



## UNI Graduating Senior Survey Report

**December 2009 • May 2010**

*University  
of  
Northern  
Iowa*

Office of Institutional Research  
August 2010

## Survey Administration

This report provides a summary of the data collected with the administration of the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Graduating Senior Survey. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of several critical components regarding the academic and social experiences of UNI students.

The UNI Graduating Senior Survey was given to all UNI graduates prior to commencement exercises in December 2009 and May 2010. The survey was completed by 417 students in December 2009 and 1,076 in May and Summer 2010, for a total of 1,493 respondents (see Table 1 for an illustration of response rates). Students who chose not to attend the commencement exercises or students who arrived late to their respective ceremonies were not included in the survey administration.

***Table 1. Response Rates for Undergraduate Graduation Sessions***

	Survey Respondents	All Graduating Seniors	Response Rate (%)
December 2009	417	760	54.9%
May and Sum 2010	1076	1436	86.1%
Total	1493	2196	68.0%

## Survey Highlights

Upon examination of the overall responses to the UNI Graduating Senior Survey, certain patterns of response emerged. These survey response sets highlight key issues of importance for UNI students and graduates. The following list presents some of the key observations of the survey. Agreement is presented in terms of individuals who responded either “agree” or “strongly agree” to the Academic and Social Environment

items and “good” or “excellent” to questions in the Educational Experience and Skills section.

- 1) Students reported that they received a premium educational experience at UNI.
  - Nearly all students felt they had received a high quality education at UNI (97.0%).
  - 93.0% of students stated that the courses they took at UNI were intellectually demanding.
  - Most students would recommend UNI to prospective students (95.3%).
- 2) Students had positive interactions and exchanges with faculty members during their time at UNI.
  - Most students said that the faculty they had contact with were dedicated to their charge and committed to advancing student learning (96.2%).
  - Students felt that their professors were intellectually stimulating (92.5%).
  - A large percentage of students said that at least one faculty member showed an active interest in their educational or career goals (97.0%).
  - Students agreed that the overall quality of teaching at UNI is excellent (93.1%).
- 3) Many students indicate the UNI is a welcoming community where they have had exposure to cultures and ideas different from their own.
  - Just over three-fourths of graduates (77.5%) felt that they have been prepared for working with people of diverse backgrounds.
  - The majority of respondents (83.4%) believed that most UNI students are tolerant of people whose lifestyles are different from their own.

- 88.3% of respondents indicated that the UNI community encourages the examination of diverse and controversial ideas.
- 4) Students graduated from UNI with a strong set of professional skills to enhance their experience in the workplace.
- Most students believe that UNI prepared them with the computer skills necessary to achieve their future career goals (81.5%).
  - Students gained strong communication skills at UNI and are well prepared for speaking effectively (85.7%) and communicating through writing (87.4%).
  - 90.7% of students said they learned how to conduct themselves professionally and competently while at UNI.
  - UNI prepared the majority of students (84.2%) with the ability to work as a team, but students are also able to work independently when the need arises (90.5%).
- 5) Students were satisfied with the peer relationships that they developed at UNI and with the activities they were participated in both on and off campus.
- Most students agreed that they developed close relationships with other students on campus (93.9%).
  - 75.6% of students participated in university sponsored on campus activities regularly at the same time as 88.1% of students engaged in social activities with other students off campus.

### Distribution of Graduates by College

Figure 1 shows the distribution of graduates by college. Student identification numbers are self reported. Over the past several years, students have been hesitant to list their student number, which is illustrated by the percentage of missing data in Figure 1.

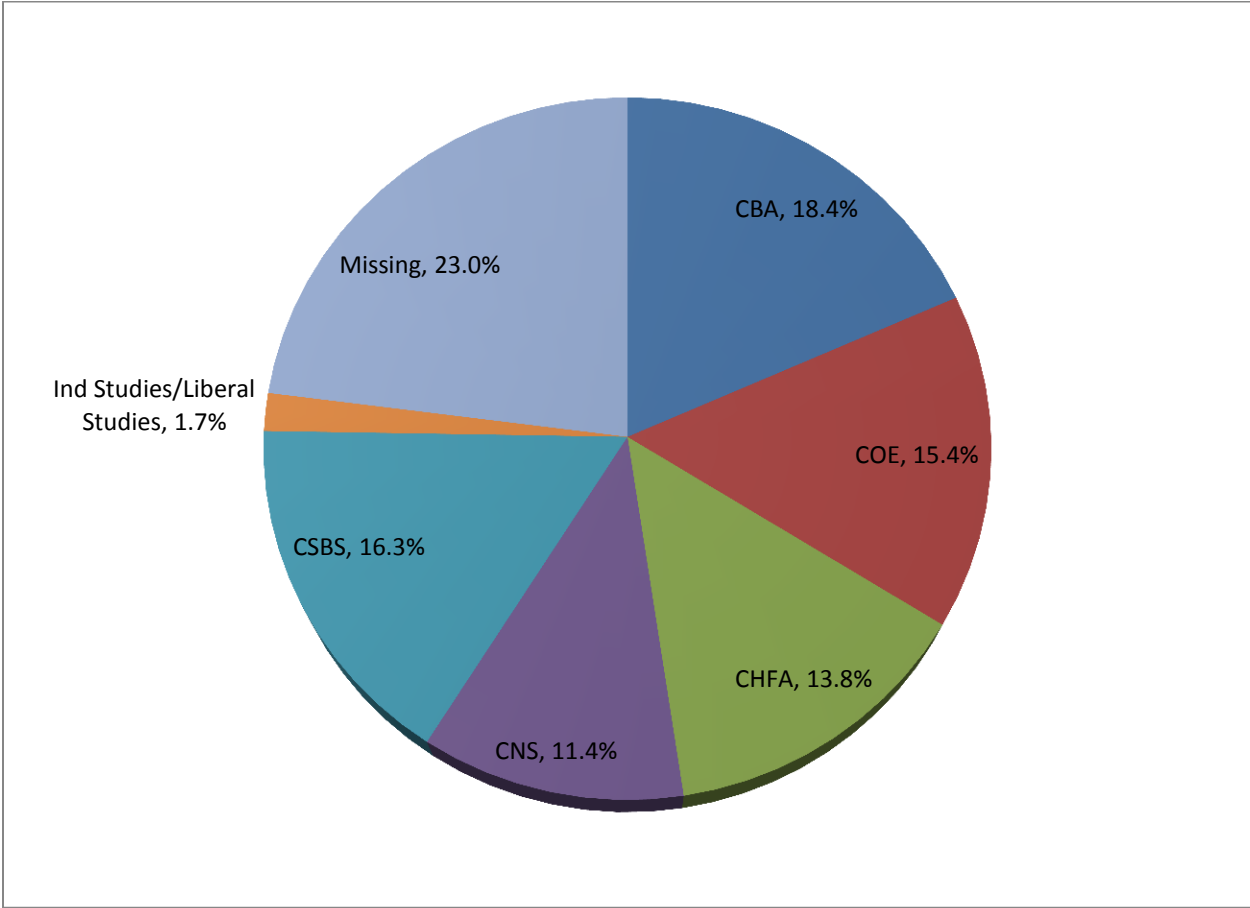


Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents by College

### Plans Following Graduation

Students were asked to indicate their plans following graduation. As Figure 2 indicates, 67.5% of the respondents indicated they were employed upon graduation. An additional 18.4% of respondents indicated they would be pursuing a graduate/advanced

degree. Of all respondents, 74.2% were employed within the state of Iowa, indicating the important role that UNI students play in the state of Iowa.

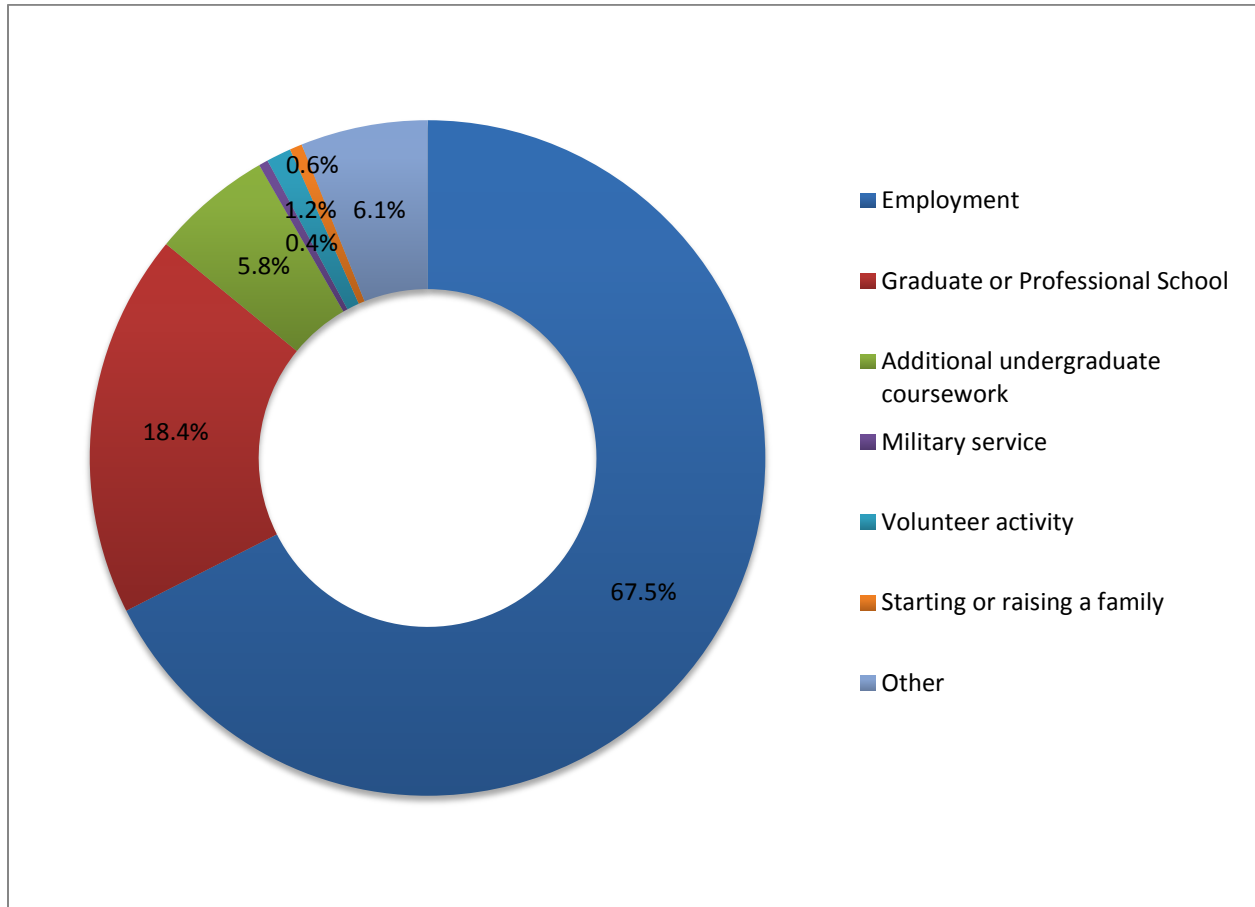


Figure 2. Plans Following UNI Graduation

A comparison of plans by college (see Figure 3) illustrates that the College of Natural Sciences had the highest percentage of graduates employed upon graduation (70.3%). The College of Natural Sciences also had the highest number of graduates enrolled in a graduate or professional program (22.6%). Across all colleges, the vast majority of students (approximately 80%) indicated that they were employed or enrolled in a graduate program of study for the next academic year.

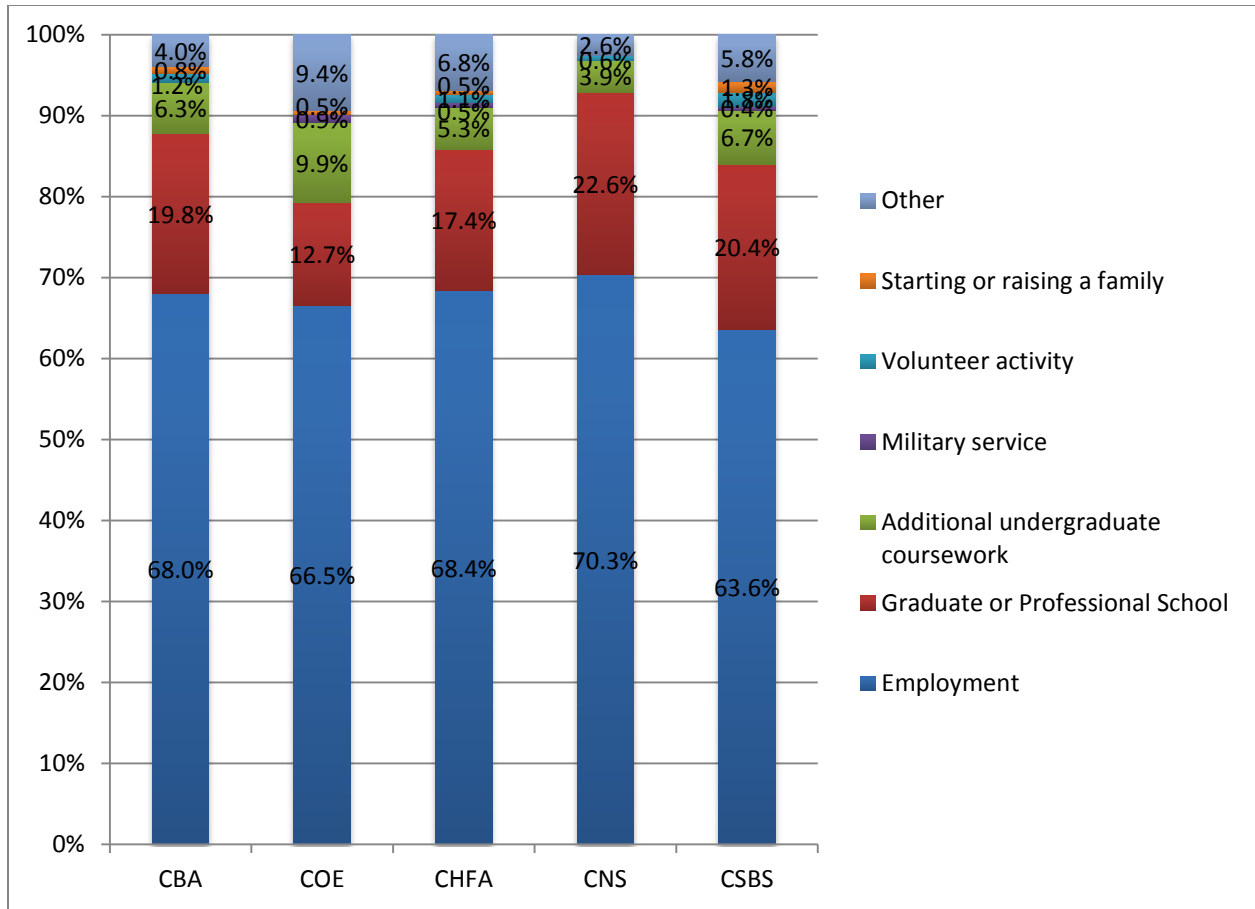


Figure 3. Plans Following UNI Graduation by College

## Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 2009-2010 Graduating Senior Survey respondents were examined to determine the representativeness of the sample of respondents. The high response rate to the survey, coupled with an adequate sampling of students from all groups, helps to ensure that the characteristics of the sample are similar to the characteristics of all students graduating in the 2009-2010 academic year. Presented below are the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Please note the axis minimum values in the charts below.

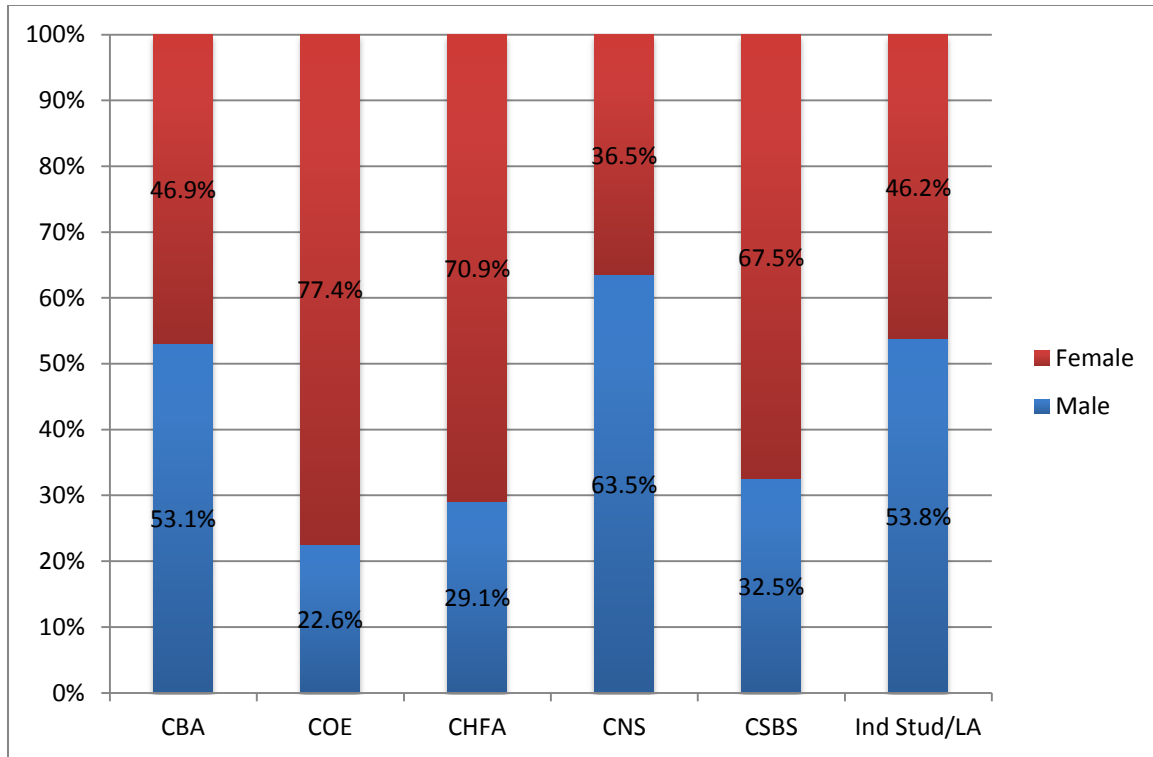


Figure 4. Gender of Respondents by College

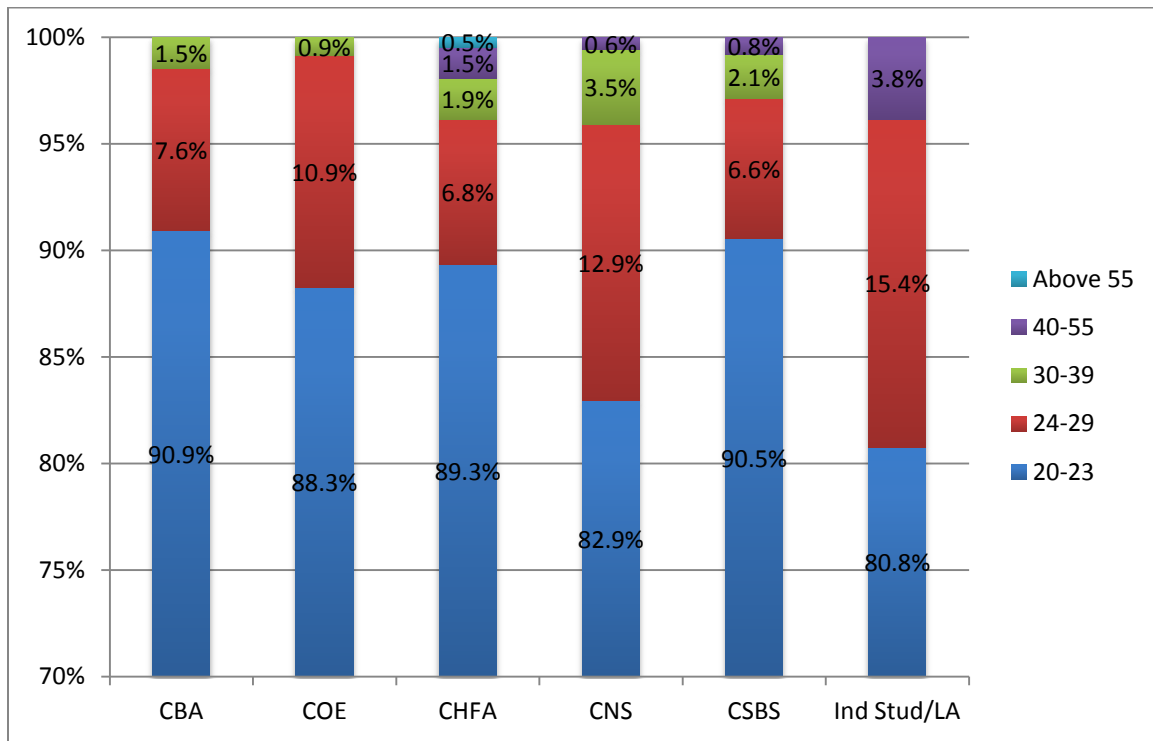


Figure 5. Age of Respondents by College



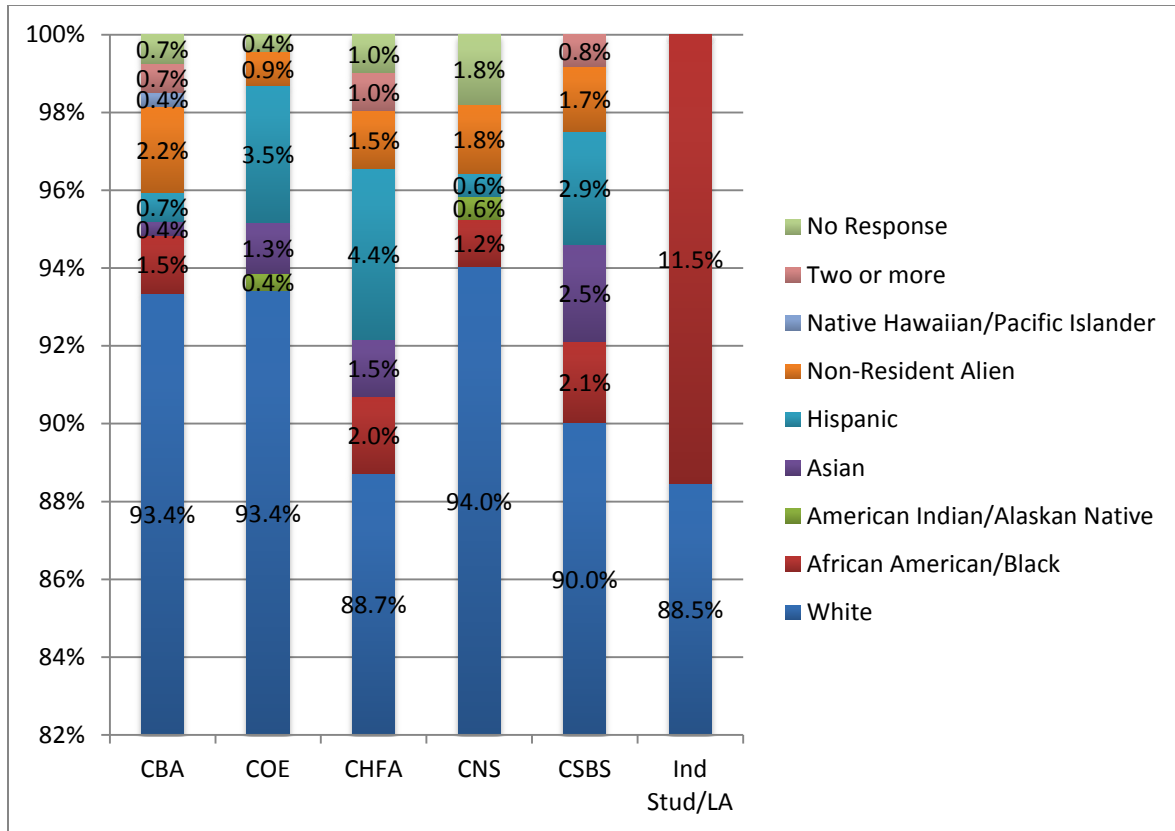


Figure 6. Race/Ethnicity of Respondents by College

## Institutional Summary of Results

Respondents were asked to indicate how well UNI prepared them for 23 different critical skills and experiences on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). A “cannot evaluate” option was also available. They were also asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to 27 statements regarding the academic and social environment at UNI on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), with a “not sure” category available in addition to the other options. A summary of the overall responses is seen in the tables below, followed by a breakdown of the responses by college.

