in political events, nor did they have much experience organizing meetings
- Budget delegates were highly involved on campus, but some did not know how to affect change. Half of respondents indicated they were “very” or “extremely” involved in campus life, but only about one in five were “very” or “extremely” comfortable with knowing how to start making a change on campus
- Budget delegates were predominantly undergraduates, with only 7% of them being graduate students
- 68% of budget delegates attended the University of Colorado Denver
- Almost two-thirds of budget delegates were female
- 39% of respondents’ household income was under \$25,000
- One in five respondents were born outside the United States
- Race and ethnicity demographics of budget delegates roughly matched the Auraria Campus, with individuals who identified as Black being overrepresented

## **Demographic Data**

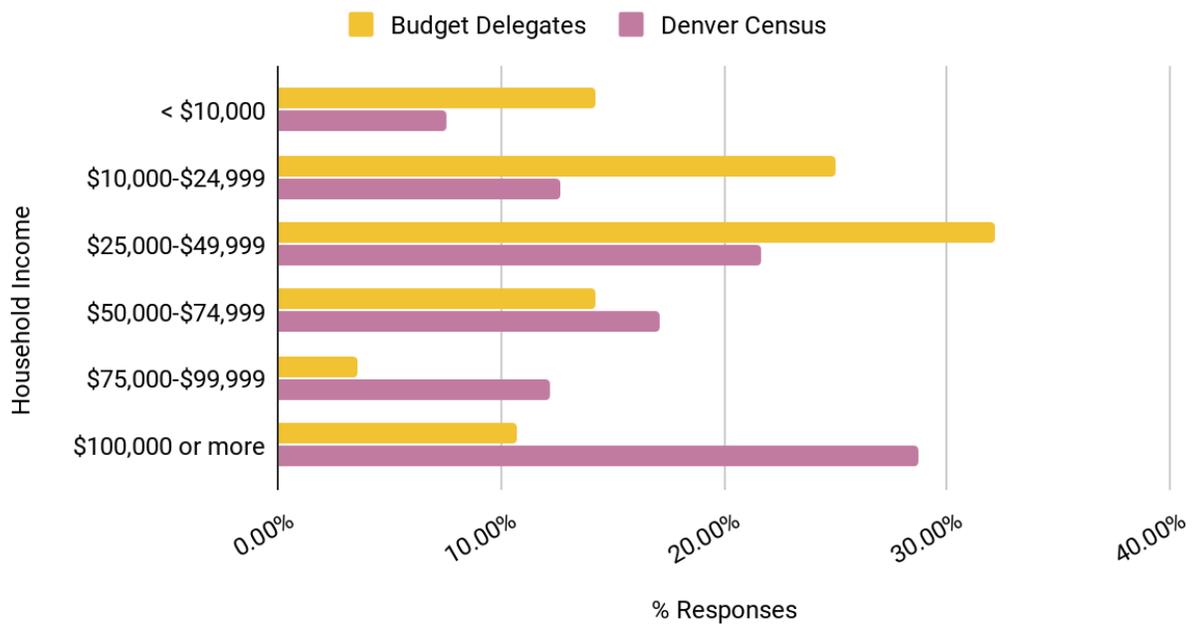
## Age Demographic of Budget Delegates



64% of budget delegates were traditional-age students (under 25-years-old). 35% of budget delegates were over 25, and the youngest delegate was 16.

- Comparison to campus data: Traditional age students are 61% of the Auraria campus, while non-traditional age students are 39%. Budget delegates reflected the demographics of the campus overall.

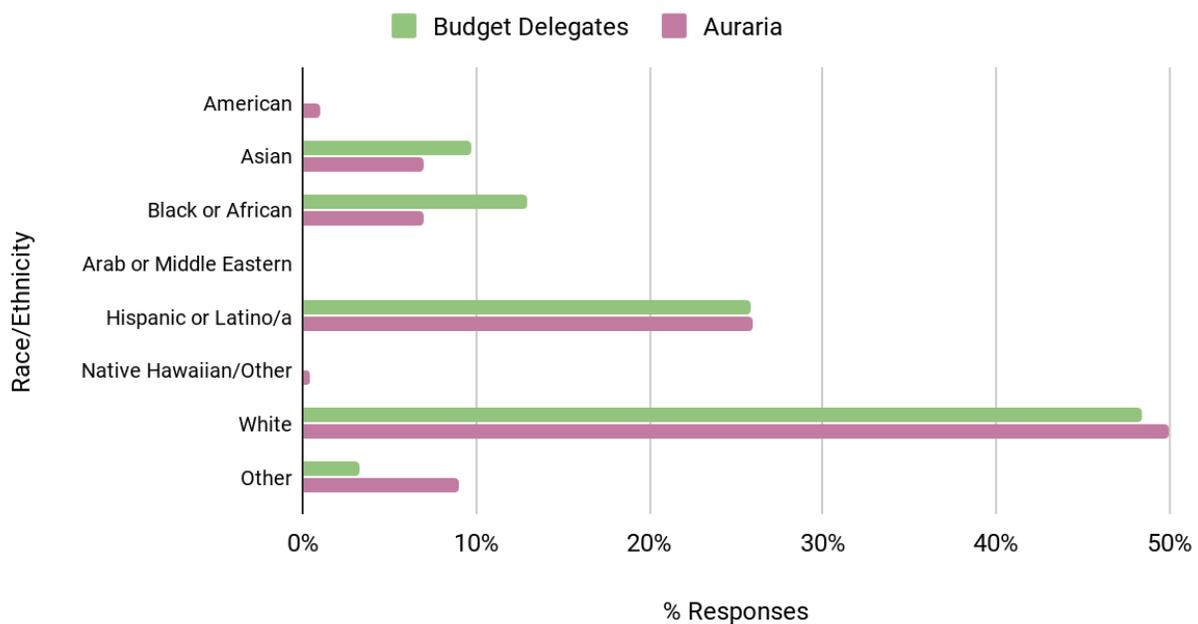
## Household Income Comparison



71% of budget delegates reported a household income of less than \$50,000 per year, including 39% who reported household incomes less than \$25,000 per year.

- Comparison to census data: Budget delegates with incomes less than \$25,000 were overrepresented, while those with incomes over \$50,000 were under-represented.

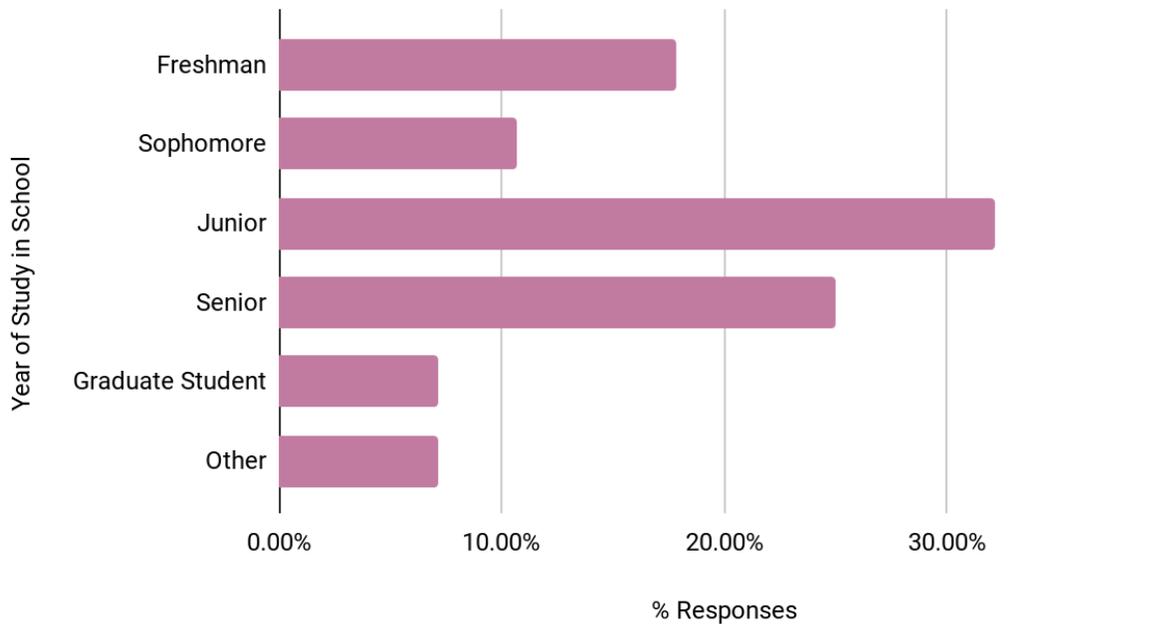
## Race/Ethnicity Comparison



Approximately half of budget delegates identified as a person of color, including 26% who identified as Hispanic or Latinx, and 13% who identified as Black or African American.

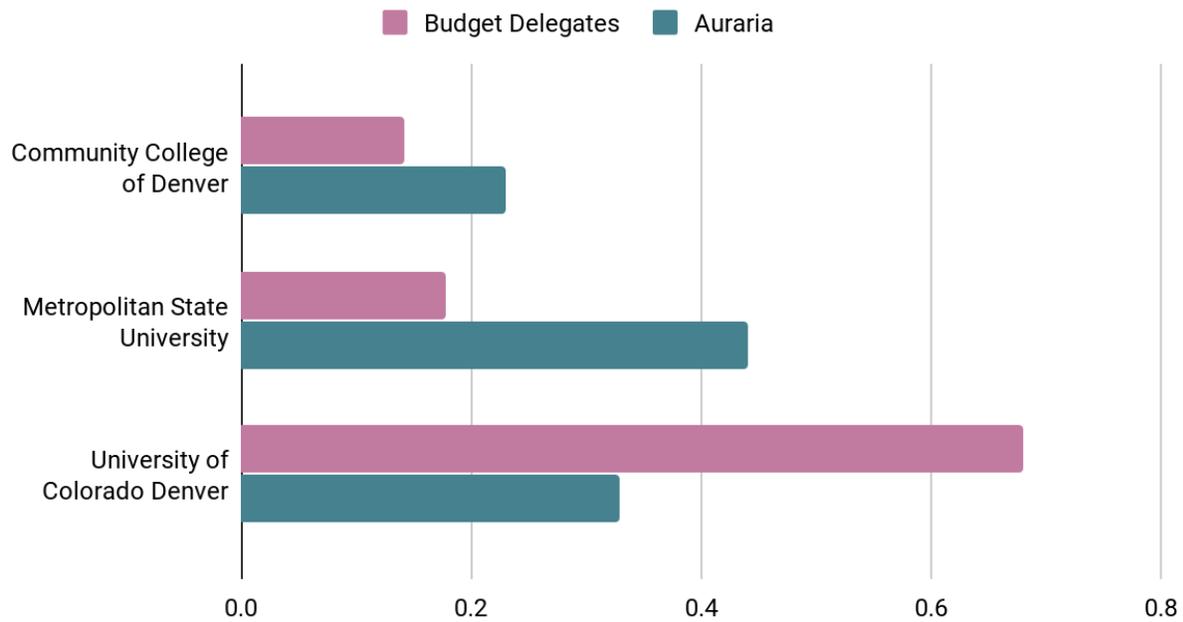
- Comparison to campus data: Across nearly all race/ethnicity categories, survey respondents were reasonably representative of campus data, except for Blacks being overrepresented among budget delegates

### Year of Study in School



93% of budget delegates were undergraduates, and 7% were graduate students. Among undergraduates, budget delegates tended to be upperclassmen, with 57% indicating they were a junior or senior.

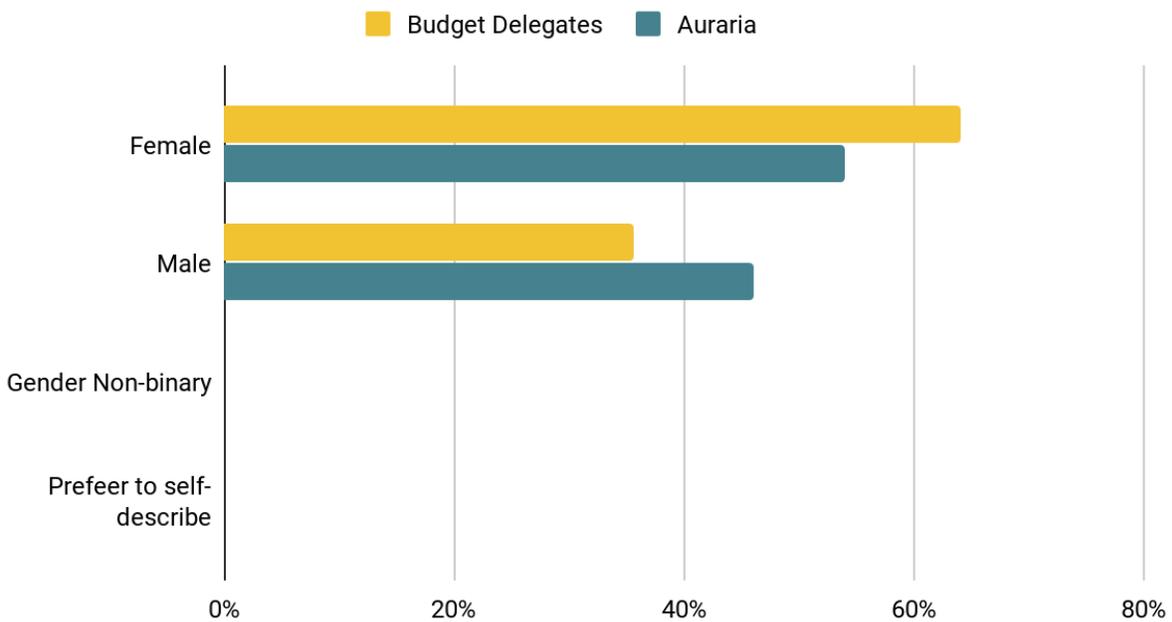
## College/University Enrollment Comparison



68% of budget delegates attended the University of Colorado Denver. 18% attended Metropolitan State University, and 14% attended Community College of Denver

- Comparison to campus data: CU Denver was overrepresented while MSU and CCD were underrepresented among budget delegates

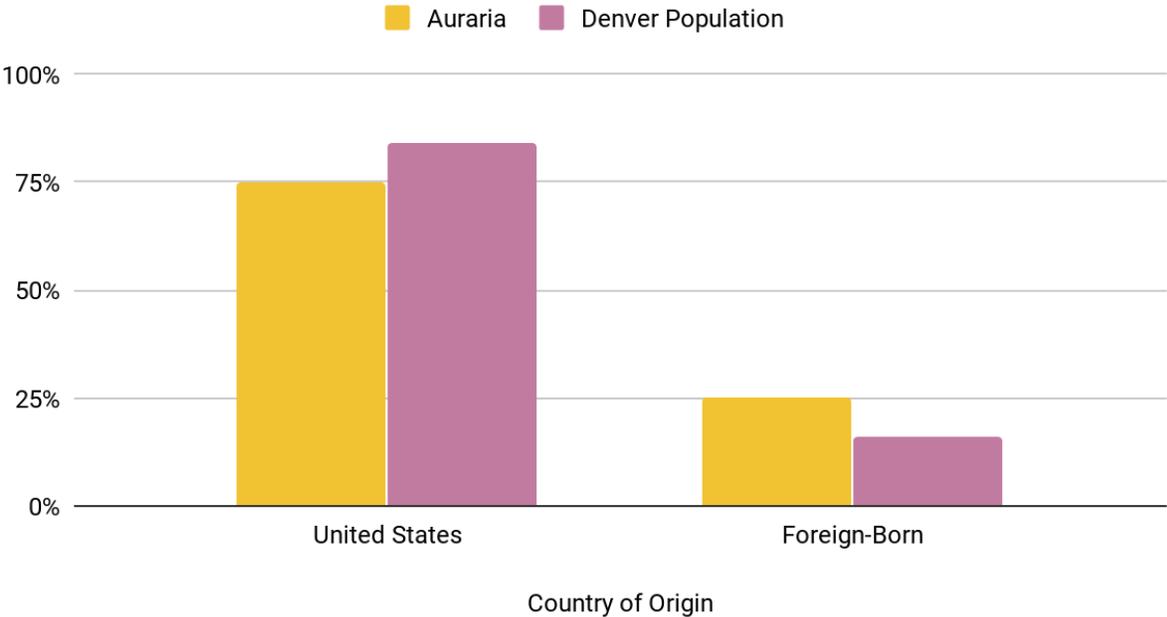
## Gender Comparison



More women served as budget delegates than men.

- Comparison to campus data: Women were overrepresented as budget delegates by approximately 10%, and men were under-represented by about 10%.

### Country of Origin Comparison



Approximately one in five budget delegates were born outside the United States, and countries of origin included Ethiopia, Canada, China, Germany, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia.

