

# Making the Value of Women's Colleges Matter to Your Female Advisees

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Baltimore, MD  
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What a women's college is...  
and what it is not.

# Rankings 2009

## **The Princeton Review**

Of their 371 Best Colleges, 13 (4%) are women's colleges.

Of their 639 Best Regional Colleges, 22 (3%) are women's colleges.

Of their top 20 campuses with the best career services, 3 (15%) are women's colleges.

## **Forbes College Rankings**

Of their 600 Best Colleges, 22 (4%) are women's colleges.

## **US News and World Report College Rankings**

Of their 126 Best Liberal Arts Colleges, 12 (10%) are women's colleges.

## **Washington Monthly – A Different Kind of College Ranking**

<http://www.womenscolleges.org/story/different-kind-of-ranking>

Of their 253 colleges, 22 (9%) are women's colleges.

# Must have or very important characteristics of a college for young women

GDA Integrated Services 2004

- Career preparation
- A strong department in your major
- Able to personalize your education to meet interests and needs
- Accessible professors
- Provides a supportive environment
- Preparation for graduate or professional school
- Concerned about the development of the whole person
- Emphasizes ethics and values
- Challenging courses
- Opportunities for experiential, hands-on learning

# NSSE: Skills That Are Extremely Important to College-Bound Women

GDA Integrated Services 2004

- Writing and speaking effectively
- Understanding yourself and people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Developing a personal code of values and ethics
- Learning effectively on your own and working with others
- Acquiring job-related knowledge and skills
- Gaining leadership skills
- Solving complex real-world problems
- Thinking critically and analytically
- Contributing to the welfare of your community

# Women's Reasons for Selecting a Specific School

Stamats 2008

- Graduates get good jobs
- Wanted to go to a school about this size
- A visit to campus
- Offered financial assistance

# Employers' Expectations of College Graduates

GDA Integrated Services 2004

- Works well as a team member
- Strong thinking and reasoning skills
- Has high ethical standards
- Writes and speaks effectively
- Demonstrates problem solving skills
- Demonstrates self confidence
- Interacts well with people from racial groups or cultures different from own
- Has leadership skills
- Has an interest in exploring new ideas
- Has a liberal arts education

# Employers' Expectations of College Graduates – Skills and Knowledge

Research conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities  
by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 2008

[http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap/documents/2008\\_Business\\_Leader\\_Poll.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap/documents/2008_Business_Leader_Poll.pdf)

- Teamwork
- Ethical judgment
- Intercultural skills
- Social responsibility
- Quantitative reasoning
- Oral communication
- Self-knowledge
- Adaptability
- Critical thinking
- Writing
- Self-direction
- Global knowledge

# Employers' Expectations of College Graduates – Skills and Knowledge

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Employers also look at how college graduates applied these skills and knowledge to complex, real-world challenges and projects that integrated problem solving, writing, and analytical reasoning skills in such hands-on opportunities as internships, community service projects, study abroad experiences and senior projects.

# Making the value of women's colleges matter to young women and their families.

- What matters in college matters after college.
- And it matters in the college selection process.
- It's all about engagement.

# Engagement – Pascarella and Terenzini

“Our review indicates two persistent themes in the research literature on college effects. The first is the central role of other people in a student’s life, whether students or faculty. . . .The second theme is the potency of the student’s effort and involvement in the academic and non-academic systems of the institutions they attend.

“The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved.”

*How College Affects Students*

Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini 1991

# Engagement – Astin

“... although different types of institutions tend to have particular types of environments, ... it is the environment created by the faculty and the students ... that really seems to matter.

... the single most important environmental influence on student development is the peer group.”

*What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*  
Alexander W. Astin 1993

# NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement

<http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/Gender-and-Student-Engagement-in-College.pdf>

[http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/Comparing-Coed-to-Womens\\_MarApr2007.pdf](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/Comparing-Coed-to-Womens_MarApr2007.pdf)

Comprehensive survey of student experience that assesses the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development.

- Level of academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Enriching educational experiences
- Supportive campus environment

Sample: NSSE data from 42,112 randomly sampled first-year and senior women at 294 colleges and universities; 4,676 women at 26 women's colleges.

# NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement (continued)

## Results

- Women at women's colleges are more engaged than women at coed colleges:
  - Higher academic challenge, seniors more likely to engage in higher order thinking
  - First years and seniors higher on active and collaborative learning and student-faculty integration, more integrative activities
  - Largest difference related to experiences with diversity

# NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement (continued)

## Results

- Educational gains higher for women's college first years and seniors:
  - Understanding of self and others
  - General education
  - Ability to analyze quantitative problems
  - Desire to contribute to welfare of others
- Women's colleges are transfer friendly

# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumni Research Study

<http://www.womenscolleges.org/story/what-matters>

- Research design and survey instruments devised to test – *based upon the perceptions, experiences, benefits and outcomes reported by alumnae* – the findings of earlier scholarly research about education.
- Grounded in and organized around key factors that education researchers, including Astin, Pascarella and Terenzini, have identified as critical to both an effective undergraduate education and greater student satisfaction:
  - Frequent, extensive formal and informal interaction between faculty and students
  - A strong community and peer interactions both inside and outside the classroom
  - A challenging, active classroom environment
  - Participation in such intensive learning experiences as international study, internships, faculty-directed research and independent study
  - Involvement and leadership in extracurricular activities

# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumni Research Study (continued)

- Unlike many alumnae studies that assess students shortly after graduation, the Hardwick~Day survey of alumnae from the classes of 1970 through 1997 assesses the *long-term impact* of the college experience on:
  - Satisfaction with the undergraduate experience
  - Career preparation and advancement
  - Broad skill development
  - Personal and professional values and attitudes
  - Community involvement

# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumnae to Alumnae to Alumnae Research Study

March 2008

Sample:

- Women graduates of graduating classes 1970-1997 from four-year institutions
- Interviews are proportioned to be representative of the average enrollment over the study years with:

333 alumnae of women's colleges and universities (44 four-year women's colleges are represented)

415 alumnae of other four-year liberal arts colleges (i.e., excluding women's colleges; 153 colleges represented – a subset of H~D's larger database of 276 four-year colleges and universities)

264 alumnae of national "flagship" public universities (110 universities represented – a subset of H~D's larger database of 205 public and regional universities)

# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumnae Research

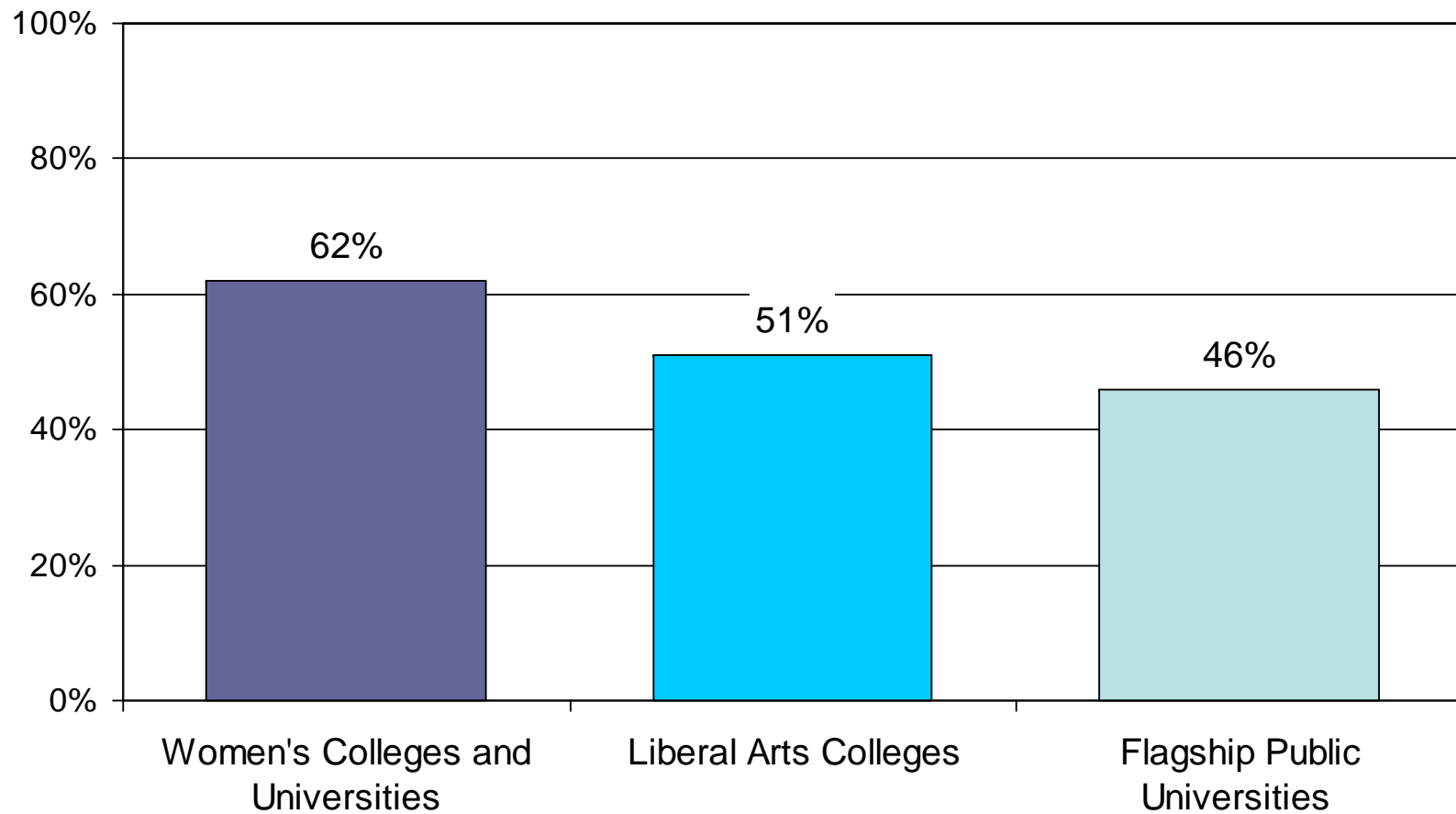
## Finding #1

A Women's College Education...