## Educational Experience and Skills

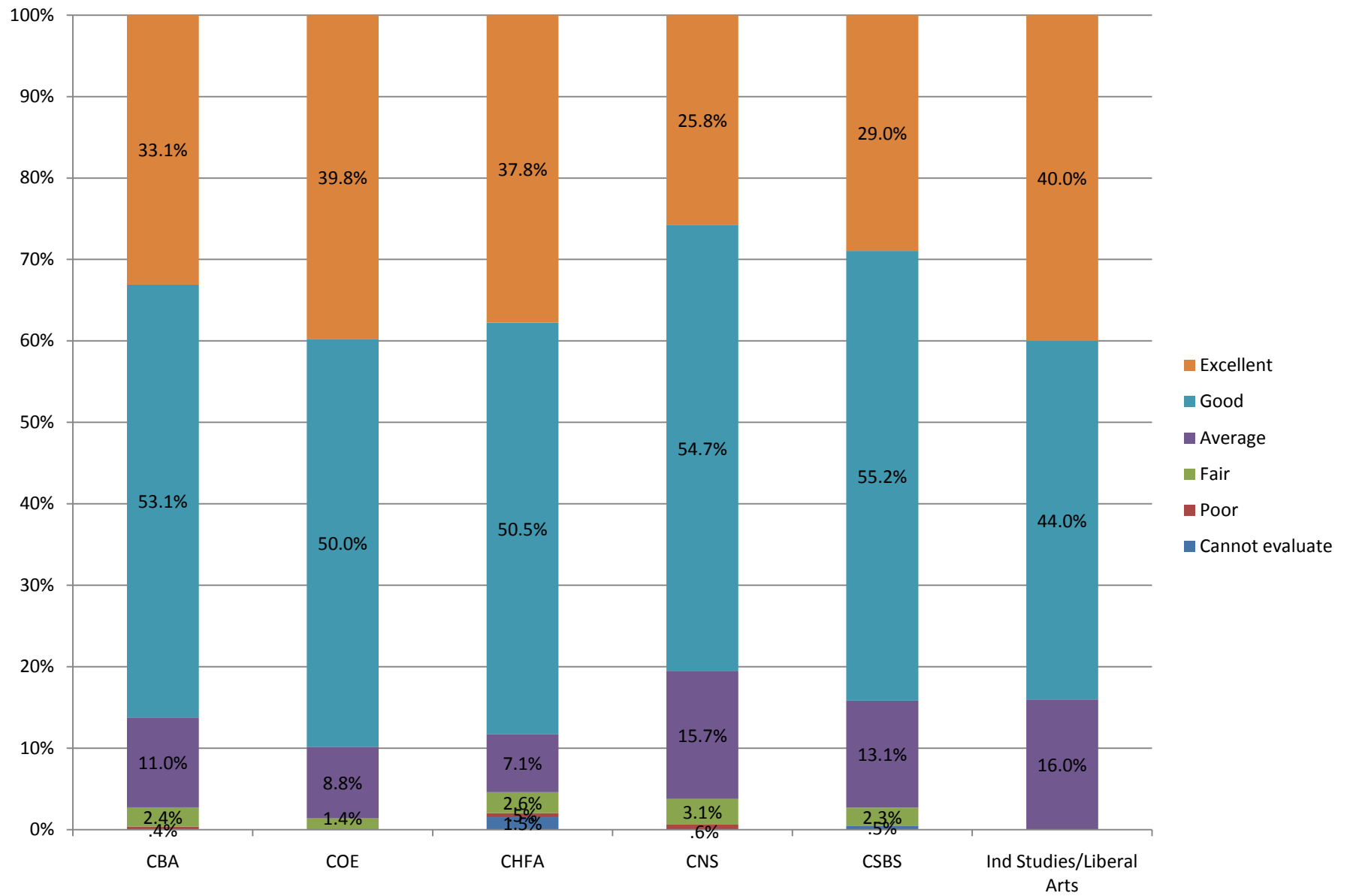
	N	Cannot evaluate	Poor (1)	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent (5)	Mean
<b>Speaking effectively</b>	1374	.5%	.4%	2.4%	11.0%	51.8%	33.9%	4.15
<b>Communicate through writing</b>	1336	.3%	.2%	2.1%	10.0%	50.1%	37.3%	4.21
<b>Understanding written communication</b>	1355	.2%	.6%	1.9%	10.2%	49.1%	38.0%	4.21
<b>Listen effectively</b>	1302	.5%	.3%	.9%	9.4%	47.7%	41.1%	4.27
<b>Basic computer skills</b>	1310	1.2%	.7%	2.0%	14.6%	41.8%	39.8%	4.14
<b>Making basic calculations</b>	1308	1.8%	.8%	3.2%	18.4%	42.4%	33.3%	3.99
<b>Foreign language skills</b>	1342	32.0%	12.3%	15.4%	17.7%	12.4%	10.2%	1.97
<b>Planning projects</b>	1331	.9%	.5%	3.5%	16.5%	45.7%	32.9%	4.04
<b>Defining problems</b>	1286	.9%	.3%	2.5%	13.7%	50.5%	32.1%	4.09
<b>Solving problems</b>	1275	.6%	.2%	2.0%	12.1%	48.9%	36.2%	4.17
<b>Learn new things</b>	1280	.3%	.3%	1.2%	8.0%	44.4%	45.9%	4.33
<b>Creative thinking</b>	1306	.4%	.3%	2.4%	12.0%	46.9%	38.1%	4.19
<b>Bringing information together</b>	1277	.5%	.2%	1.7%	11.2%	49.6%	36.7%	4.19
<b>Using research skills</b>	1272	.5%	.4%	2.0%	13.5%	45.7%	37.9%	4.17
<b>Conducting self in prof manner</b>	1255	.6%	.2%	1.0%	7.5%	40.2%	50.4%	4.38
<b>Uphold ethical standards</b>	1247	.5%	.5%	1.5%	8.1%	42.5%	46.9%	4.32
<b>Adapt to change</b>	1241	.6%	.2%	1.5%	11.3%	46.2%	40.3%	4.23
<b>Work under pressure</b>	1243	.3%	.2%	1.1%	9.1%	43.0%	46.3%	4.33
<b>Making decisions</b>	1267	.5%	.5%	1.0%	9.6%	49.6%	38.9%	4.24
<b>Work independently</b>	1233	.5%	.3%	.7%	7.9%	44.6%	45.9%	4.34
<b>People of diverse backgrounds</b>	1236	.9%	1.8%	4.4%	15.5%	37.0%	40.5%	4.07
<b>Working as a team</b>	1207	.4%	.7%	1.7%	9.9%	43.2%	44.2%	4.27
<b>Leading others</b>	1189	.6%	.4%	2.8%	12.8%	45.2%	38.3%	4.16

## Academic and Social Environment

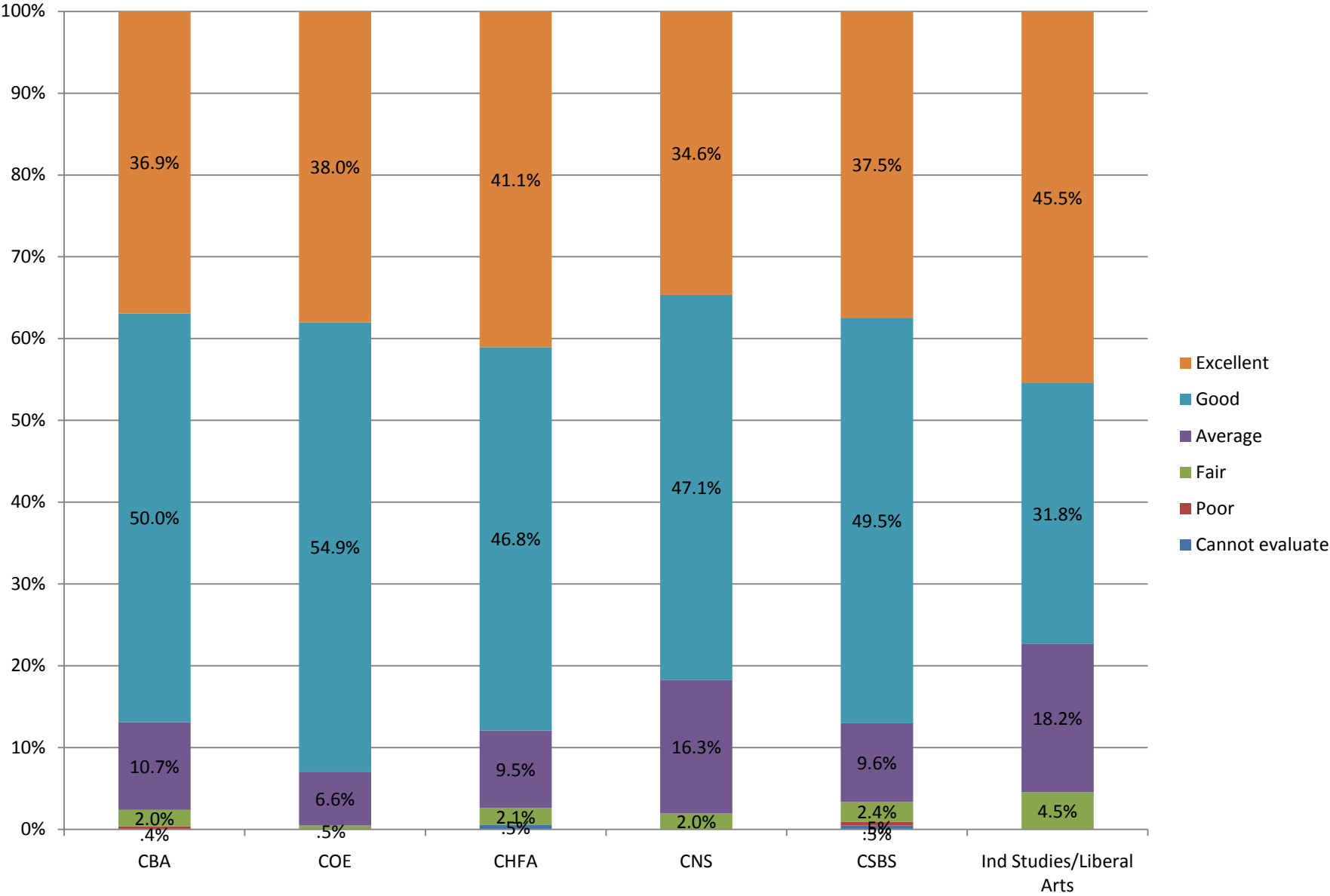
	N	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree (4)	Mean
<b>Courses intellectually demanding</b>	1447	.7%	.8%	5.5%	72.5%	20.5%	3.11
<b>Instructors intellectually stimulating</b>	1444	1.0%	.5%	6.0%	69.5%	23.0%	3.13
<b>Integrated subject matter</b>	1435	1.6%	.5%	7.5%	67.5%	22.9%	3.10
<b>Cumulative learning</b>	1433	1.0%	.3%	2.0%	66.6%	30.1%	3.24
<b>Lifelong learner</b>	1435	2.4%	.8%	6.8%	55.9%	34.1%	3.18
<b>Peers valued achievement</b>	1436	2.6%	.8%	7.5%	64.5%	24.7%	3.08
<b>Excellent teaching quality at UNI</b>	1428	1.3%	.6%	5.0%	64.7%	28.4%	3.18
<b>Courses in major available</b>	1426	.5%	2.1%	10.2%	57.9%	29.2%	3.13
<b>LAC quality excellent</b>	1428	8.2%	2.7%	16.9%	56.9%	15.3%	2.68
<b>LAC purposes clear</b>	1423	7.4%	3.4%	18.3%	54.5%	16.4%	2.69
<b>LAC intellectually demanding</b>	1426	6.8%	4.2%	18.2%	55.2%	15.6%	2.69
<b>LAC teaching excellent</b>	1423	8.6%	2.5%	13.9%	58.2%	16.7%	2.72
<b>LAC important</b>	1423	7.2%	5.5%	16.5%	51.6%	19.3%	2.70
<b>Faculty committed to learning</b>	1431	.6%	.2%	3.0%	58.2%	38.0%	3.33
<b>Faculty interest in goals</b>	1431	.3%	.3%	2.4%	43.8%	53.2%	3.49
<b>Close relationships w/ students</b>	1426	.4%	.5%	5.2%	50.6%	43.3%	3.36
<b>Off campus social activities</b>	1422	1.0%	1.6%	9.5%	49.2%	38.7%	3.23
<b>On campus activities</b>	1429	1.2%	4.5%	18.6%	50.2%	25.4%	2.94
<b>Alcohol abuse a problem</b>	1433	9.8%	11.0%	42.9%	27.1%	9.3%	2.15
<b>Students tolerant of differences</b>	1428	5.0%	2.4%	9.2%	67.2%	16.2%	2.87
<b>Sexual harassment a problem</b>	1417	12.1%	20.7%	41.2%	19.6%	6.4%	1.87
<b>UNI values excellence</b>	1420	3.9%	1.0%	5.1%	66.8%	23.3%	3.05
<b>UNI values intellectual vitality</b>	1428	3.4%	.6%	3.6%	69.3%	23.1%	3.08
<b>Examines diverse ideas</b>	1426	3.9%	1.3%	6.5%	67.2%	21.1%	3.00
<b>High quality education at UNI</b>	1417	.9%	.5%	1.6%	52.2%	44.8%	3.39
<b>Recommend major to student</b>	1418	1.8%	1.1%	3.9%	44.1%	48.9%	3.37
<b>Recommend UNI to student</b>	1417	1.4%	.8%	2.5%	42.4%	52.9%	3.44