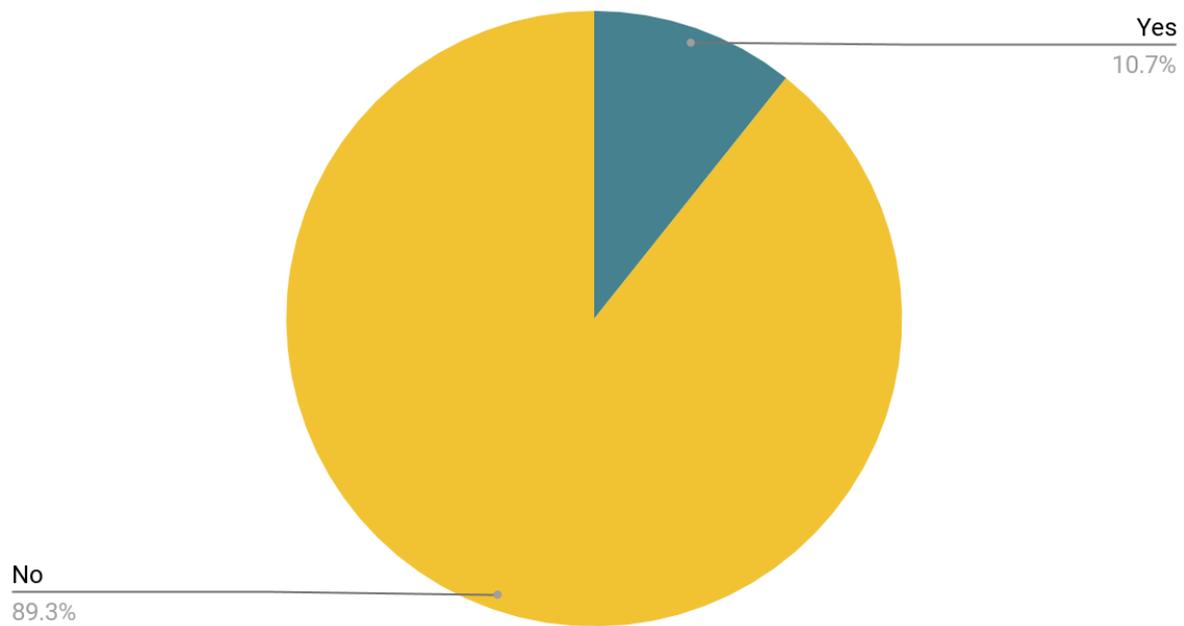
- Comparison to census data: Budget delegates were nearly representative of census data.

Language Fluency	Auraria
English	28
Spanish	7
Mandarin/Other Chinese dialects	0
Vietnamese	0
Arabic	1
Somali	0
(Other)	0

All budget delegates were fluent in English; seven reported feeling comfortable speaking Spanish; and one reported comfort speaking Arabic.

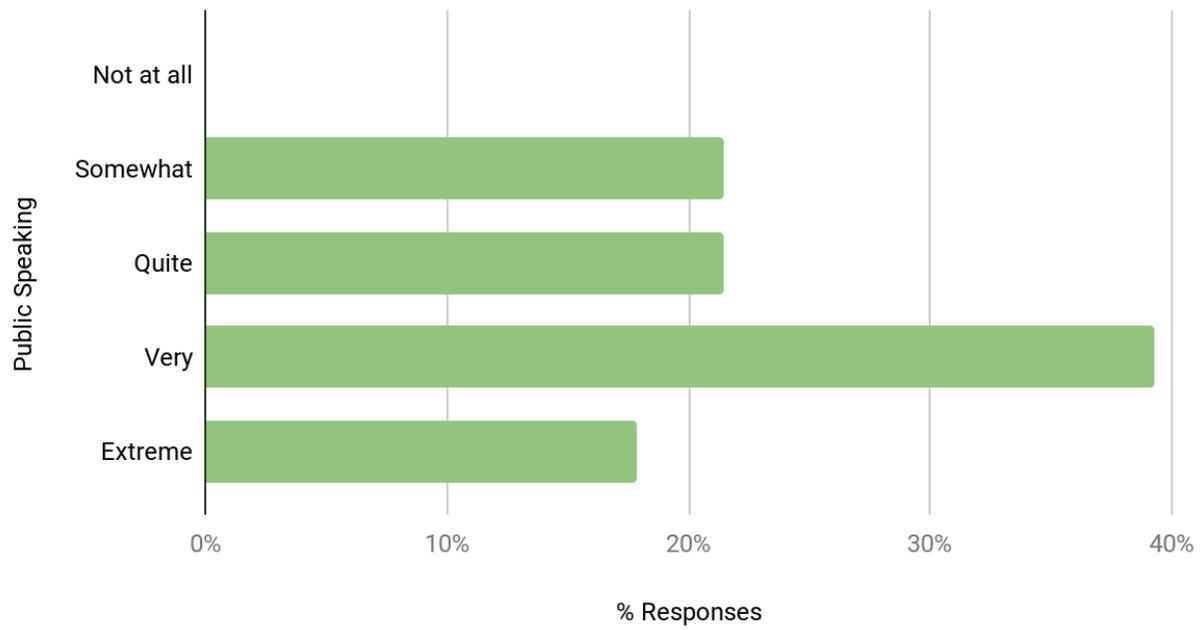
### Civic Engagement, Beliefs, and Efficacy

## Prior Involvement in Auraria PB

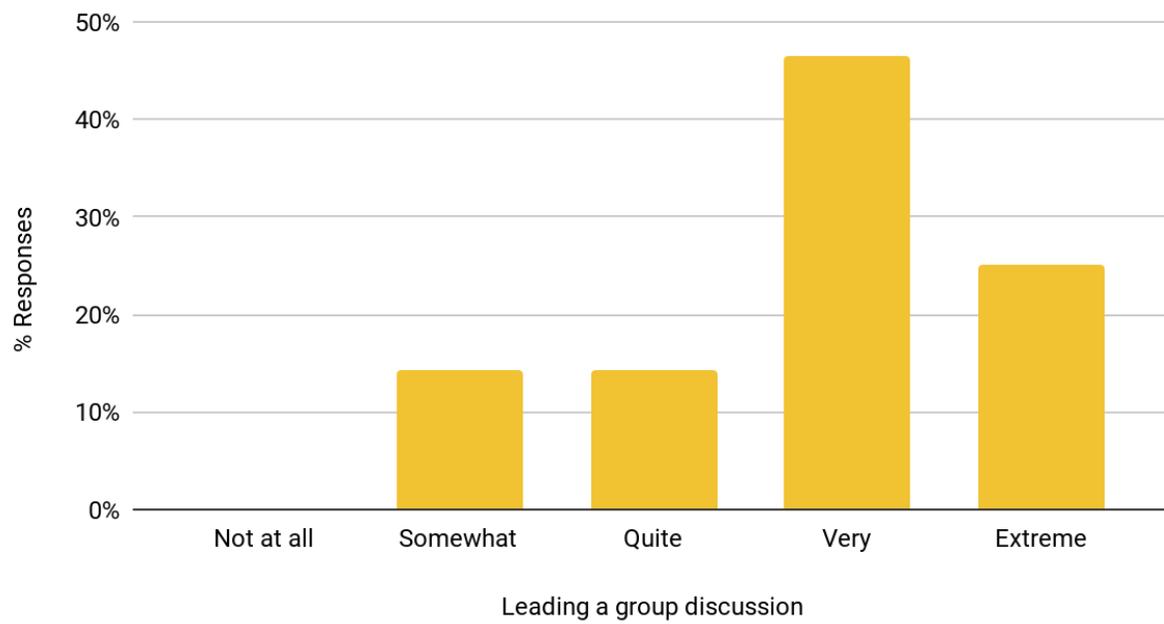


89% of budget delegates had not previously participated in the Auraria PB process. Of the three delegates who had previously engaged in the process, all of them served on the steering committee.

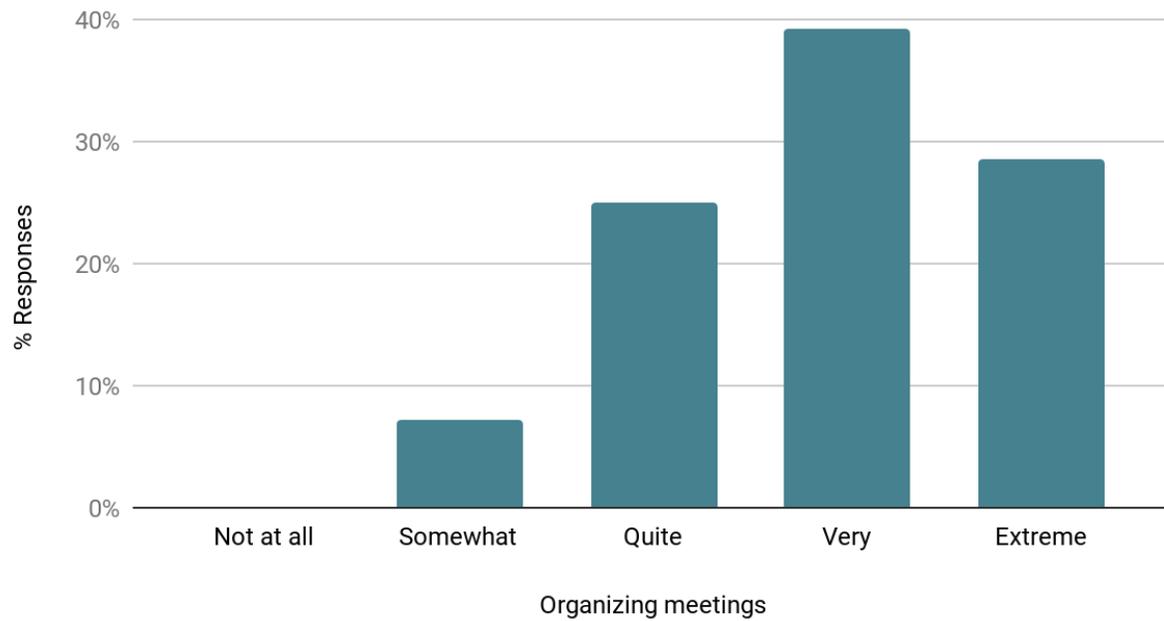
## Public Speaking



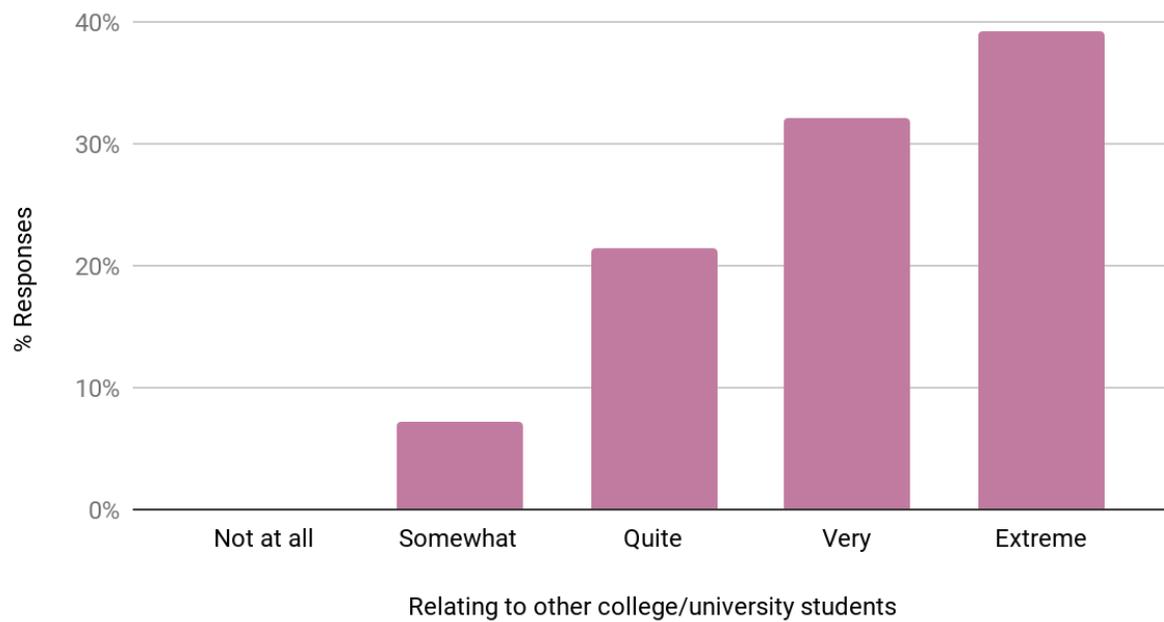
## Leading a group discussion



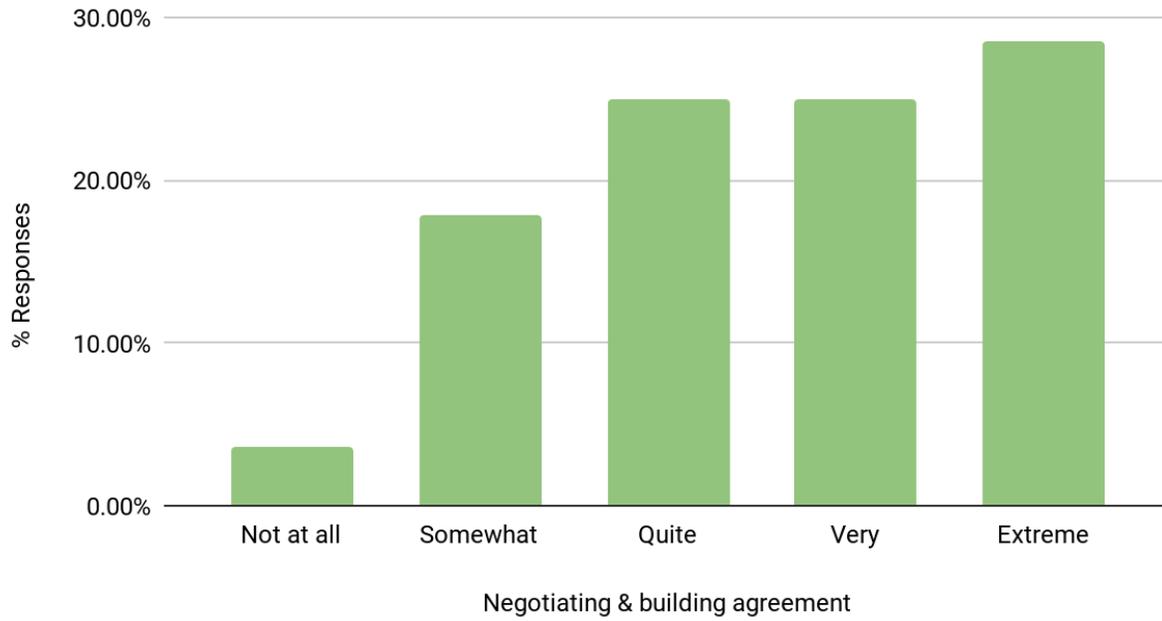
## Organizing meetings



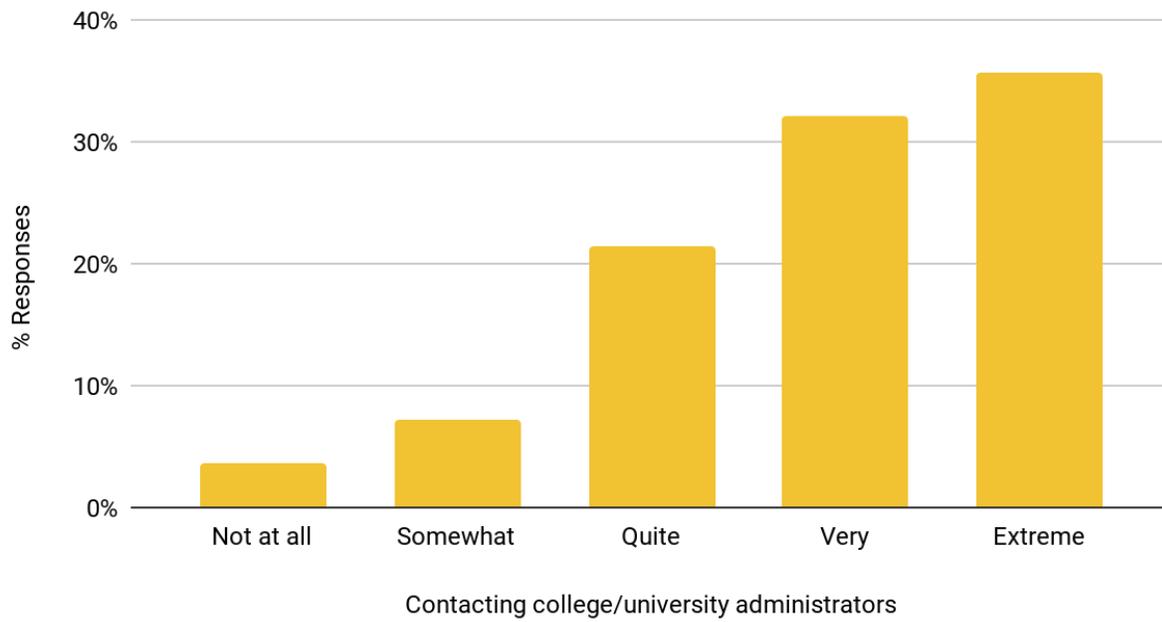
## Relating to other college/university students