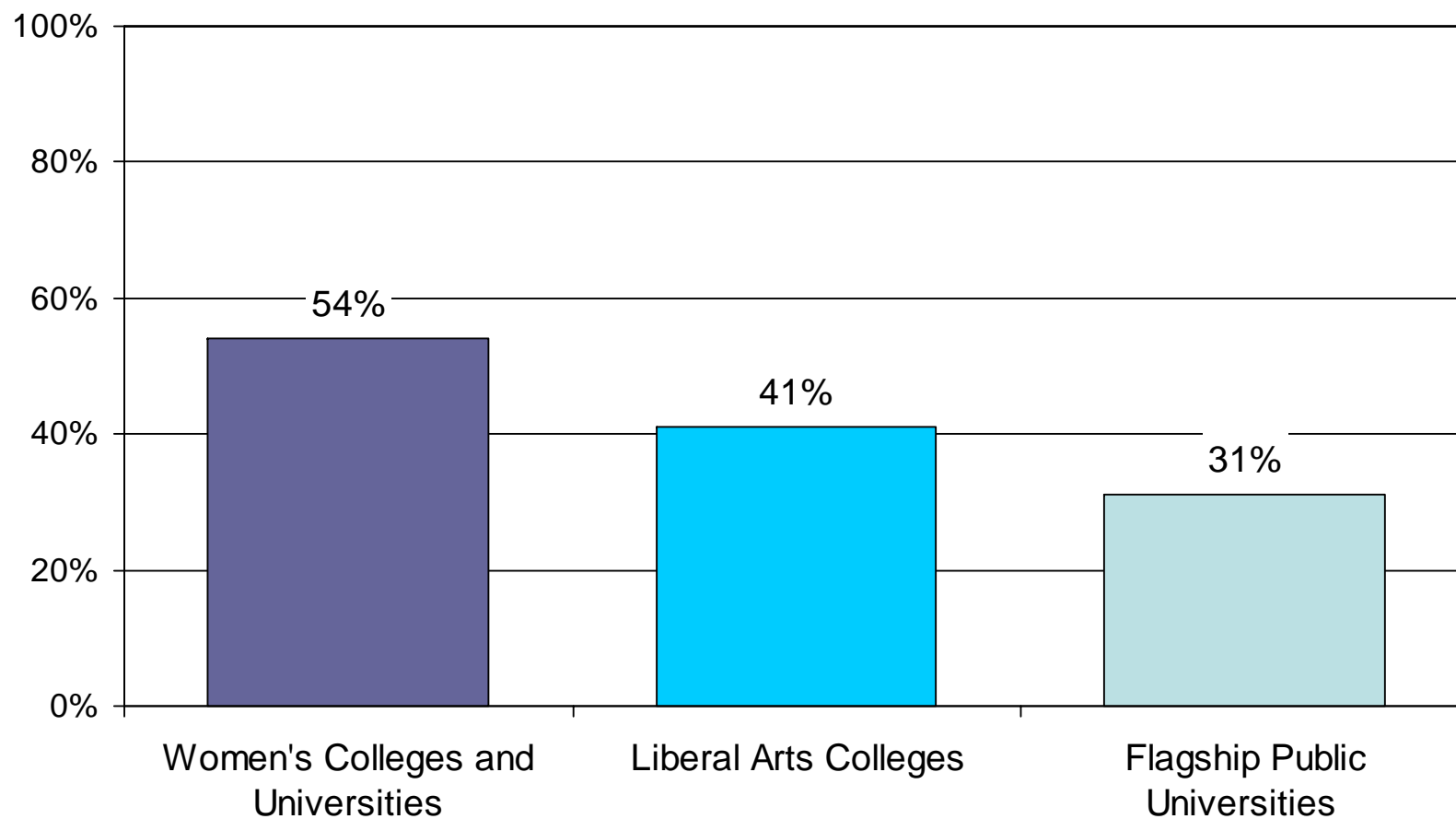
*Enables students to engage with top faculty  
and resources.*

- Women's college graduates attribute their success to interaction with "a high quality teaching-oriented faculty."
- They report strong benefits from mentoring, small classes and personal interaction with professors.
- At women's colleges, *all* of the resources, from sophisticated research equipment to preeminent athletics facilities to internship and fellowship funding, are focused on and available to women students.

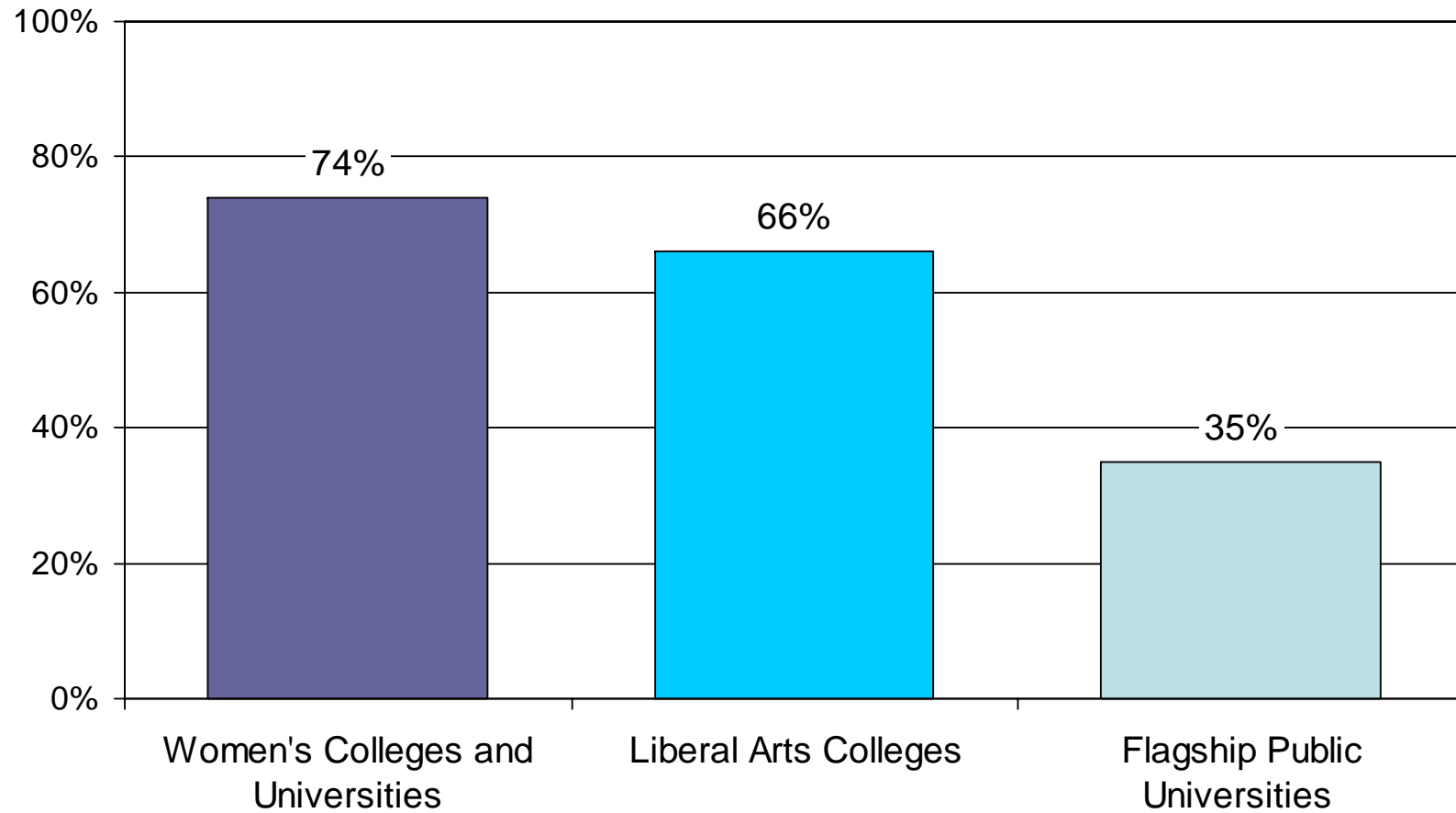
## The Quality of References by Faculty or Staff Played More of a Role in Being Accepted to Graduate School or Finding a First Job



## Benefited Very Much from Good Academic Facilities and Equipment



## Benefited Very Much from a High Quality, Teaching-Oriented Faculty



# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumnae Research

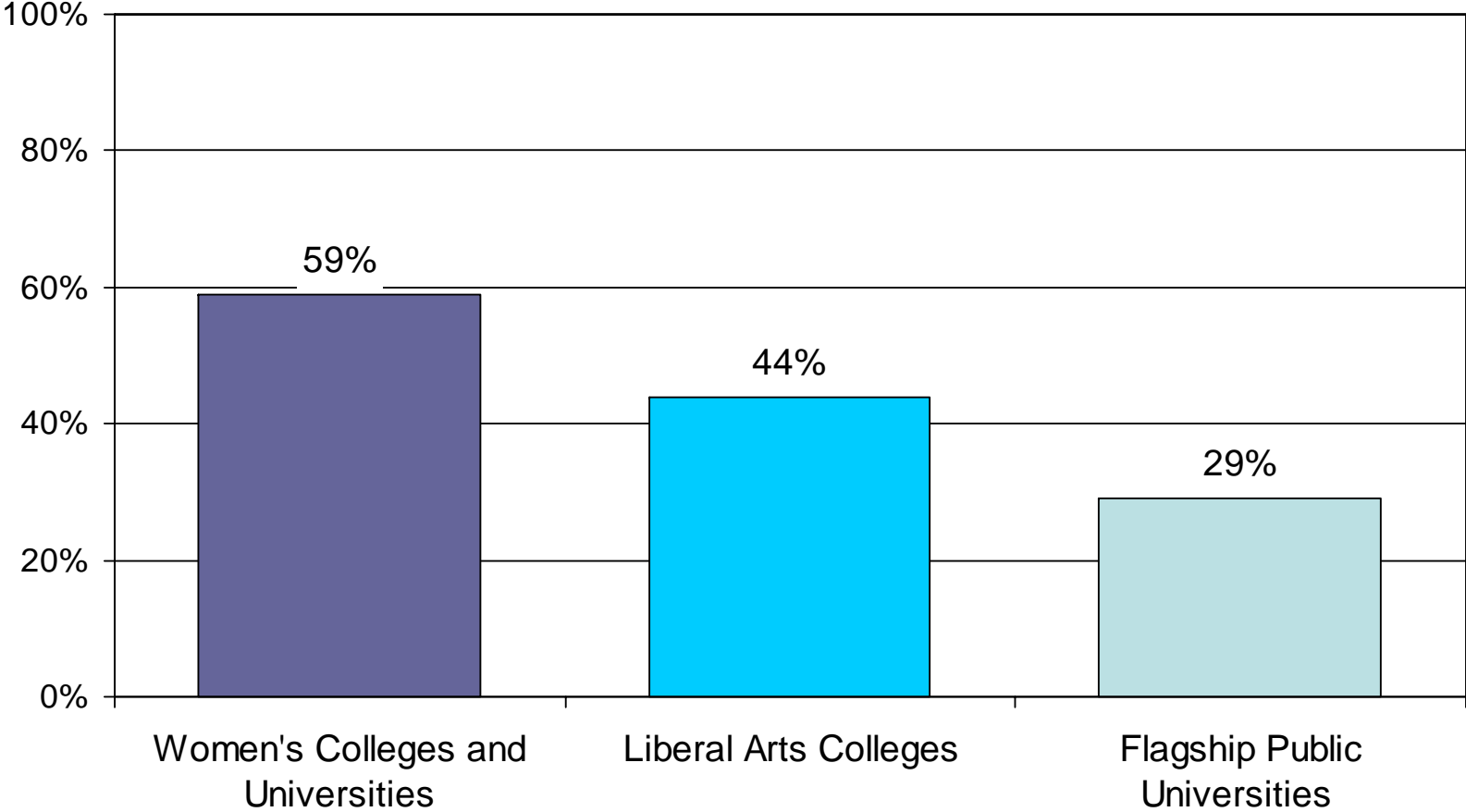
## Finding #2

A Women's College Education...