## Summary of Responses by College

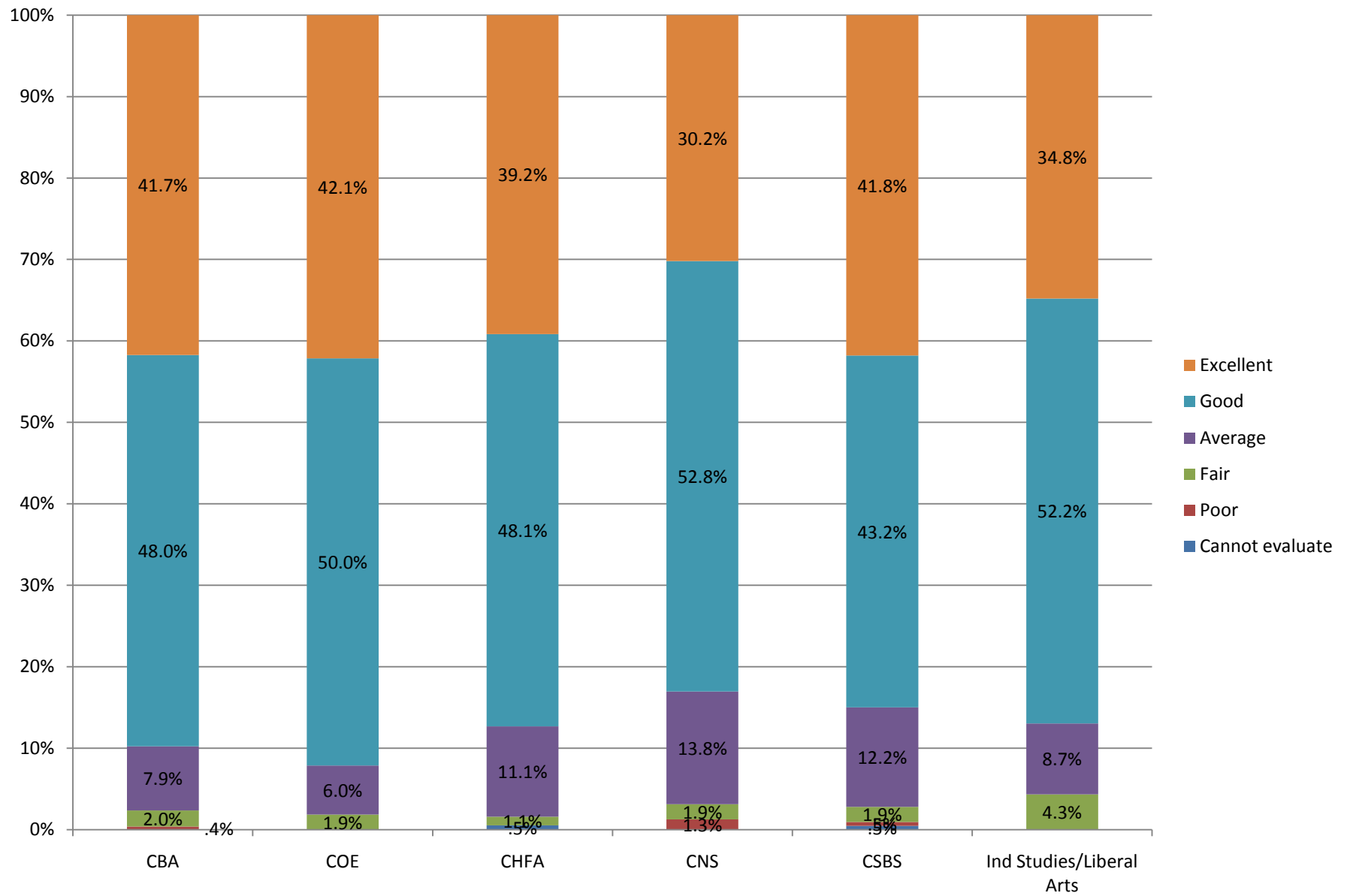
## Speaking effectively



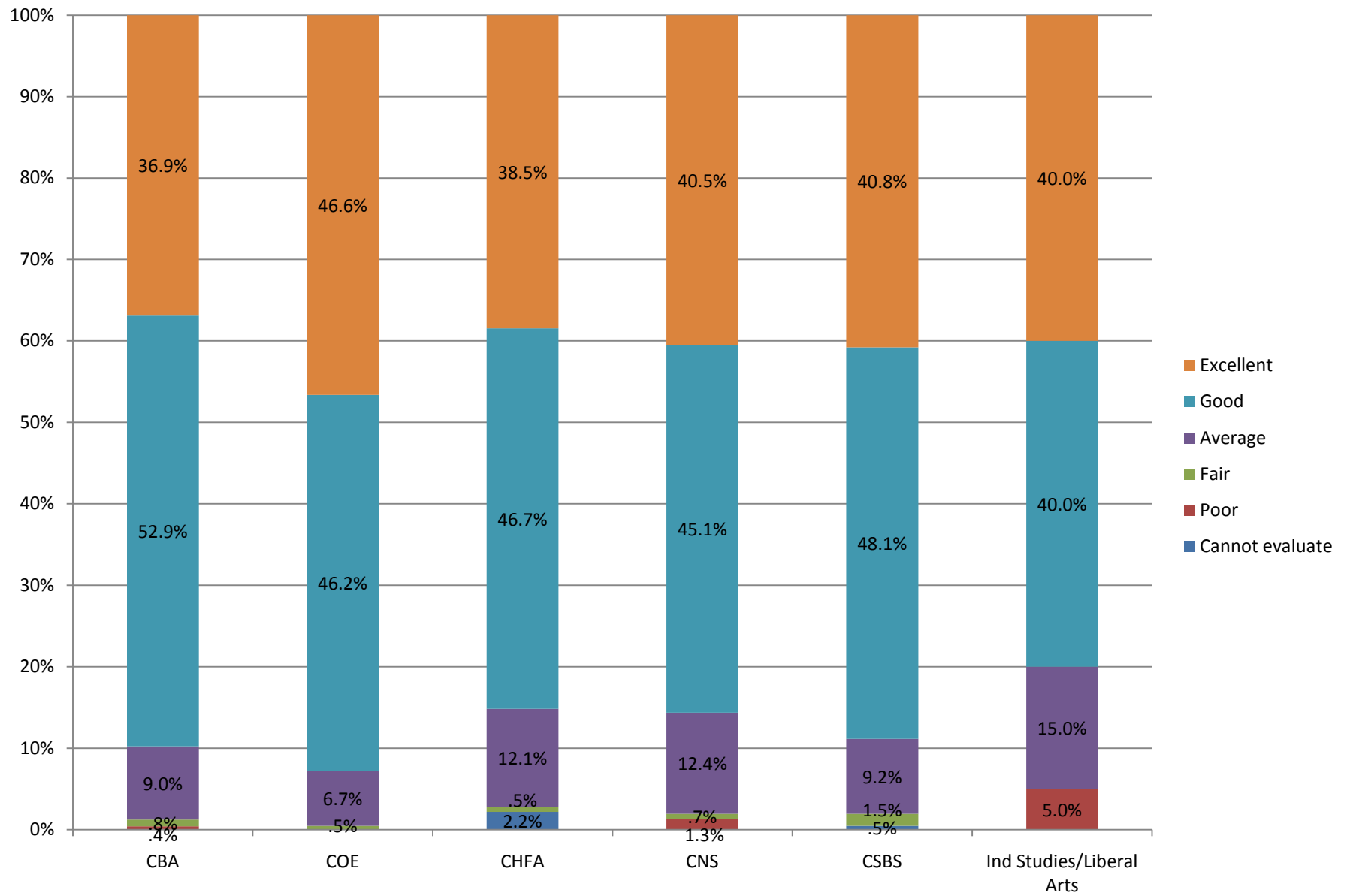
# Communicating through writing



## Understanding written communication

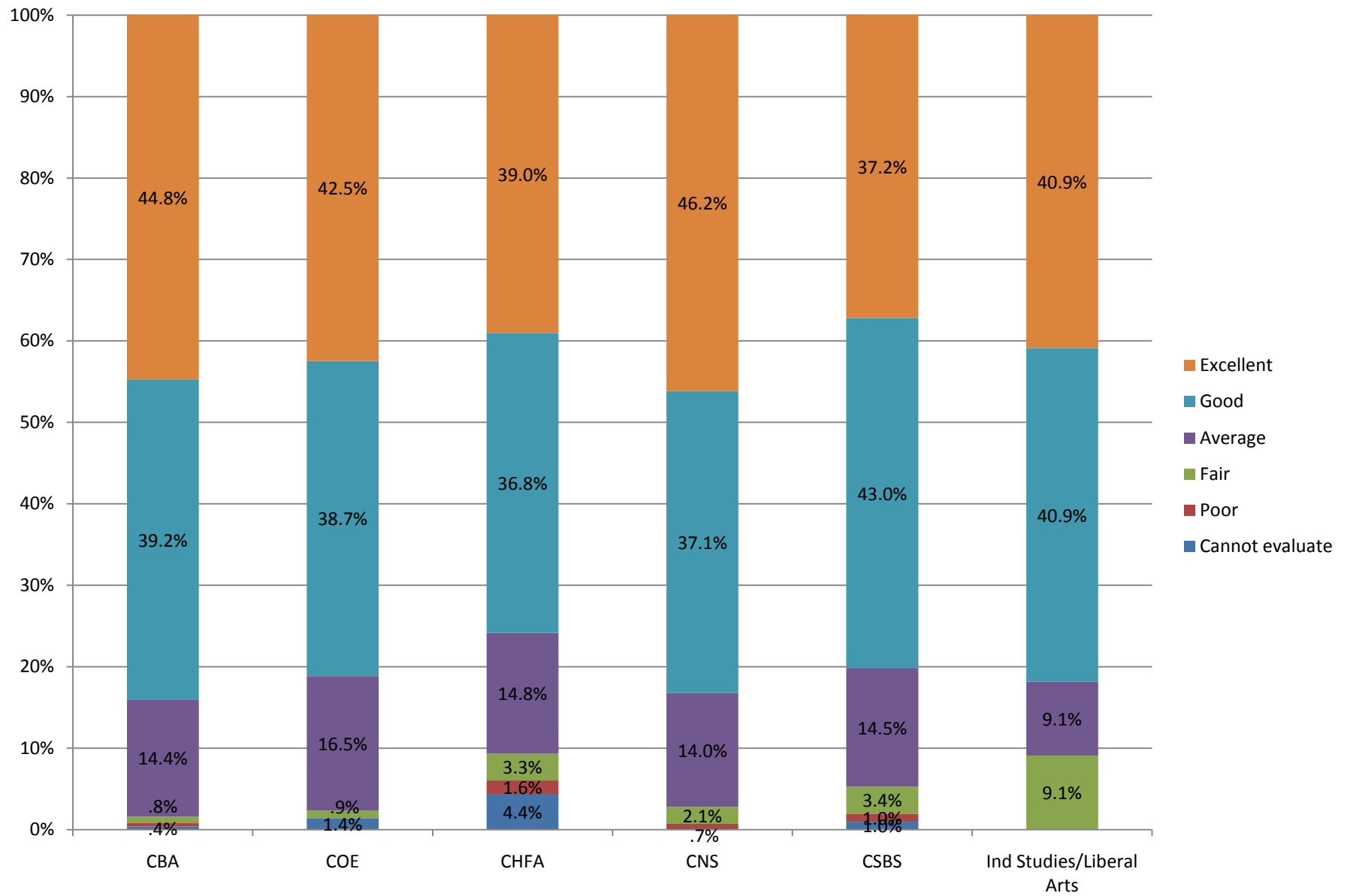


## Listening effectively

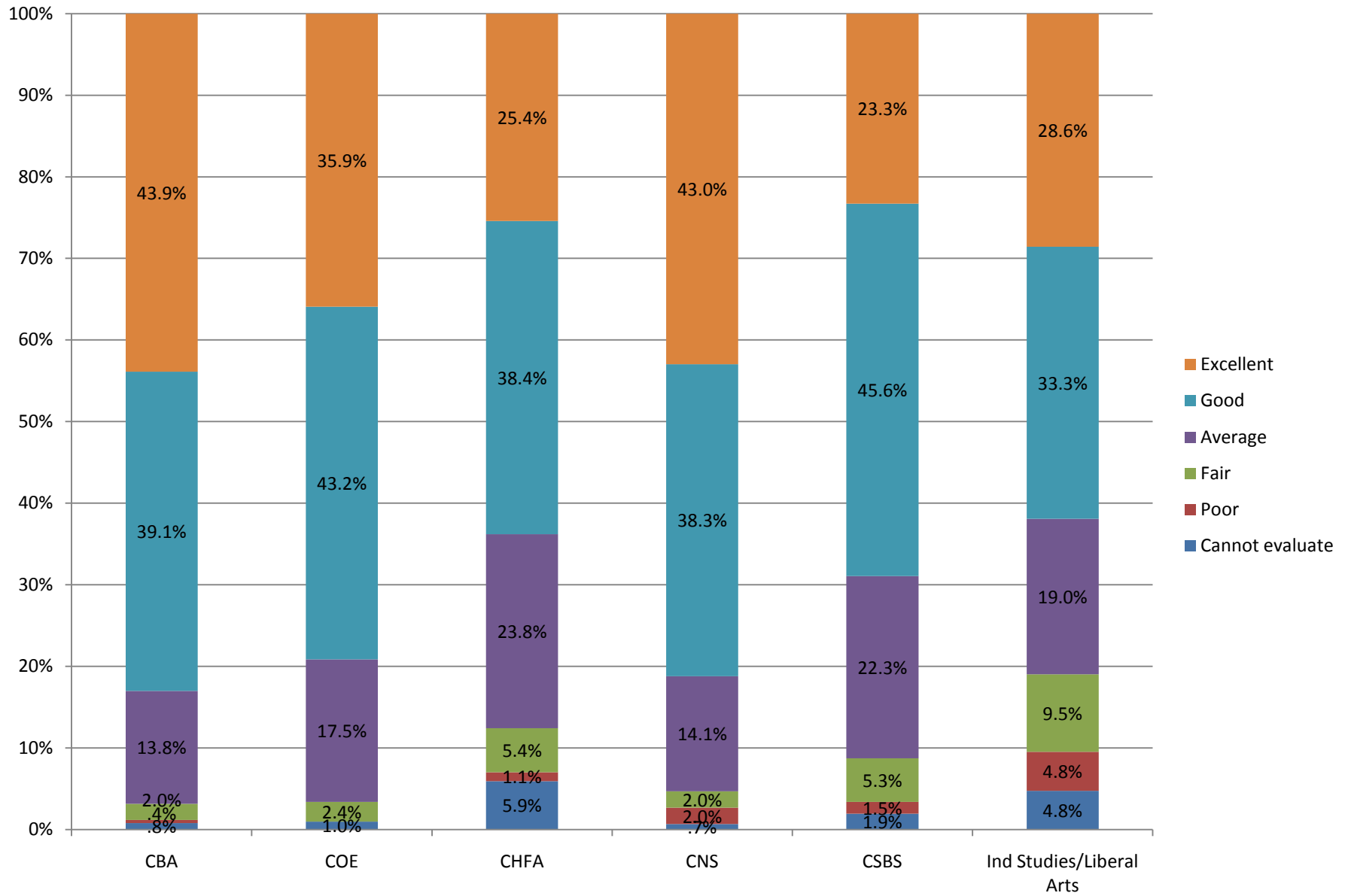




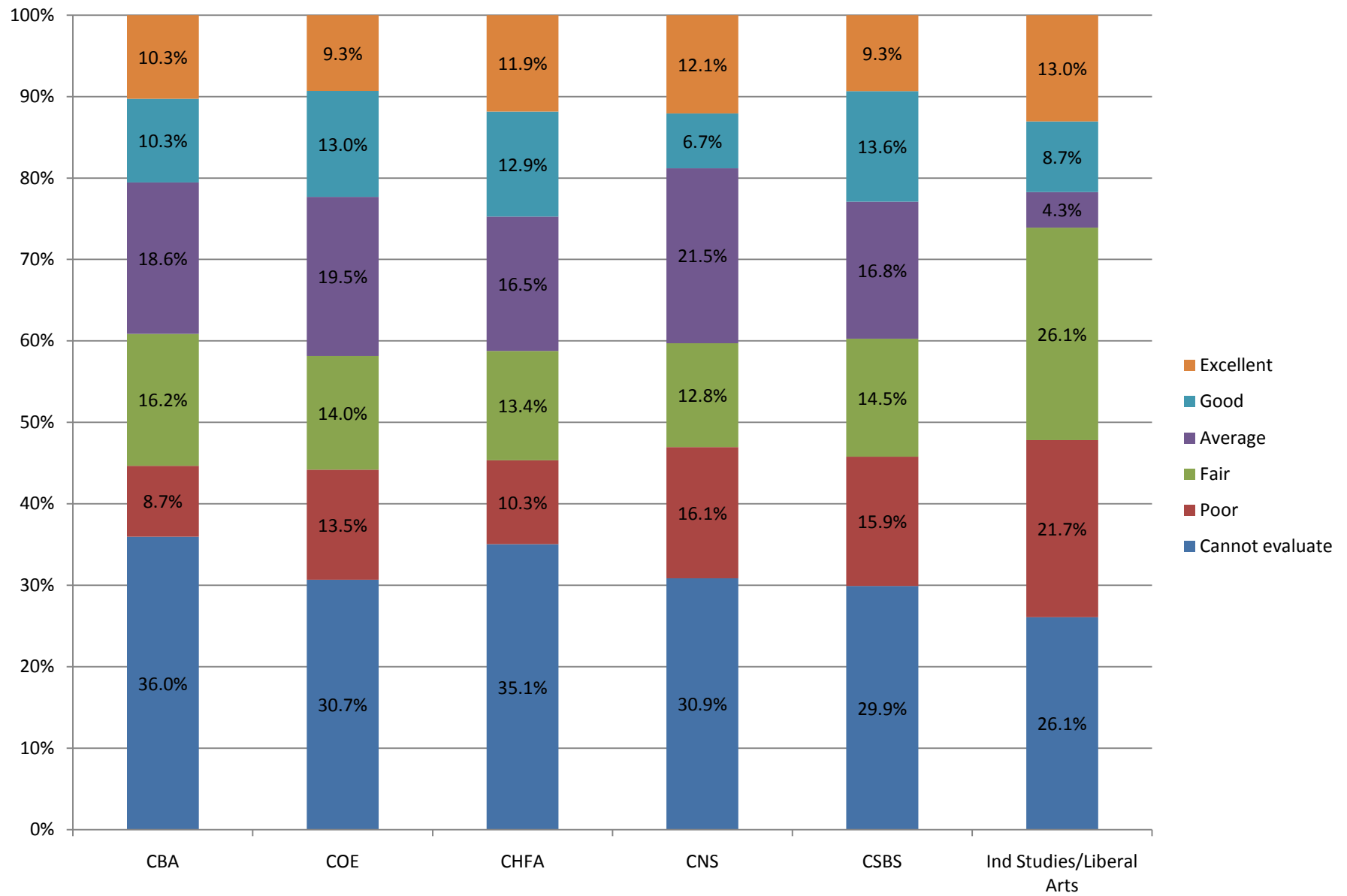
## Using basic computer skills (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.)



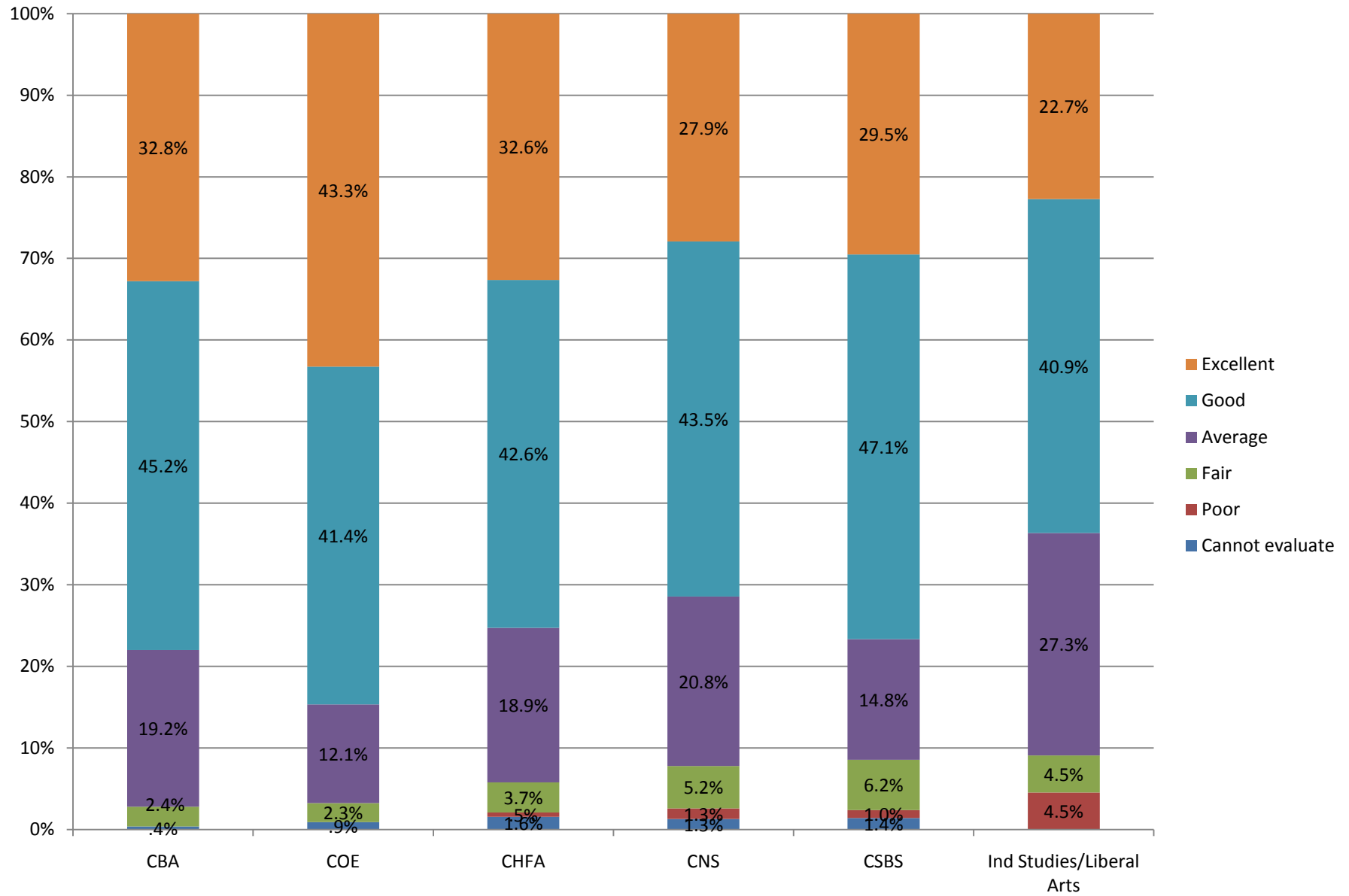
## Making basic calculations and computations