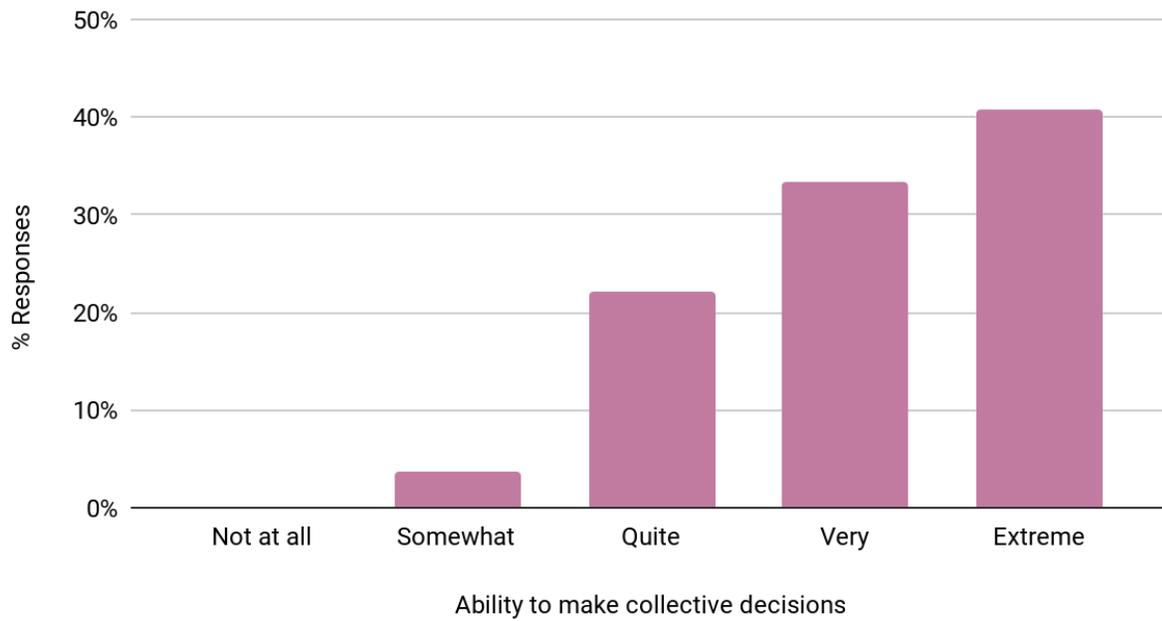
## Negotiating & building agreement



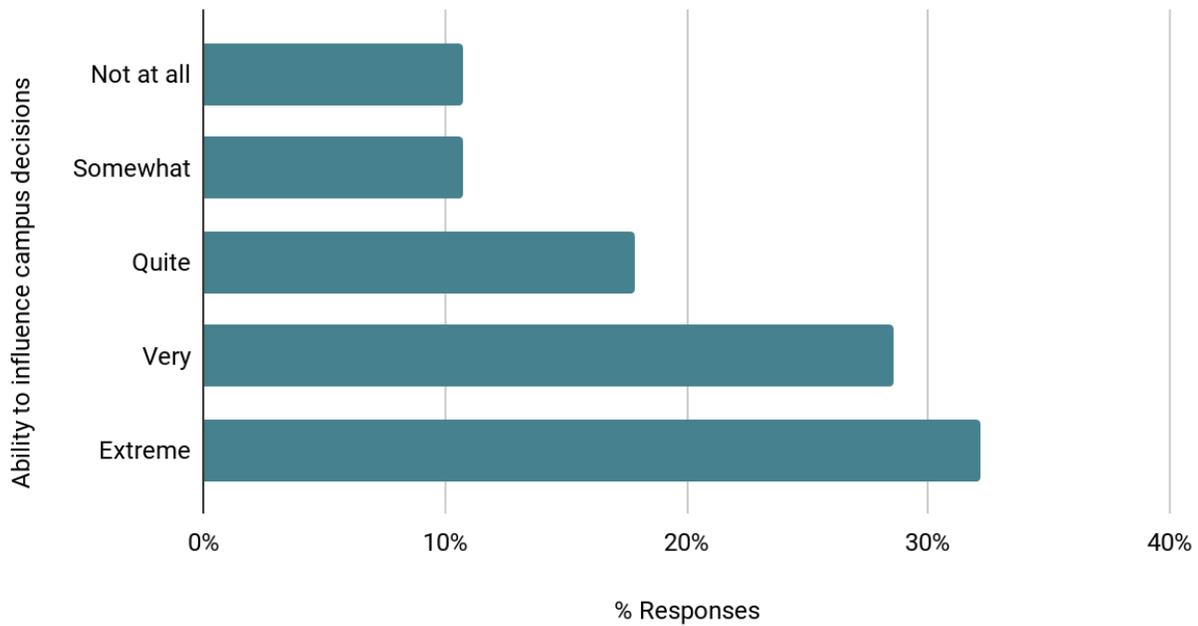
## Contacting college/university administrators



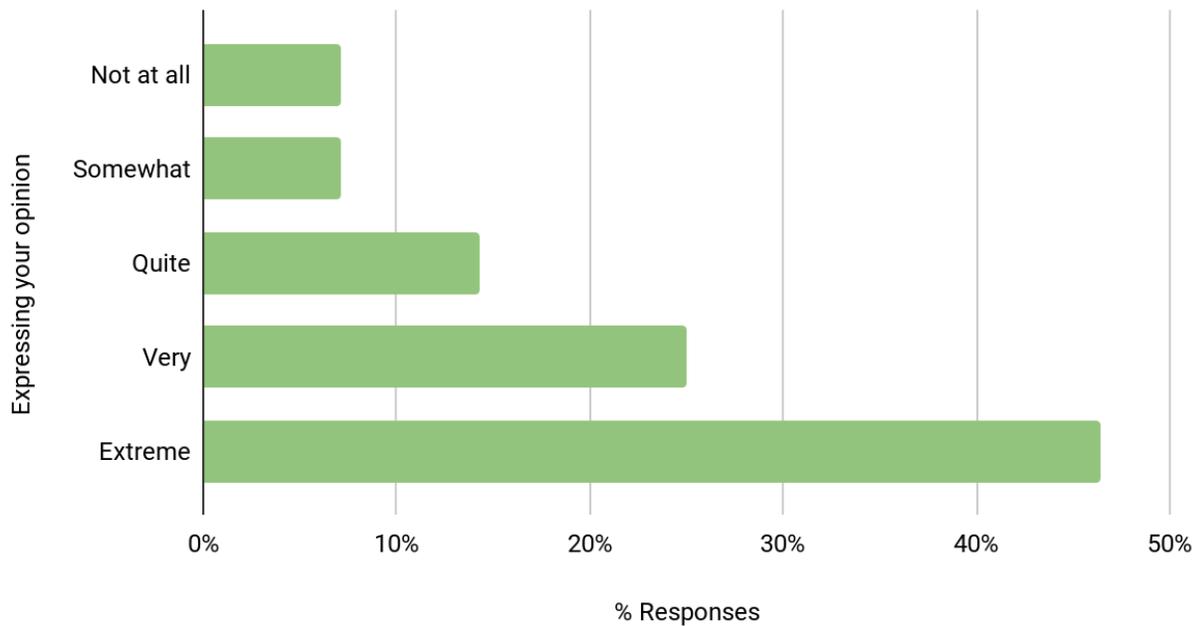
## Ability to make collective decisions



## Ability to influence campus decisions



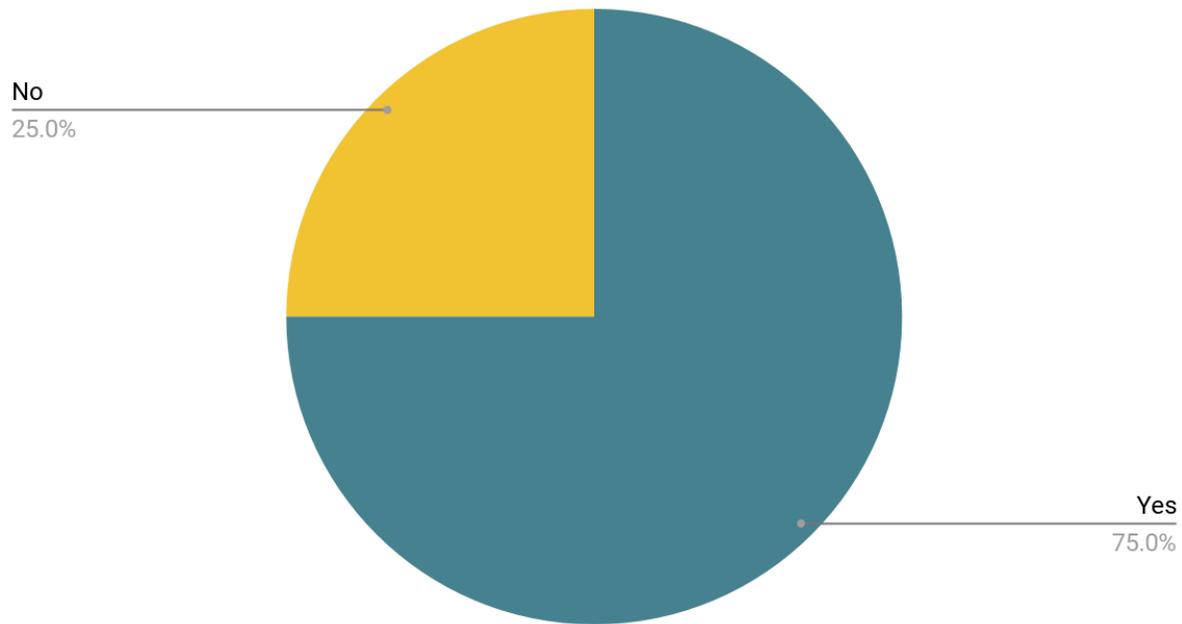
## Expressing your opinion to your student government



Experience and comfort with various forms of democratic and campus engagement varied among the budget delegates. They were mostly comfortable with making collective decisions and expressing their opinion to student government. 73% were “very” or “extremely” comfortable making collective decisions, and 71% were “very” or “extremely” comfortable expressing their opinions to student government.

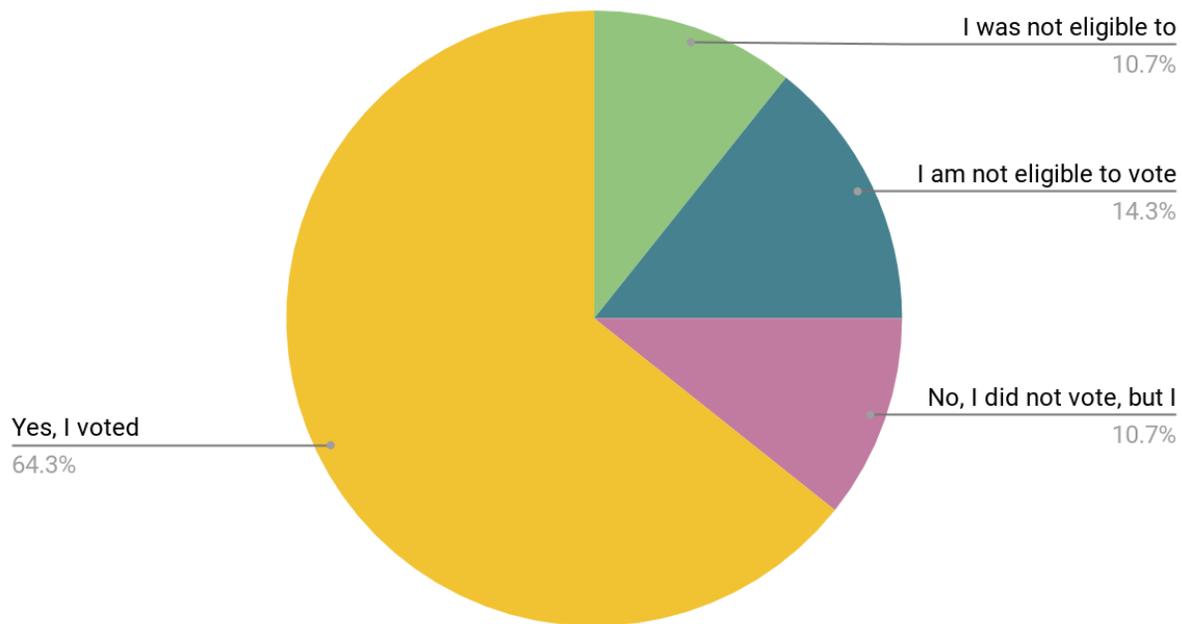
On the opposite end of the scale, budget delegates were least comfortable with negotiating and building agreement, as well as their ability to influence campus decisions. 22% of respondents indicated “not at all” or only “somewhat” for both items.

## Working with other people to fix a community problem



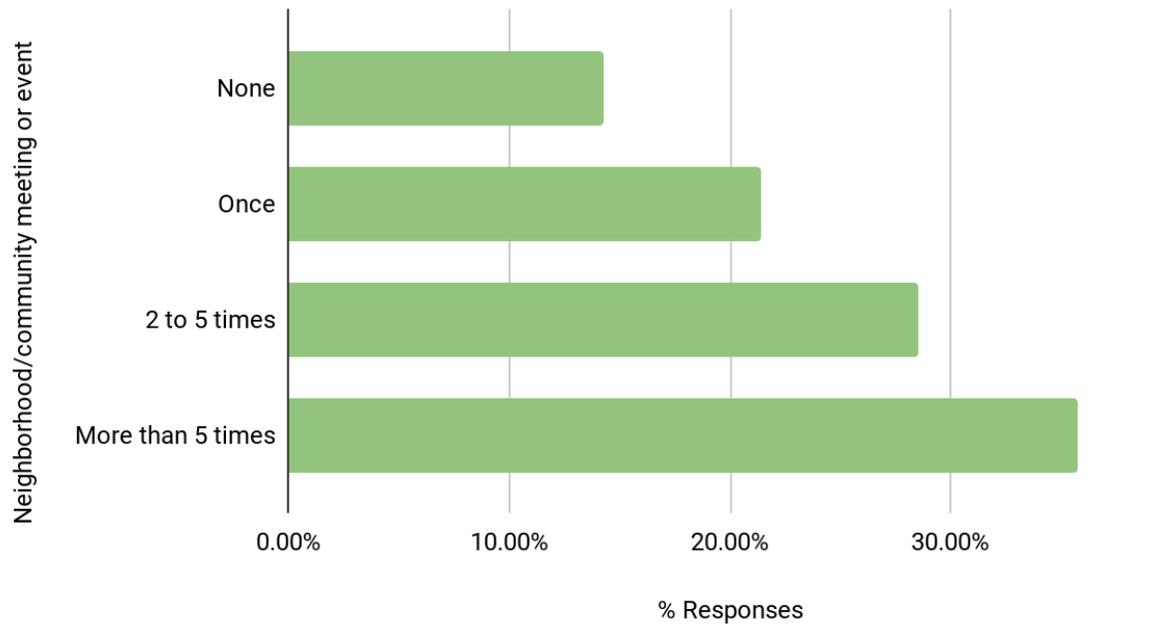
Three quarters of budget delegates had worked with other people in their community in the past 12 months to fix a problem or improve a condition. One quarter had not.

## Voting in the 2016 Presidential Election

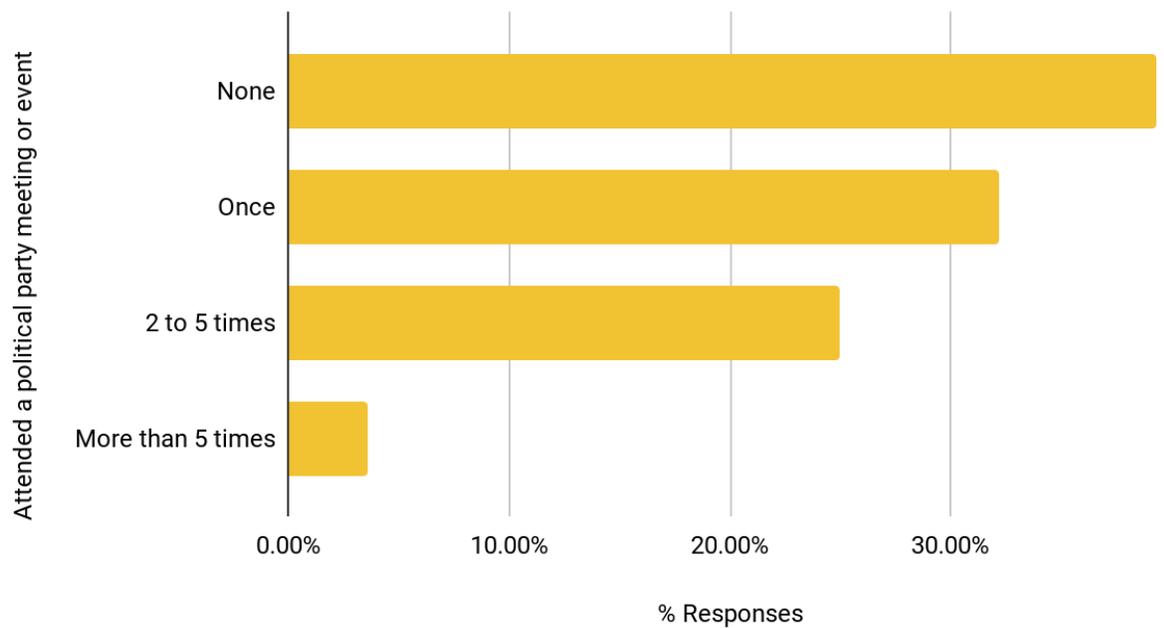


The majority of budget delegates had voted in the most recent U.S. election, which was the 2016 presidential election. 14% of respondents reported that they are ineligible to vote.