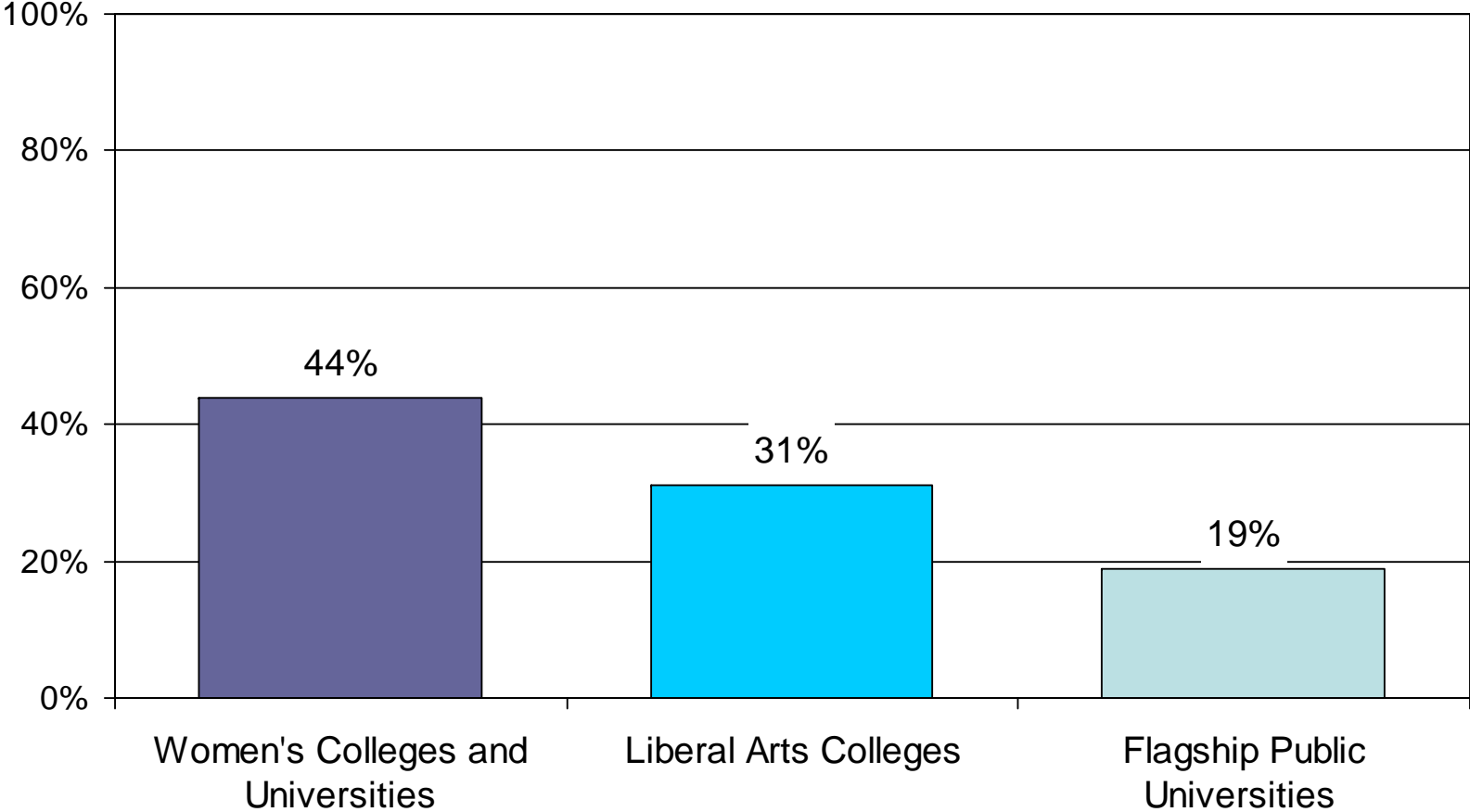
*Creates leaders, communicators, and persuaders.*

- Speaking out and speaking up – key components of leadership and civic engagement – are capacities actively developed at women’s colleges.
- Women’s college alumnae report more in-class experience with making presentations than their peers at other institutions and are more likely to gain leadership experience in student government and campus media.

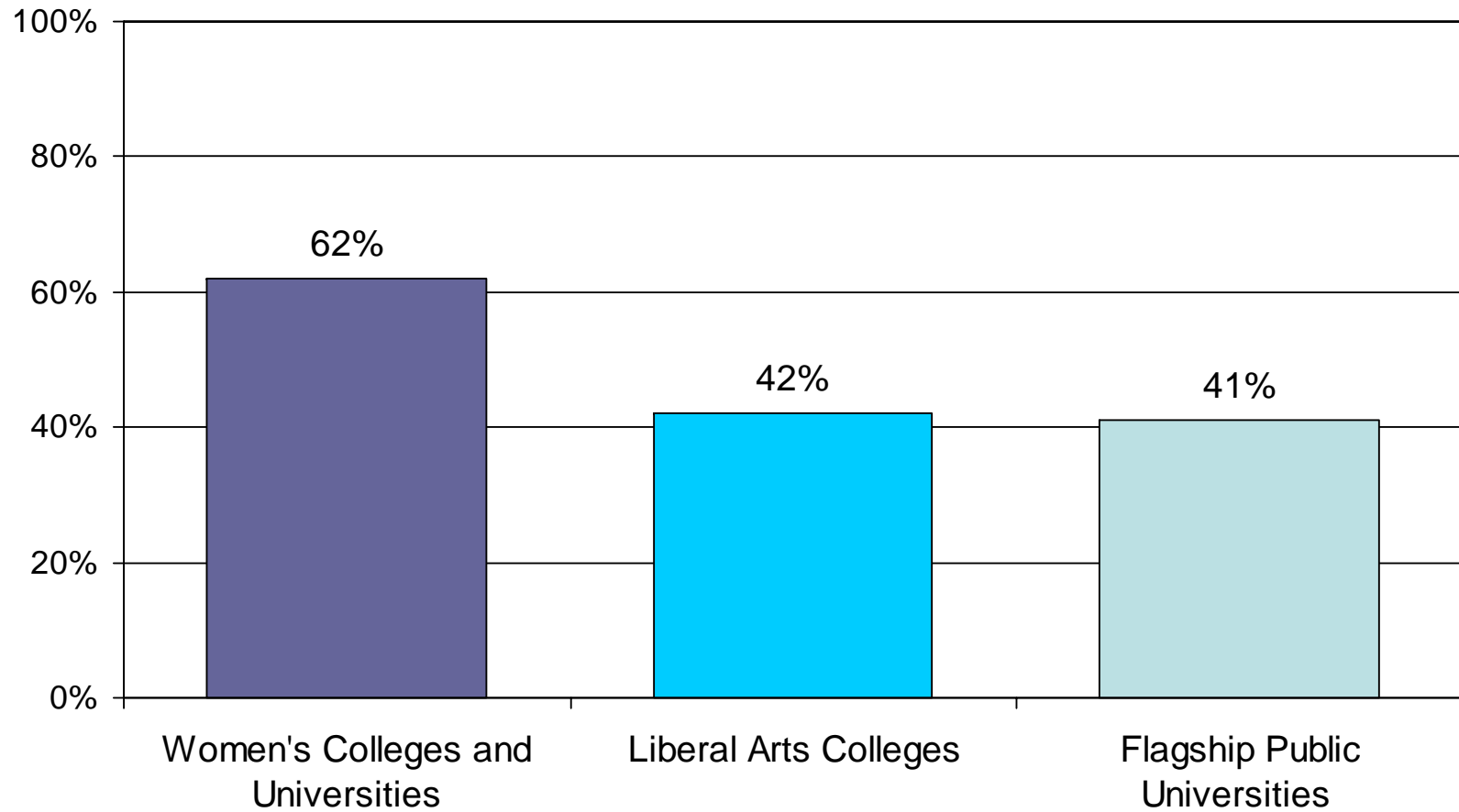
# Helping Students Learn to Write Effectively



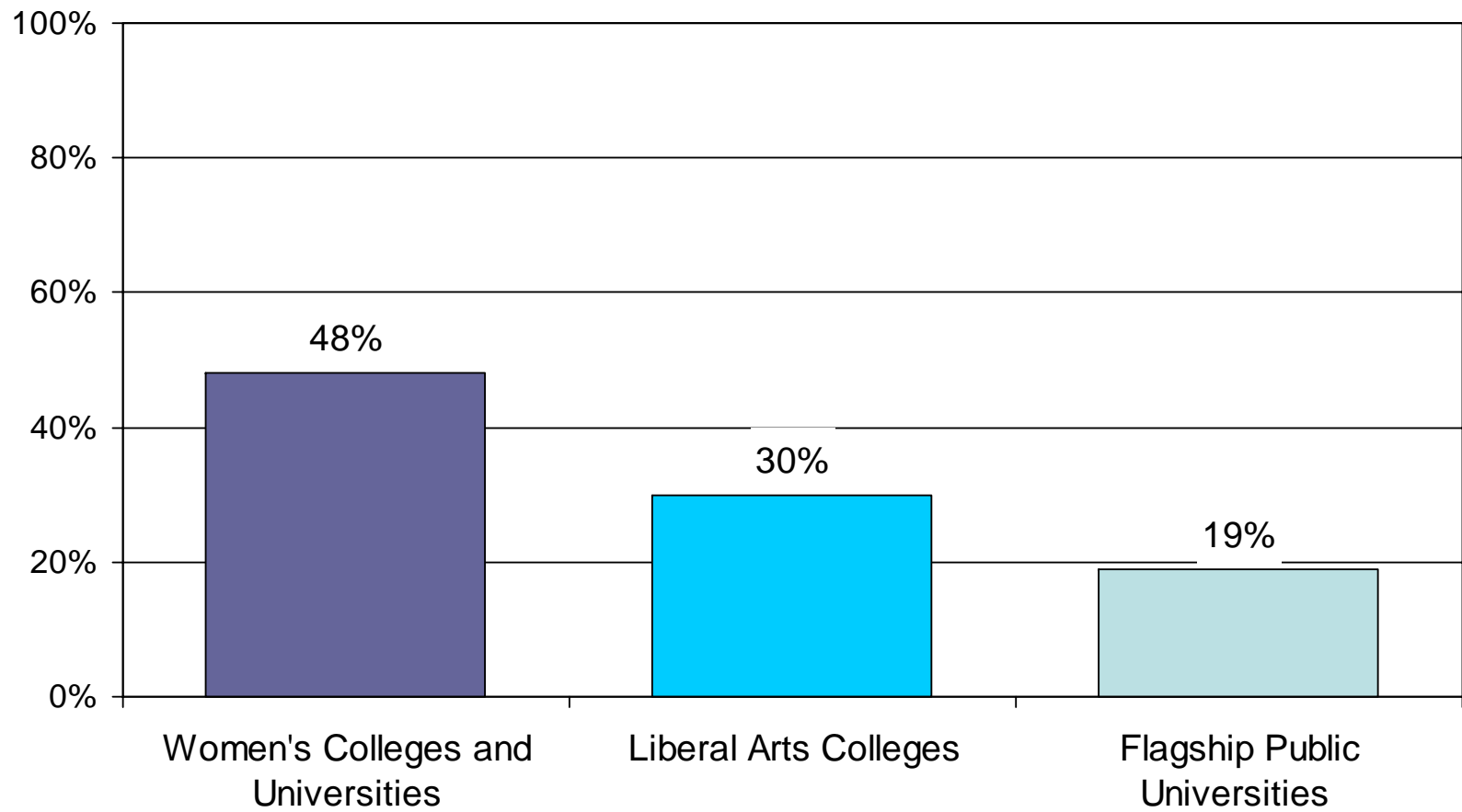
# Helping Students Learn to Speak Effectively