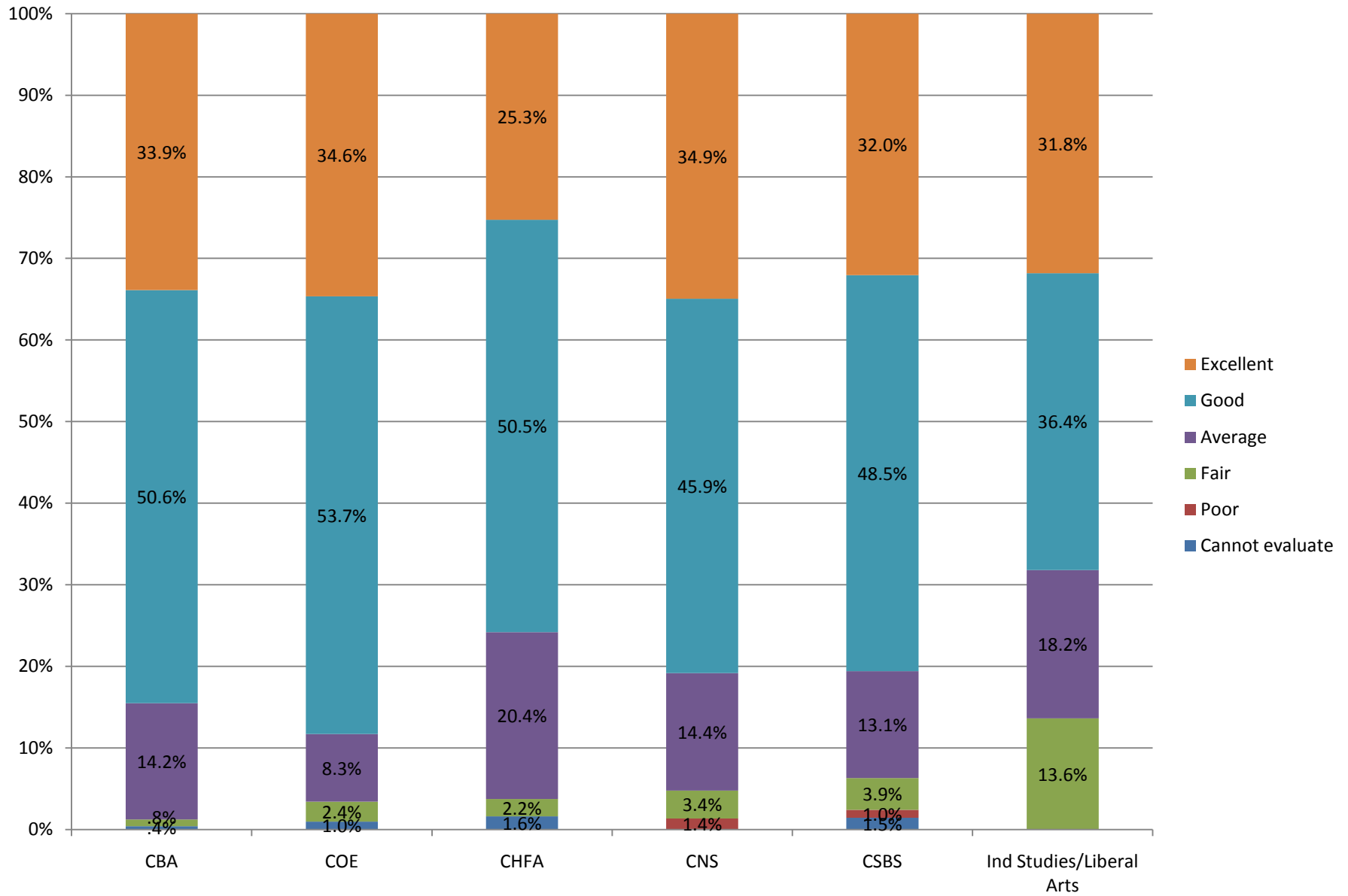
## Using foreign language skills



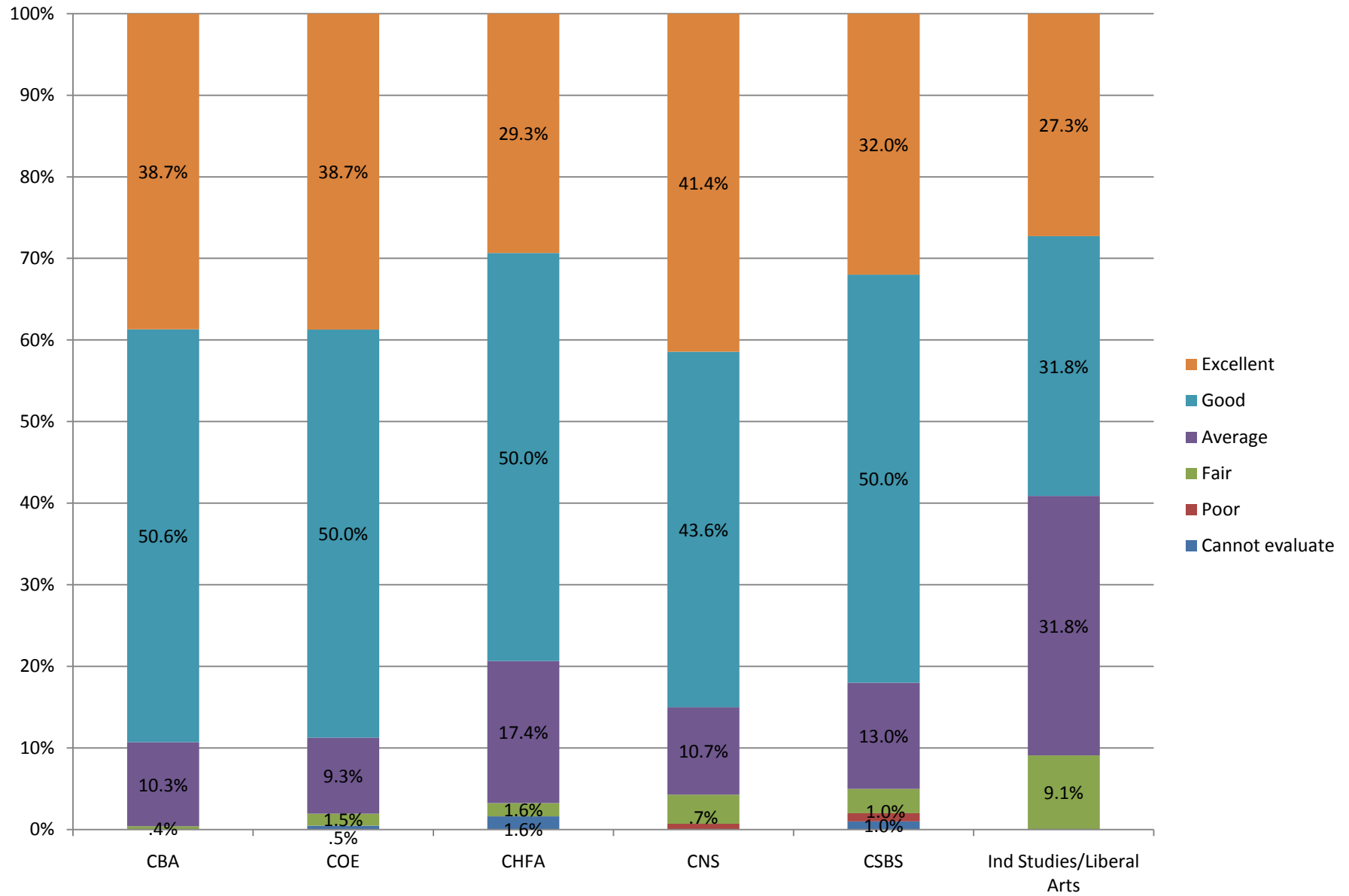
## Planning projects



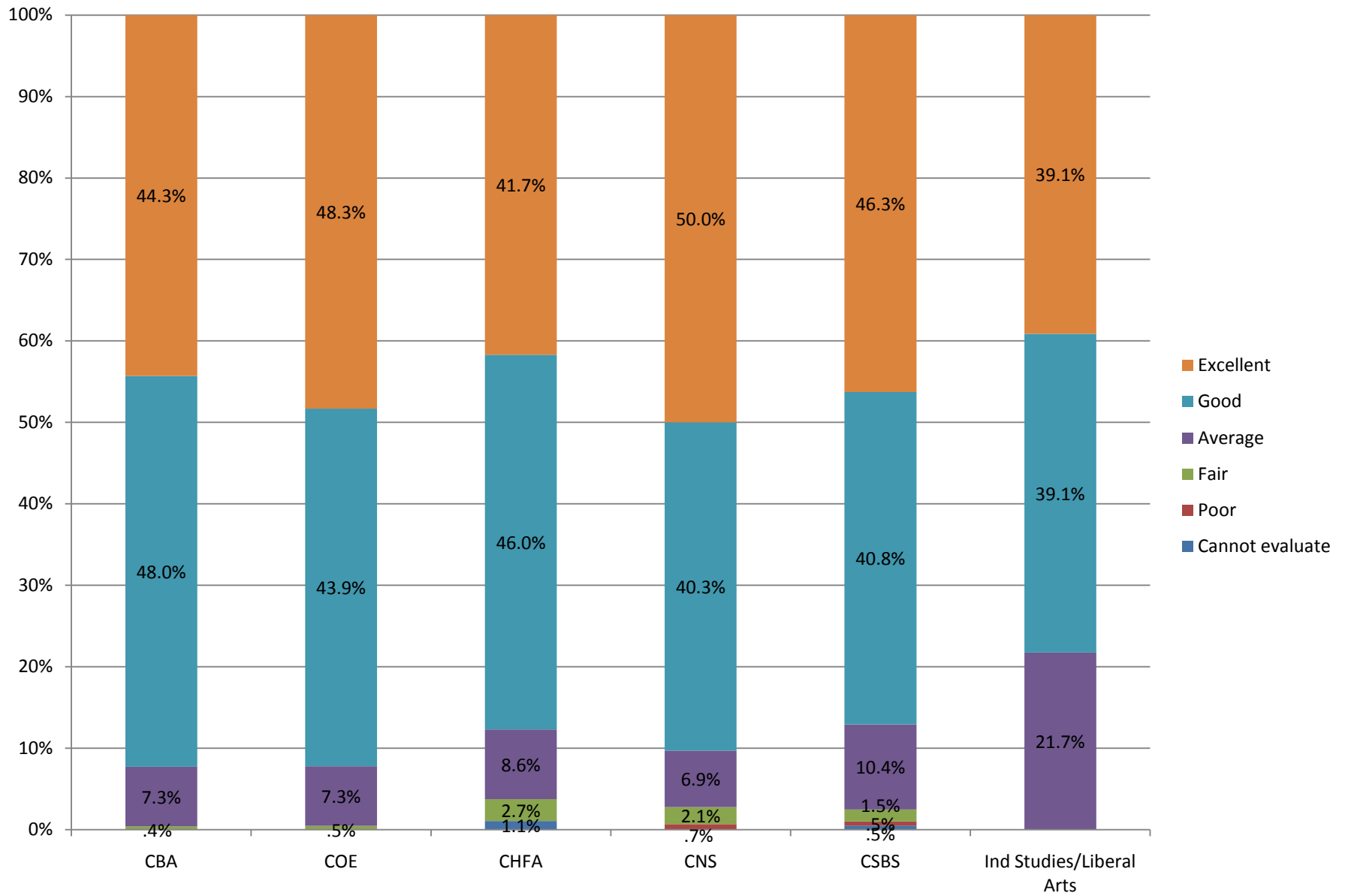
## Defining problems



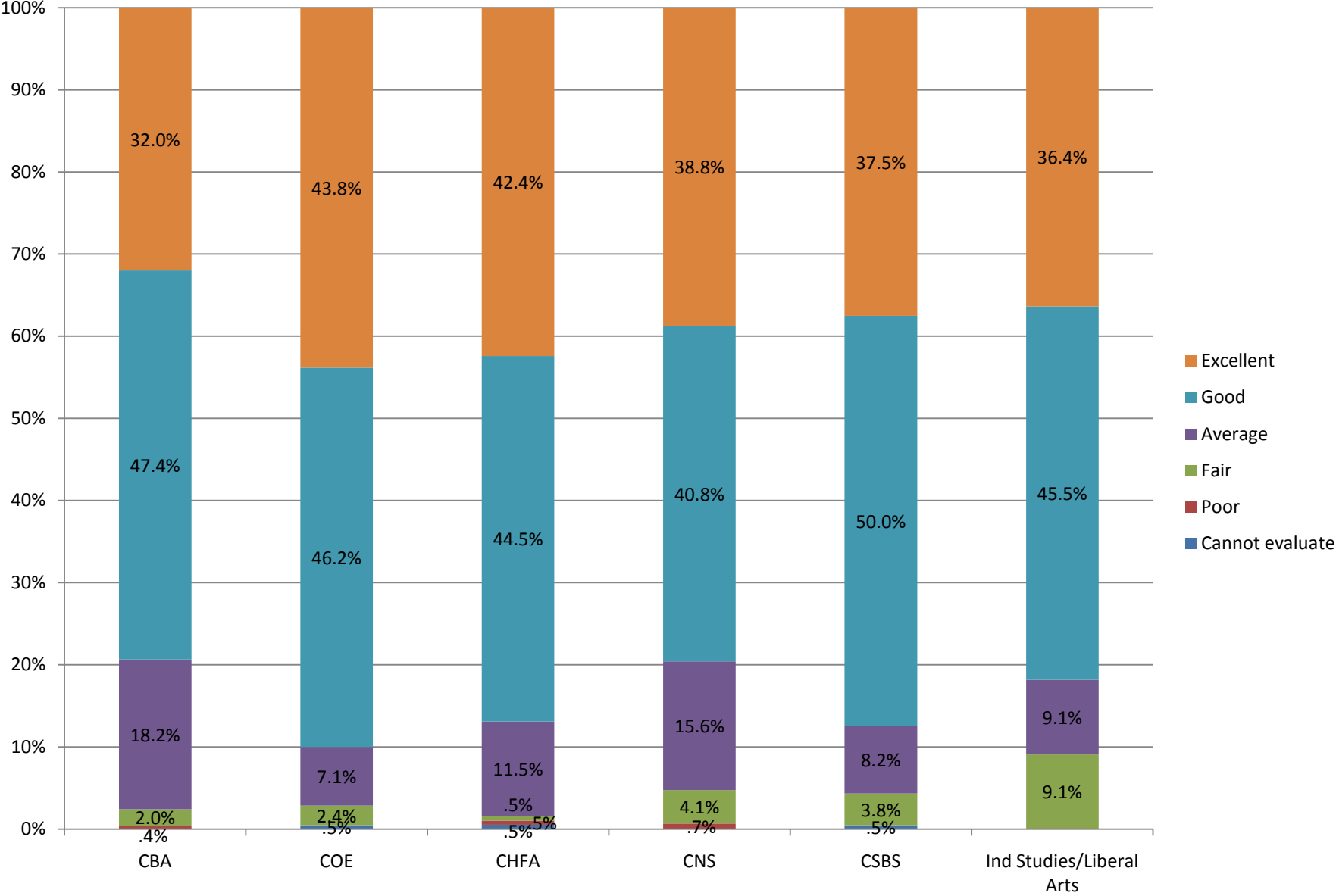
## Solving problems



## Learning new things

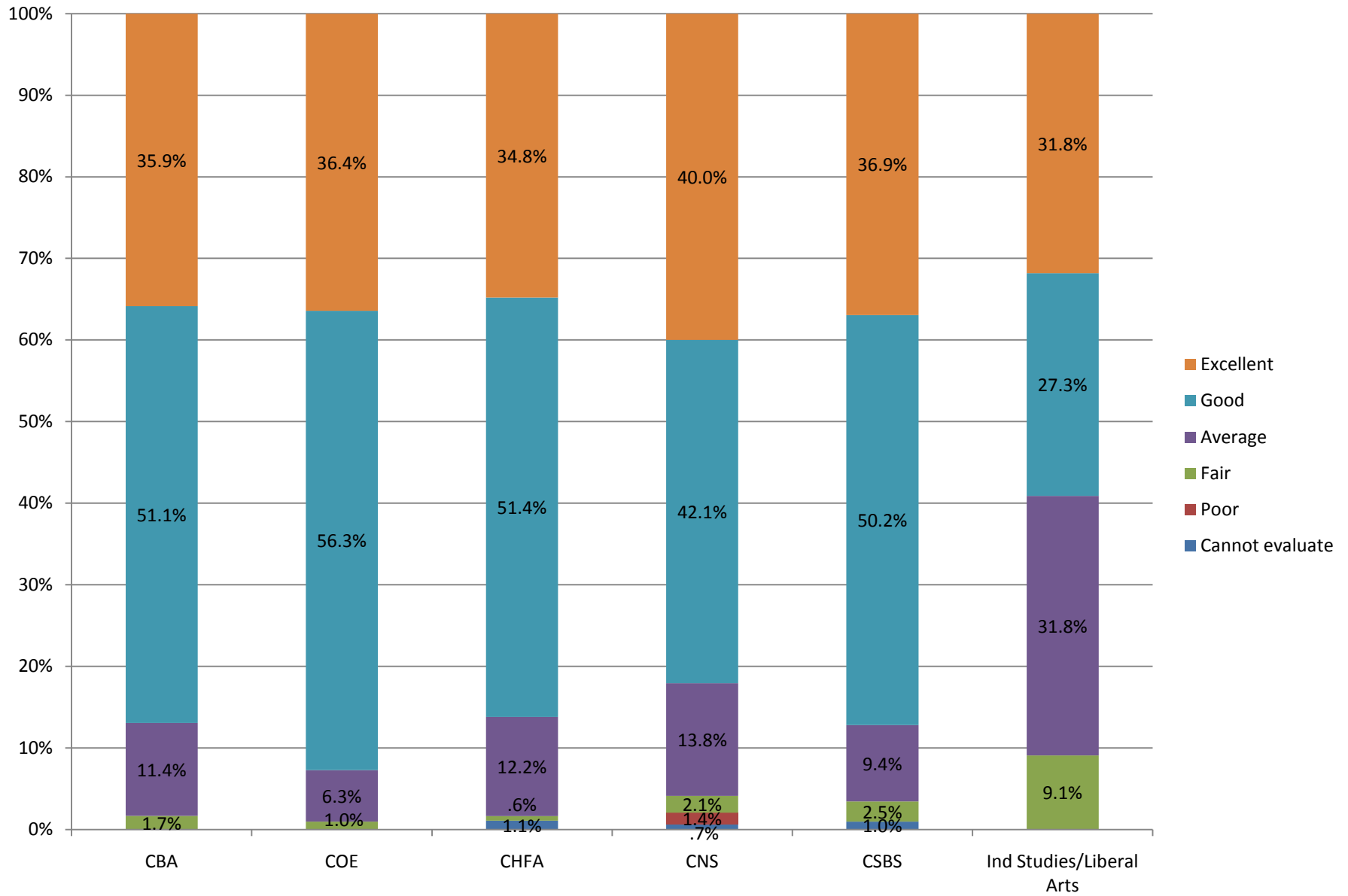


# Thinking creatively

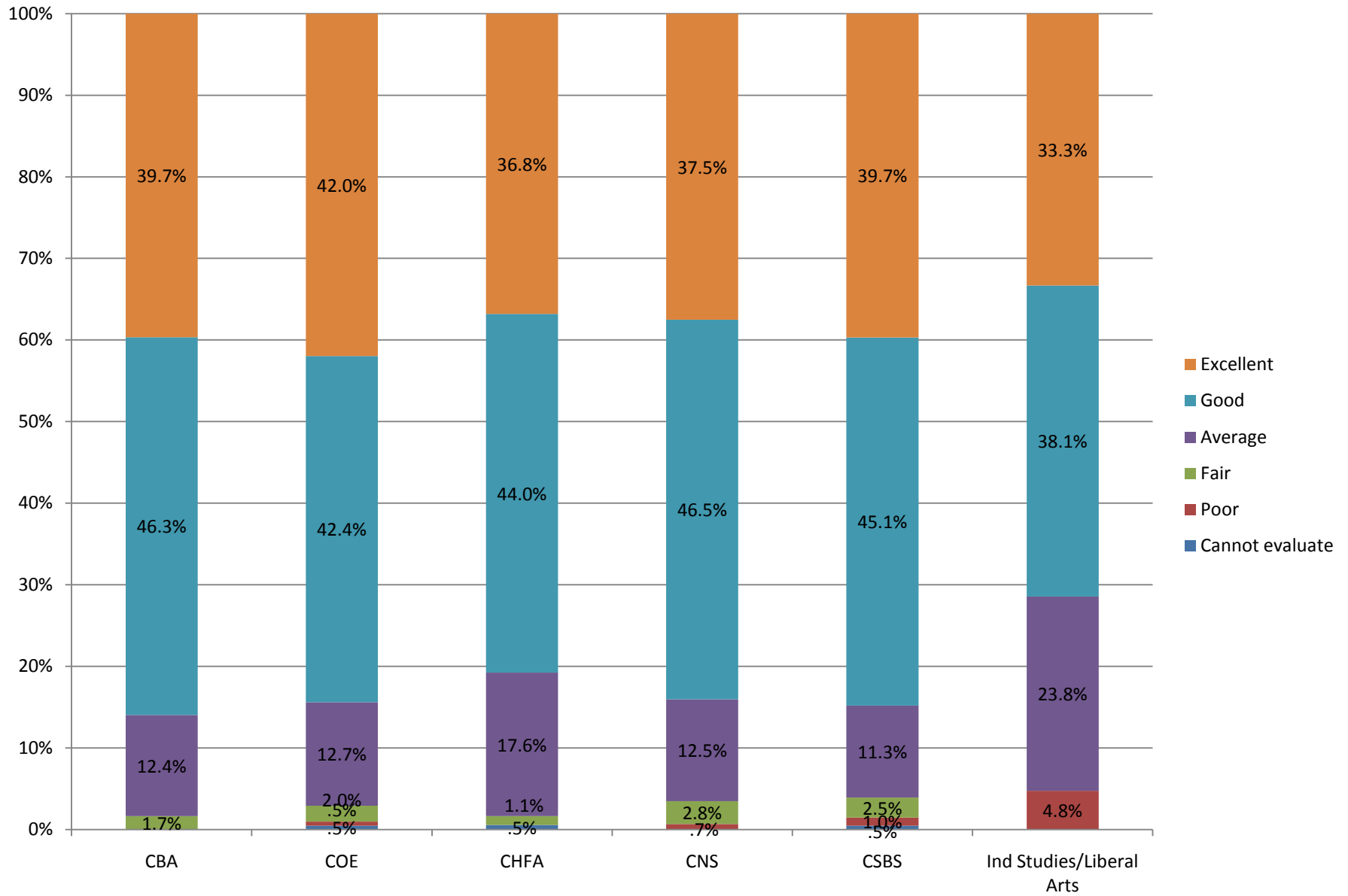




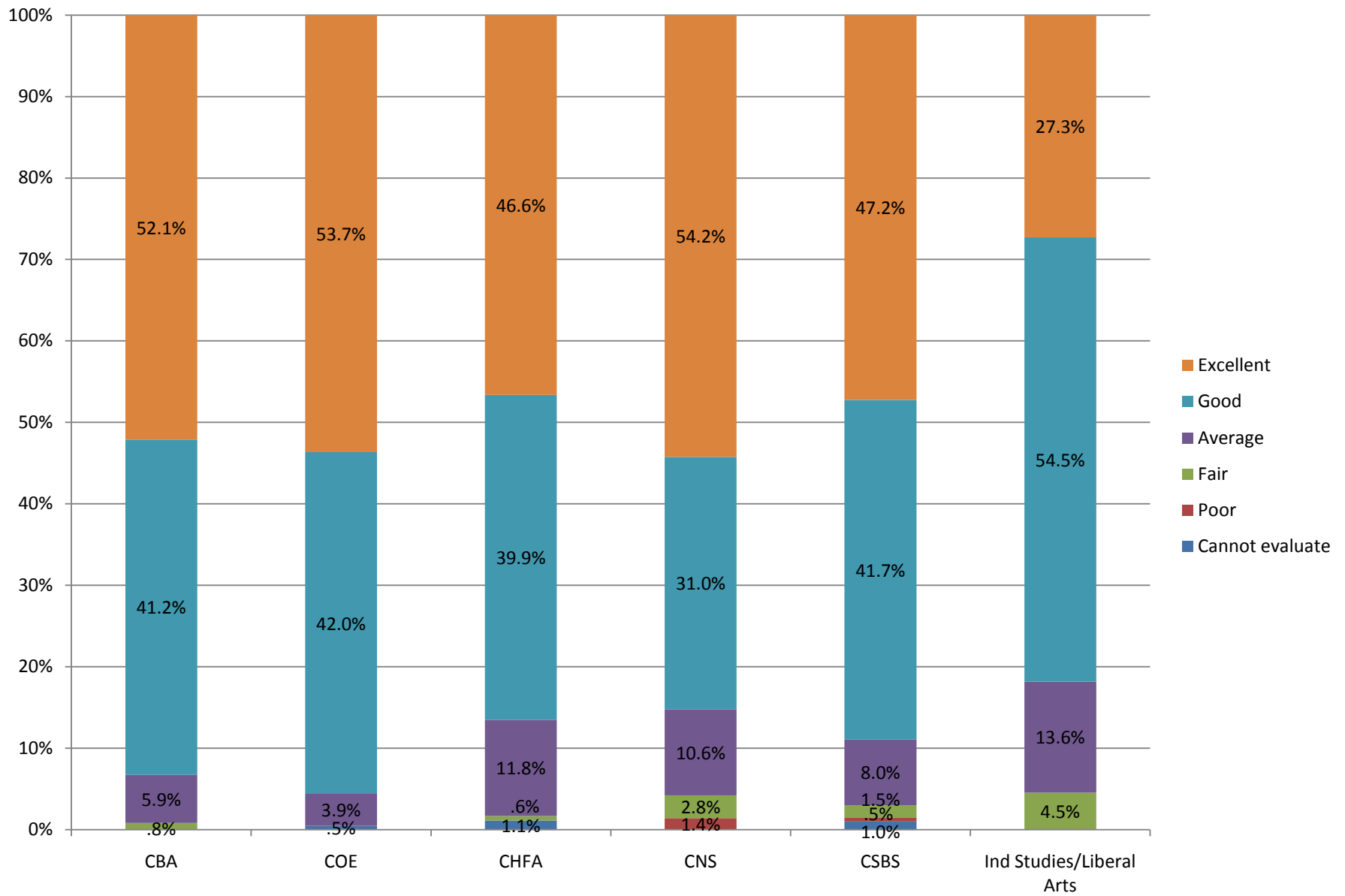
## Bringing information/ideas together from different areas



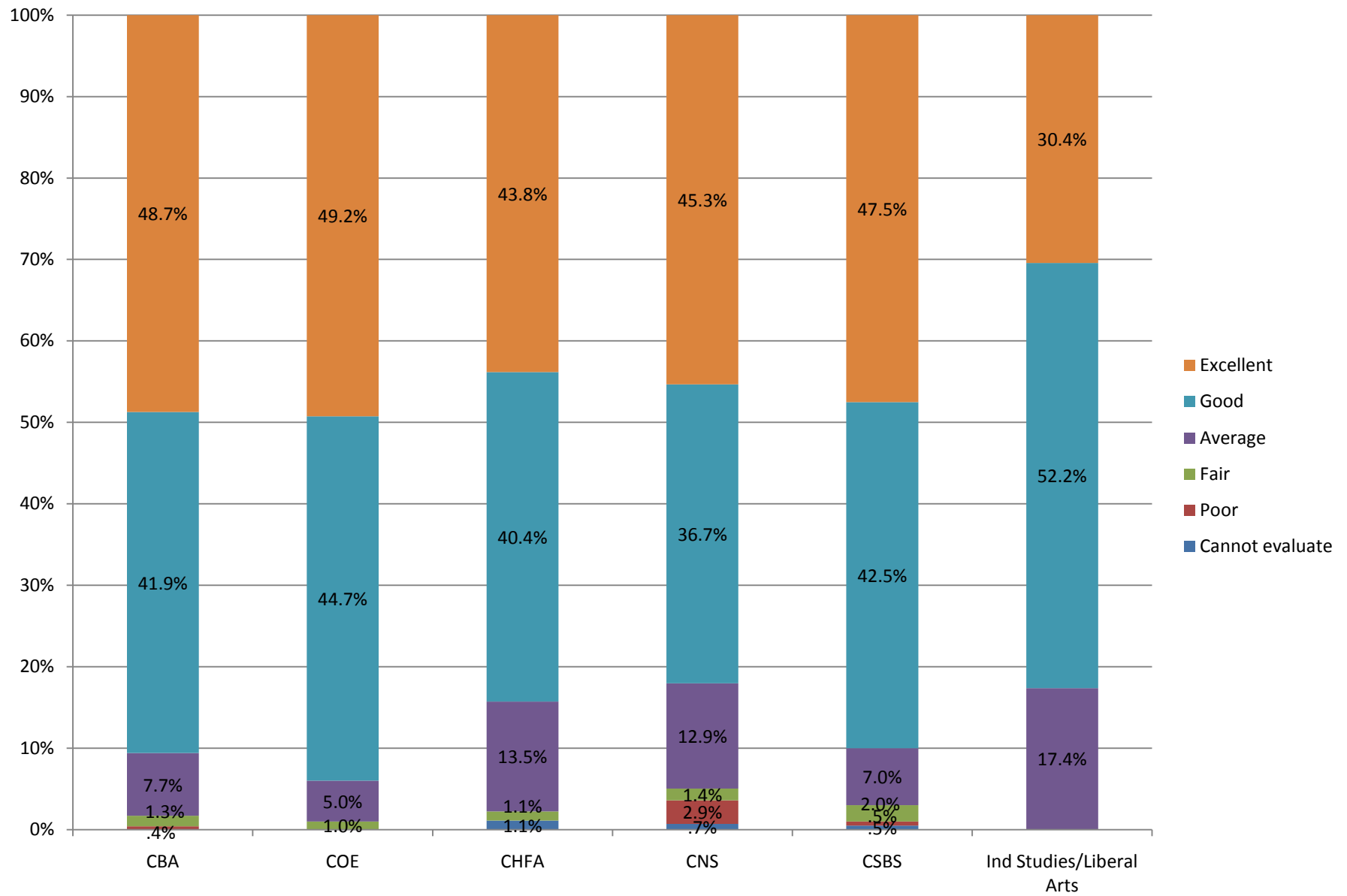
## Using research skills



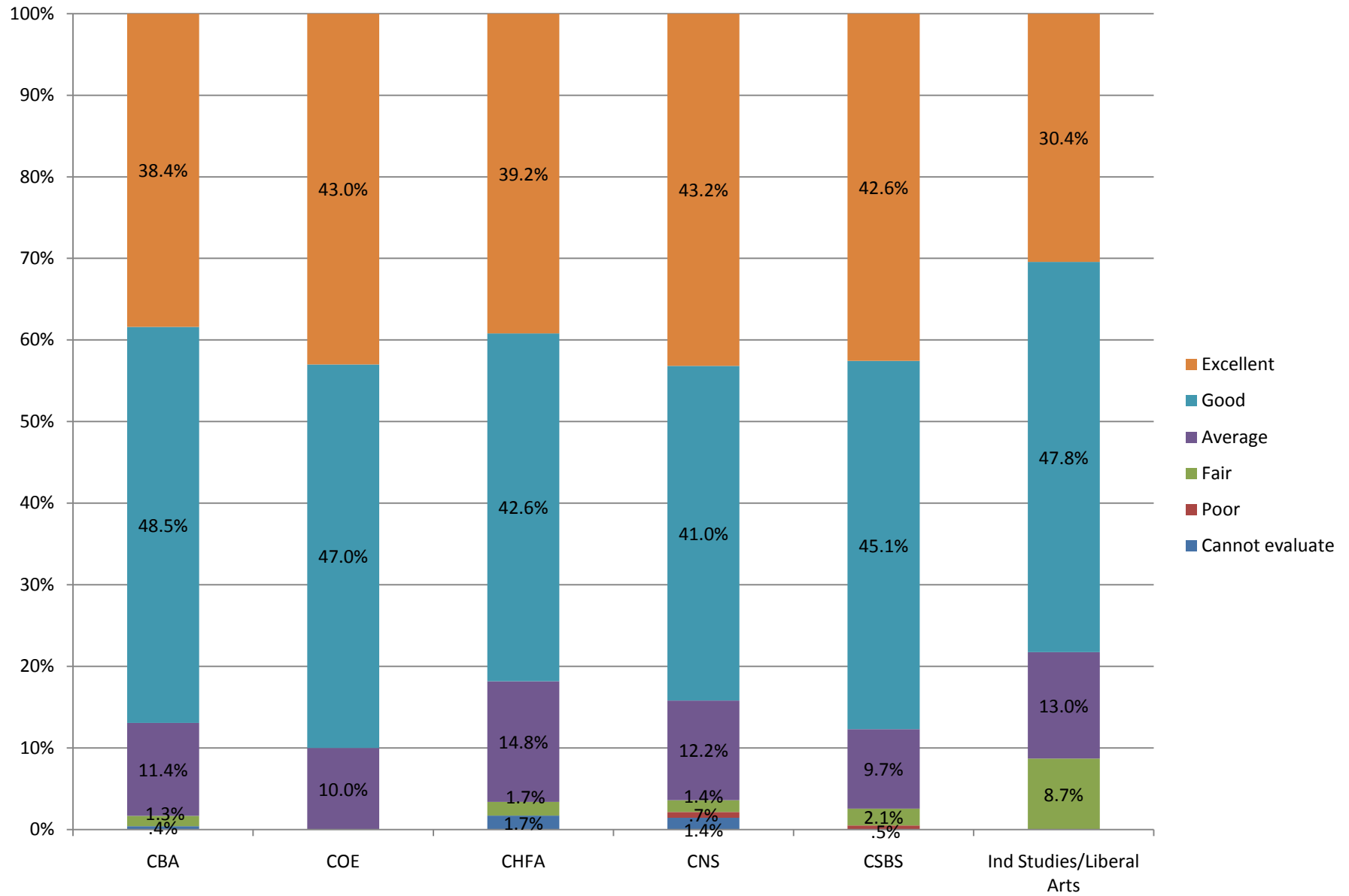
## Conducting yourself in a professional manner