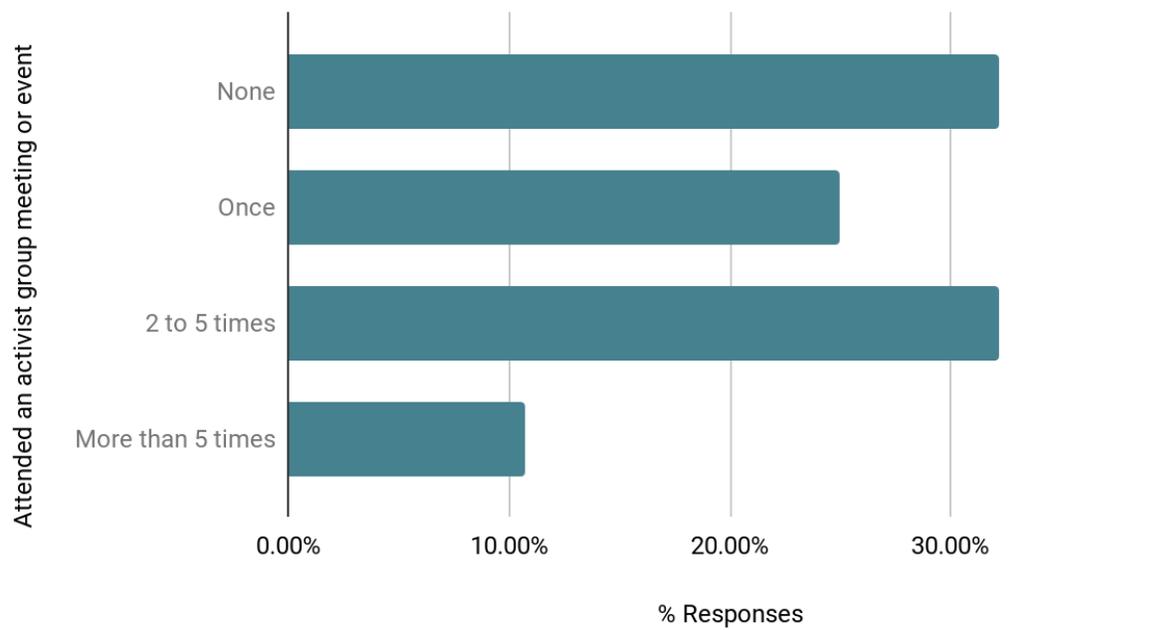
### Attended a neighborhood/community meeting or event



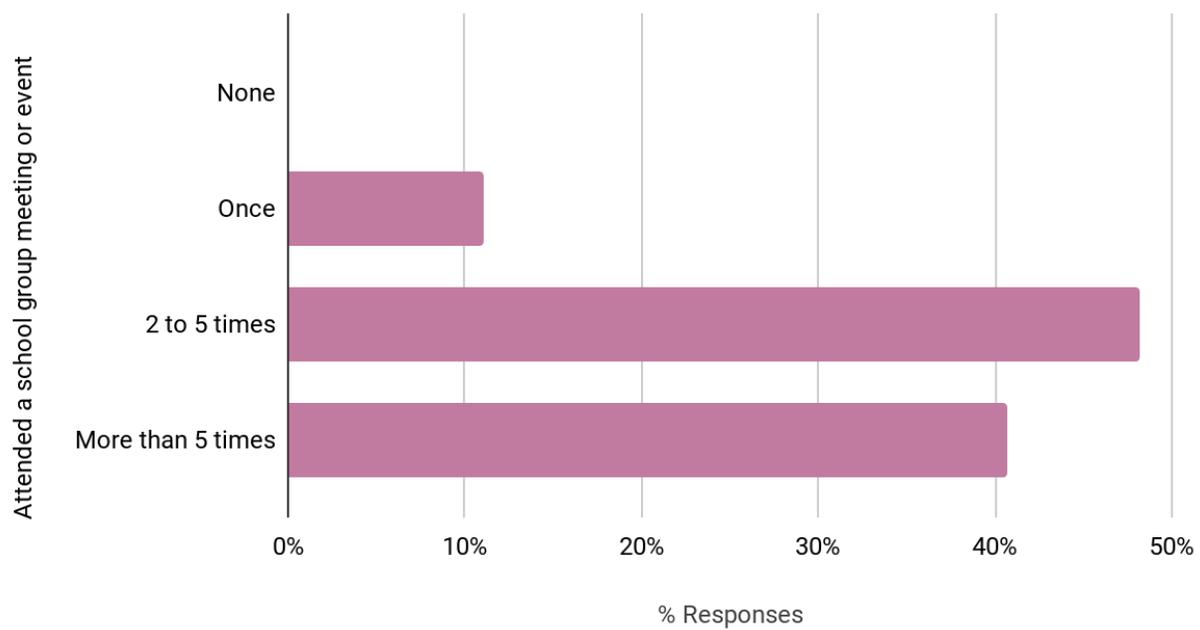
### Attended a political party meeting or event



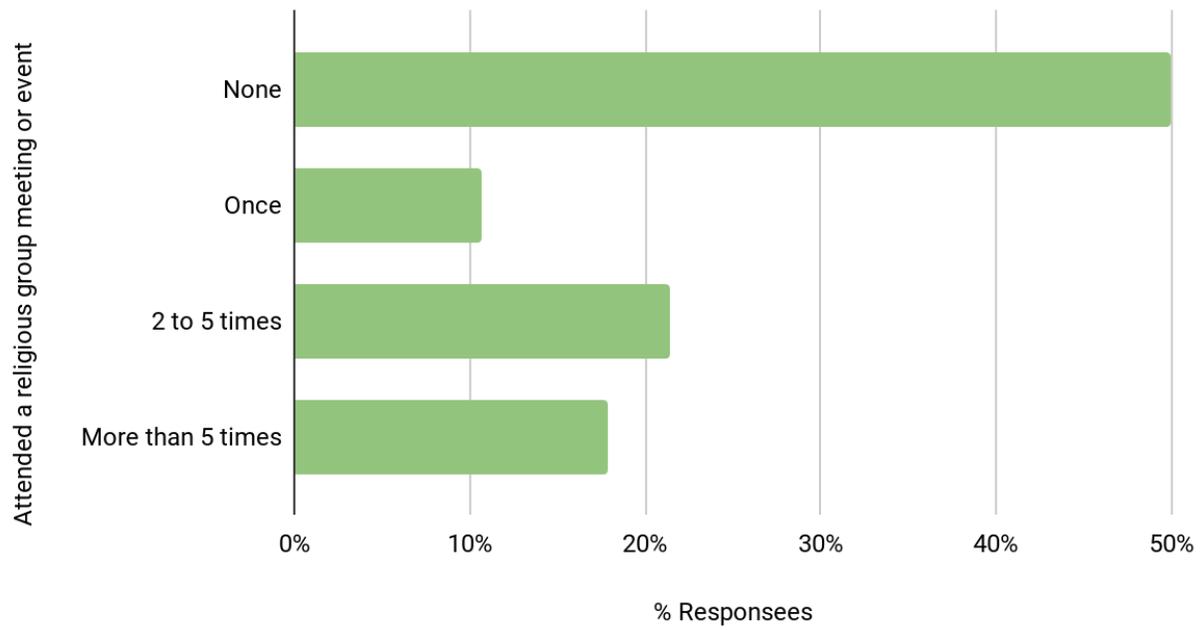
### Attended an activist group meeting or event



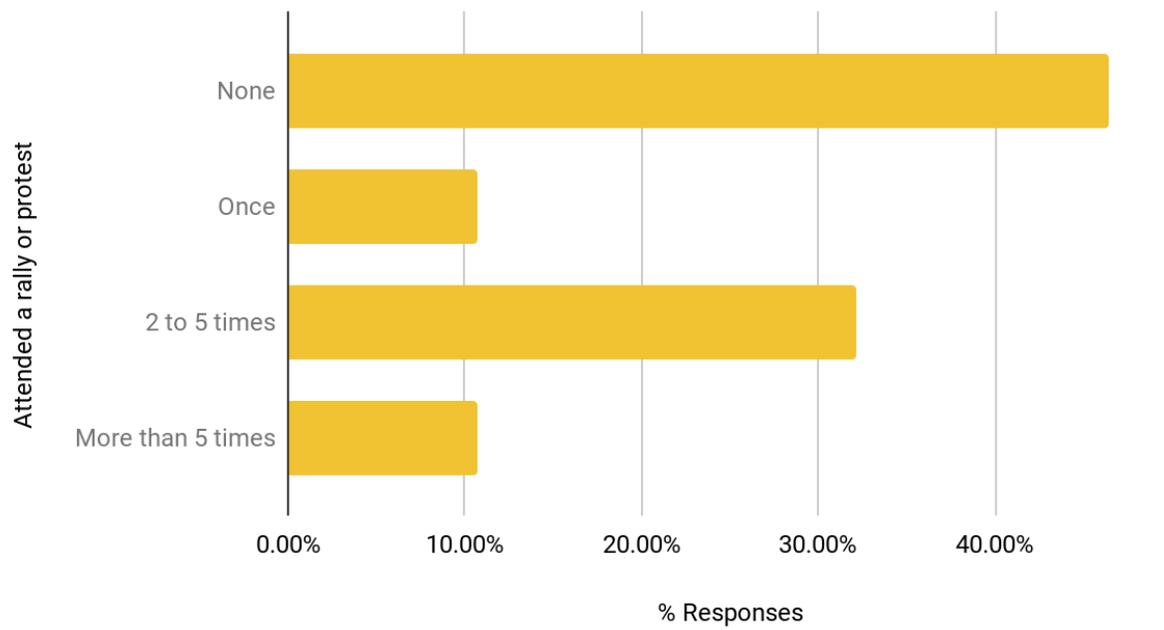
### Attended a school group meeting or event



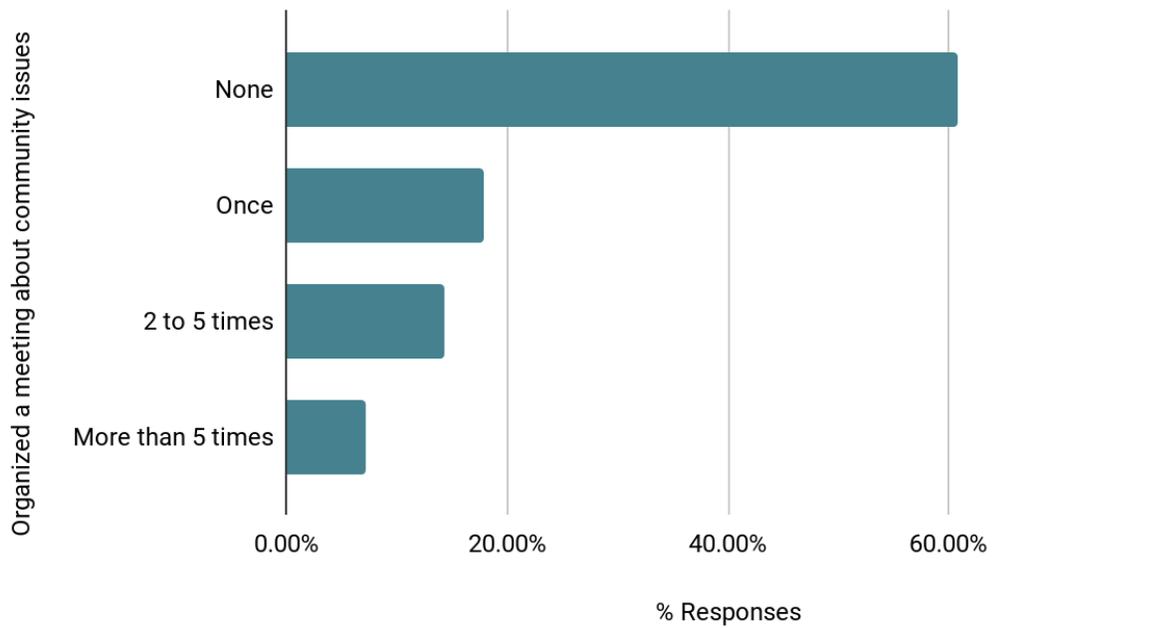
## Attended a religious group meeting or event



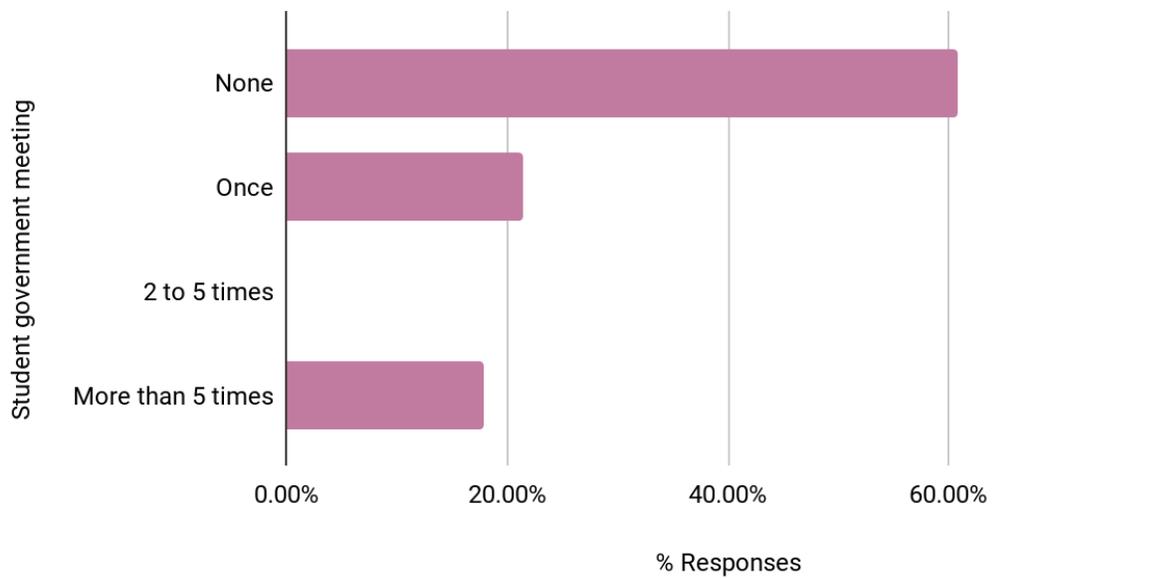
## Attended a rally or protest



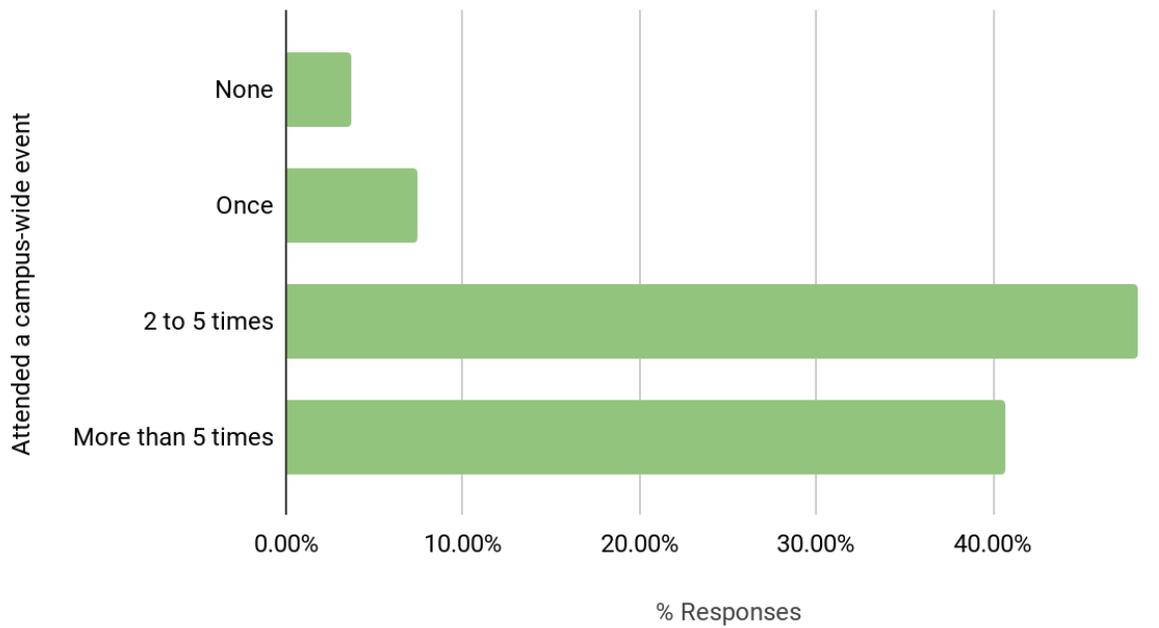
## Organized a meeting about community issues



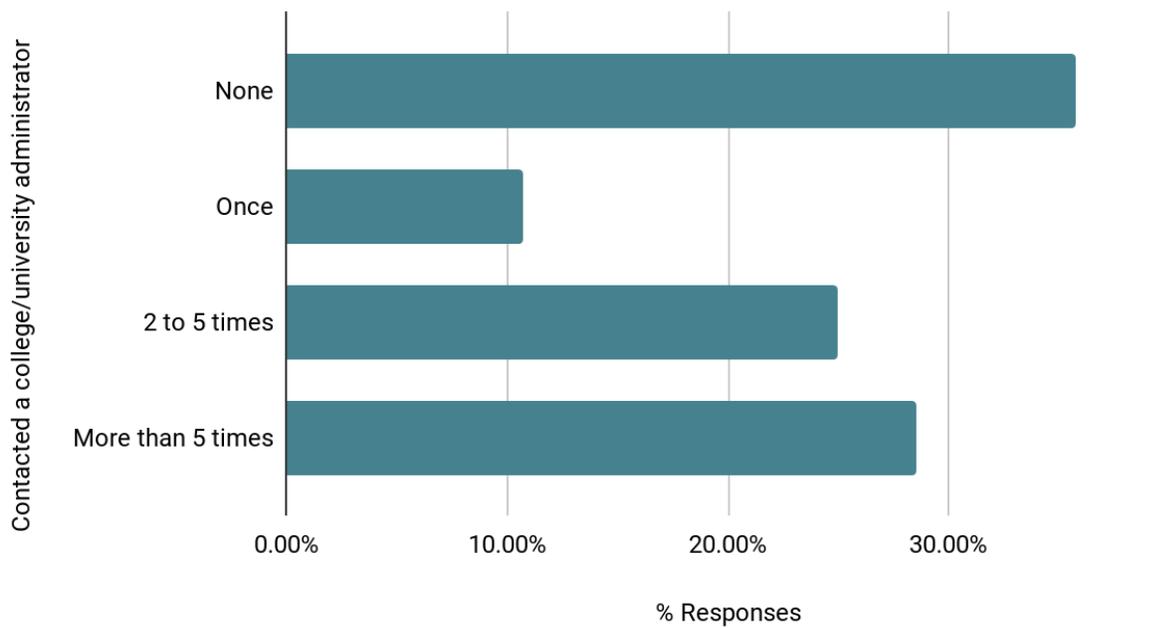
## Attended a student government meeting or contracted your student government representative



## Attended a campus-wide event



## Contacted a college/university administrator

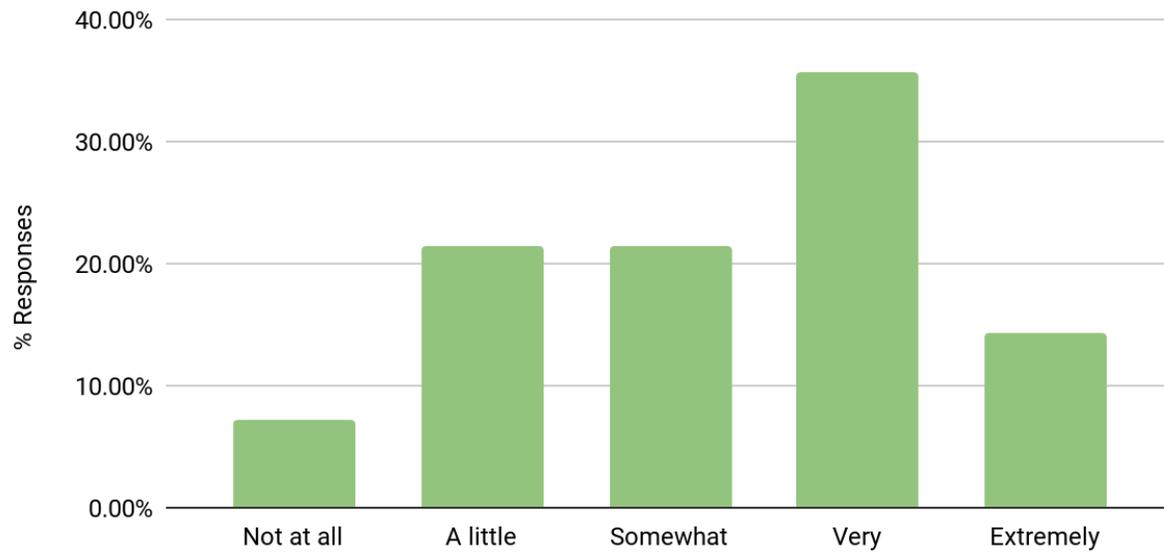


Budget delegates reported completing a variety of social action work in their communities both on and off campus in the past 12 months. Delegate actions tended to skew toward more passive and non-political events. For example, 36% said they had attended a neighborhood/community meeting or event more than five times, but 60% said they had not organized a single meeting about community issues.