## Helping Students Develop Self-Confidence and Initiative



## Helping Students Learn to Be a Leader



# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumnae Research

## Finding #3

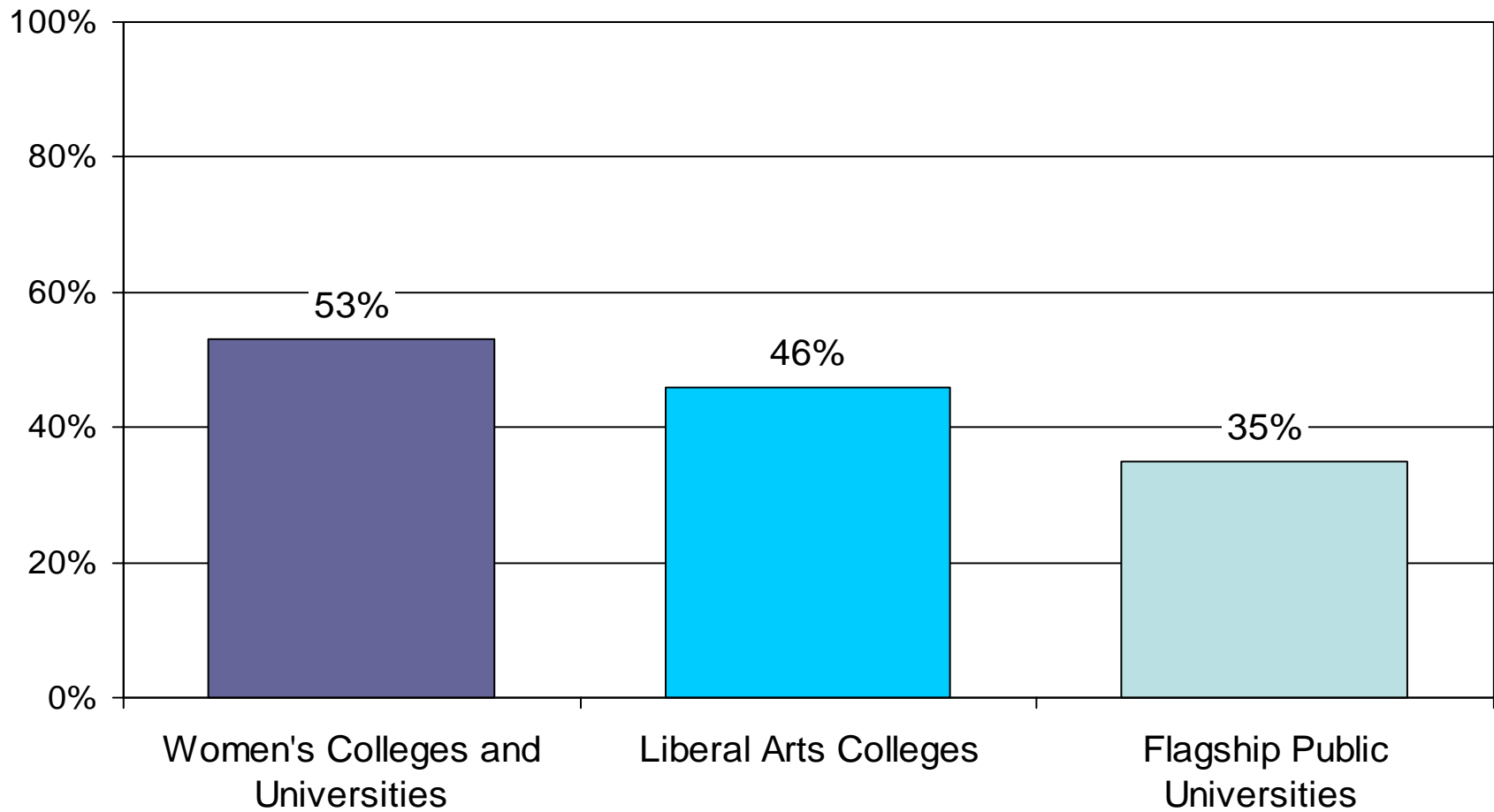
A Women's College Education...

*Does a better job of helping students  
develop critical skills for success in life and  
career.*

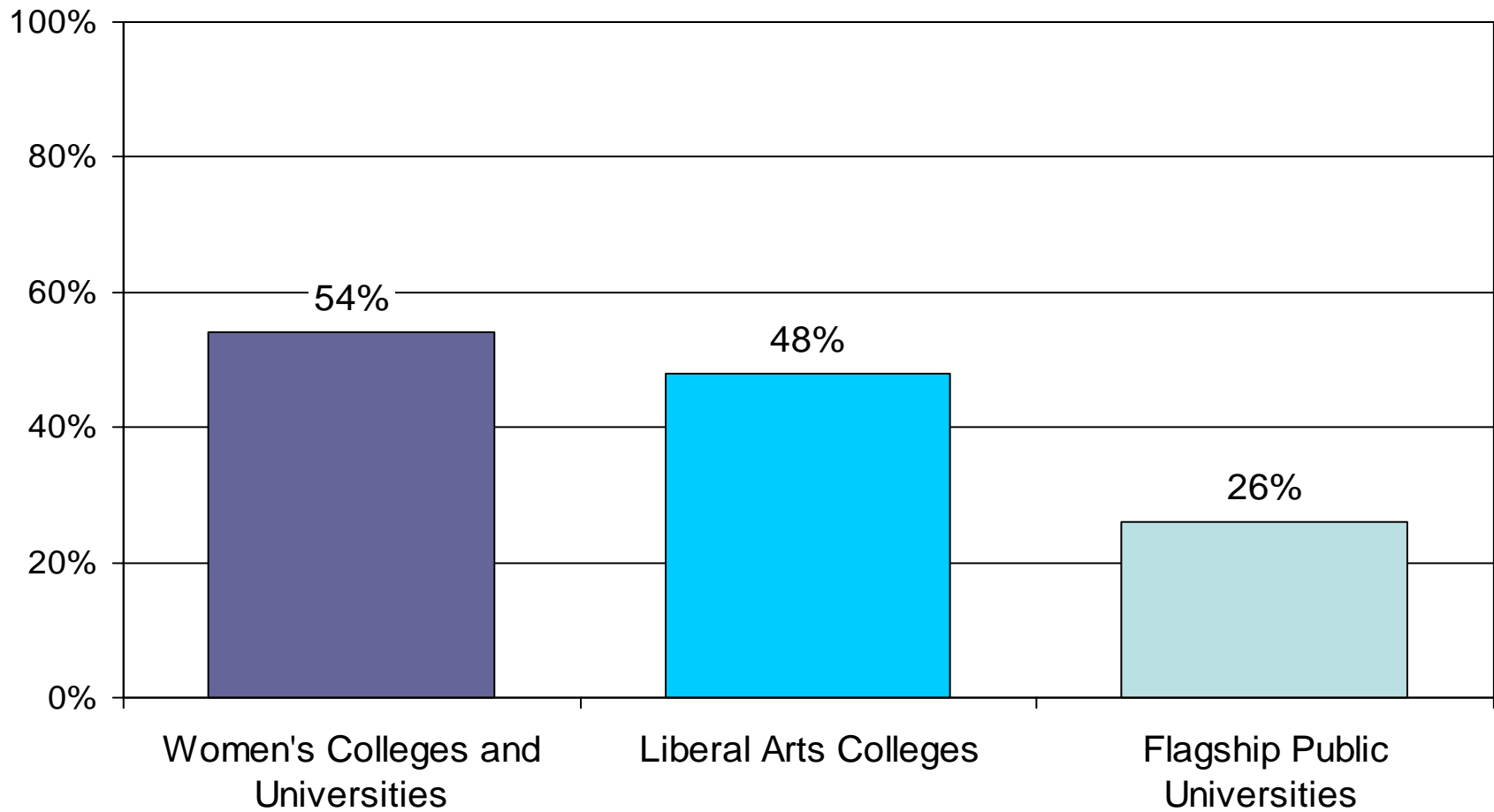
# Preparation for career and life success

- Studies about skills necessary for life success repeatedly underscore the need for critical thinking, global knowledge, intercultural competence, and real-world abilities.
- According to the research, Women's Colleges surpass public and private colleges in helping young women learn to:
  - think analytically
  - bring social and historical perspective to issues
  - work as part of a team
  - write and speak effectively
  - make sound decisions
  - gain entry to a career
  - prepare for career change or advancement
  - be politically and socially aware.