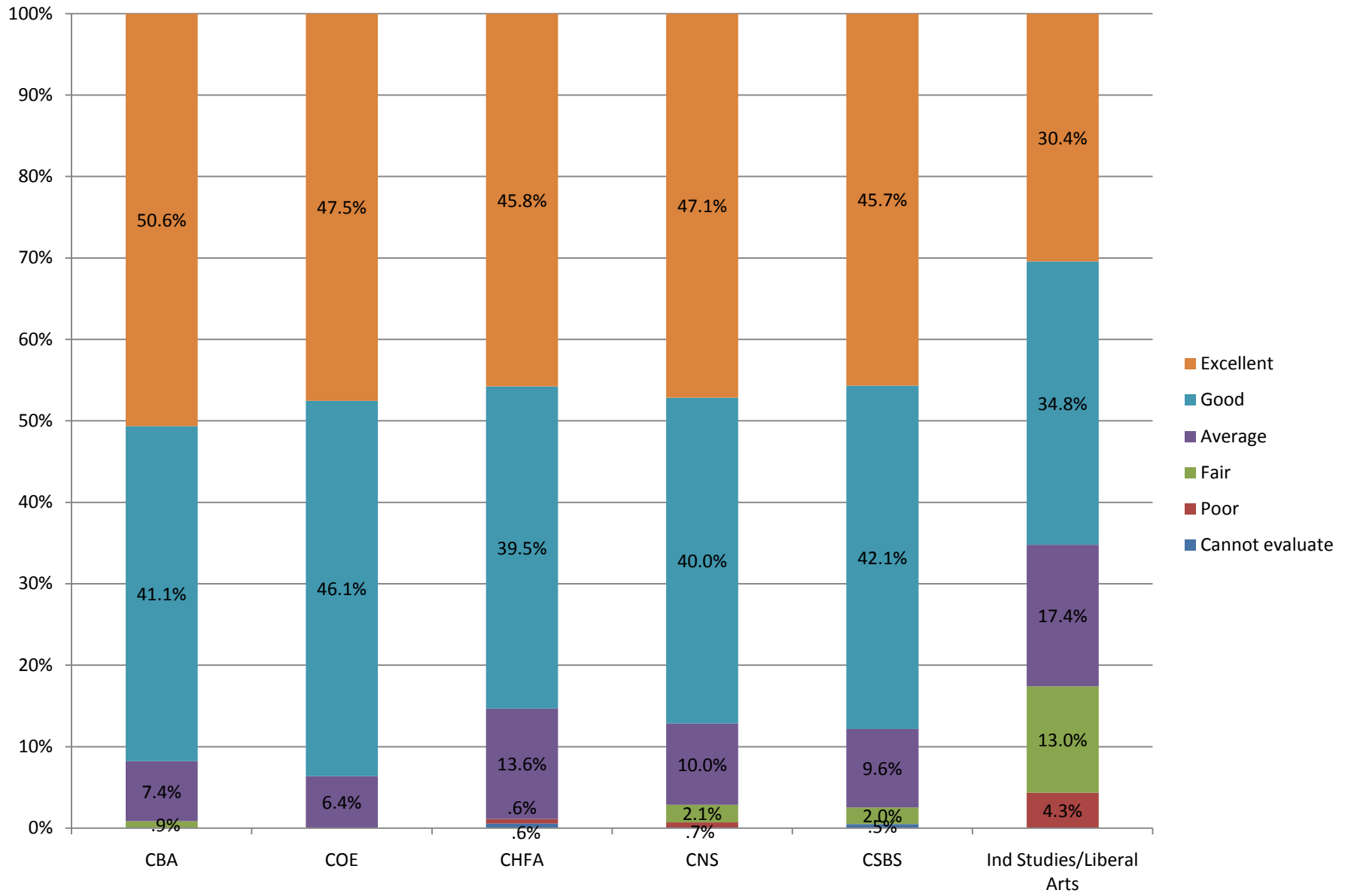
## Upholding ethical standards



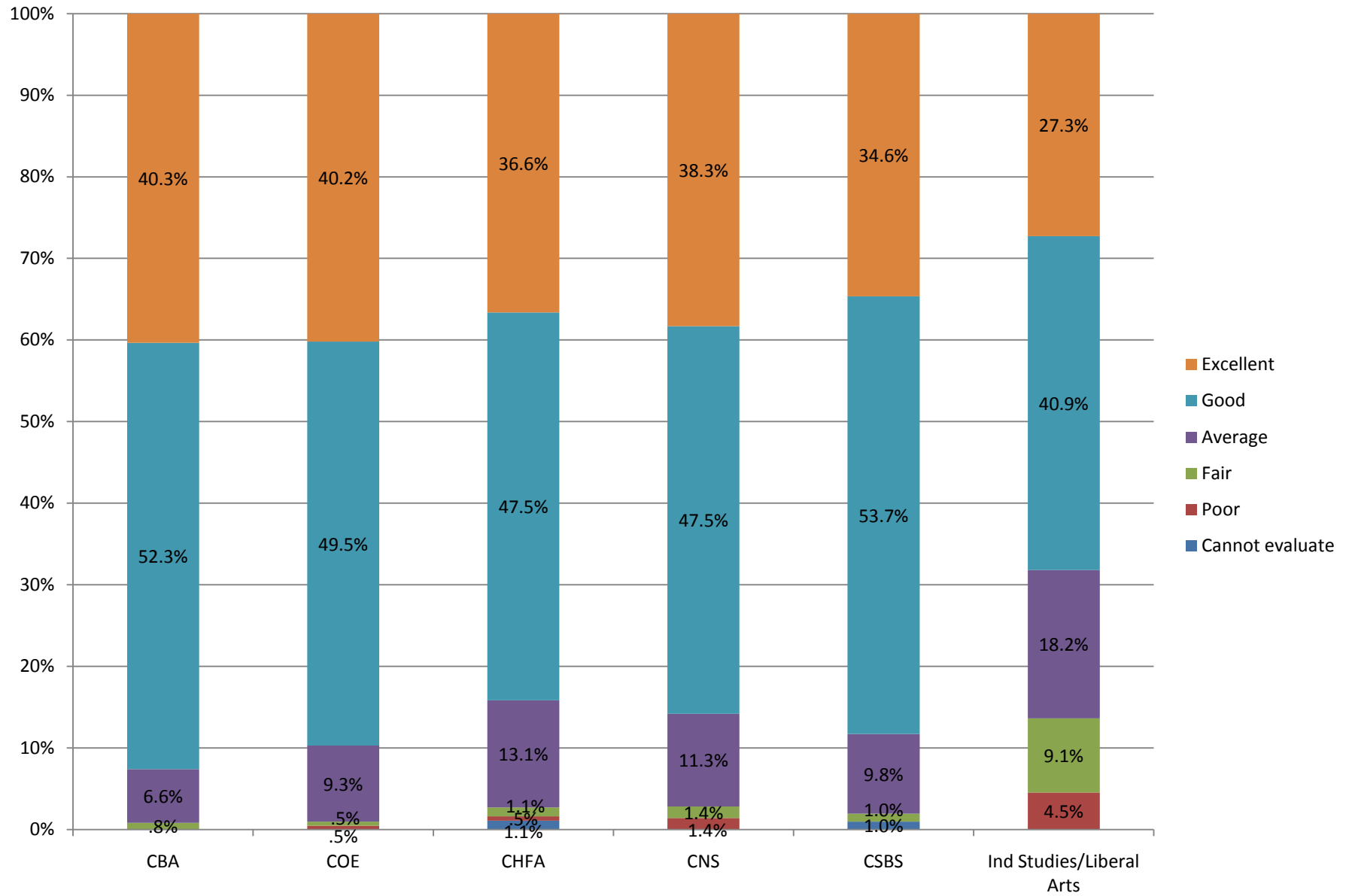
## Adapting to change



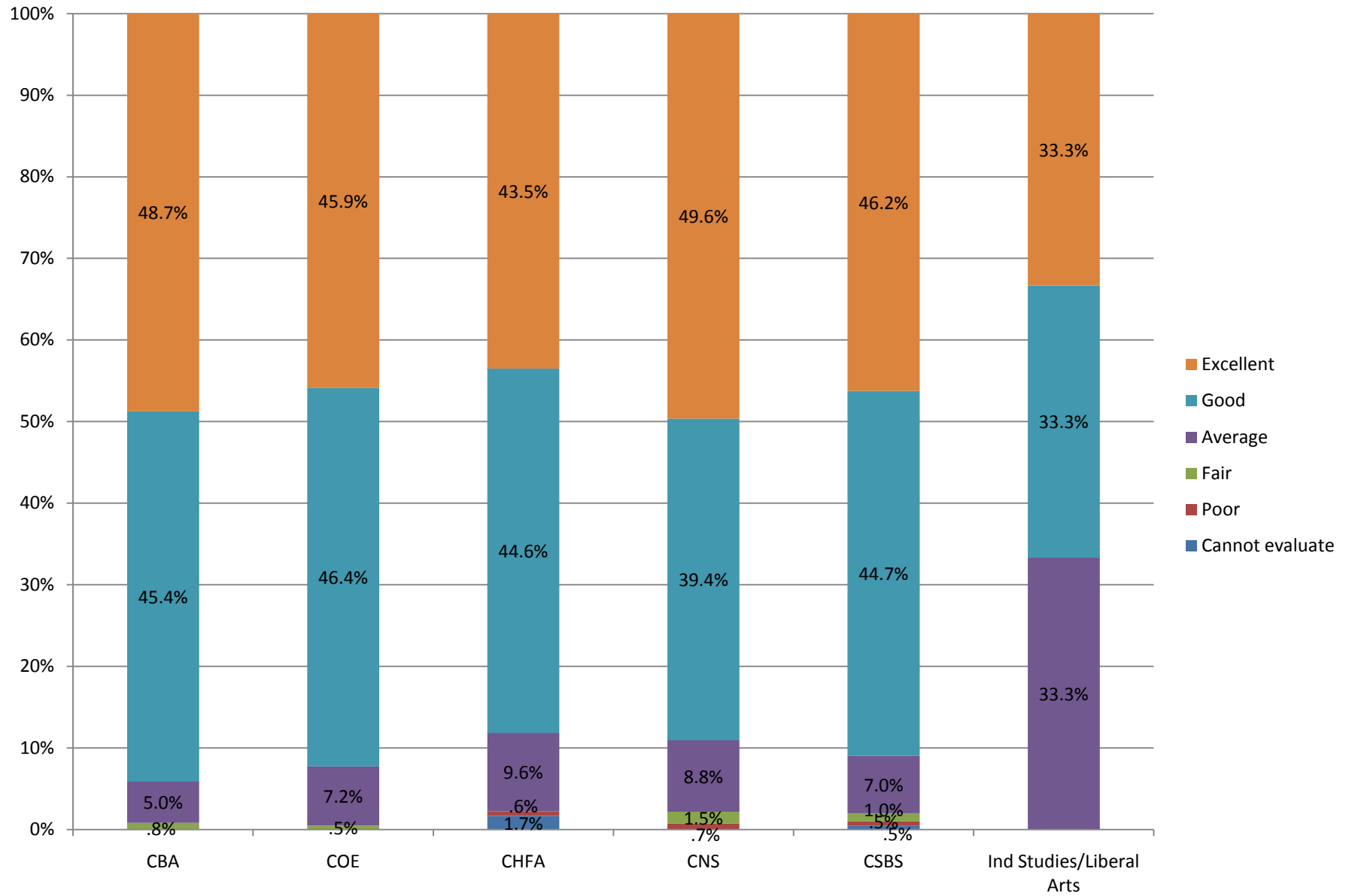
## Working under pressure



## Making decisions

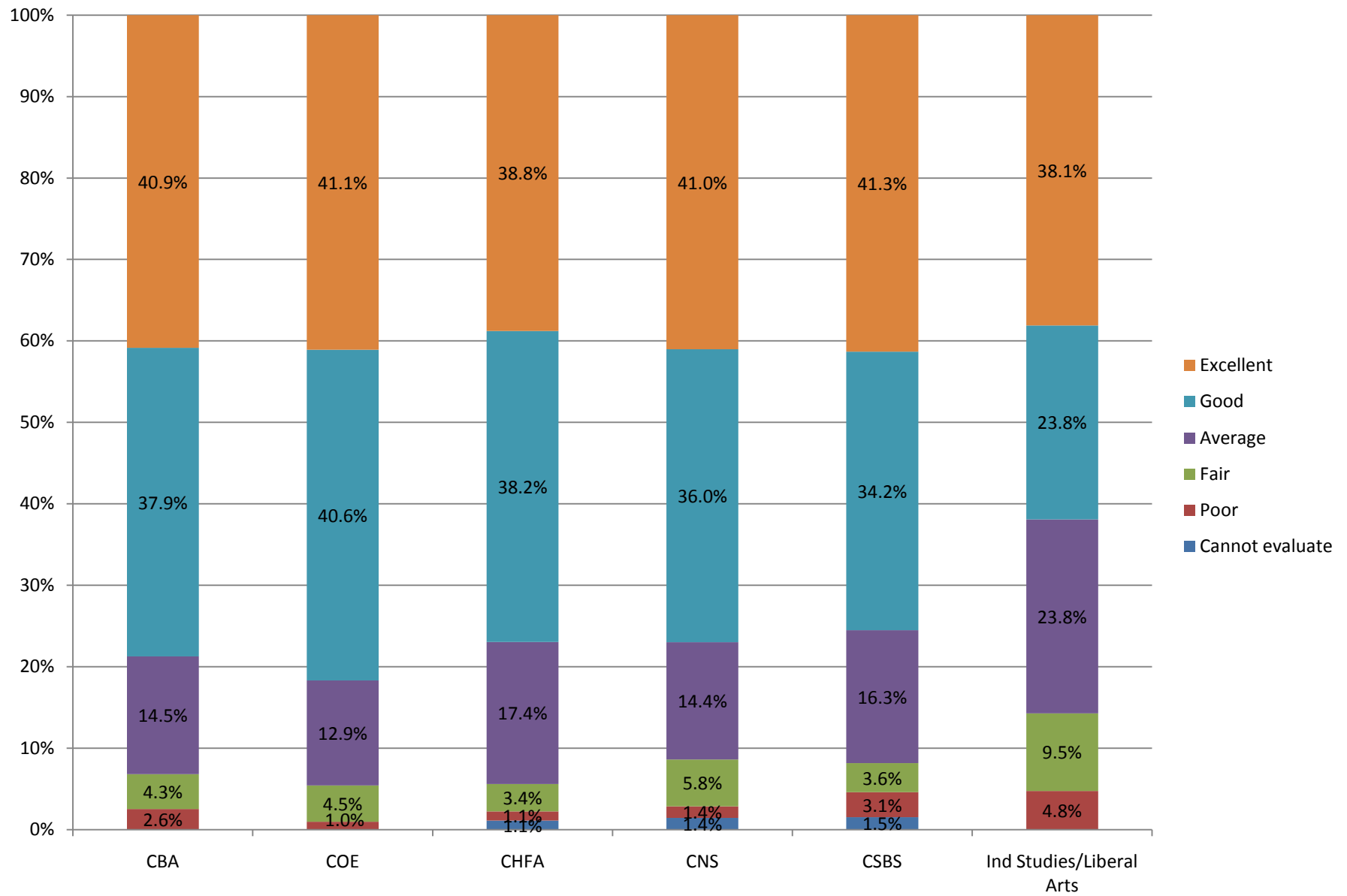


## Working independently

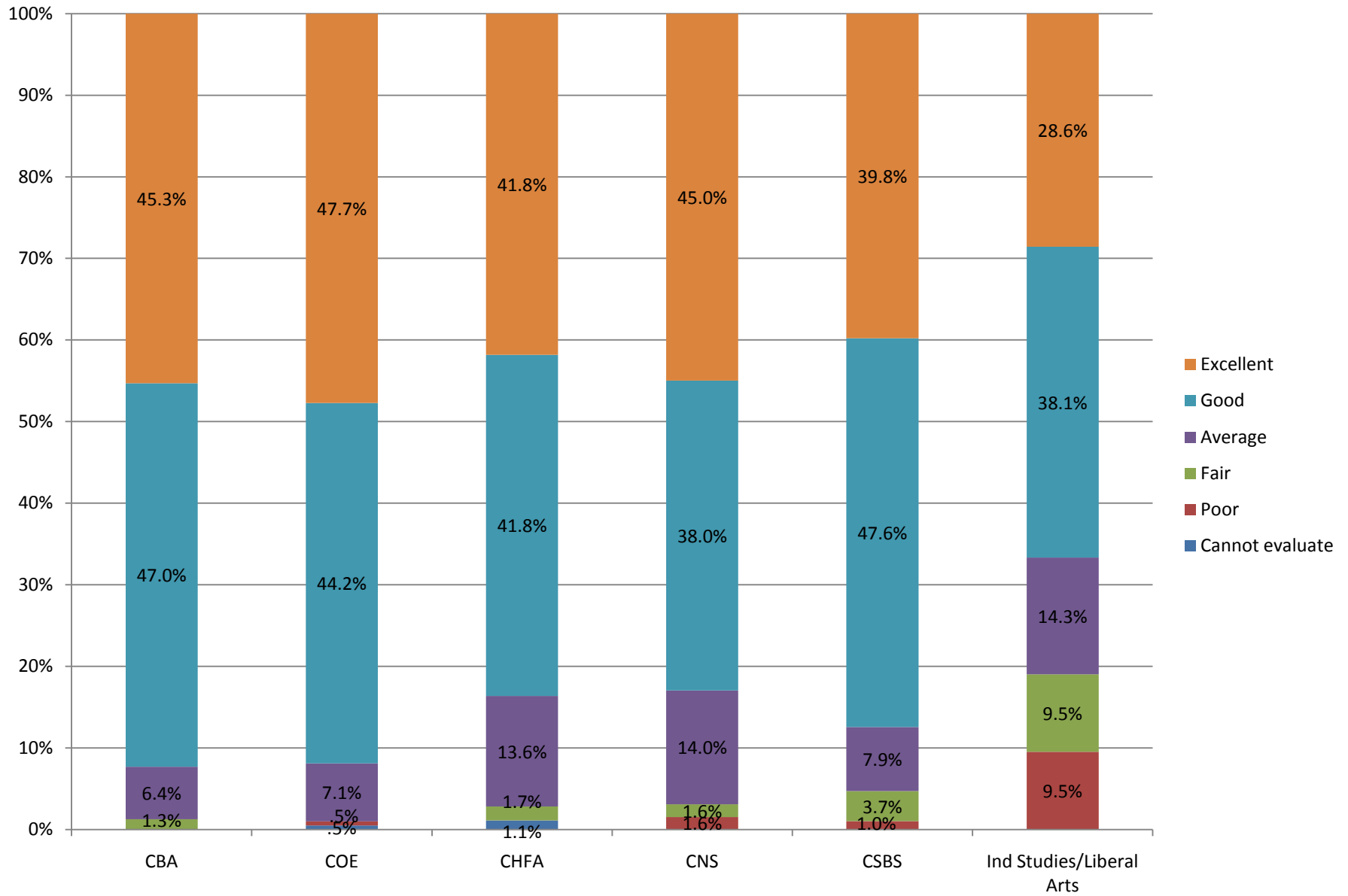




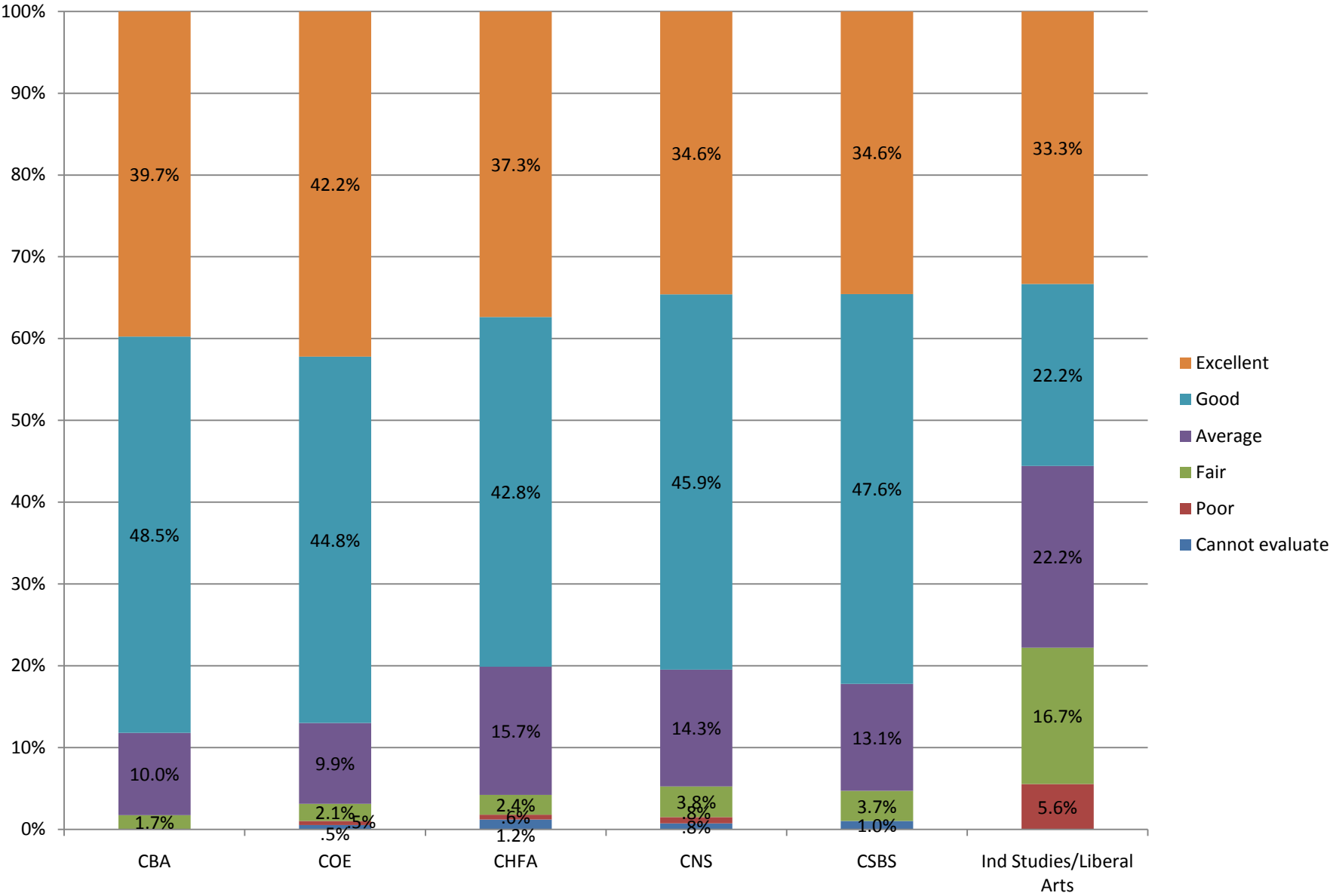
## Working with people of diverse backgrounds



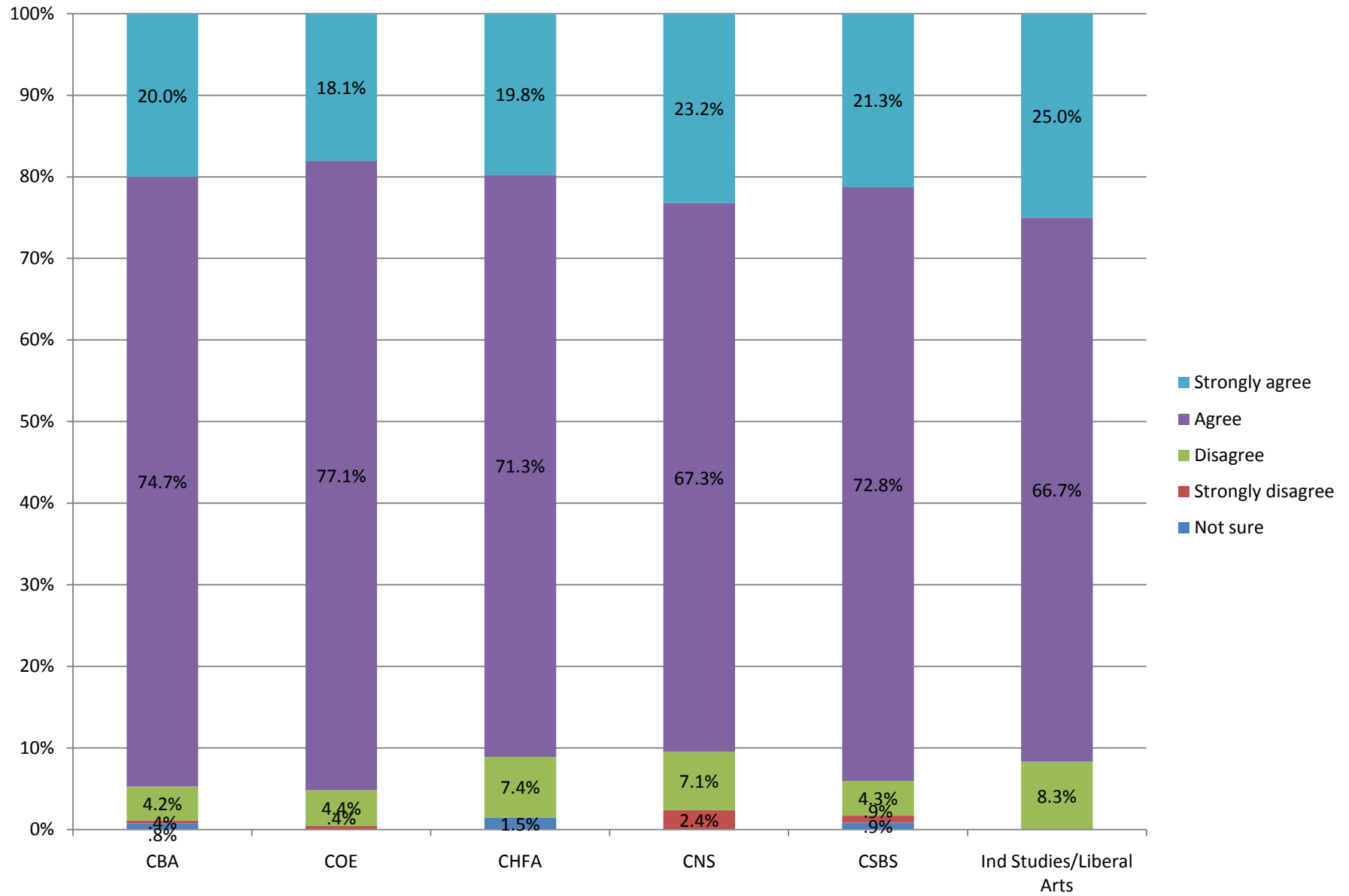
## Working as a team



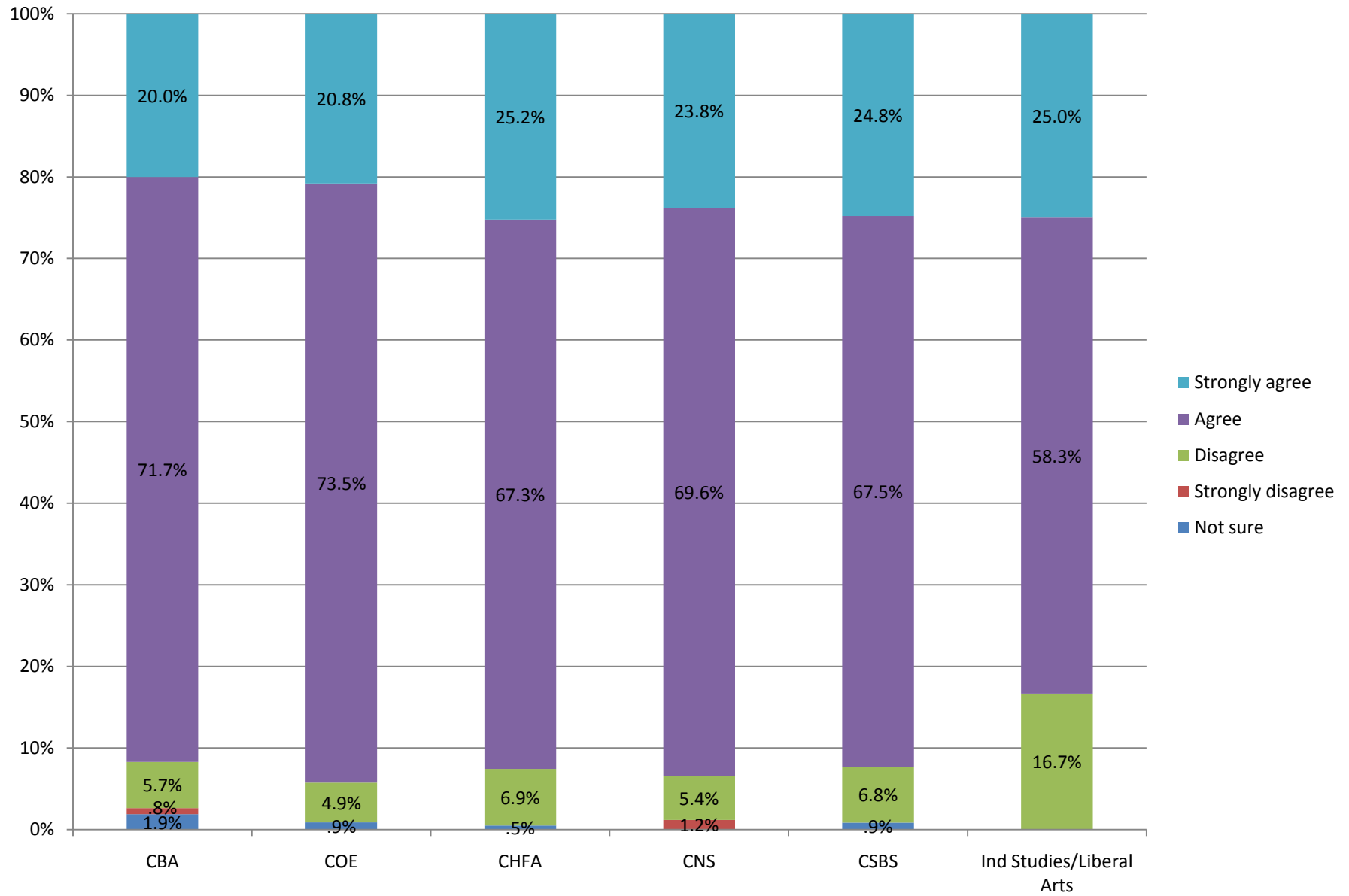
### Leading others



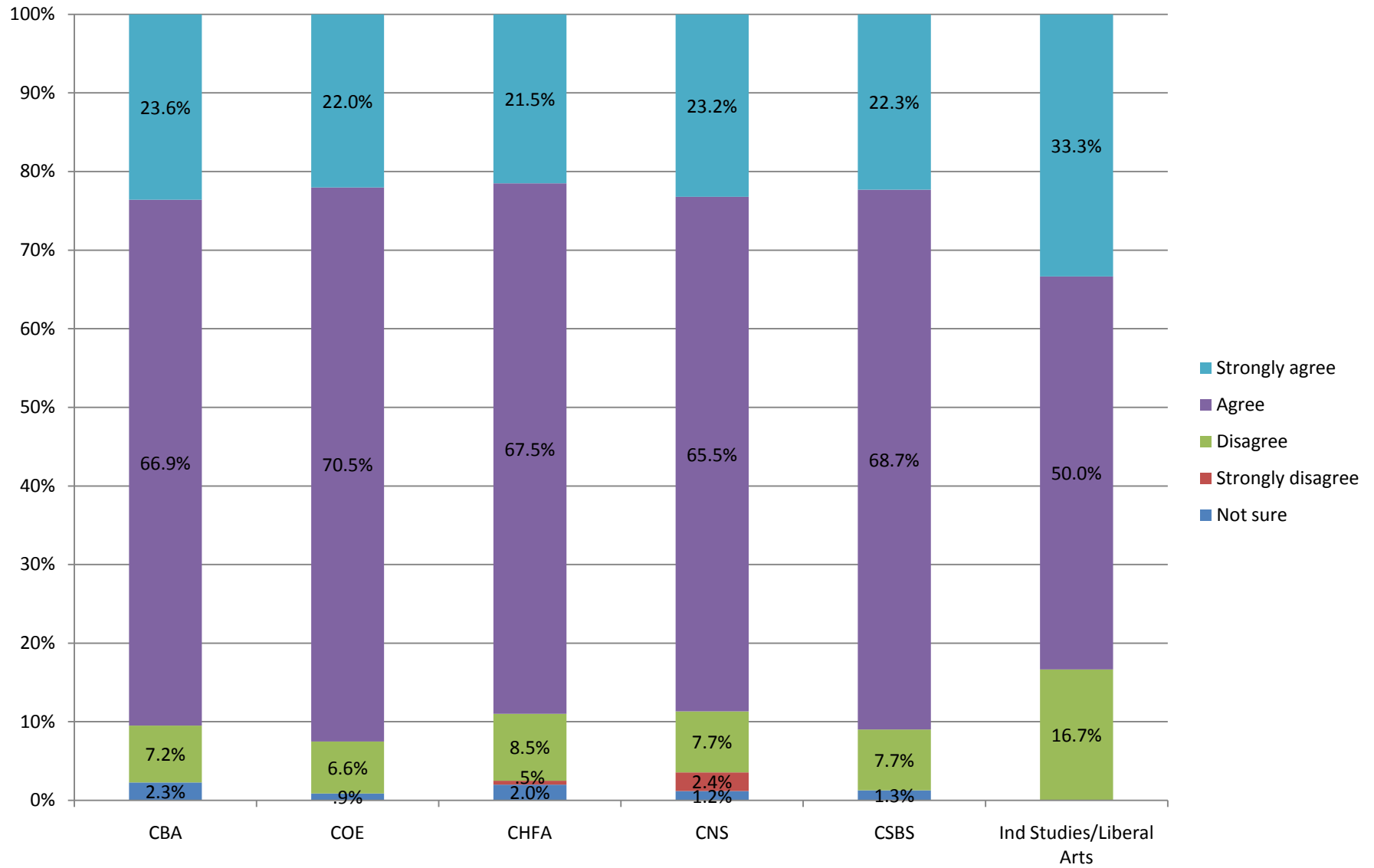
## Most of the courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding



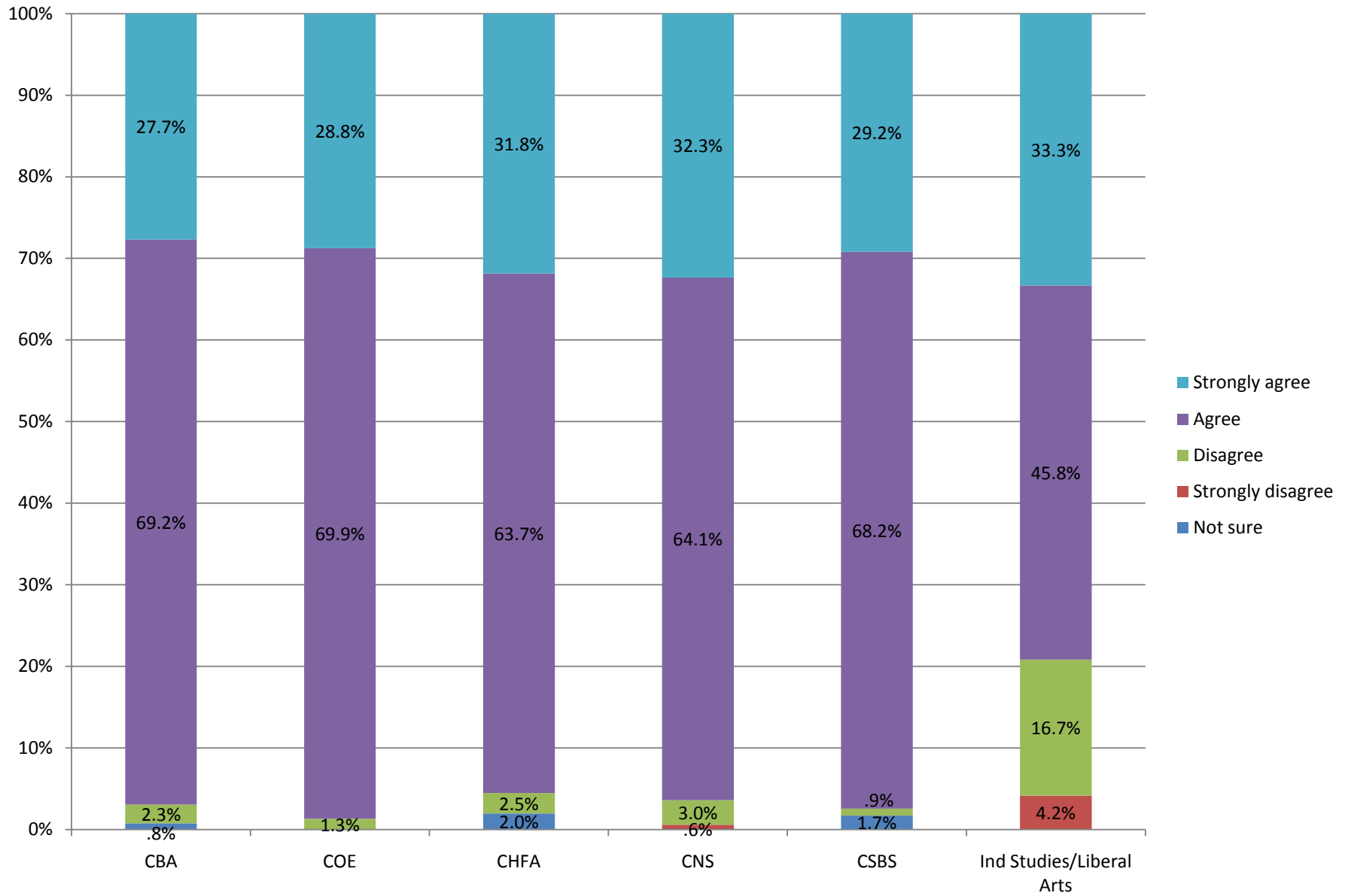
## Most of my instructors were intellectually stimulating



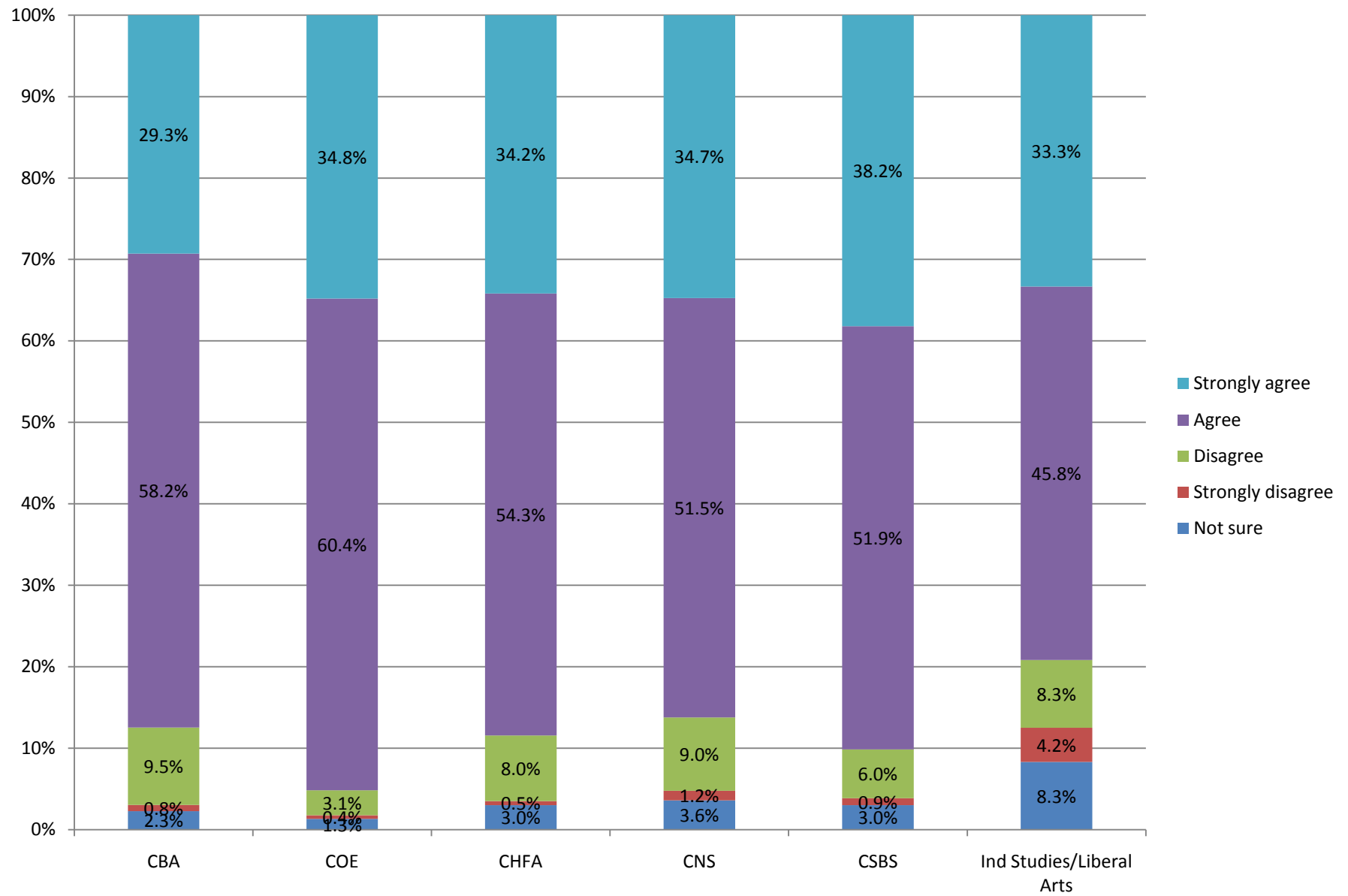
## Most of my courses required integration of subject matter from several academic areas



## My learning experience was cumulative over a series of courses

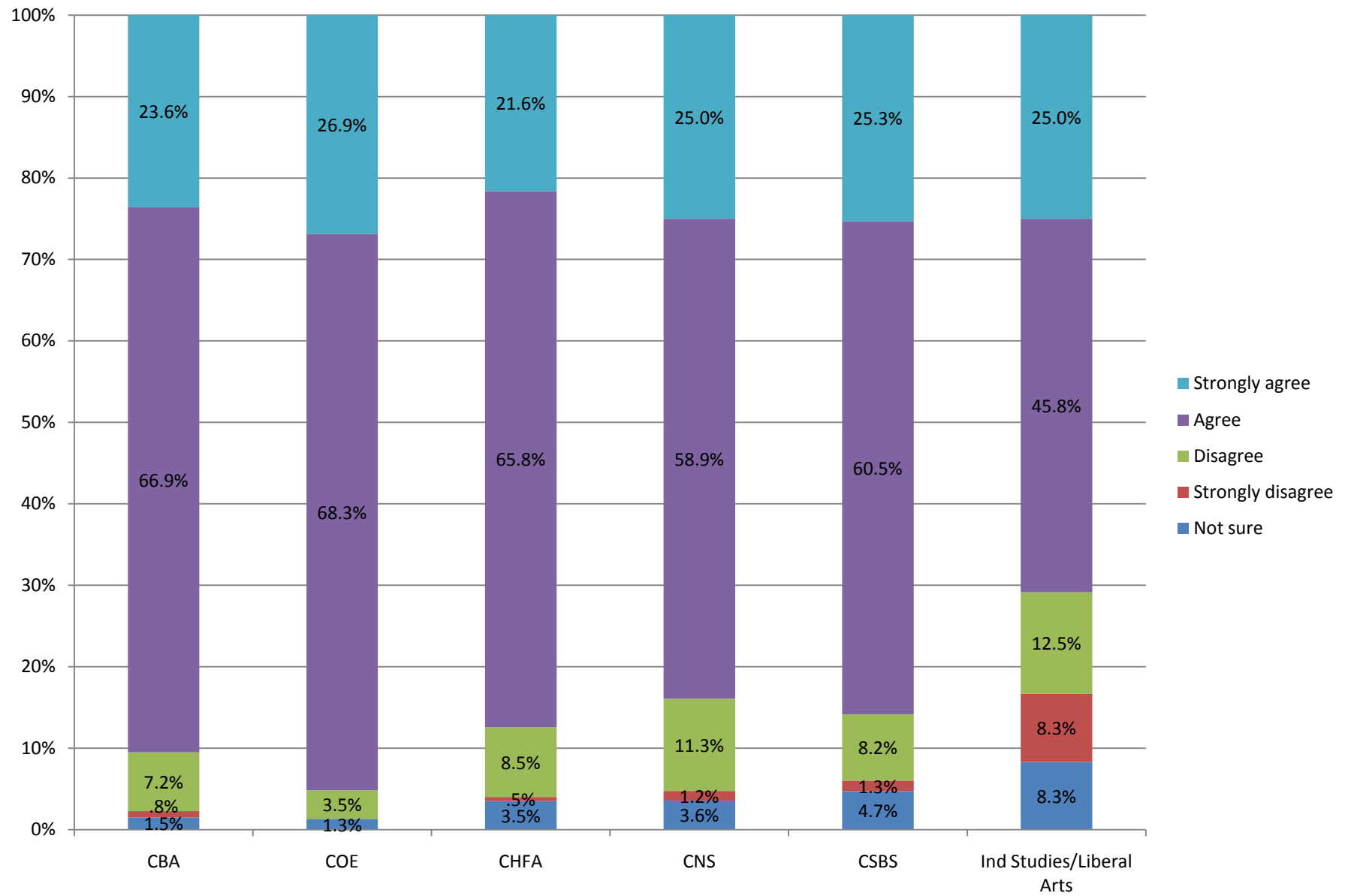


## My academic experience at UNI made me want to be a lifelong learner

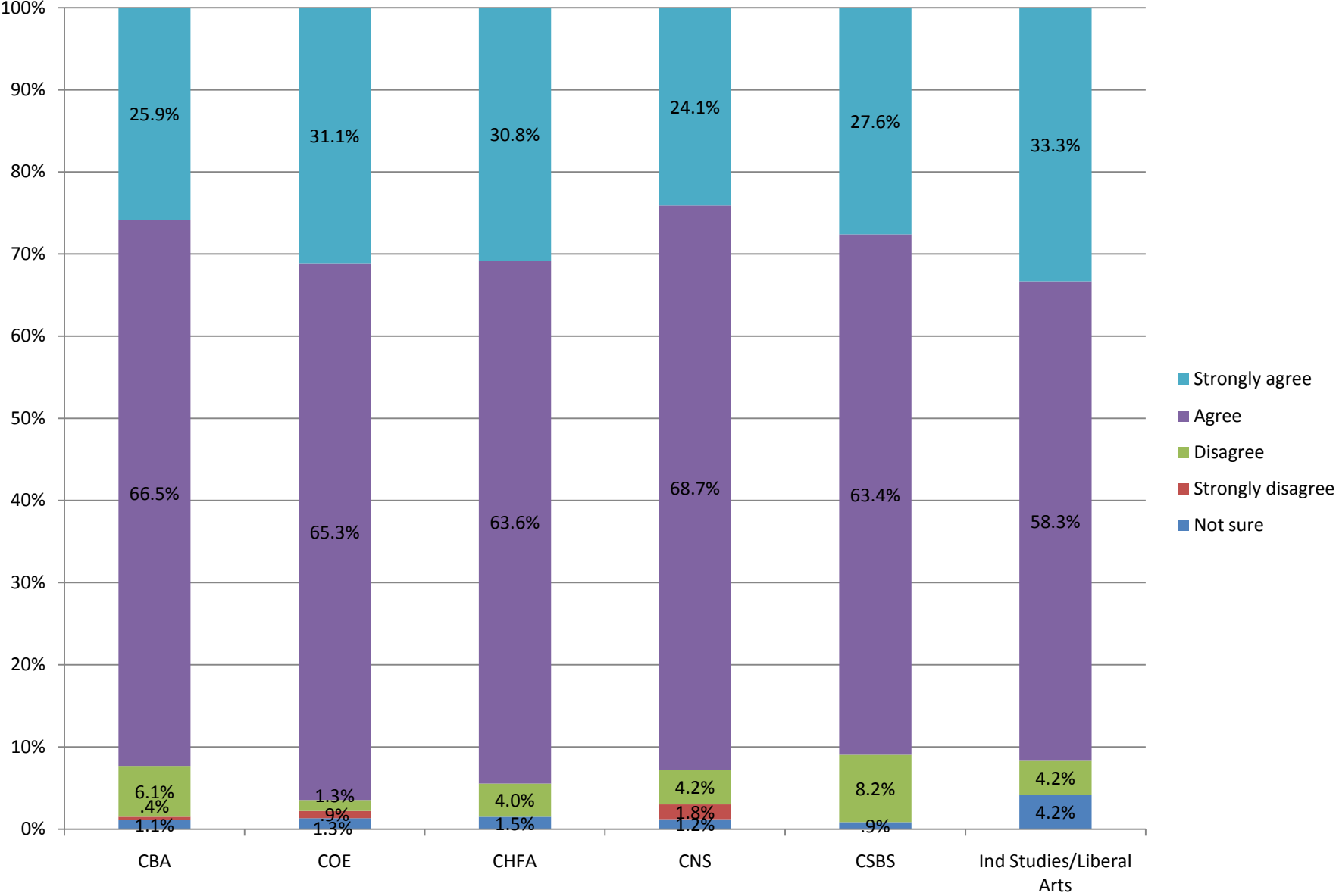




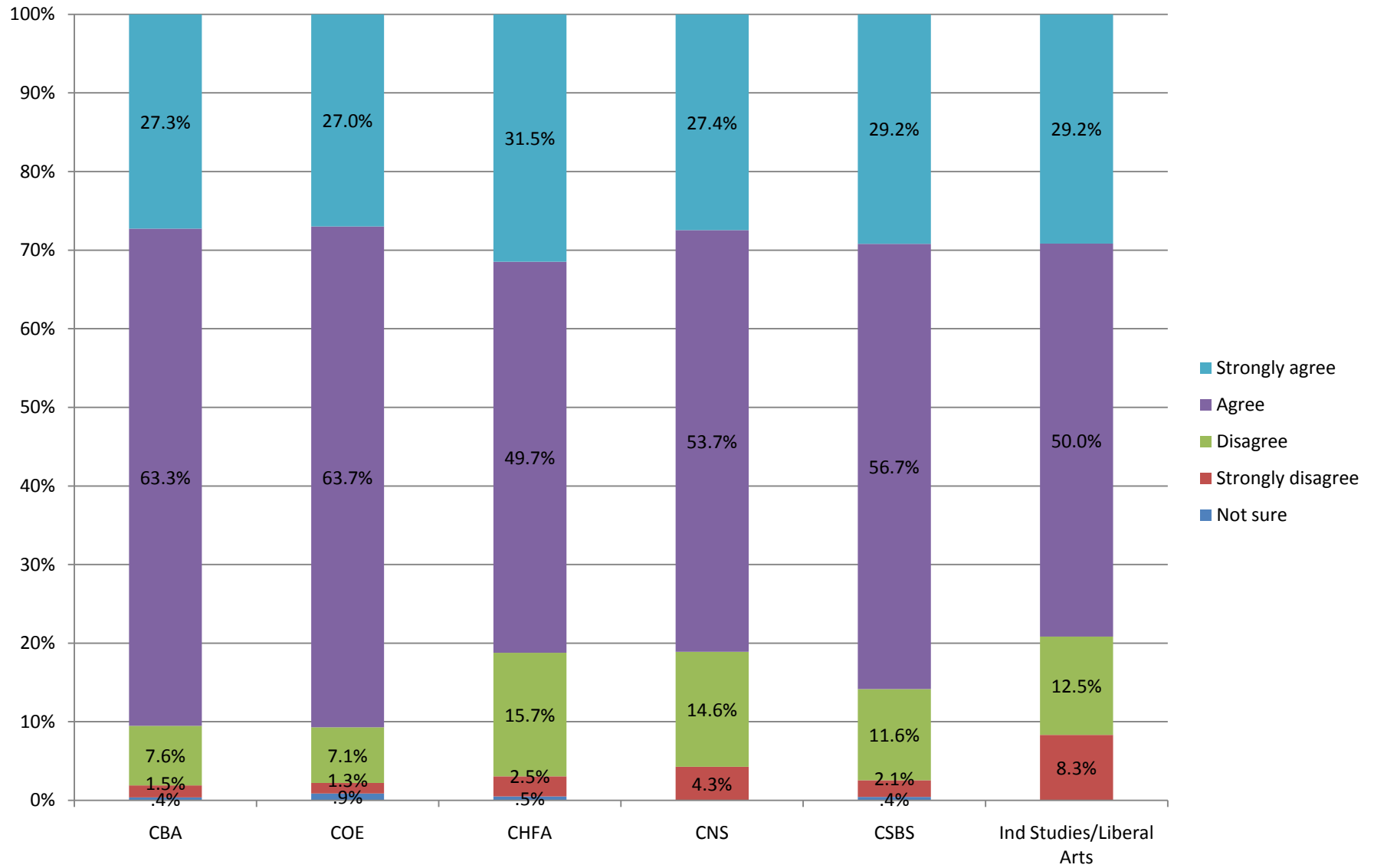
## Most of my students peers valued high academic achievement



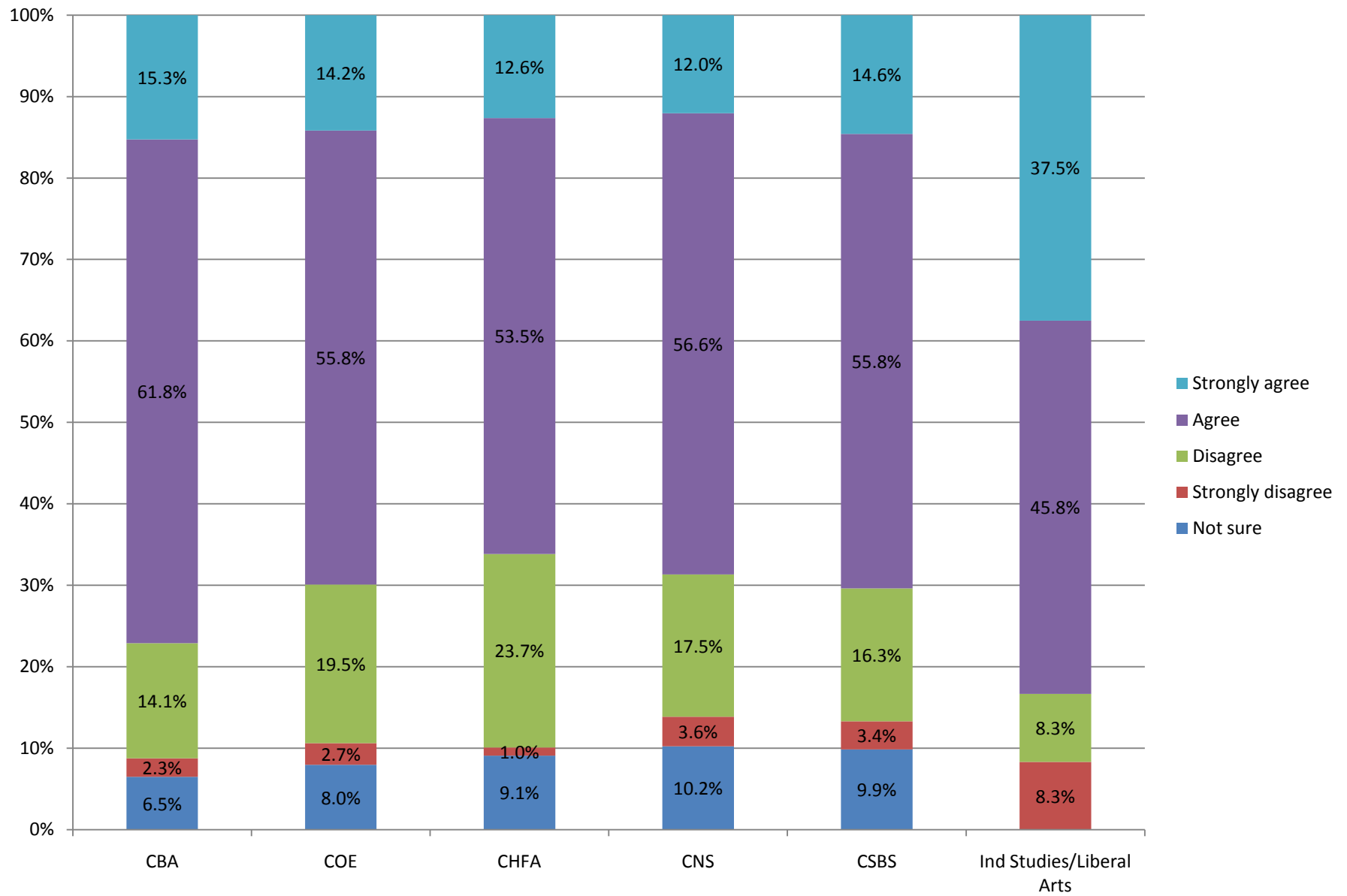
### The overall quality of teaching at UNI is excellent