Similarly, 89% said they had attended a campus-wide event more than twice in the past year, but only 18% had contacted student government more than two times.

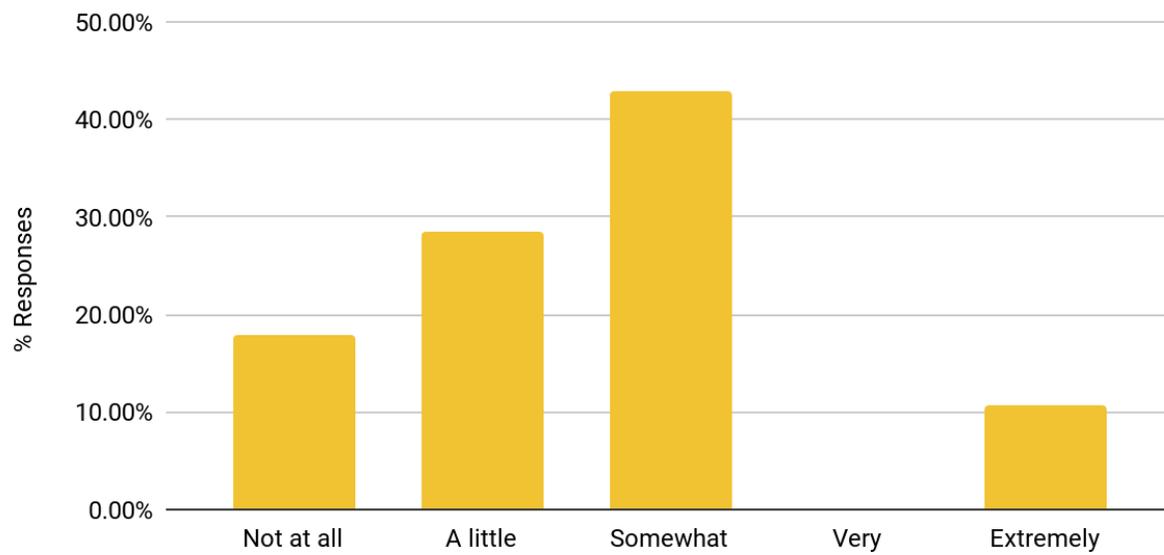
Political action, in general, was not common among budget delegates. 71% of respondents had attended a political party meeting or event zero to one time. 57% had attended an activist group meeting zero to one time, and 57% had attended a rally or protest zero to one time.

## Campus Life Involvement



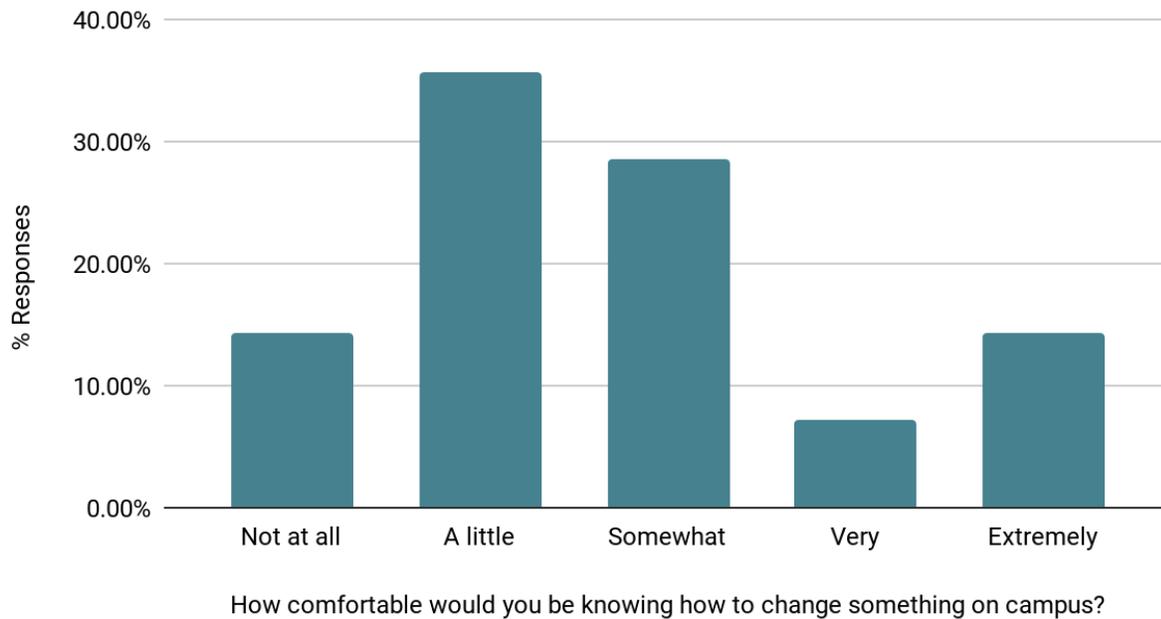
In general, how involved are you in campus life outside of classes?

## Understanding of Student Government

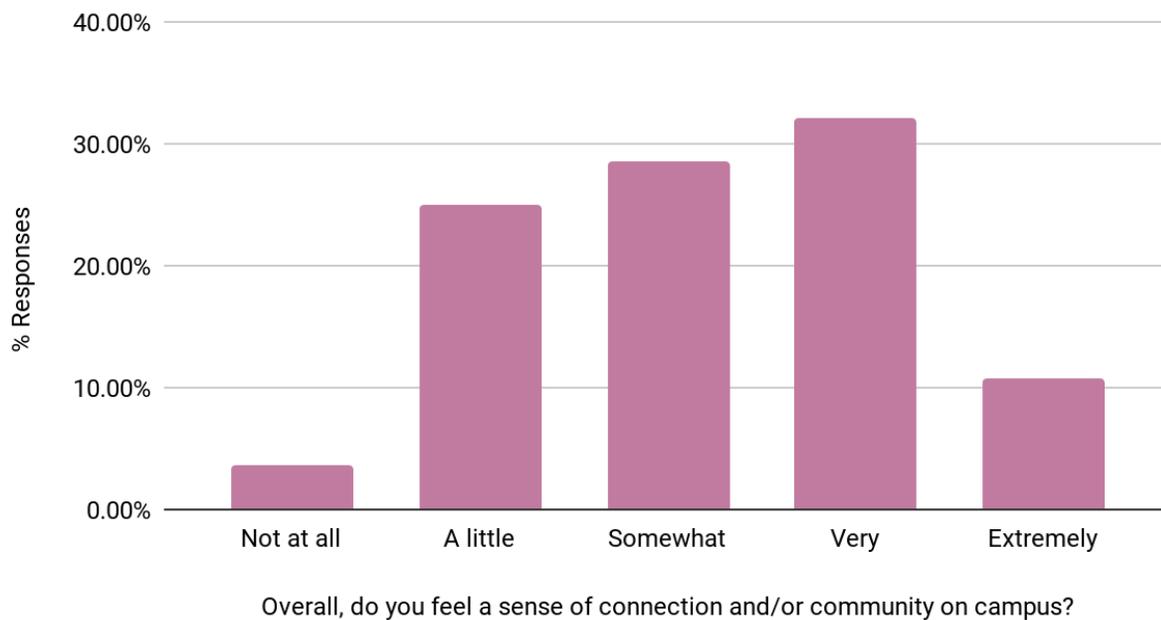


How well do you understand how your student government works?

## Comfort in willing to change something on campus



## Sense of connection and/or community on campus



Budget delegates rated themselves highly engaged in campus affairs. Half of respondents said they were “very” or “extremely” involved in campus life outside of classes. When asked if they feel a sense of connection and/or community on the Auraria campus, 71% responded “somewhat,” “very,” or “extremely,” while only 29% reported “not at all” or “a little.”

Yet, budget delegates were uninformed about how social and policy change occurs on the campus. When asked how well they understand how student government works, 47% responded “not at all” or “a little.” When asked how comfortable they were with knowing how to start changing an issue on campus, half of respondents said “not at all” or “a little.”

## **Budget Delegates Interview Findings**

### *Successes*

Budget delegates worked to prioritize the project ideas submitted by participants and, ultimately, developed the final project proposals for the vote in December. All interviewees reported several successes for PB: the relationships developed, the support from the Auraria campus staff, the process of developing the project proposals, the increased student engagement on campus issues, and the deliberation process of vetting proposals and learning what’s feasible and what’s not.

One interviewee explained, “I think the process of participatory budgeting creates spaces for a lot of skill development that aren’t always prioritized in class. That process of having to deliberate and explore what’s practical and what’s not, can you push, kind of unveiling some of the power structures on campus.” Budget delegates enjoyed the process that allowed them to learn new skills and connect with more people that they may not have otherwise. As a democratic process intended to give students power around campus decisions, many of the budget delegates appreciated the opportunity provided by PB to make change through the different proposals.

### *Challenges*

Budget delegates also identified several challenges for PB in their interviews, namely a lack of structure, a lack of communication, a lack of time, and a lack of institutional support. First, as stated by one interviewee, “Since it [PB] was a new thing at Auraria campus, it was kind of freehand. It was challenging, but, at the same time, it was rewarding.” While there were guidelines for budget delegates outlined at the beginning of the process, those guidelines were frequently modified as the process progressed. Because PB lacked precedent on campus, budget delegates often felt they were making new rules as they went along.

The compressed timeline of Auraria PB also was a challenge. As stated by one budget delegate, “On a logistical level, the process I think was condensed and was more rushed than it would be in an ideal situation or in an ideal world, so I think that created anxiety.” The process was only four months long, which was less than half the time of the average PB process in North America. It may be of benefit if the cycle is extended over a full academic year rather than an academic semester. There was a lot to be accomplished over such a restricted period.

Finally, interviewees reported a lack of communication between various stakeholders, especially as it related to teamwork and collaboration. For some, it was difficult to work with other people, especially with college students, because everyone was on a different schedule and extremely busy trying to balance multiple responsibilities (e.g., budget delegate, student, club member, family member,

employee, etc.). Some communication tensions arose around what kinds of projects would get implemented and the boundaries surrounding feasibility. Some members would commit to a project and “Say they’re gonna do something and then not be able to do it,” as commented on by one of the budget delegates. This lack of communication also resulted in a degree of dishonesty between student government and campus administration. One budget delegate said, “I was surprised by some of the levels of dishonesty that seemed to happen throughout the process from, if not an administrative then student government, and that wasn’t across the board between the three campuses.” While there were some challenges during implementation, many of the budget delegates were excited about the work they accomplished.

### *Lessons Learned*

Interviews with budget delegates identified lessons learned throughout this implementation project that could be used for future processes:

- A deeper understanding of campus operations to implement change on campus. Prior to PB involvement, the delegates explained they were not as informed on operations. This process has allowed budget delegates to learn how campus works and better preparing budget delegates for operations challenges at the beginning of their work could help PB generate better projects. Most of the budget delegates agreed that this work helped them to learn how to draft proposals and practice communicating ideas with other people about bigger projects.

*“I did learn more things about campus processes. I would say that it helped in idea formation, navigating campus, and practicing pitching ideas.” -Budget Delegate*

- Another lesson learned was the importance of building relationships and connecting with other people. A budget delegate said, “One thing I learned - the relationships were beneficial, as well.” There were a few skills related to relationships that many of the budget delegates commented on learning, including meeting new people, working as a team, and actually being able to communicate with a team to make decisions and have one’s voice heard.

### **Campus Staff Interview Findings**

#### *Successes*

The research team interviewed two Auraria campus staff members who worked closely with budget delegates and student organizers to implement the PB process and vet project proposals. The interviews revealed several successes of the process, according to the interviewees: that the process was student initiated and student led, that the process served as a school for democracy, that projects not funded through PB will still be implemented, that the process generated creative and high quality projects, and that PB promoted collaboration across multiple stakeholders.

First, interviewees reported that they appreciated that PB was initiated and led by students. Both interviewees indicated hearing about Auraria PB from students. As one staff member explained, “This was my first experience with PB and finding out what it is. I discovered the whole process because I was walking through campus on the first day of class and saw [PB students] tabling.” Staff liked that the process was led by students and strove to support them as they tried to develop project proposals. One interviewee described his role as “a mentor or steward of students’ ideas.” He “didn’t want to influence them” with his ideas and instead allowed students to take the reins on project development. Staff participants found working with the students to be highly rewarding. As one indicated, “Working with the students was most rewarding. Learning from them and hopefully passing on some knowledge to them. It was exciting to see them engage in a way I never did as a student.”

Second, Auraria staff believed the process was successful at promoting student learning, especially as it relates to the skills and habits necessary to thrive in a democratic society. As one interviewee explained, “I think the erosion of democracy is a serious concern, and getting people to see a direct result of participation in democracy is a great way to strengthen our institutions. For that reason alone, just giving students a win on a small scale sets them up for wins on a big scale.” Staff reported that students engaged in stakeholder engagement, thorough research, and realistic budgeting. One participant said these skills were important because “that’s what it takes in the real world to get things done.” Staff believed the practice of deliberative democracy through PB was instructive for students: “I think in the end everyone had their input and participation, and it was useful and meaningful. Not everybody won, and there’s a lesson there, too, which is a good part of this. That’s why taking it to your peers is so good.”

*“I bet some of these students learned more in this process than in some of their classes.” -Auraria staff member*

Third, staff reported that Auraria PB promoted creative and high quality projects. One interviewee said, “If you come up with an idea in an office, things get tossed out more easily. In this [PB], people came up with ideas, and the door was cracked open for these more.” The project ideas generated and funded through PB also reflected a shift in funding priorities for the school. One staff member reported that campus administrators always fund security and cost-saving measure first, and then everything else gets low priority. Students indicated that the values of security (i.e., surveillance and militarization) and austerity were not as important to them as providing a sustainable, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. As one interviewee explained: “The bus stop was not on anyone’s radar. ... I think this took lower priority projects for [administrators] and made it high priority for students, when that consideration isn’t normally there.”

Staff found that the projects funded through PB were of high quality, too. One interviewee was impressed with how practical the projects were, and another staff member said that the winning projects “generally focus on helping each other, being there for your fellow students, supporting each other, and that was really cool.”

Fourth, even projects that weren't funded through PB, staff found to be useful and helpful for their jobs. So much so, that they were likely to implement PB projects that did not win or could not be placed on the ballot. One interviewee said he found several of the projects related to sustainability to be quite useful, and even though they weren't funded through PB, he was going to implement them anyway. Other projects were able to be funded outside of PB. Several Wi-fi improvements provide an example: "I think some of the Wi-fi improvements were taking place already or brought attention to where the need was. I know Tivoli [Student Union] is going to improve their Wi-fi, and this process sparked that timeline being shortened. It was on the docket, but a few years out, and it's been moved up in priority." One staff member said that PB improved efficiency by placing power in students' hands and getting projects that meet students' needs funded more quickly: "Really, the difference is the actual real change the individual student can make. It really puts the process in their hands. The campus was going to tackle these problems someday anyway. It makes it happen quicker. It gets people what they need quicker." Overall, interviewees reported that PB provided an important means of formal input for students so that staff could better understand students' needs and take actions to meet those needs.

Lastly, staff members found that Auraria PB was successful in promoting collaboration across the campus. When asked what he would describe as a success of PB, one staff member said, "That it was truly tri-institutional. That just doesn't happen here. Getting people to collaborate and work together and show that students have common wants and needs." Another staff member echoed these thoughts and said that PB had students and various campus departments in conversation with each other, which generated administrative and student learning. He indicated that some of the issues brought up through PB would not have been addressed otherwise, helping administrators address blind spots when it comes to the challenges some students face on campus.

### *Challenges*

Despite Auraria PB's numerous successes, campus staff indicated several challenges for the process, namely a lack of clarity about PB, a lack of staff input, a lack of institutional support, varying levels of knowledge among students, and a compressed timeline. First, at the start of PB, one interviewee reported that the process was not made clear to campus staff. He said that "There was a lot of confusion around it [PB] because it had never been done before. There was a lot of skepticism about it." Students and organizers did not adequately prepare staff early in the process and did not assuage their concerns. This lack of initial clarity about PB generated some conflict between staff and students during the project development phase of the process.