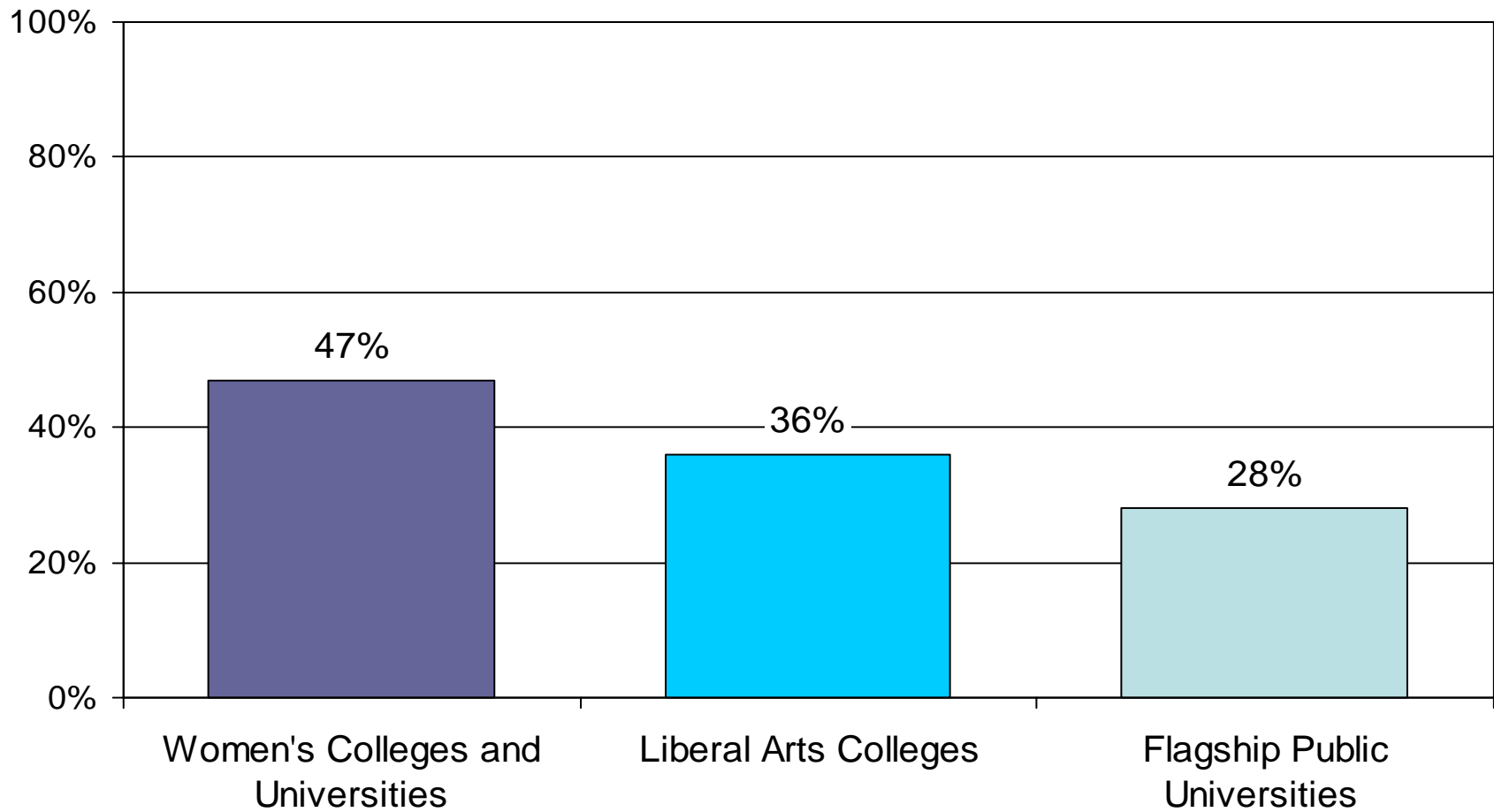
## Helping Students Learn to Think Creatively



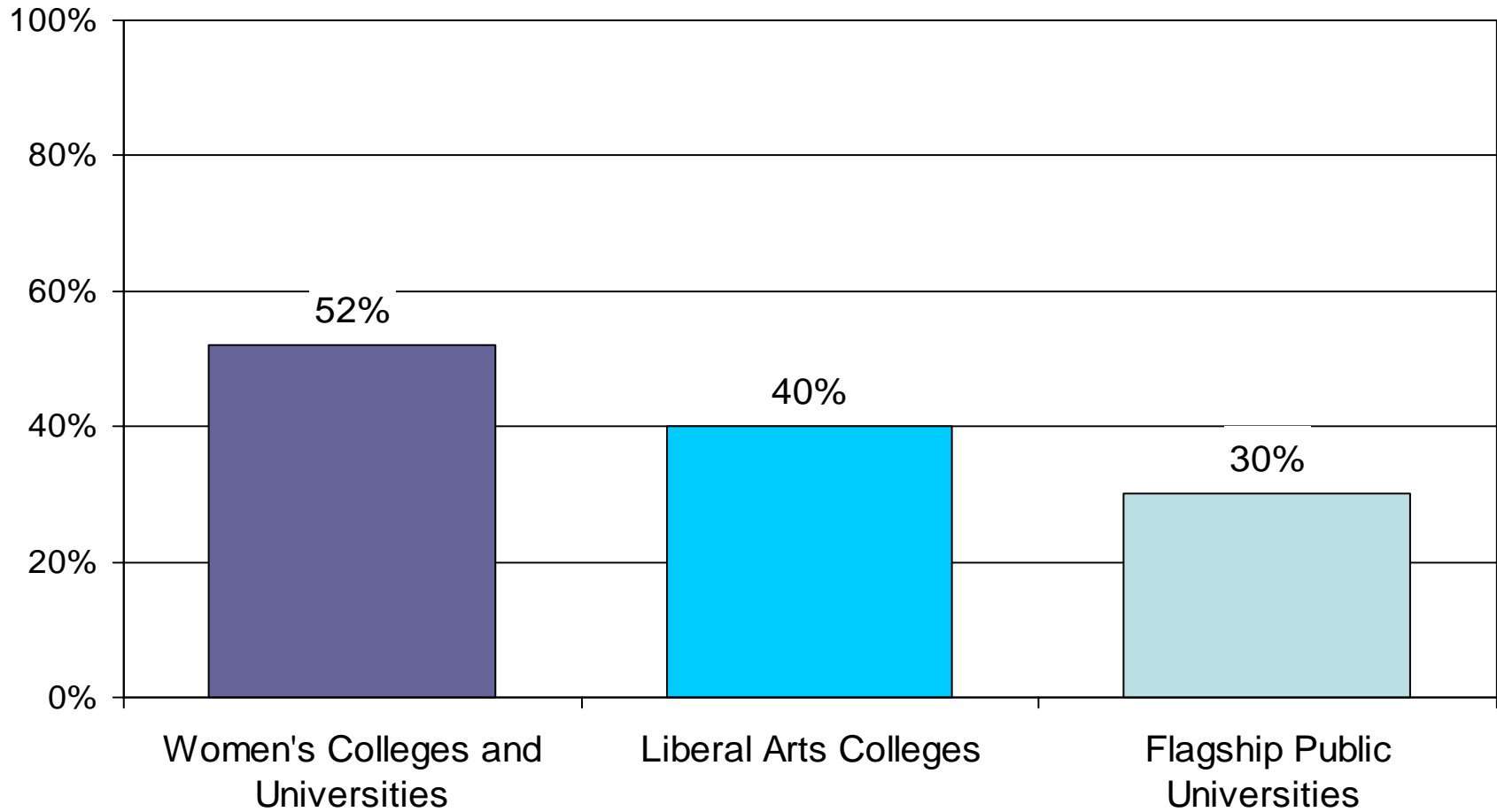
## Helping Students Learn to Think Analytically



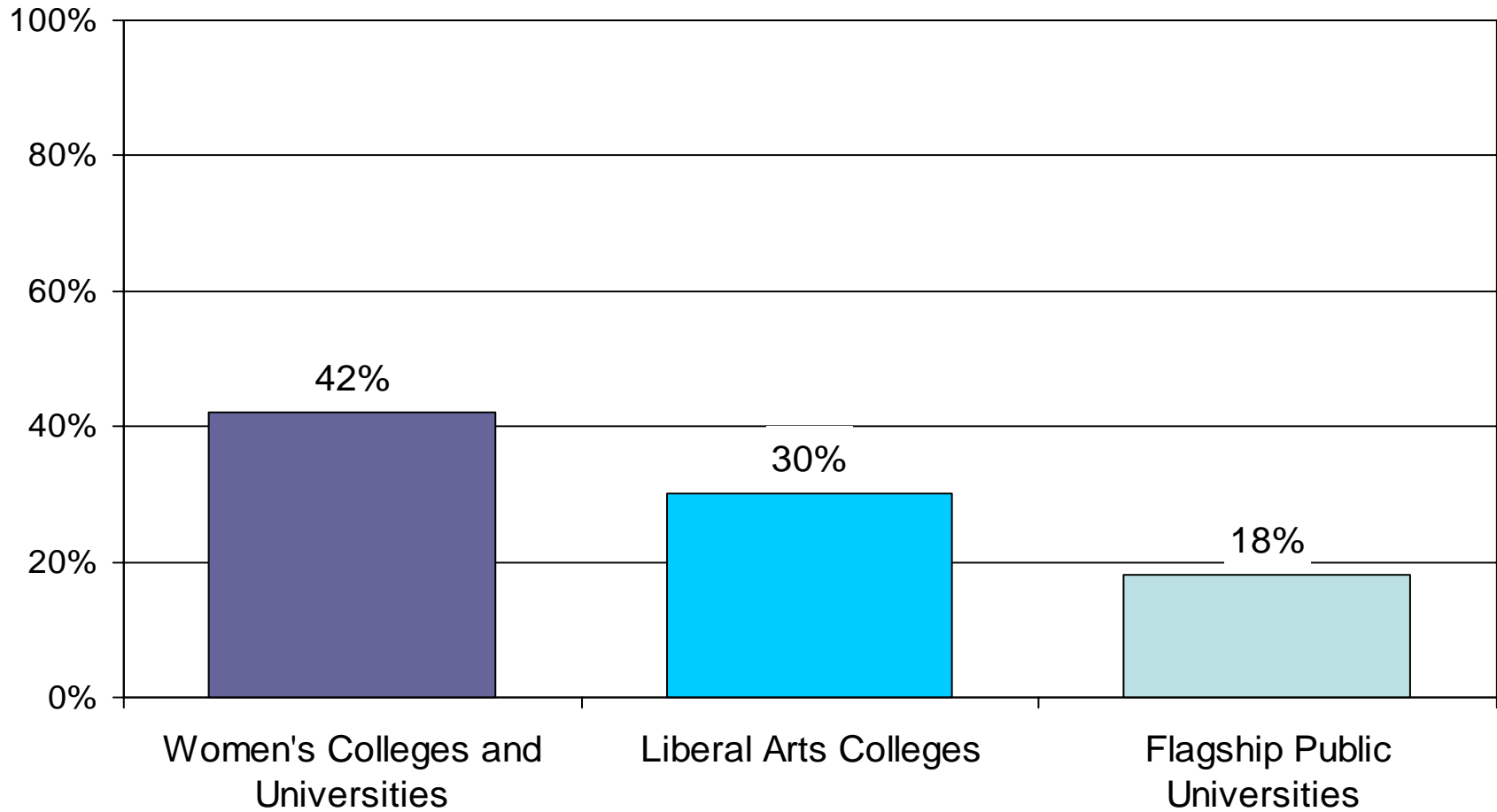
## Helping Students Learn to Work as Part of a Team