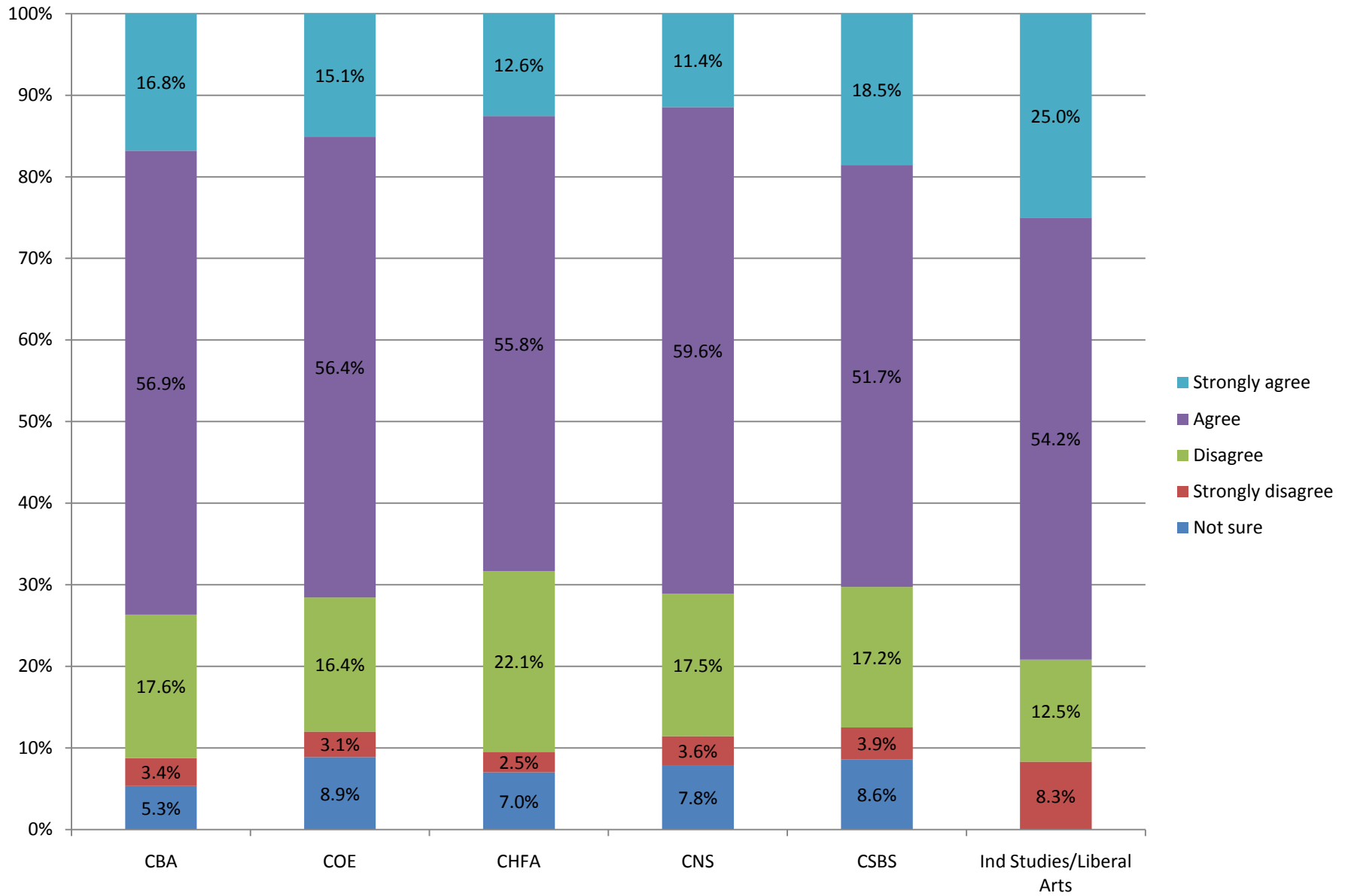
## Most of the courses in my major were readily available when I wanted to take them



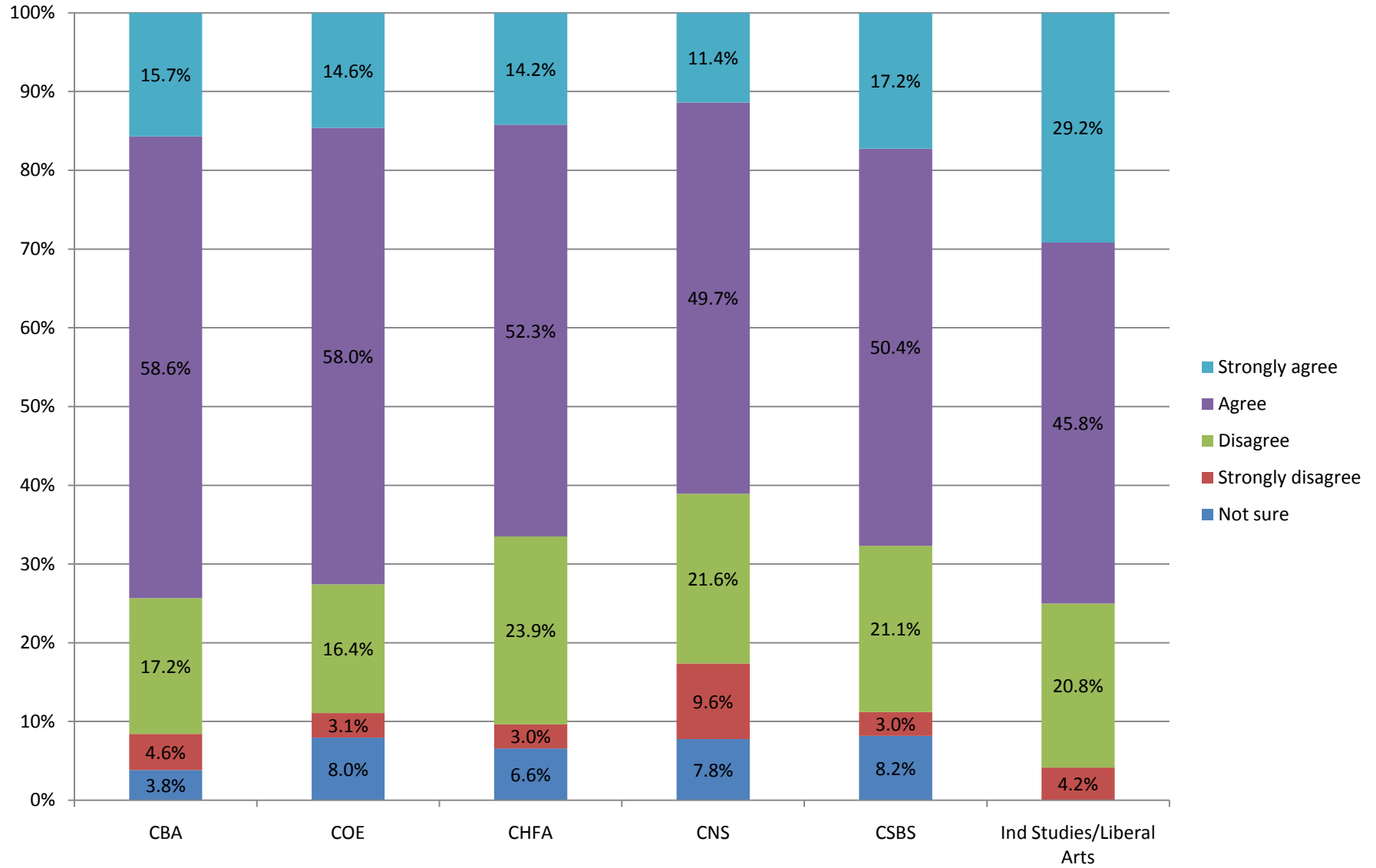
## The overall quality of most Liberal Arts Core courses is excellent



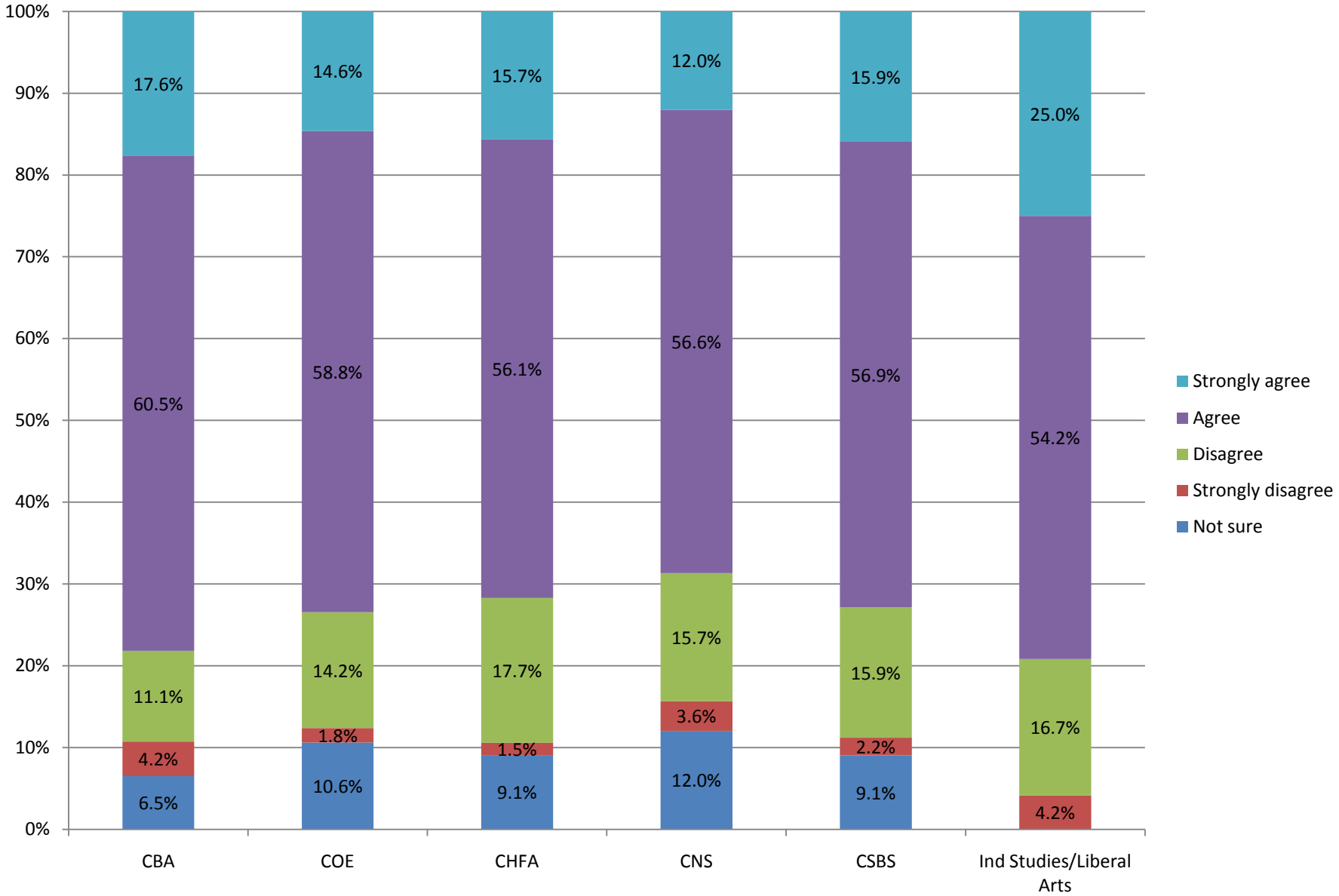
## The purposes of most Liberal Arts Core courses are very clear



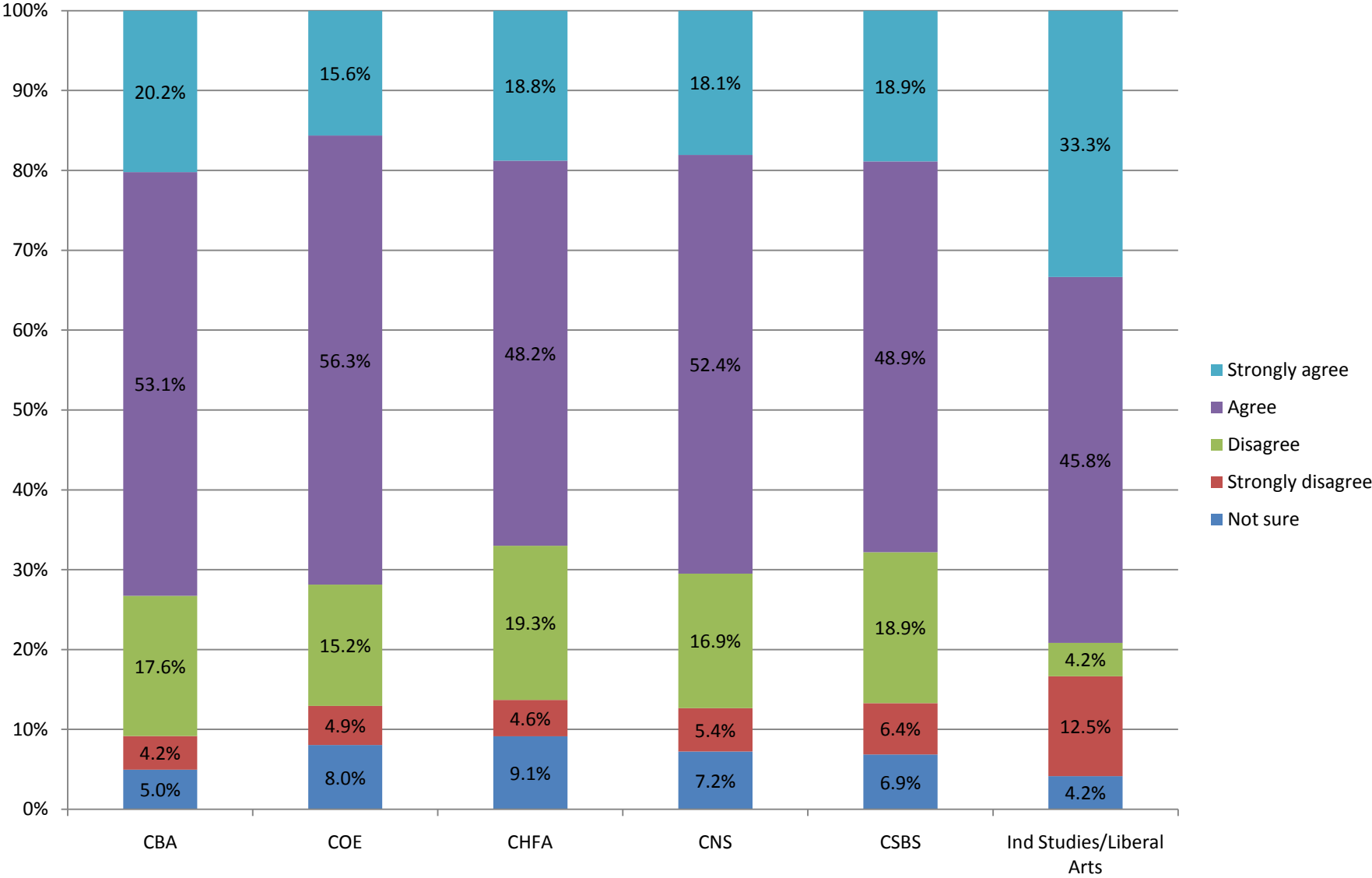
## Most of the Liberal Arts Core courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding



# The overall quality of teaching in the Liberal Arts Core at UNI is excellent

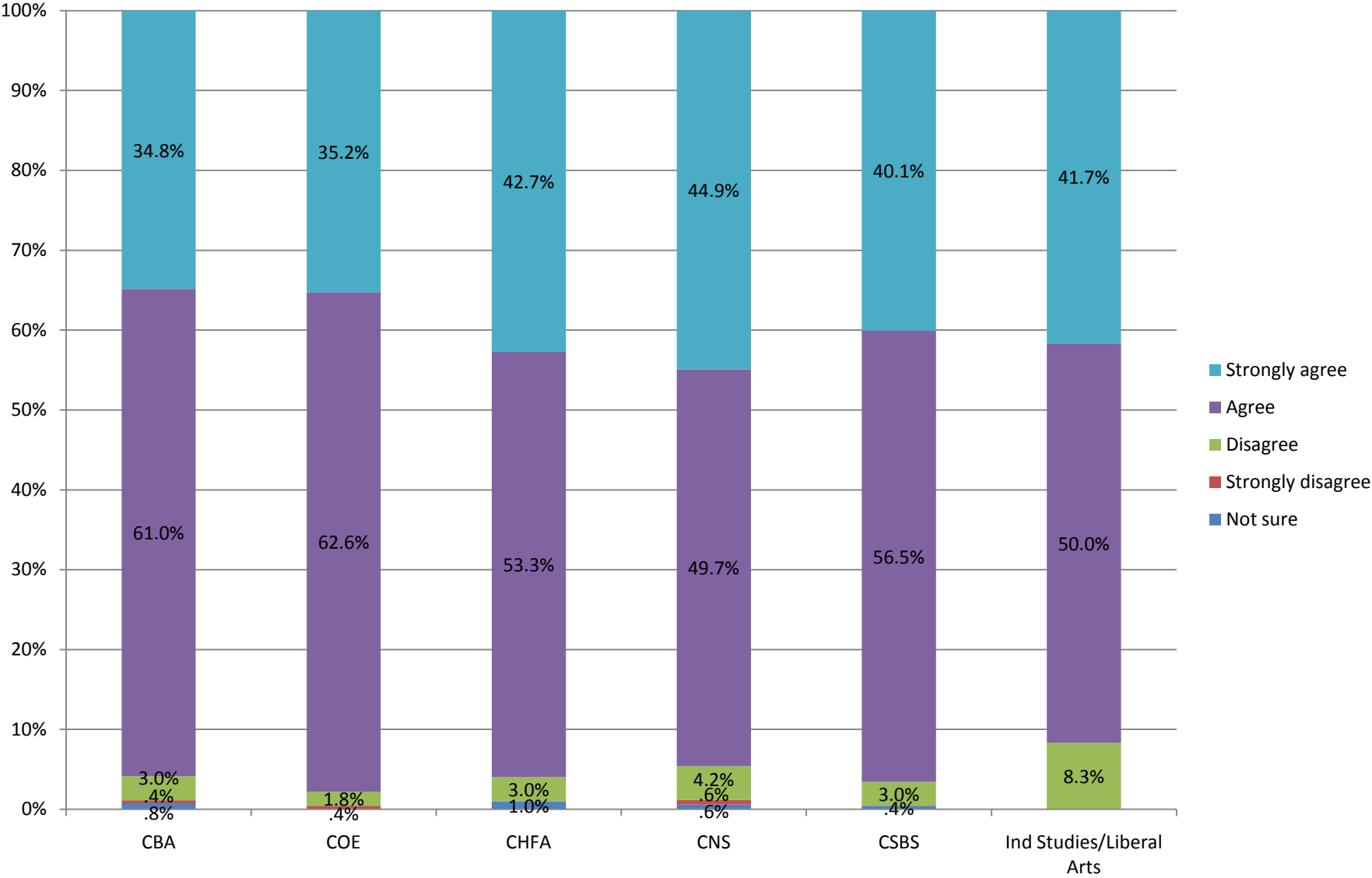


## I believe the Liberal Arts Core has been an important part of my education

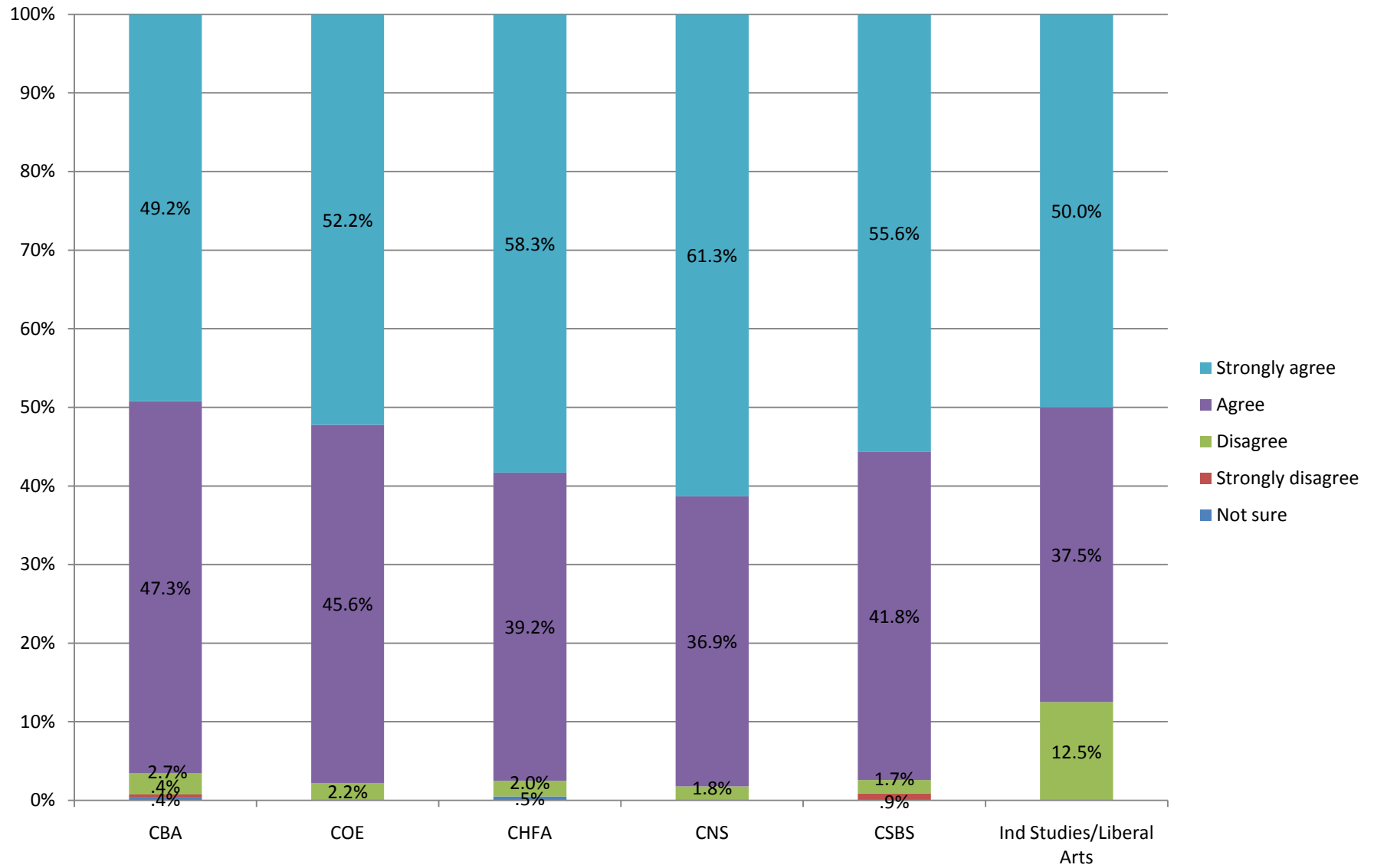




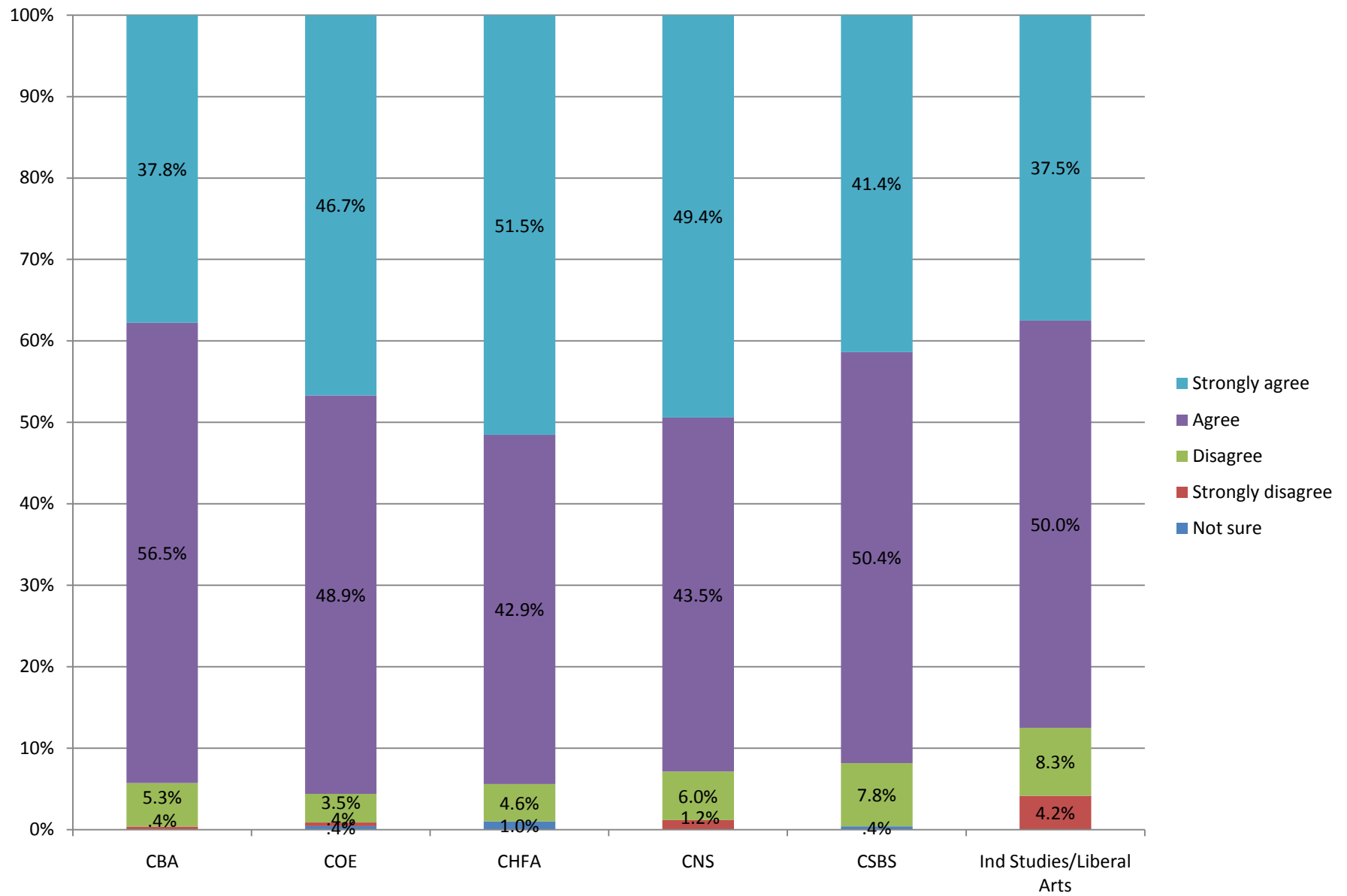
## The faculty I had contact with were very committed to advancing student learning