The biggest challenge for staff was that they felt they were not able to provide enough input during project development. As one interviewee remarked, "If I would change anything, I wanna be allowed to be more involved. I get the benefit of it [PB] being student-led and student-focused. I just think I could have helped more." He indicated that staff felt "ambushed" at times and students did not take staff member's suggestions in good faith. Staff were sometimes left off important communication chains and were therefore out of the loop. As one participant explained, "No one communicated directly to me what won, for instance! They didn't even think to update me after the results came in, so how valuable was I? I get it, but it would have been nice to get more regular updates." The participant wished PB organizers

had been more collaborative with staff members but instead, “It felt like they [PB students and organizers] were just using us for what they needed.”

Staff members indicated that another challenge for Auraria PB was its tri-campus emphasis. Both interviewees indicated that it is difficult to implement programs across all the schools at Auraria because there is a lack of formal institutions and mechanisms that allow for cross-campus collaboration. As one staff member explained, “We’re a unique organization. Having student, faculty, staff participate in our structure is more challenging on our campus. . . . The [campus] identity isn’t as strong.” These challenges complicated project development because staff sometimes lacked experience working across departments or across different schools. For students, the lack of cross-campus collaboration hindered their ability to develop projects because they were sometimes unable to find a department that had appropriate authority to vet their project proposals.

Although staff indicated working with the students was one of the most rewarding aspects of Auraria PB, it was also challenging at times, especially because students have varying levels of experience working with bureaucracy and negotiating terms for a project. One interviewee told a story about a budget delegate who called him the day project proposals were due asked him to come to the community garden. As the staff member explained: “I helped him out and came out to the community garden. He was overall kind of abrasive, and I told him what the ballpark cost would be, and that was the most frustrating situation. He did none of the research, is coming at the final hour, and I didn’t have to help him.” Likely due to a lack of knowledge and experience, the student imposed an unrealistic request on the staff member with short notice.

Another staff member explained, “I had a challenge with convincing them that their budget wasn’t enough and that contingency is a good thing. It was a struggle of making the project sexy and attractive for votes and then being realistic.” He did not blame the students but rather believed they lacked the time necessary to develop some knowledge related to project planning. As he explained, “I think there’s a lot of learning that the students have to go through to develop a proposal. You have to learn what a bus shelter is. Or for the bike share, you have to learn how our funding system works. There’s limitations you would never think of.”

Finally, one staff member remarked that the compressed timeline of Auraria PB was a challenge, and one that likely contributed to the other challenges experienced in the process. He said more time would have been helpful for all parties involved and that he, personally, would have liked “one more chance to provide input” on projects before they went on the ballot.

### *Lessons Learned*

Interviews with staff identified several lessons learned that could be incorporated in future Auraria PB processes:

- **Make PB permanent:** Both interviewees were highly supportive of PB and believed that the process should be permanent because it benefited students, staff, and the campus at large

*“If this gets established and has a yearly rhythm, there will be less fear and surprises. ... I’m glad it[PB] ended up here because we’re gonna get some cool stuff out of that.” - Auraria staff member*

- Keep PB student-led but better incorporate campus staff as partners in the process: Staff members considered themselves allies and advocates for the process and felt snubbed when students did not take their suggestions in good faith. Staff members are necessary for PB’s implementation, and they provide invaluable assistance to this cycle. For example, one interviewee reported that adding a 20% cost buffer to projects on the ballot was his suggestion, one that will help prevent cost overruns during implementation.

*“I think having a faculty or administrative advisor would make more sense. Because they [budget delegates] were just guessing who would be responsible.” -Auraria staff member*

*“They [PB organizers] should know they have more allies in the administration that can help.” -Auraria staff member*

- Increase the timeline for PB: The compressed timeline for the pilot process generated much of the challenges for campus staff members. They did not feel they had enough time to vet projects and that students did not have enough time to learn important facts about project planning. Allowing more time for PB would provide more chances for staff input, more time to vet and develop projects, and more time for organizers to conduct outreach for student participation. Although staff were impressed with the number of students who participated in PB, more time for the process could generate even greater participation levels.

## Phase III: Voting Analysis

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Surveys were collected from 540 individuals who voted November 26–December 9, 2018 in Auraria’s first PB. The overall survey response rate was 59%, higher than the average voter survey response rate in PB processes across the country in 2014–2015.<sup>7</sup> In-person voting opportunities were hosted at multiple locations across campus for 10 days, including one structured Auraria PB voter information seminar. Ballots also could be completed online. A total of 918 individuals voted for up to 4 projects they wanted funded on campus. Out of 12 potential projects, ultimately, Auraria PB voters approved 7.

What follows is an analysis of the data collected through these voter surveys. Where appropriate, the data is compared to Auraria campus population data.

## Key Findings

- Survey respondents were generally representative of Auraria's population in race and ethnicity, except whites were slightly underrepresented
- Traditional age students (under 25) were overrepresented among Auraria PB voters
- People who identified as male were underrepresented, compared to the Auraria student population
- People with low incomes (below \$50,000) were overrepresented among voters, compared to the Auraria student population
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents learned about the Auraria PB vote by passing by an in-person voting site
- 13% of respondents learned about the vote from a campus or community group, mostly from Auraria PB organizers
- Only one in ten respondents learned about the vote from a school administrator or student government, demonstrating a lack of institutional support for the process
- 83% of respondents had not participated in PB before the vote, reflecting engagement from students who were not previously involved in the process
- Almost all respondents (92%) believed PB should continue.
- Auraria PB attracted the involvement of students who are not typically involved in public affairs. Over half of respondents (54%) had not previously worked with others in the past year to address a campus/community problem, and 8% of participants were ineligible to vote in official government elections
- Auraria PB attracted participation from people who were skeptical of campus input processes. 39% of respondents believed they had only a little or no influence on campus, and approximately one in four (26%) reported only a little to no trust in campus administrators

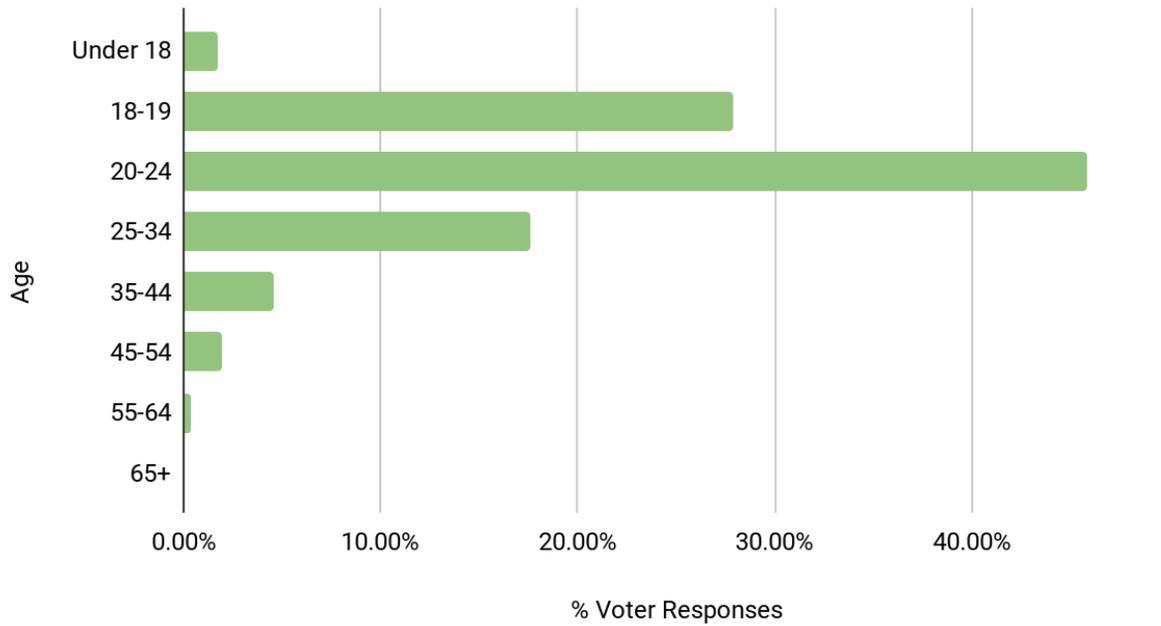
## Demographic Data

### *Age*

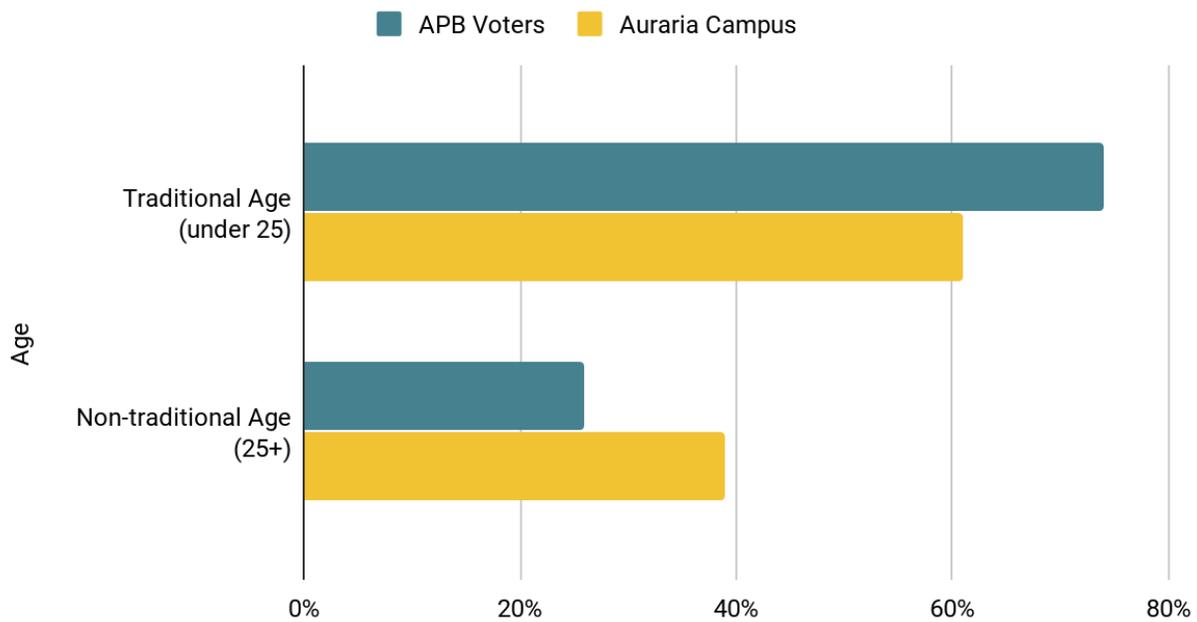
People aged 20–24 made up 46% of survey respondents, while people 35 and older made up only 7%.

- Comparison to campus data: Auraria student censuses do not break down age according to the Auraria PB voter surveys. Instead, they indicate whether students are traditional college age (under 25) or not (over 25). Traditional age students were overrepresented among respondents, and non-traditional age students were underrepresented, compared to Auraria campus demographics
- Comparison to North American PB voter data: Less than 1 in 5 surveyed PB voters in 2014–2015 processes was under 25 years old. Auraria PB overrepresented young people, compared to national PB voter statistics

## Age Breakdown of Voters



## Non-Traditional Age v. Traditional Age Comparison

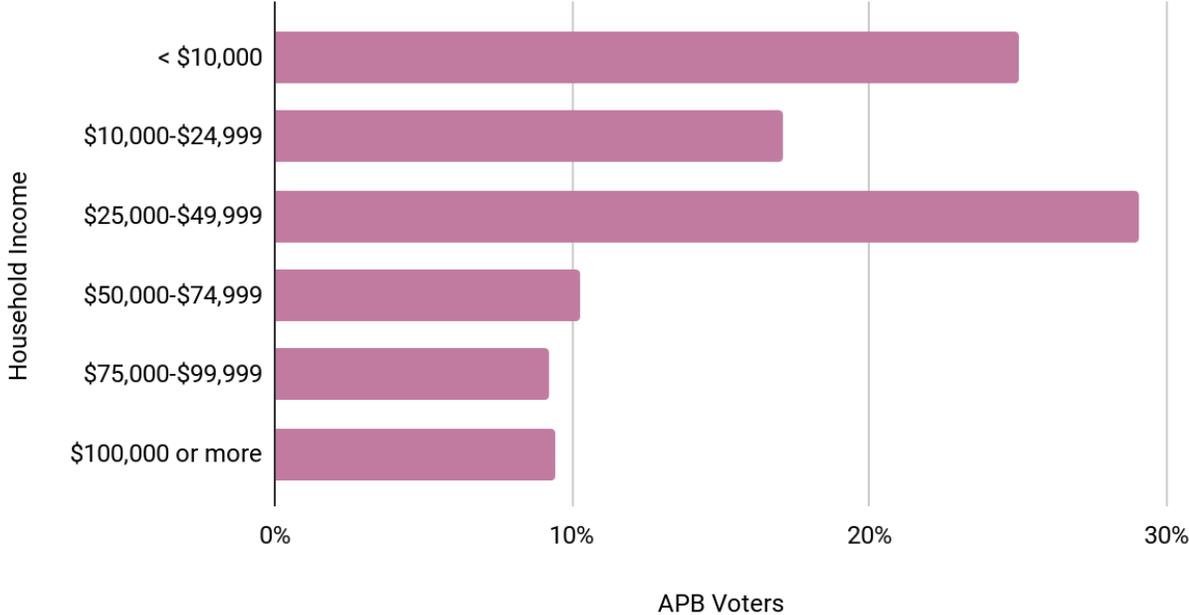


### *Household Income*

71% of survey respondents reported a household income below \$50,000 per year, including 42% who reported household incomes below \$25,000 per year.

- Comparison to North American PB voter data: About half of surveyed PB voters in 2014–2015 processes reported household incomes of less than \$50,000 per year. Auraria PB therefore overrepresented people with lower incomes, compared to North American PB processes

### Household Income of APB Voters

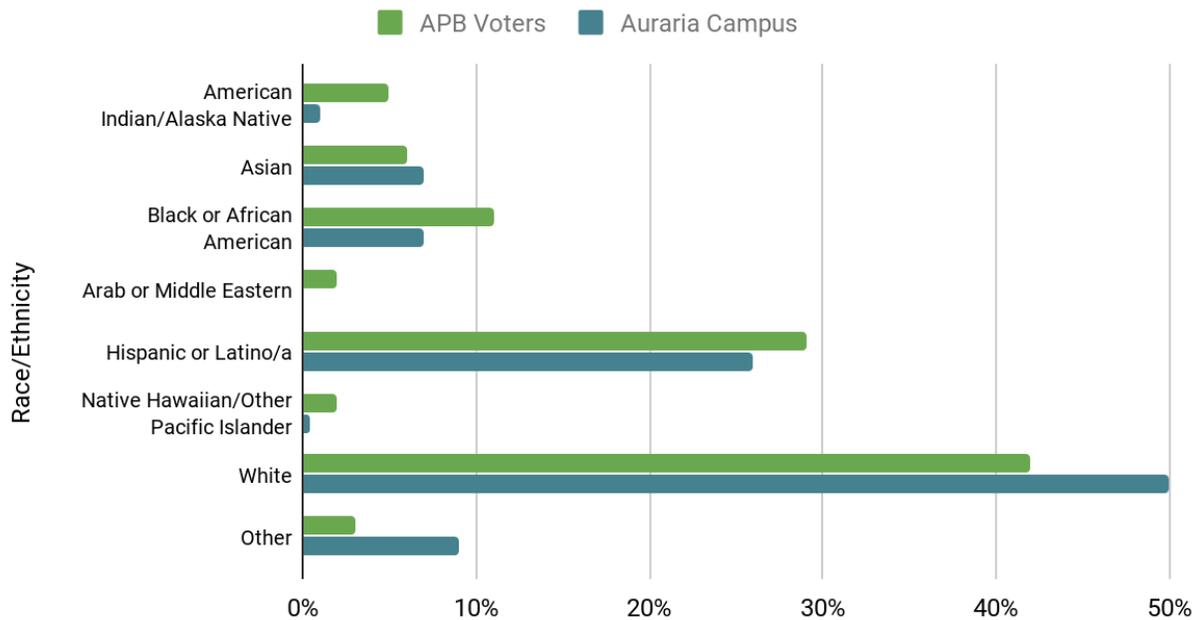


### Race and Ethnicity

More than half of survey respondents identified as a person of color, including about 11% who identified as Black/African American, and 29% who identified as Hispanic/Latinx.

- Comparison to campus data: Across nearly all race/ethnicity categories, survey respondents were reasonably representative of campus data.
- Comparison to North American PB voter data: Just over half of surveyed PB voters in 2014–2015 processes identified as a person of color, with about 1 in 5 identifying as Black/African American. In the vast majority of 2014–2015 processes with voter data, Black/African American and white residents were overrepresented or representative of the local census, among survey respondents.