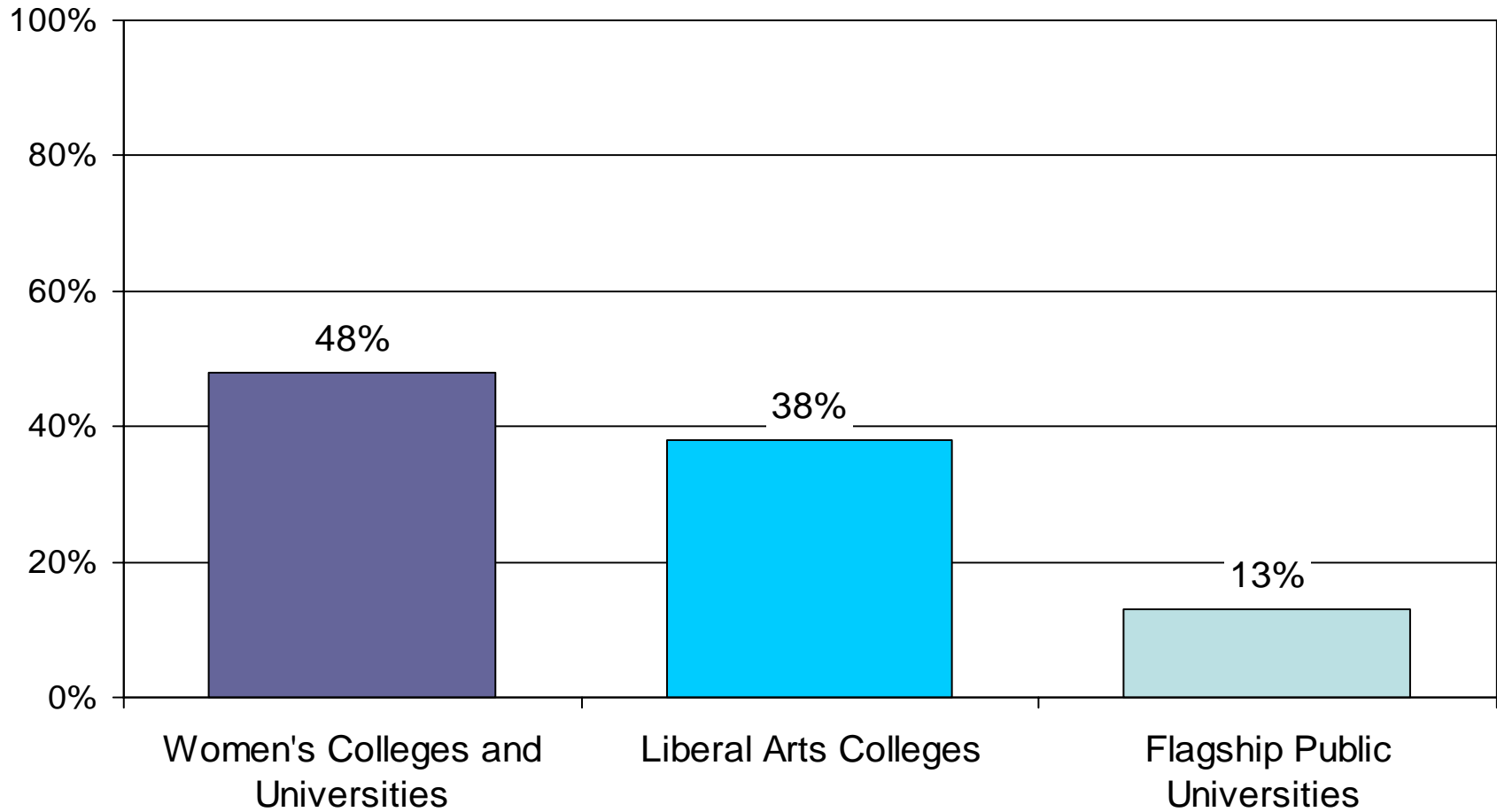
## Helping Students Learn to Relate to People of Different Backgrounds



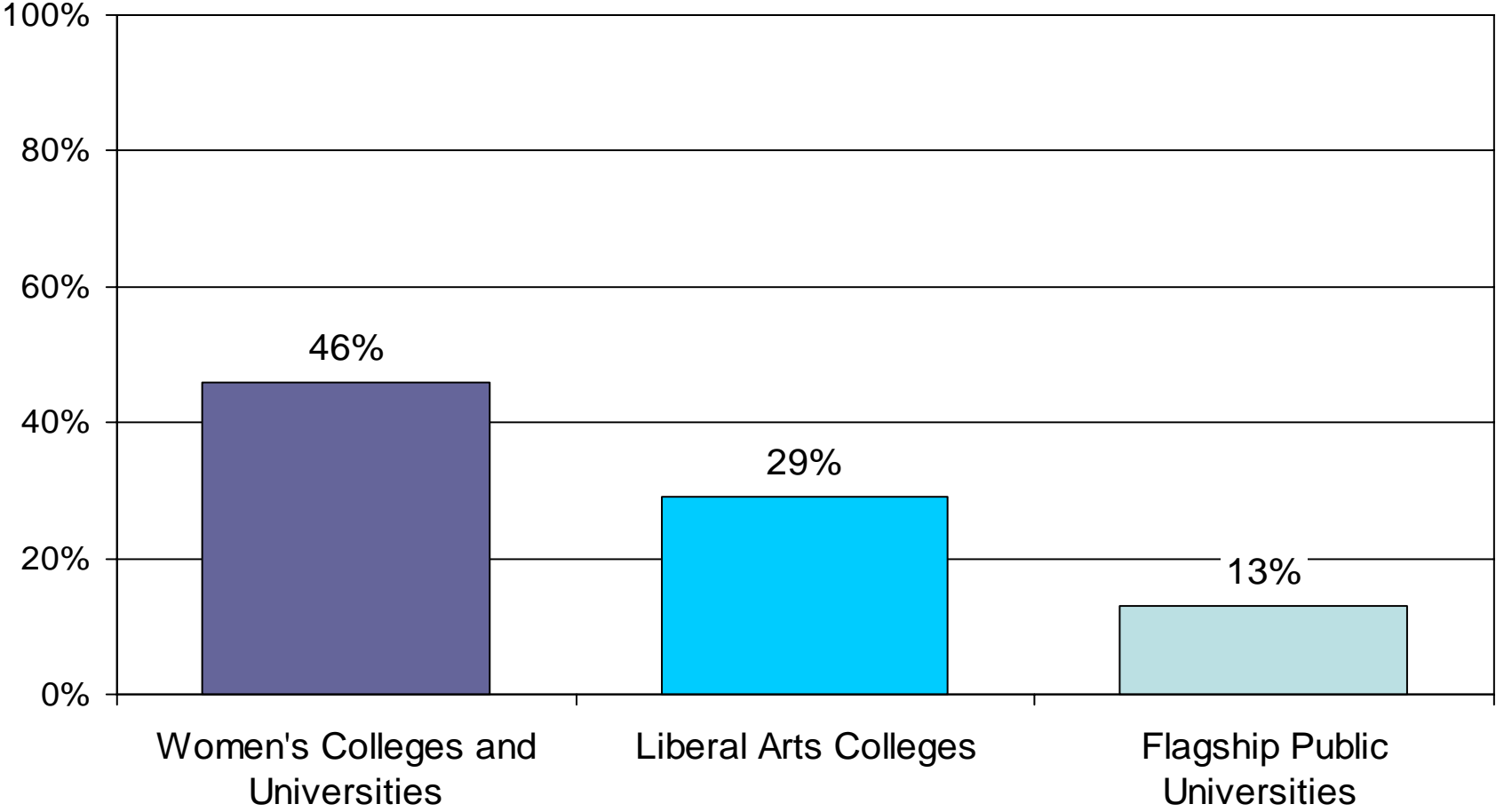
## Helping Students Learn to Be Politically or Socially Aware



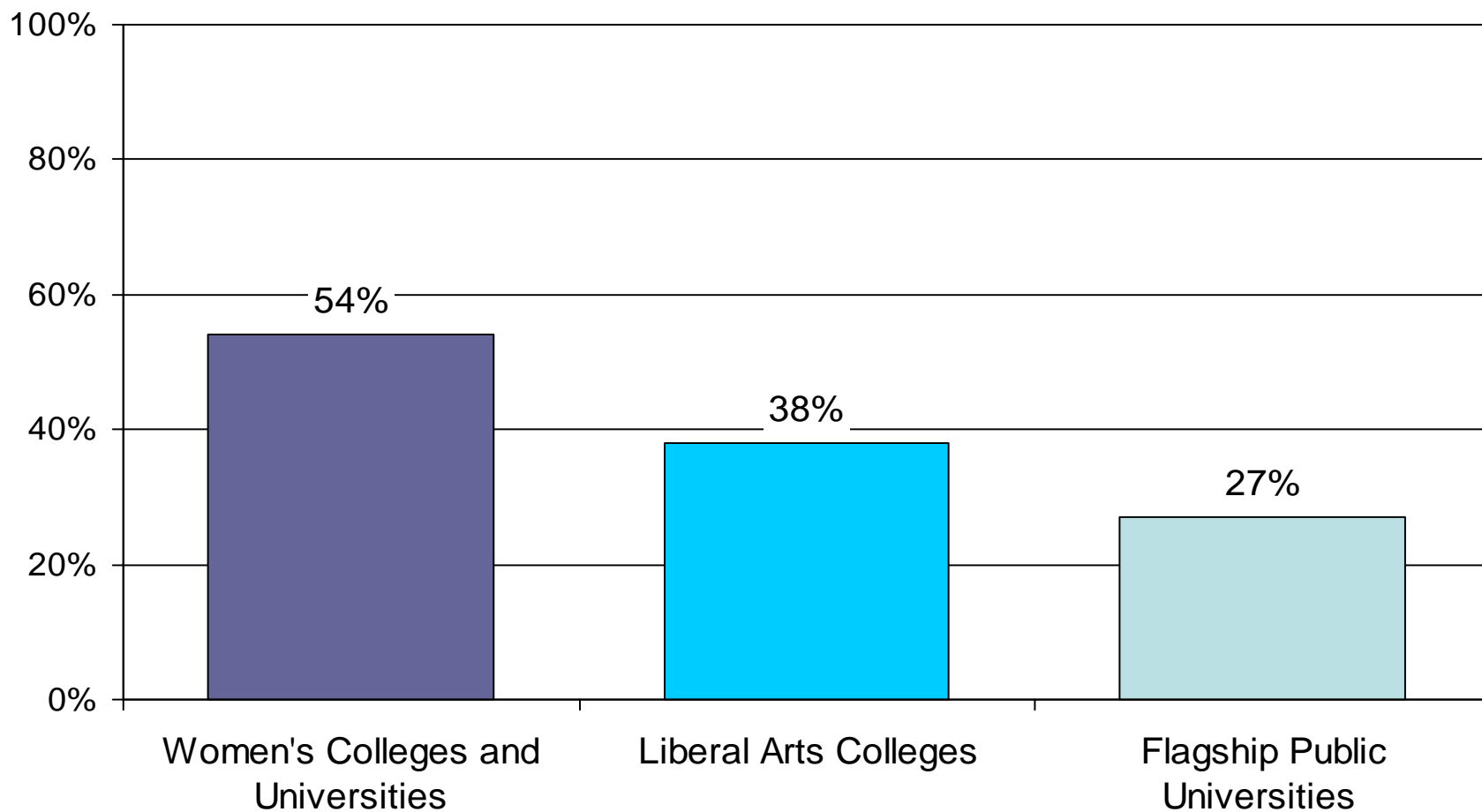
## Helping Students Develop Moral Principles That Can Guide Actions



# Helping Students to Place Problems in Social and Historical Perspective



## Helping Students Learn to Solve Problems and Make Effective Decisions



# Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumnae Research

## Finding #4

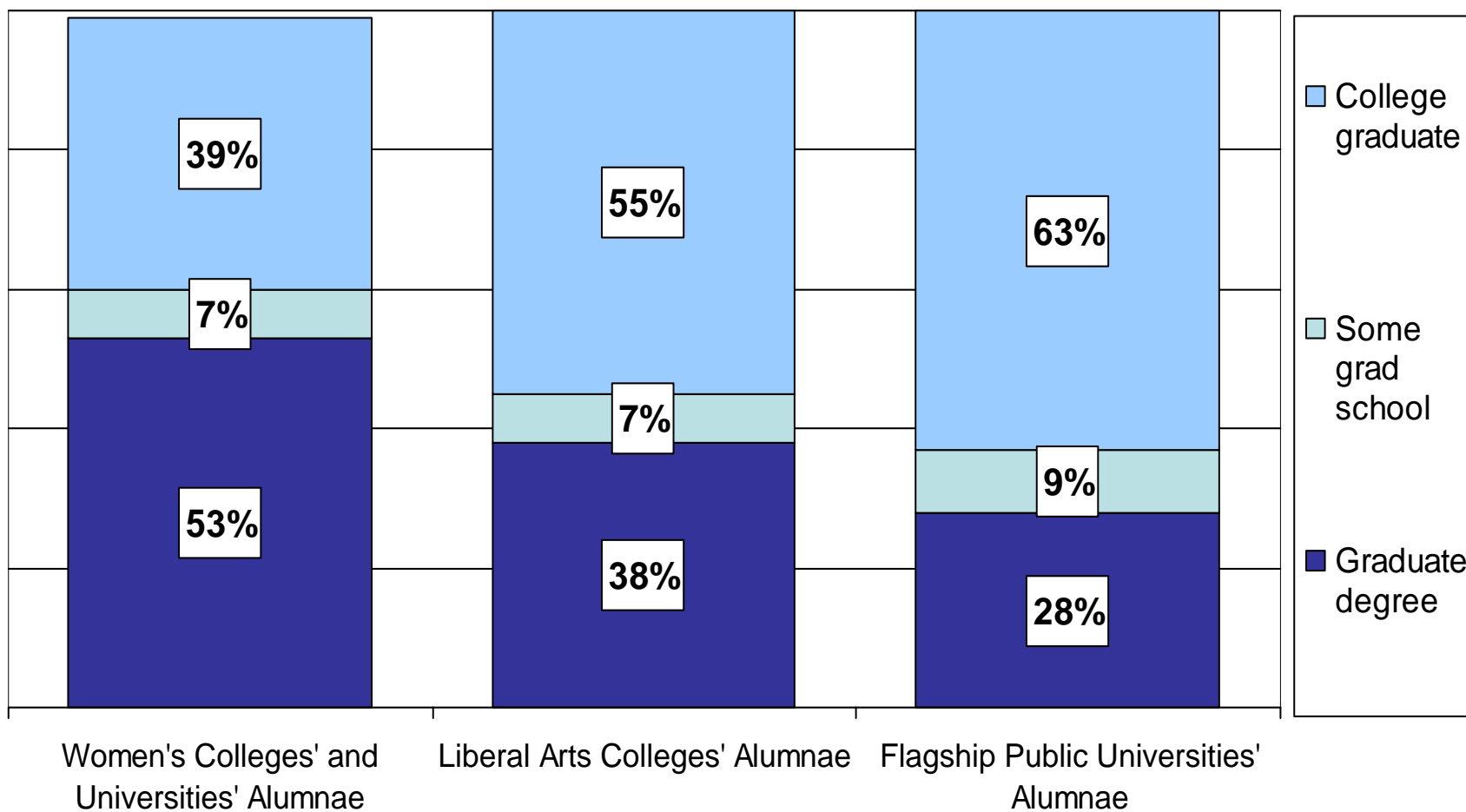
A Women's College Education...

*Proves its value over a lifetime.*

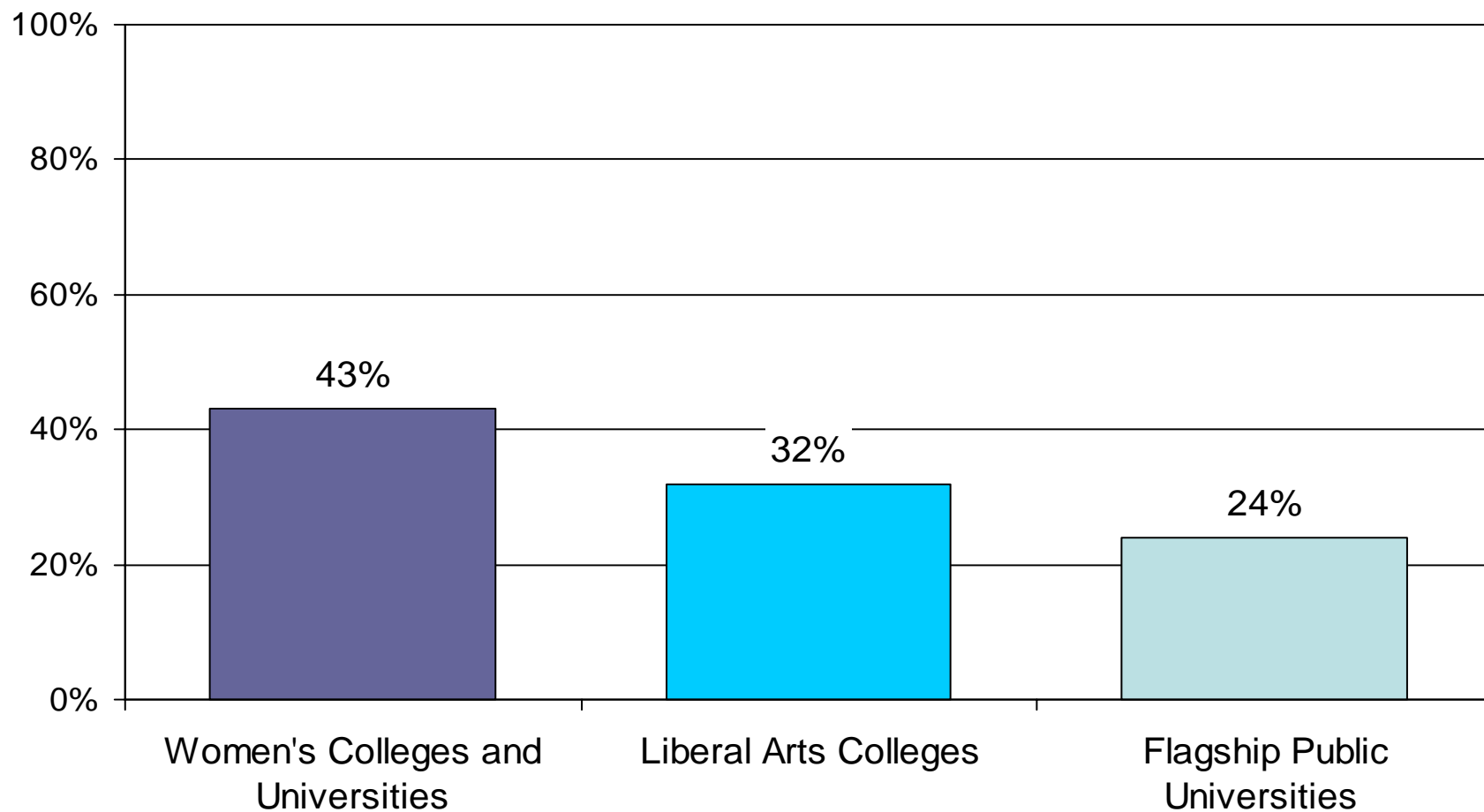
# The value of a Women's College Education

- Graduating from a women's college, versus a co-ed public or private college or university, significantly increases a woman's chances of earning a graduate degree.
- Women's college graduates succeed in entering a range of career fields and graduate programs, regardless of their undergraduate major.
- More than 95% of women's college alumnae believe the financial investment in their education was worthwhile and that the intellectual and personal capacities they gained are still extremely important to them.