## Race/Ethnicity Comparison

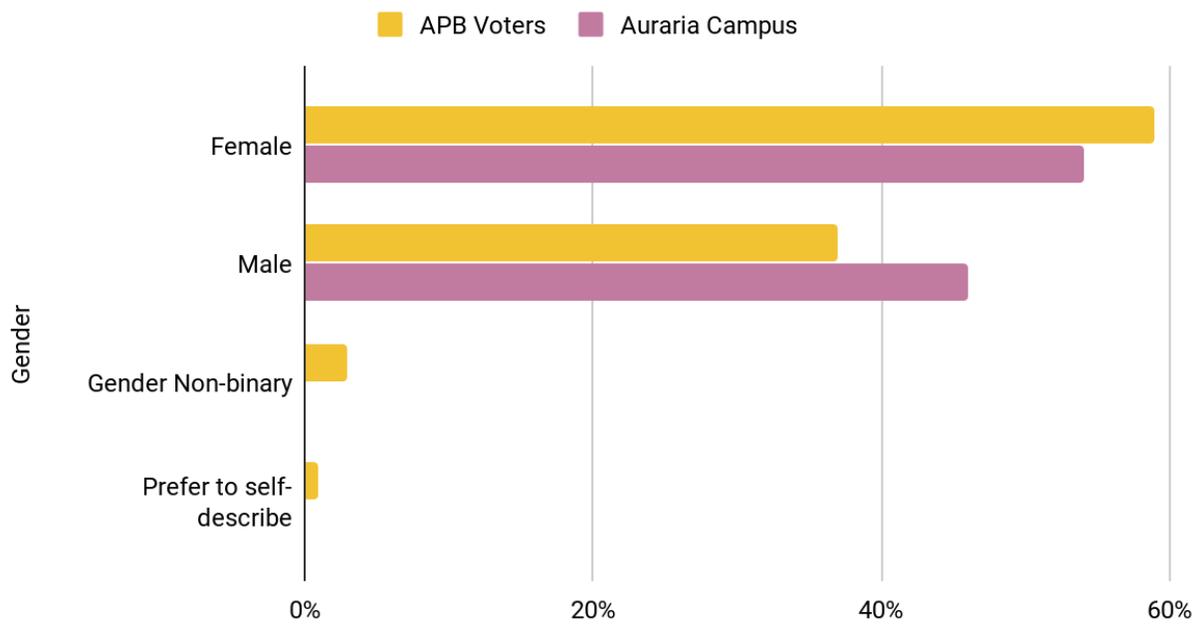


### Gender

More women (59%) voted in Auraria PB than men (37%). Also, 3% of survey respondents identified as gender non-binary.

- Comparison to campus data: Men were underrepresented by 9%.
- Comparison to North American PB voter data: Similar to Auraria, the majority of surveyed PB voters in 2014–2015 were women. The vast majority of PB processes with voter data reported an over-representation of women compared to their local demographics.

## Gender Comparison

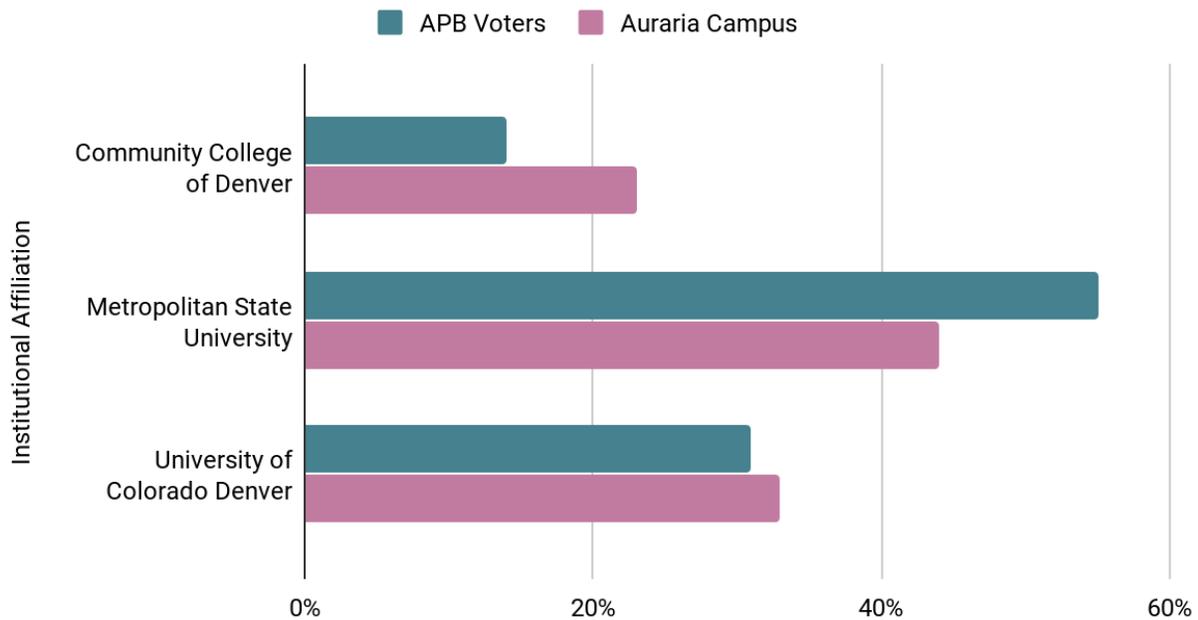


### *Institutional Affiliation<sup>8</sup>*

Schools were not represented proportionally, with Metropolitan State University being overrepresented (55%), and Community College of Denver being underrepresented (14%).

- Comparison to campus data: MSU students were overrepresented by 11%, and CCD students were underrepresented by 9%

## Institutional Affiliation Comparison

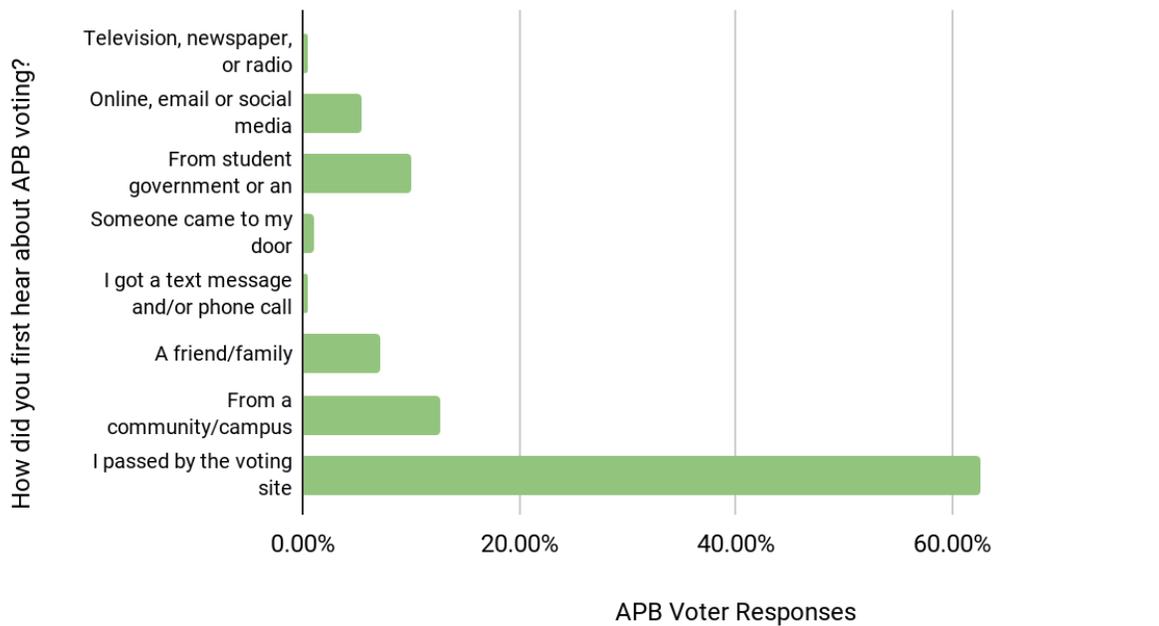


### *How Respondents Heard about PB Voting*

The majority of respondents learned about Auraria PB voting by passing by an in-person voting site (63%) or from a community/campus group (13%). Only 1 in 10 respondents learned about PB voting from student government and/or a school administrator.

- Of those who indicated they heard about PB voting from a campus/community group, 44% indicated they heard about it from Auraria PB volunteers.

## How did you first hear about APB voting?



### *Earlier Participation in the PB Process*

Just over 8 in 10 respondents (83%) indicated that they were not involved in the PB process besides voting.

Besides voting, how else have you been involved in participatory budgeting over the last 6 months? (check all that apply)	
I was not involved besides voting	82.50%
I attended a Fall 2018 meeting or event where project ideas were collected	5%
I submitted a project idea	5%
I was a budget delegate	2.88%
I was on the steering committee	1.54%
Other:	3.08%

### **Civic Engagement, Beliefs, Efficacy**

#### *Community Engagement*

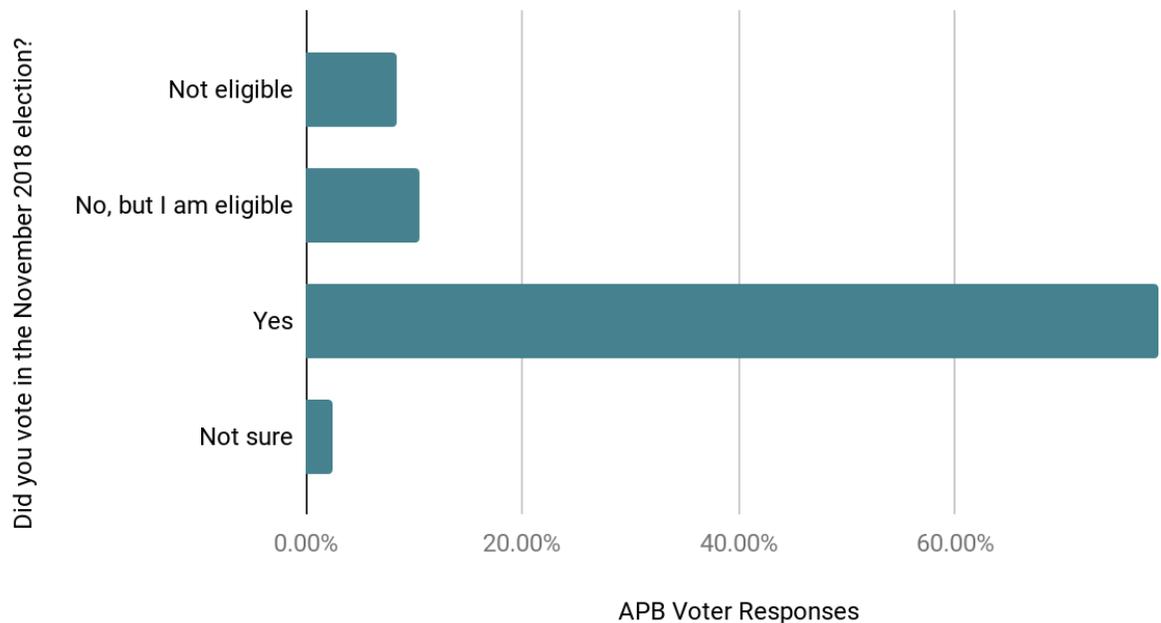
Just over half of the respondents (54%) reported that they had not, in the past 12 months, worked with other people to fix a problem in their community.

In the past 12 months, have you worked with other people in your community to fix a problem or improve a condition not including work you may have done related to participatory budgeting?	
Yes	31.23%
No	53.95%
Not sure	14.82%

### Past Voting

Nearly 8 in 10 respondents (79%) indicated that they had voted in the most recent national election (November 2018 midterms). However, 8% indicated they were not eligible to vote.

### Did you vote in the November 2018 election?



### Political Efficacy

Most survey respondents believed they had at least some influence on making the campus better (61%) and had at least some trust in campus administrators to do what is right (74%).

- However, 39% of survey respondents believed they had only a little or no influence on making their community better, while 26% did not believe, or believed only a little, that they could trust school administrators to do what is right.

*“Administrators don’t take students’ views and interests into account. This needs to change.” -Auraria PB Voter*

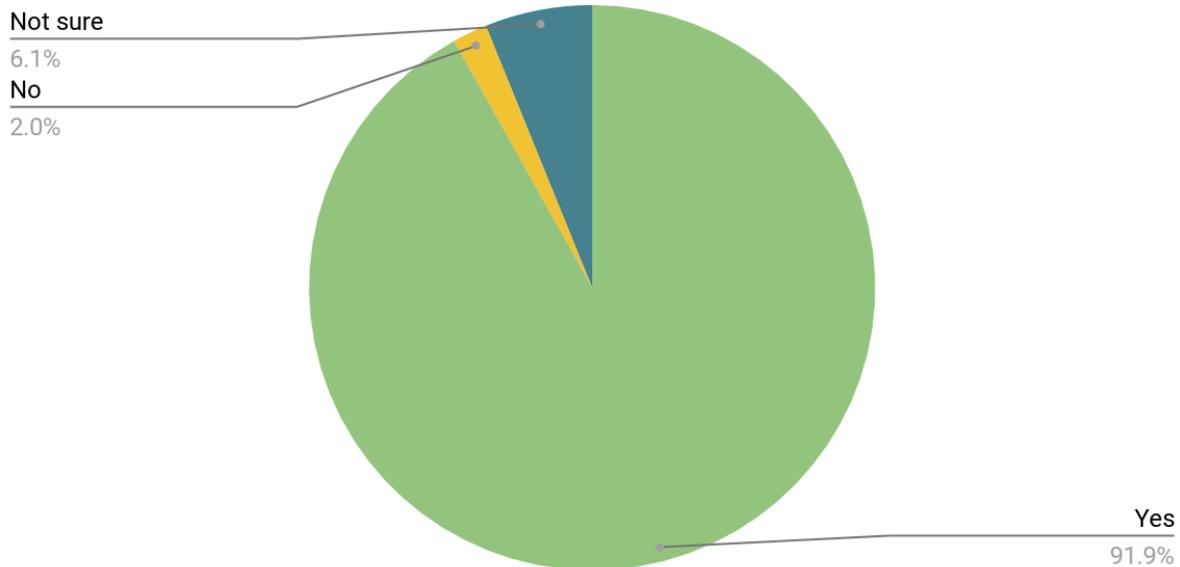
How much influence do you think you have in improving the Auraria campus?	
None	6.13%
Only a little	33.40%
Some	42.89%
Quite a lot	10.87%
A great deal	6.72%

How much of the time can you trust your university/college administrator to do what is right?	
None	4.58%
Only a little	21.51%
Some	38.45%
Quite a lot	27.89%
A great deal	7.57%

### Continuing Auraria PB

Almost all respondents (92%) believed Auraria PB should continue the next year.

Do you think Auraria Participatory Budgeting should continue next year?



### Number of Voters and Ballots

- 918 total unique voters
  - 751 in-person ballots
  - 158 online ballots
  - 9 ballots disqualified because more than 4 projects were selected

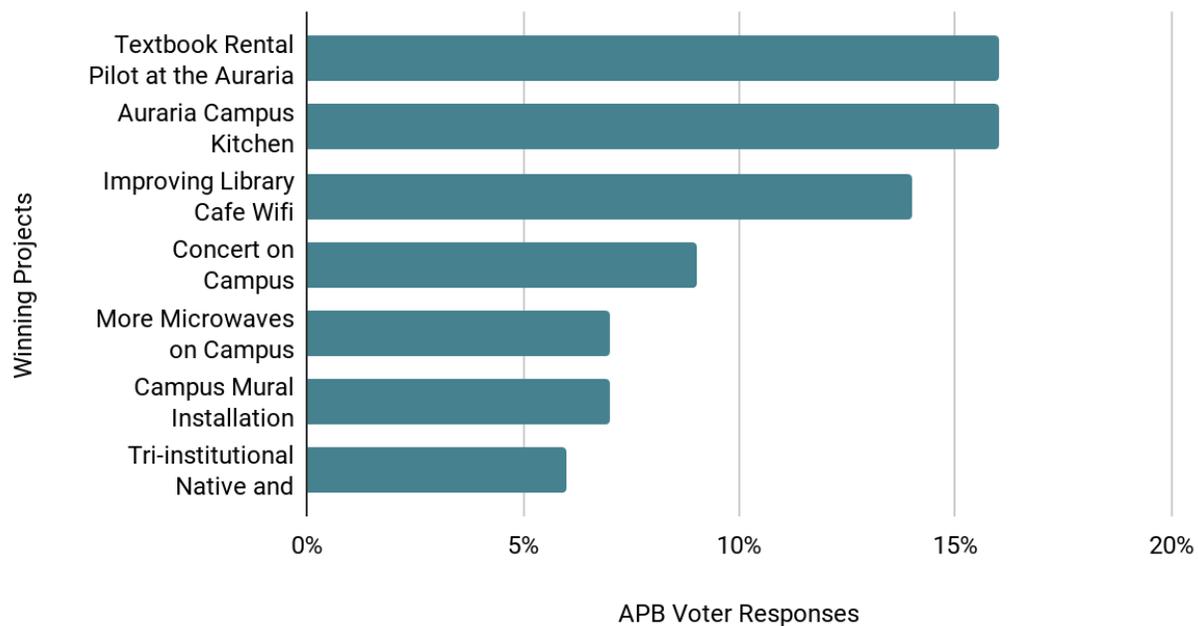
- 3,475 total votes cast across 909 ballots
  - 2,866 in-person
  - 609 online

## Winning Projects

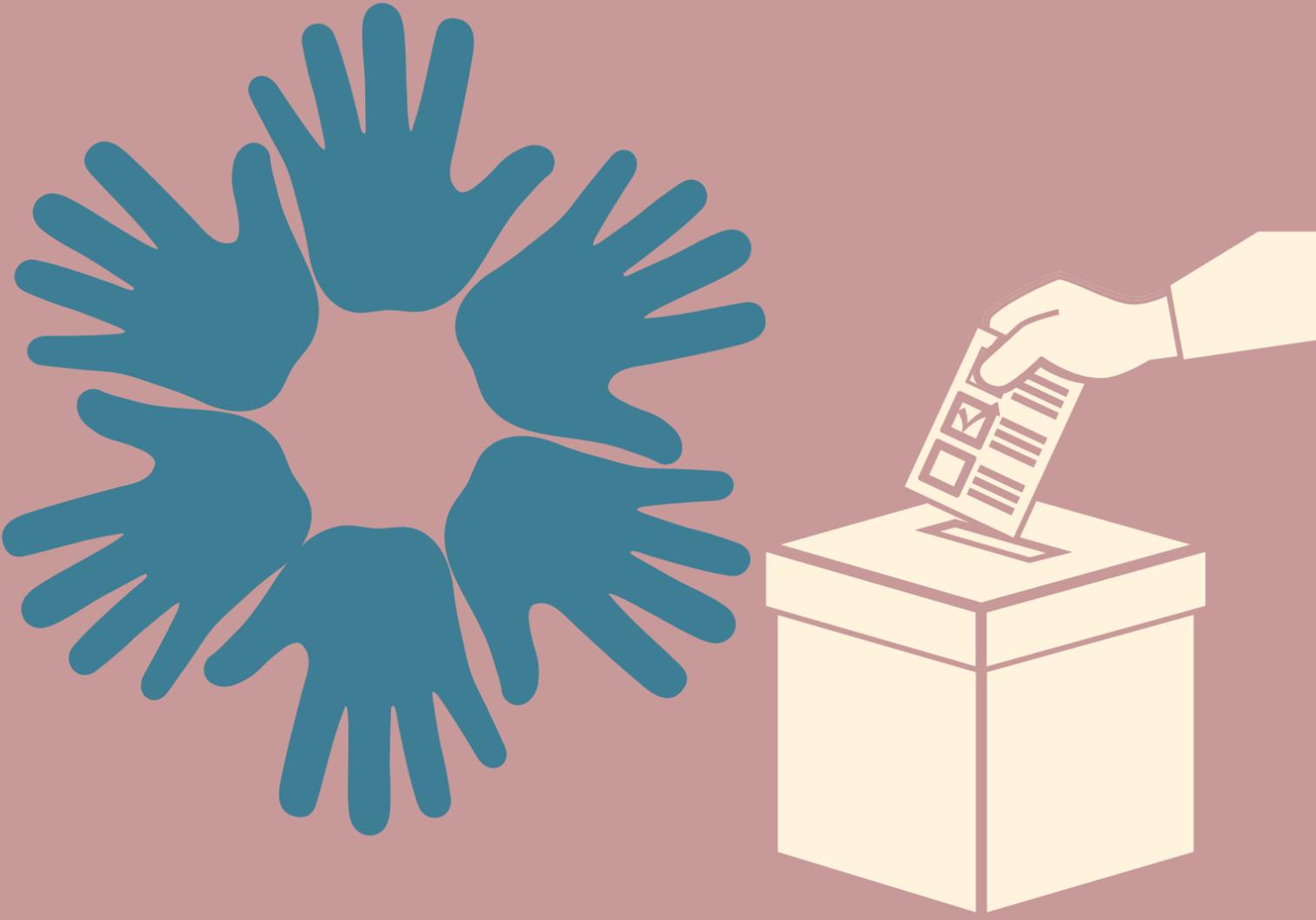
12 projects were placed on the Auraria PB ballot, and, in the end, voters chose to fund 7 of them:

1. Textbook rental pilot at the Auraria library (16% of votes)
2. Auraria Campus Kitchen (16% of votes)
3. Improving library café wifi (14% of votes)
4. Concert on campus (9% of votes)
5. More microwaves on campus (7% of votes)
6. Campus mural installation (7% of votes)
7. Tri-institutional native and indigenous student retreat (6% of votes)

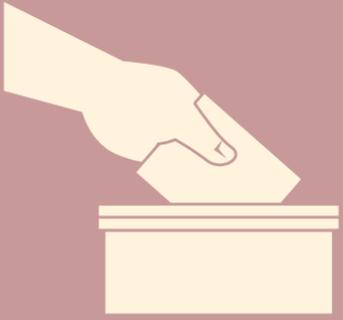
## Winning Projects



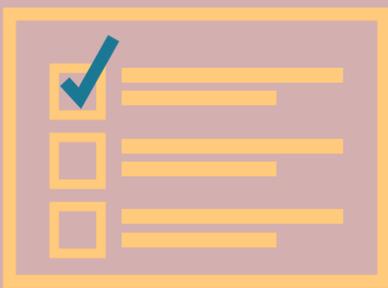
# Auraria Participatory Budgeting



## NUMBER OF VOTERS & BALLOTS



**918 TOTAL UNIQUE VOTERS**



### BALLOTS

751 in-person ballots  
158 online ballots  
9 ballots disqualified because more than 4 projects were selected



**3,475 TOTAL VOTES CAST**

Across 909 ballots  
2,866 in-person  
609 online

# Conclusion

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The guiding principles for Auraria PB in 2018 were to foster equity, community-building, and empowerment among students on a campus that disproportionately serves first-generation, working and middle class students of color. In sum, the process achieved its goals.

Auraria PB included meetings and other events across the campus that helped students imagine possibilities for change and then vote for campus improvement projects they wanted to see implemented. From a rulebook created by 15 steering committee members, to 423 project ideas submitted by approximately 400 individuals, to 12 ballot items developed by 29 budget delegates across four committees, leading to 918 students voting to fund 7 projects. Auraria PB incorporated the participation of over 1,000 students as they worked collectively to improve their campus and achieve Auraria PB's goals:

- **Equity:** Participants generally reflected student demographics on campus, and some of the winning projects will most benefit underserved students, including the textbook rental program for low-income students, a campus kitchen for students experiencing food insecurity, and a retreat for native and indigenous students.
- **Empowerment:** Auraria PB fostered participation from groups that, historically, have been marginalized and oppressed. Student participants frequently remarked in interviews that they felt more confident in their ability to affect change on campus.
- **Community Building:** Auraria PB brought students together from across three institutions to work together to solve social problems on campus. Several participants said PB was the first time they had met and worked closely with people from different schools on campus.

Auraria's students seized the new opportunity PB provided to meet with others across campus and develop solutions to issues deemed most important to the student body. Winning projects sought to improve academics and social life on campus and thereby increase Auraria's reputation as a high quality and inclusive learning environment.

## Benefits of Dialogue and Deliberation

Auraria PB offered an opportunity to develop tri-institutional deliberative infrastructure that could allow students to identify campus issues, develop potential solutions to those issues, and implement the solutions. First, PB provided an inclusive and empowering space for discussion, feedback, and action. Second, PB offered facilitation to stimulate additional talk that allowed participants to consider alternative possibilities for the process and their roles on campus. As the process progressed, participants began to feel ownership of the campus and that their voices were being heard and held authority.

*“It [PB] makes you feel like you have a claim in the campus, even if it’s just pitching an idea. It gives you a sense of ownership of the campus, which feels so, like, monolithic at times. Saying these are the areas I care about and that I think they need improvement.” -Idea Collection Participant*

*“It [PB] is a relatively safe way of being an intro to civic action. And an intro to “this is how you get a grant” and “this is what you do with a grant.” It provides a layout with that so when they hear a budgetary report from the Senate, then they feel more ownership of it because they understand the process.” -Idea Collection Participant*

Campus staff members saw the value of Auraria PB in communicating to participants that their voices mattered and were worthy of consideration:

*“I also learned from the students what projects and needs they have I might have known about but not known the priorities or extreme need. Even the microwaves. I hadn’t thought we probably do need microwaves on campus and where. I could try to put together a plan and guess, but hearing from students really helps.” -Auraria Campus Staff Member*

*“Just seeing students get excited about what’s possible. And helping them through the challenges that are inherent in this. Stakeholder engagement and thorough research and realistic budgeting. I find those things rewarding because that’s what it takes in the real world to get things done.” -Auraria Campus Staff Member*

### **Students and Campus Staff Build Trust**

At the start of Auraria PB, student participants frequently expressed doubts about the intentions of campus administrators. Administrators were said to run the schools like “corporations” and were driven by profits. Student participants often worried that administrators would co-opt the process or prevent it from empowering students and accomplishing its goals. Surely, students did face resistance. The schools did not officially endorse PB, nor did they dedicate significant resources to support it. Students reported examples of “stonewalling” from staff, flyers being taken down, and unsubstantiated denials of requests to table at locations on campus.

*“I tried to get permission to setup a table in front of Metro, and I was appalled! They wanted 2 weeks notice and to setup a walk through! Just for us to sit in front of the doors! I wanted to tell them that’s why students don’t engage on campus.” -Steering Committee Member*

*“I guess least exciting thing is going through AHEC and seeing what they’re actually going to allow cause I know about their bureaucracy. [heavy sighing in the background]” -Budget Delegate*

However, campus staff members reported that they were allies of the process and that the defiant nature of Auraria PB participants alienated some staff. Additionally, administrators did finally agree to implement the projects approved by student voters, signaling that the process was viewed as legitimate.

By the end of the process, some attitudes had begun to change between students and campus staff. Budget delegates found campus staff members to be helpful in developing project proposals, and staff members were impressed with many budget delegates' tenacity, knowledge, and maturity. Certainly, Auraria PB did not resolve all the tensions between students and staff, but it initiated a building of trust between the stakeholders.

*"They [campus staff] were extremely supportive. A lot of this couldn't be done without their help." - Budget Delegate*

*"I would say on a staff level and educator level, most of the staff that I encountered helped by distributing information, sharing with their students or networks that this was happening, really helping us spread the word. Helping navigate certain bureaucratic systems." -Budget Delegate*

### **The People's Critiques: Students Want More of What PB Promises**

Despite Auraria PB's many successes, some participants felt improvements could be made in the future.

Student participants consistently enjoyed working with each other to make meaningful change on campus. Several interviewees reported that the most rewarding aspect of the process was seeing what projects won and knowing they played a part in improving the campus.

*"The most rewarding part was seeing at the end of the process how, even if it wasn't my specific proposal that got picked, seeing other people's proposals. The Auraria campus believed those solutions would make a change, and they put more money into the proposal. So it was really cool to see that, that they believed they would make a change, as well. And seeing it from the ground up, too. That was really cool to see it. It was really inspiring." -Budget Delegate*

*"This committee provided me with a new perspective regarding the various staff who work to continually improve the various facets of Auraria that I normally take for granted. It also allowed me the opportunity to meet a different group of individuals who were excited to work ... to bring the Auraria-sourced feedback closer to fruition." -Budget Delegate*

However, the timeline and lack of administrative support increasingly presented challenges for participants. The compressed schedule of Auraria PB caused participants to work more quickly than they would have liked, potentially sacrificing the quality of their work. A lack of time also meant less opportunities to conduct outreach and generate broader participation from the campus body.

Similarly, the lack of administrative support meant that PB organizers frequently worked as outsiders trying to get permission for everything they hoped to accomplish. Bureaucracy and institutional recalcitrance put up many barriers for students, whether it was for outreach, getting information about potential projects, or even scheduling a meeting space.

*“I think the student governments should fully back it and be part of the communication. If we would have had the support of student governments in advertising the idea collection phase and advertising the vote, I think we would have had a lot more participation ... .” -Auraria PB Organizer*

Participants also wanted more money for PB. \$30,000 was not enough money to make significant impacts on the campus. The small pot of money for PB limited the kinds of projects that could be approved, and having more money for the process could attract more students to get engaged.

*“I think there should be more money put into the process overall. With a campus as large as we are, what like 45,000 students, the amount that we ended up having in the end wasn’t a lot to be considered like actual budgeting versus just spending a grant ... . I do think if we do it again, it should be a larger chunk of money from actual universities that we are actually impacting the way money is budgeting not spending outside money.” -Budget Delegate*

### **Campus Staff Critiques: More Collaboration**

Campus staff reported being skeptical of PB when it began. One staff member thought the process sounded “too good to be true,” and other staff were unsure whether a new student organization would be able to implement the process. For those reasons, among others, they were less willing to work with PB organizers.

However, staff, overall, saw PB as beneficial, and, once the process was underway, were excited to work with students. Staff wished they had been better incorporated into the process and embraced as collaborative partners, rather than as occasional consultants.

*“Communication is number one. They [staff] felt ambushed and felt like their word was misunderstood, as far as what’s a true commitment versus just possibilities ... . Every little missed communication adds up to shoot them [PB organizers] in the foot. They need to build relationships to sustain it. It [Auraria PB] has an air of defiance, which administration doesn’t do a great job with because they’re so willing to help. You don’t need to do that if people are already on board. Just be more collaborative. It felt like they were just using us for what they needed.” -Campus Staff Member*

*“If I would change anything, I wanna be allowed to be more involved. I get the benefit of it being student-led and student-focused. I just think I could have helped more ... .” -Campus Staff Member*

### **Moving Forward**

Auraria PB deserves to be repeated. That was the sentiment expressed from every stakeholder in the process. The highlights and critiques were shared, in part, across steering committee members, budget delegates, and campus staff members, as demonstrated throughout this report. Moving forward, organizers ought to take care to consider how PB can be used to the greatest benefit of the campus, especially students.

*“[I] wish we defined things, how do you define success and what are those things needed. Some of the tension felt was we were defining success in very different ways. Success was very different. For you, it was building community. We were talking about different things about what we wanted.” -Auraria PB Organizer*

*“The only improvement could have been over-communicate. Over-communicate with everybody involved.” -Campus Staff Member*

*“I just do personally believe if we don't really get serious about practicing decision making with each other, there's no way that our generation is gonna have a chance to create the large scale change that we need to ensure, or even have a chance at a livable future for a lot of people ... I think that processes like these help us map when and why we might be giving away our power.” -Budget Delegate*

Finally, there was overwhelming agreement that the merits of Auraria's first PB process outweighed the challenges in what was a dedicated effort to involve students in social change on the Auraria campus.

*“I would [recommend doing PB again] because you get a direct say in what you need on campus. You're paying the tuition, so seeing your money go towards something you need and what the community needs as a whole is rewarding in itself and it's extremely beneficial.” -Budget Delegate*

*“In general, this is an awesome exercise. I couldn't be more enthusiastic about the effort. ... It was messy, but it's a pilot. That's what happens.” -Campus Staff Member*

### **Next Cycle Suggestions: Research Team Ideas**

This report has provided observations and suggestions from the many stakeholders involved with the first cycle of Auraria PB. The research team has benefitted from tracking the process since its inception, and with our expertise in communication, we developed several recommendations for the next cycle of Auraria PB, a process that is, at its core, one of public deliberation for social justice.

We recommend that time be devoted to determining what success for the next cycle of PB will mean for organizers and participants. Steering committee members ought to explicitly state the goals of the process after facilitated reflection. We agree that the goals of equity, inclusion, empowerment, and community building are vital to a strong PB process, and steering committee members ought to decide what those terms mean for the Auraria campus. With that in mind, we recommend discussions for improving PB consider:

- **Increasing the amount of money allocated.** Given the successes of the first PB cycle, future participants deserve to have a greater say over how their tuition dollars are spent. The Auraria campus receives approximately 70% of its funding from students' tuition dollars (nearly \$3.5 million), and students deserve to have a direct say in deciding how that money is spent.
  - We recommend future cycles work their way up to allocating at least \$9.85 per student through PB, which would be .08% of the campus's 2018–2019 budget.

- For the next cycle, Auraria PB ought to allocate at least \$50,000 to help provide adequate resources for students to affect change on campus
- **Increase the Timeline.** The first cycle of Auraria PB was completed in almost half the time of other PB processes. This time crunch caused multiple challenges for participants and limited the process from achieving its full potential.
  - The next cycle of Auraria PB ought to last an entire school year. This would bring it in line with other PB processes and grant participants more time to achieve high quality results.
  - The steering committee ought to design the rulebook within the first two weeks of classes starting, and the vote should be held two weeks before the start of final exams.
- **Boosting Participation Rates.** Although Auraria PB engaged over 1,000 people in its first cycle, many participants felt that more participation would generate improved results. To encourage even more community involvement, we suggest the use of:
  - Low-cost mobile outreach methods proved invaluable for the first cycle of Auraria PB. These methods could be streamlined by developing a 5-minute overview of PB that could be shared in presentations to groups or when tabling.
  - Provide outreach training to student participants. Students varied widely in their comfort approaching strangers to talk about PB or speaking publicly to recruit participation. Organizers ought to hold workshop(s) for students to equip them with effective public speaking and dialogue skills for conducting outreach about PB.
  - A coordinated messaging campaign. A consistent image set and message for PB outreach could help the process recruit more people. Organizers ought to develop content for a coordinated multi-platform messaging campaign.
  - Implement an outreach campaign with stakeholders across campus. Organizers ought to develop partnerships with community stakeholders such as student government, diversity offices, student housing, student affairs, student clubs, and others across all three schools. Having these offices promote PB will likely generate more participation from under-served student populations.
- **Generating Deeper Engagement.** The next cycle of PB should not only try to increase the quantity of people who participate in the process; it should also strive to improve the quality of their engagement, especially during the idea collection phase.
  - The next cycle of Auraria PB should not only implement mobile idea collection methods; they should also provide several facilitated idea collection events. These events are typically called “neighborhood assemblies” in other PB process and provide attendees at least an hour to work with their neighbors to identify community needs and propose solutions. Incorporating neighborhood assemblies into Auraria PB will allow participants more time to work together and think more deeply about their project ideas.
  - The steering committee could develop one-page information sheets to provide basic information about the campus and some of the challenges at Auraria. These could be used to inform participants as they generate higher quality project ideas.
  - We recommend idea collection events follow a mock PB process, with the outline as follows:

- What is PB? Organizers provide a brief presentation about PB in general and Auraria PB specifically
- Brainstorm project ideas: Attendees work in small groups with a facilitator to identify issues on campus and potential solutions and then select one or two projects to propose to the room. However, a note taker records all project ideas.
- Present proposals: Attendees present a modestly developed project idea to everyone in the room and “pitch” it to convince people to support it
- Vote: All the proposals are listed on a board, and attendees discuss the various ideas and then vote for the ones they want to see implemented.
- All the ideas are then recorded by facilitators and organizers, along with the number of votes they received. This information can then be provided to budget delegates and better inform their process of project vetting and development.
- Develop a form for project ideas. The form ought to include the originator’s name and contact information, as well as why they proposed the project. This will provide a stronger base of information for later use by budget delegates. If they have questions about the project idea, they can contact the creator and factor that input into their project vetting and development process.

# References

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5. See <https://www.publicagenda.org/pages/research-and-evaluation-of-participatory-budgeting-in-the-us-and-canada>
6. Calculation is approximate because of anonymous idea submissions. Each anonymous idea was treated as a unique individual for counting purposes.
7. See <http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/public-spending-by-the-people>
8. Based off in-person ballots. Institutional affiliation was not recorded for online ballots.