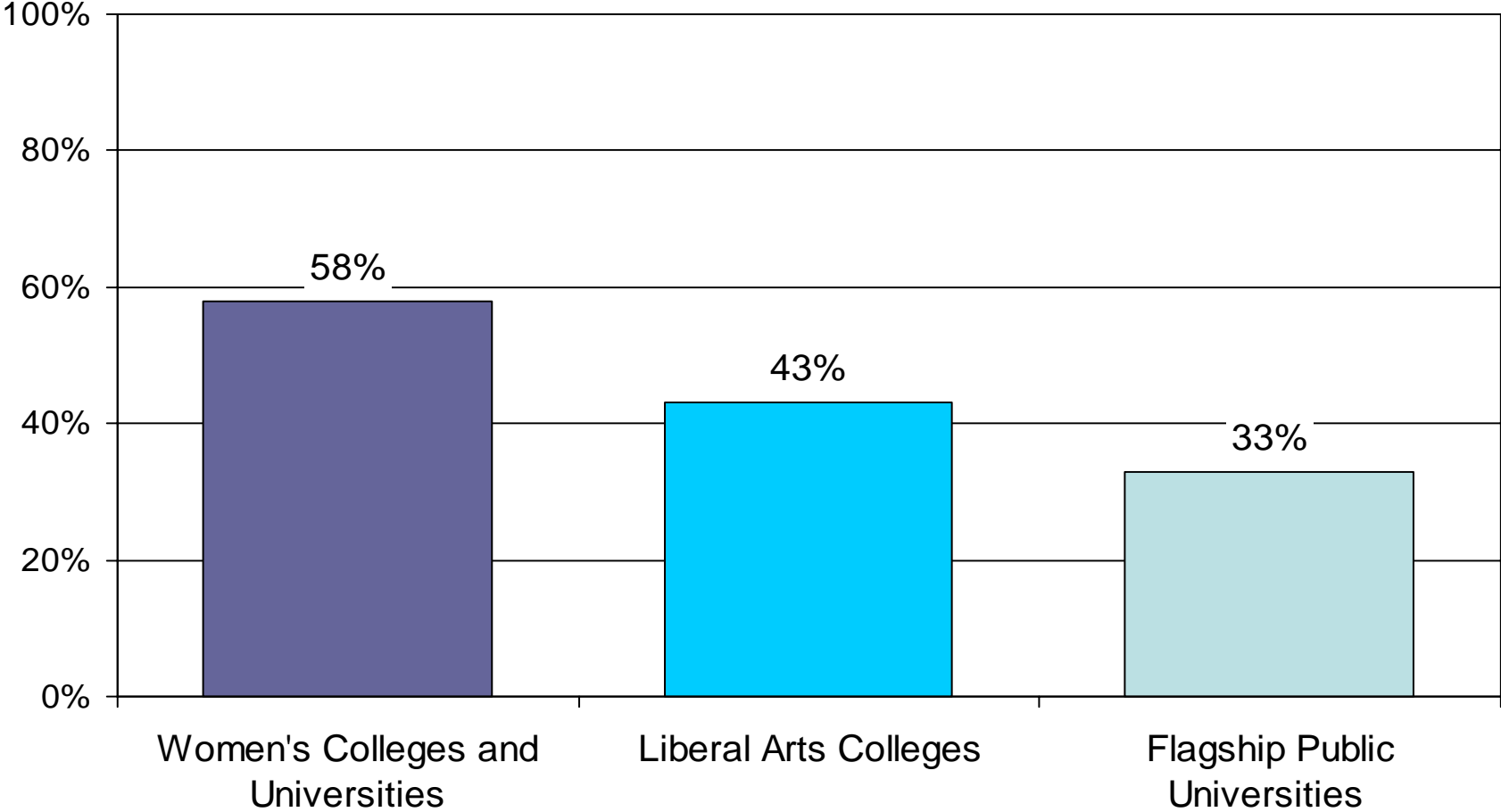
## More Likely to Complete a Graduate Degree



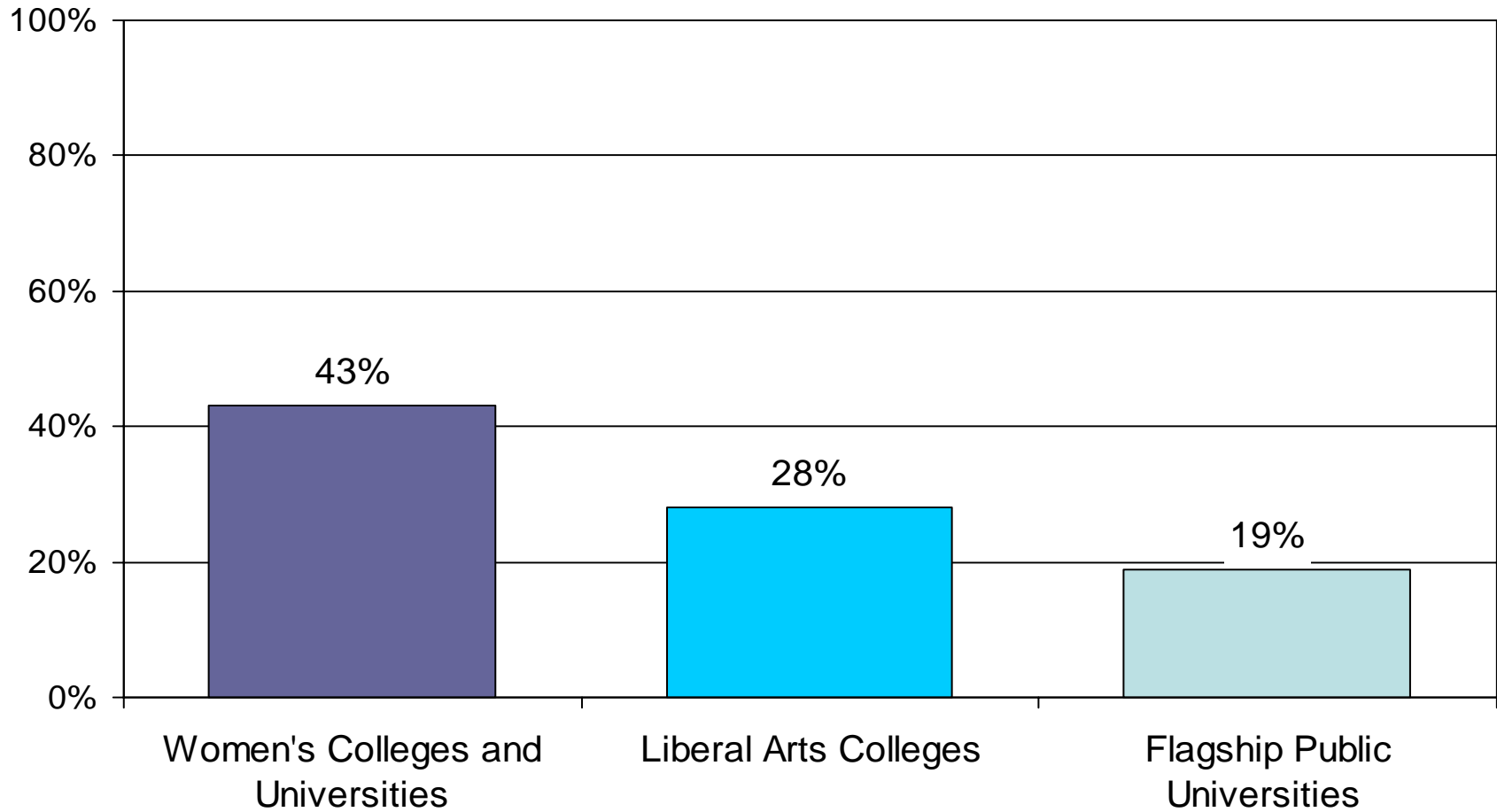
## Helping Students to Be Prepared for Their First Job



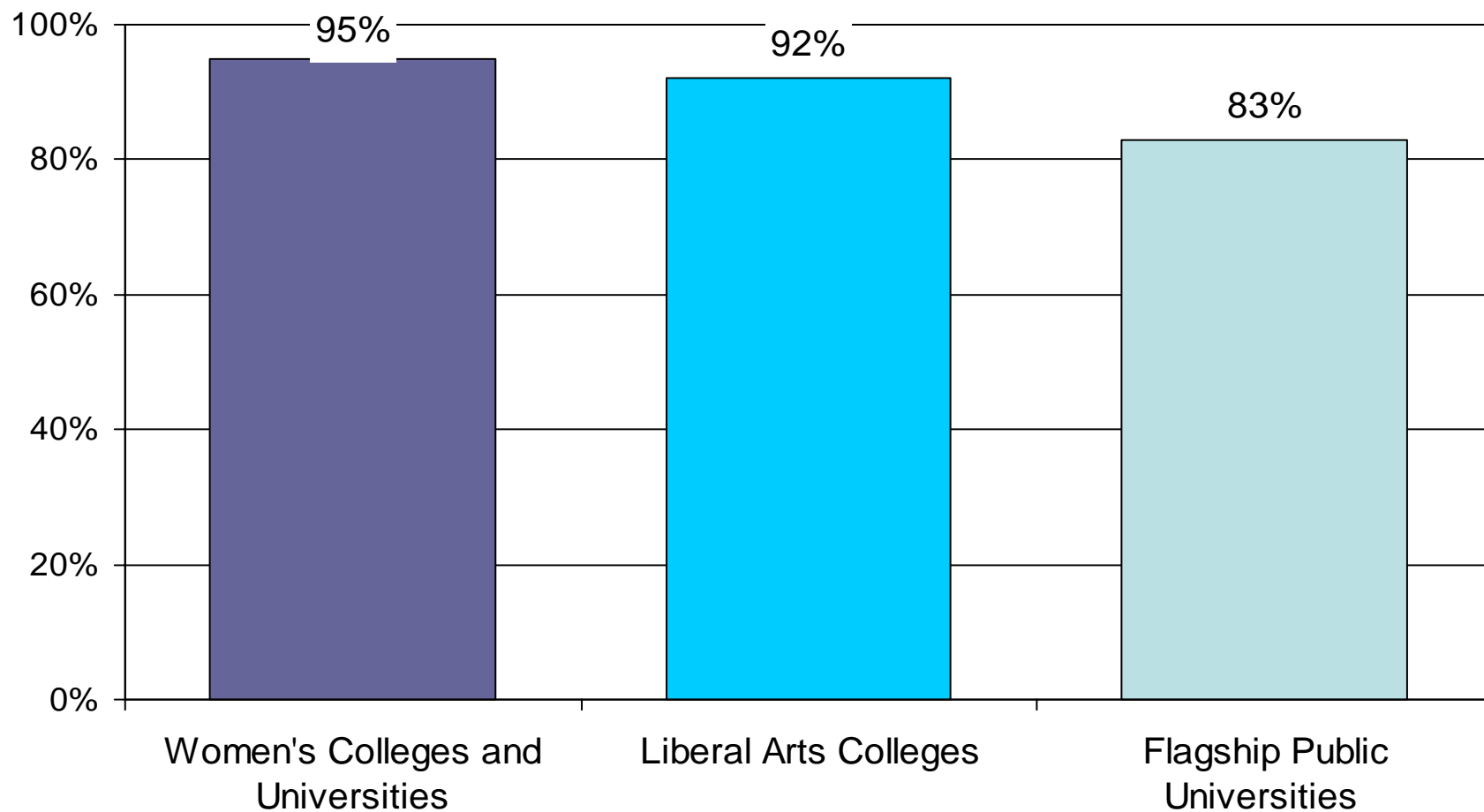
# Helping Students to Develop the Ability to Learn New Skills



## Helping Students to Be Prepared for Career Change or Advancement



## Believe the Financial Investment They Made in College Was Worth It



# A Women's College Education...

*Provides an environment where women can fit in and feel comfortable*

- How a women's college feels
- Social life and fun
- Lifelong friendships
- "The Real World"
- Alumnae network
- Defining success