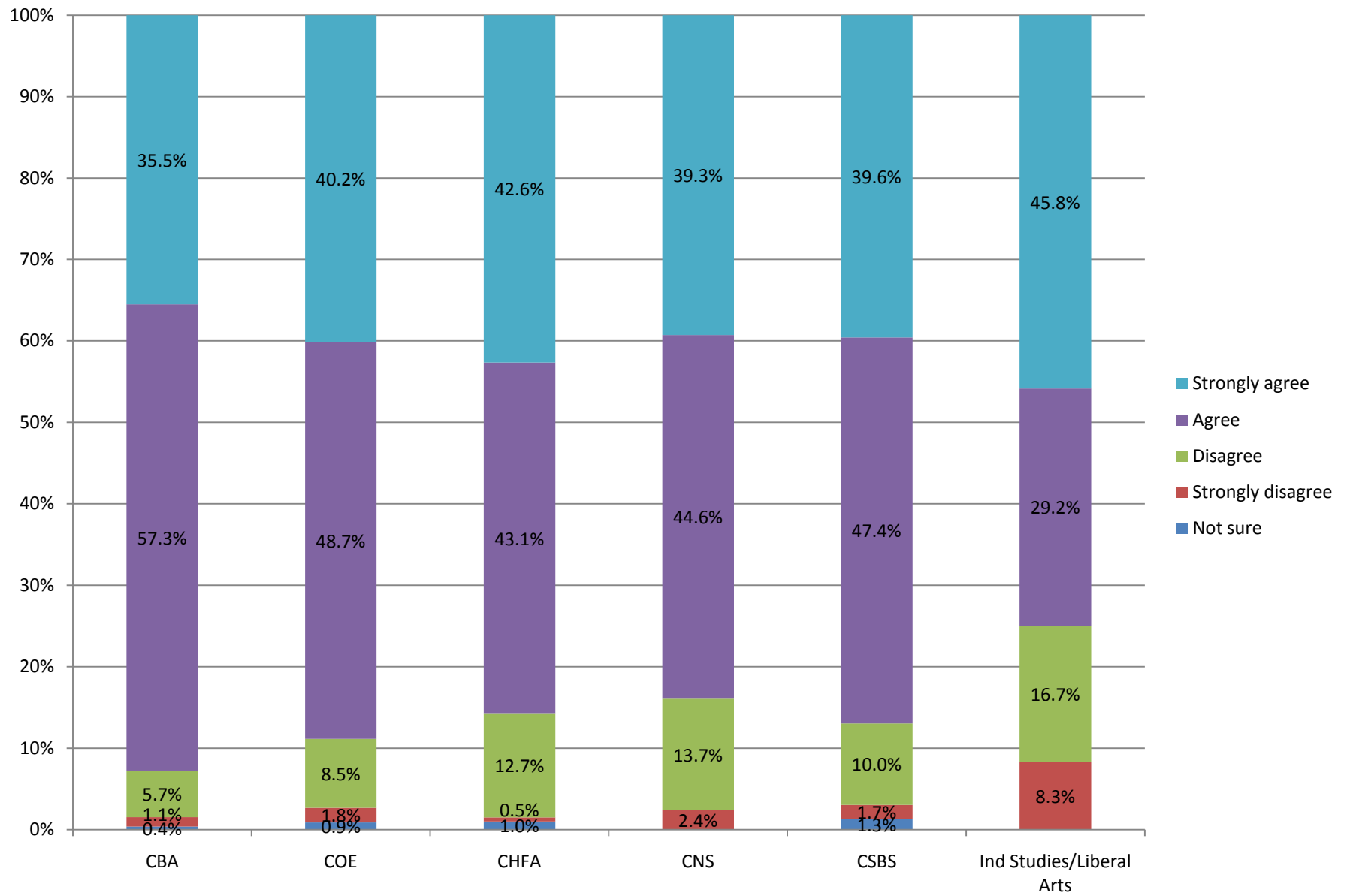
## At least one faculty member showed an active interest in my educational/career goals



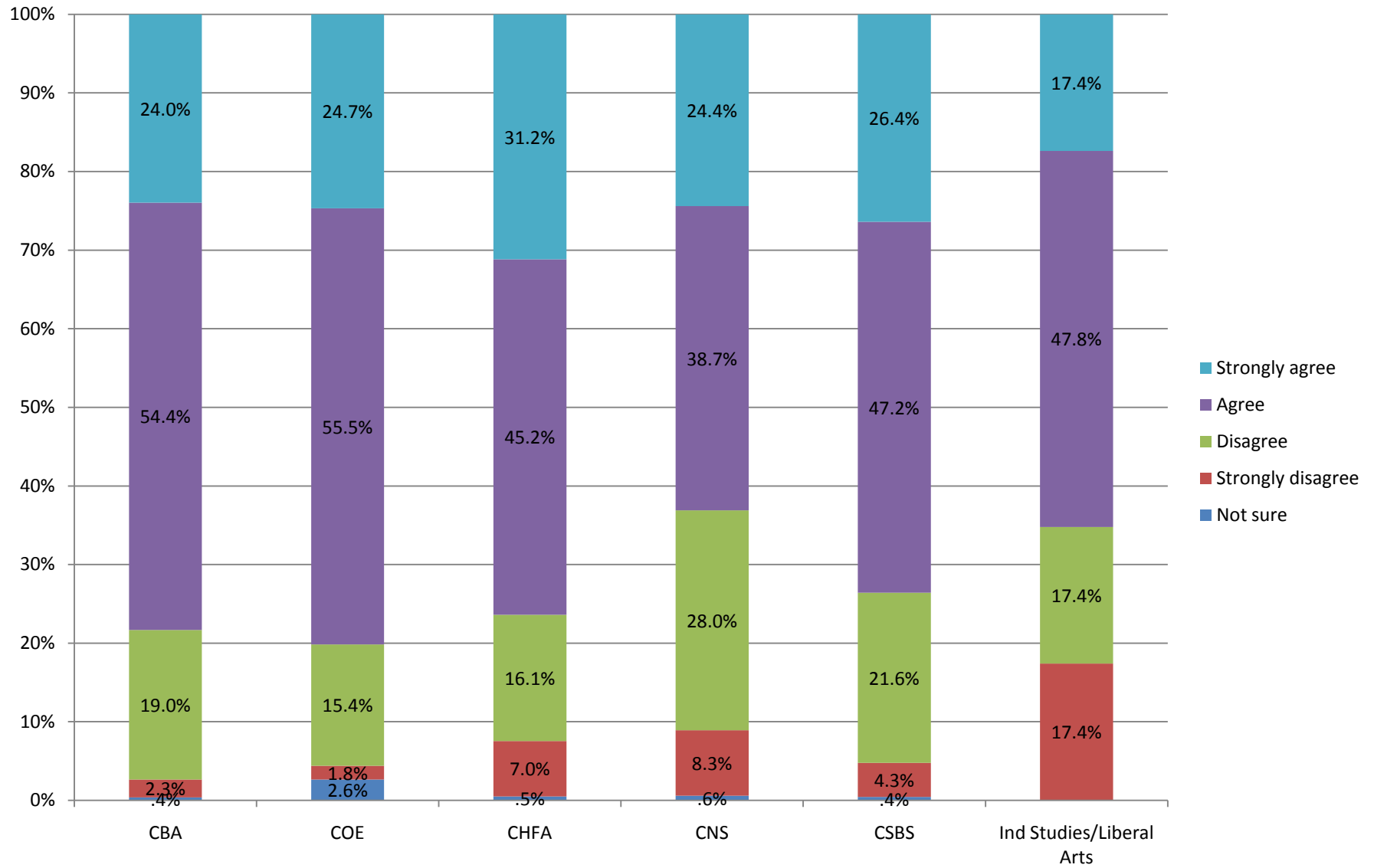
## I developed close relationships with other students



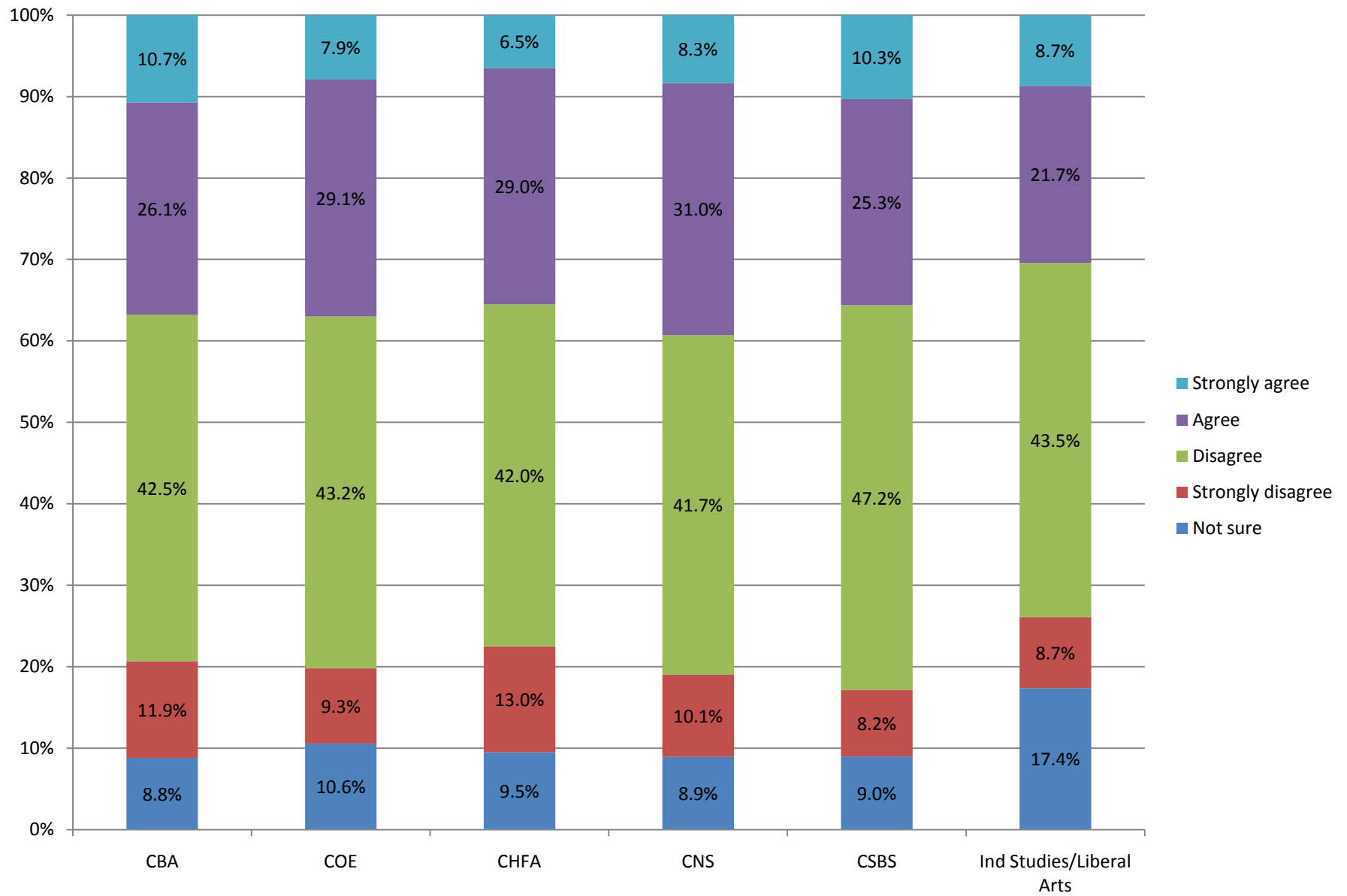
## I often engaged in social activities with other students off campus



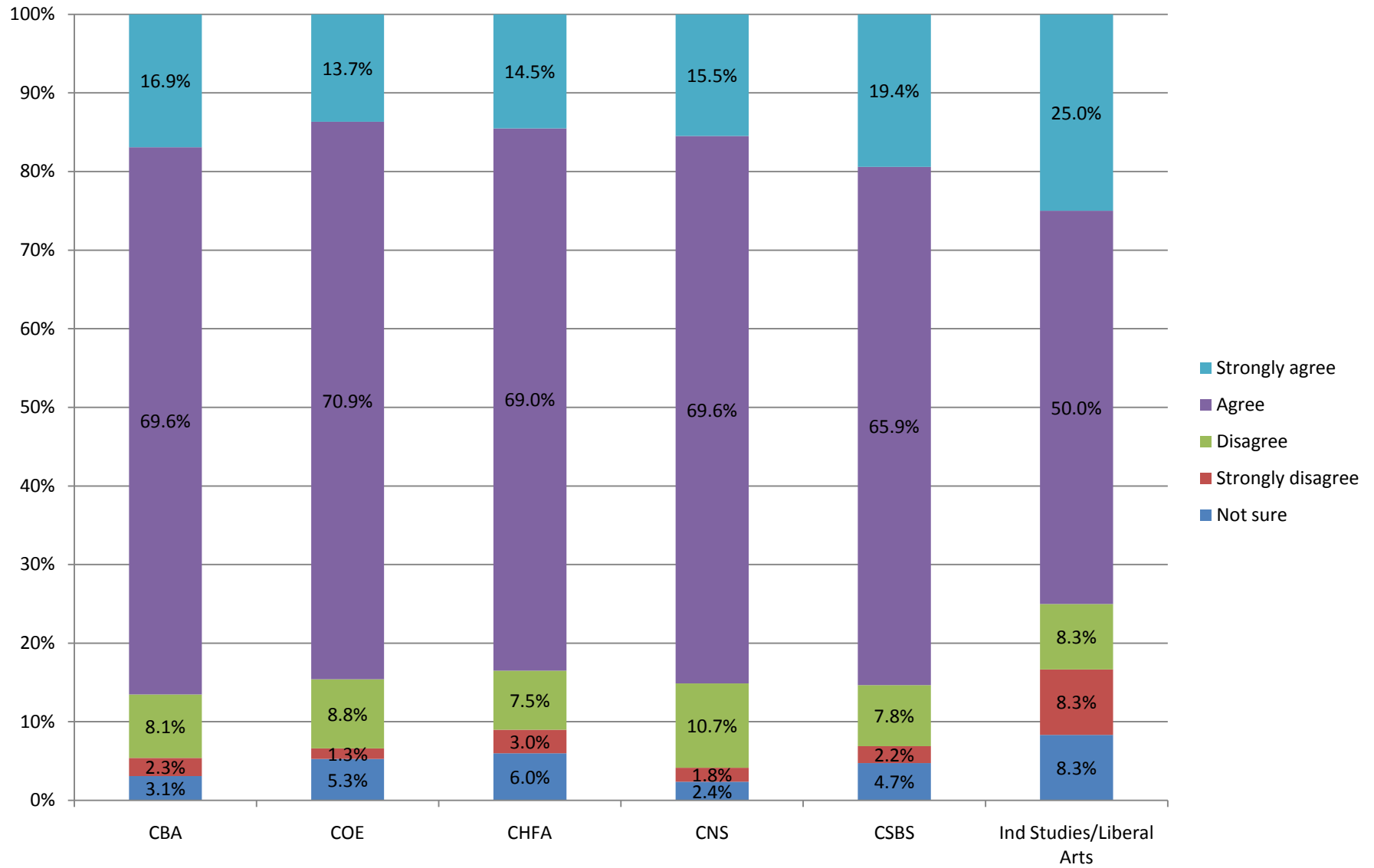
## I often participated in University or student sponsored activities on campus



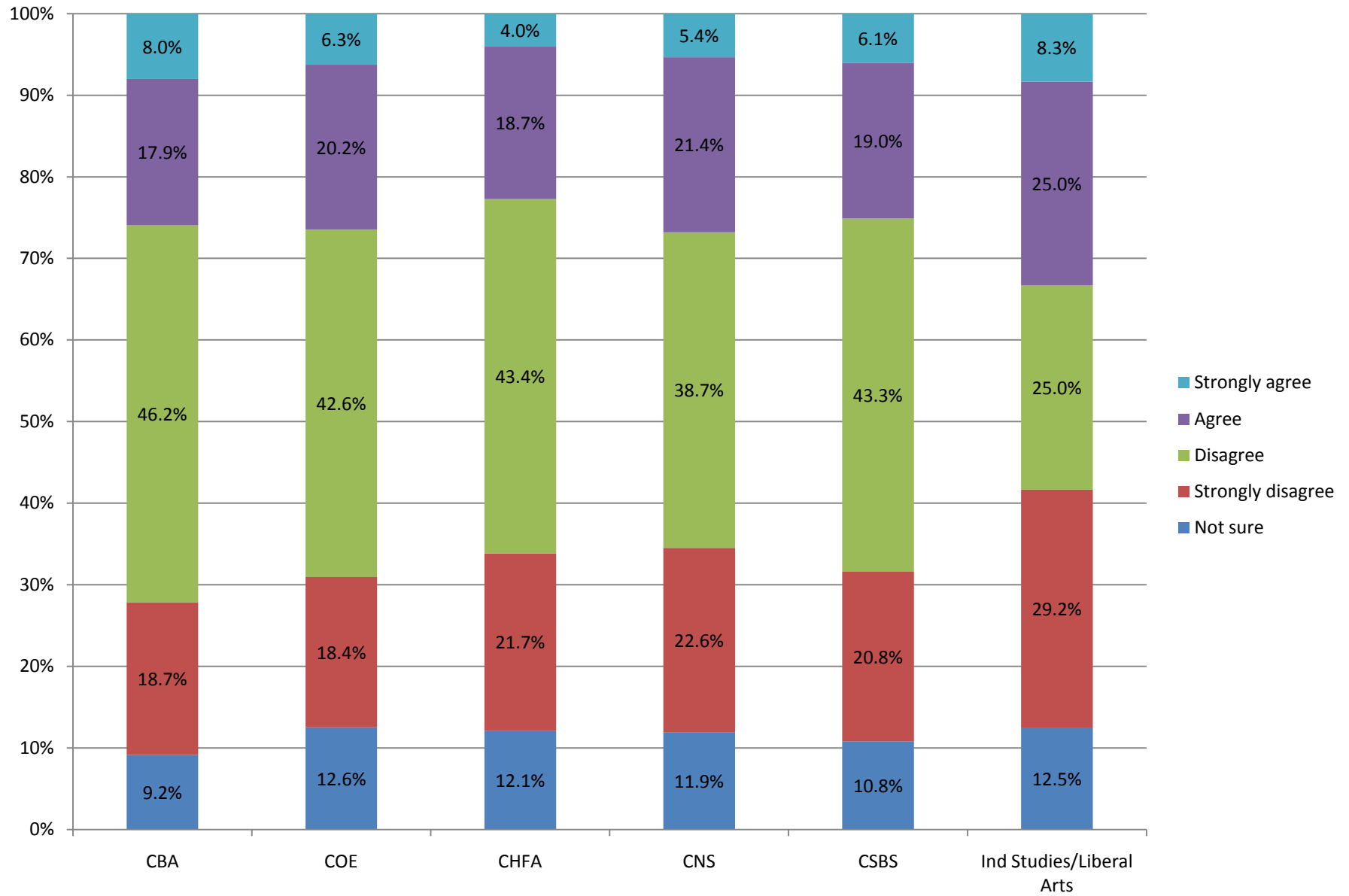
## Alcohol abuse is a major problem among students at UNI



## Most UNI students are tolerant of people whose lifestyles are different from their own

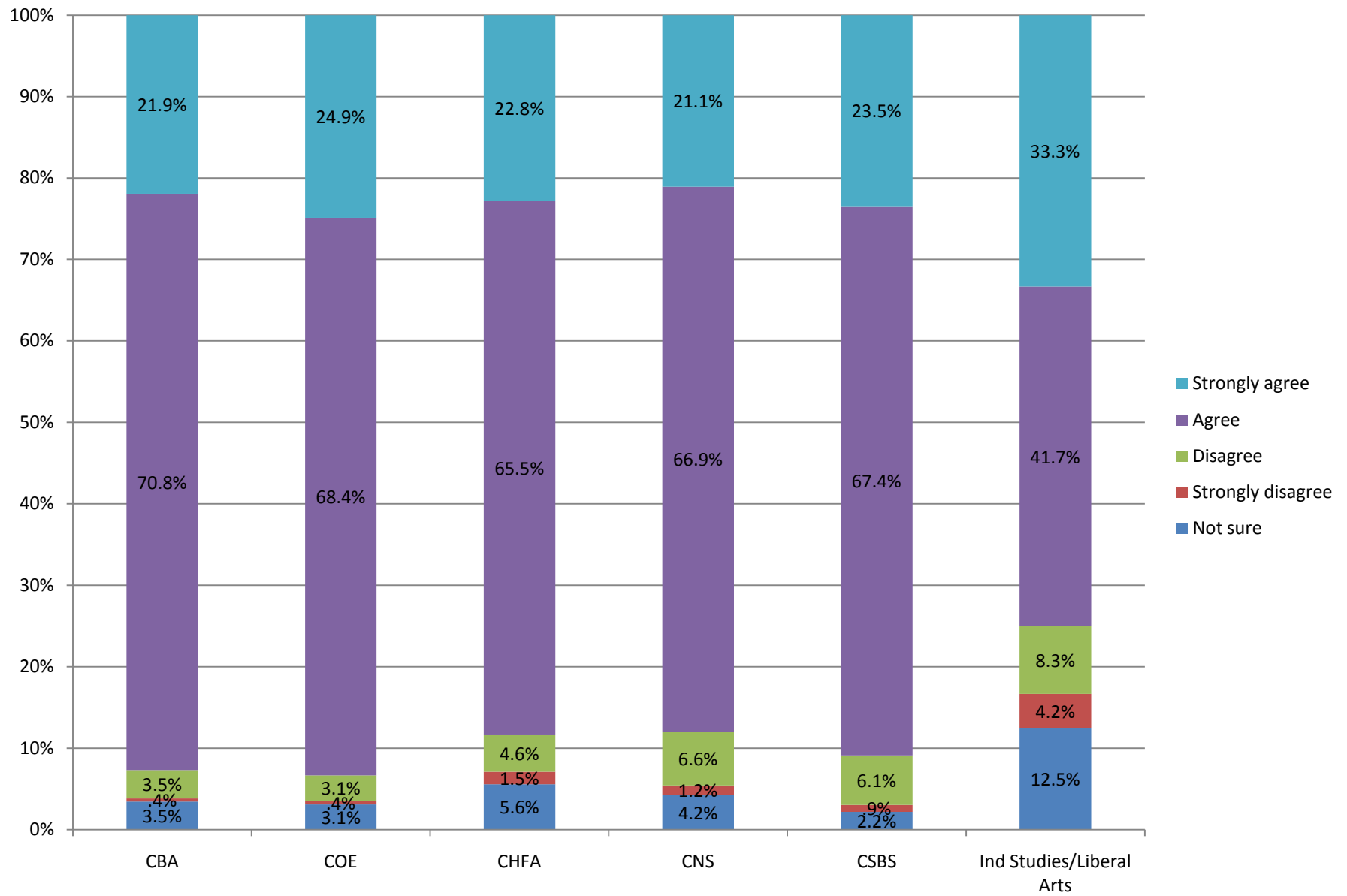


## Sexual harassment is a problem at UNI

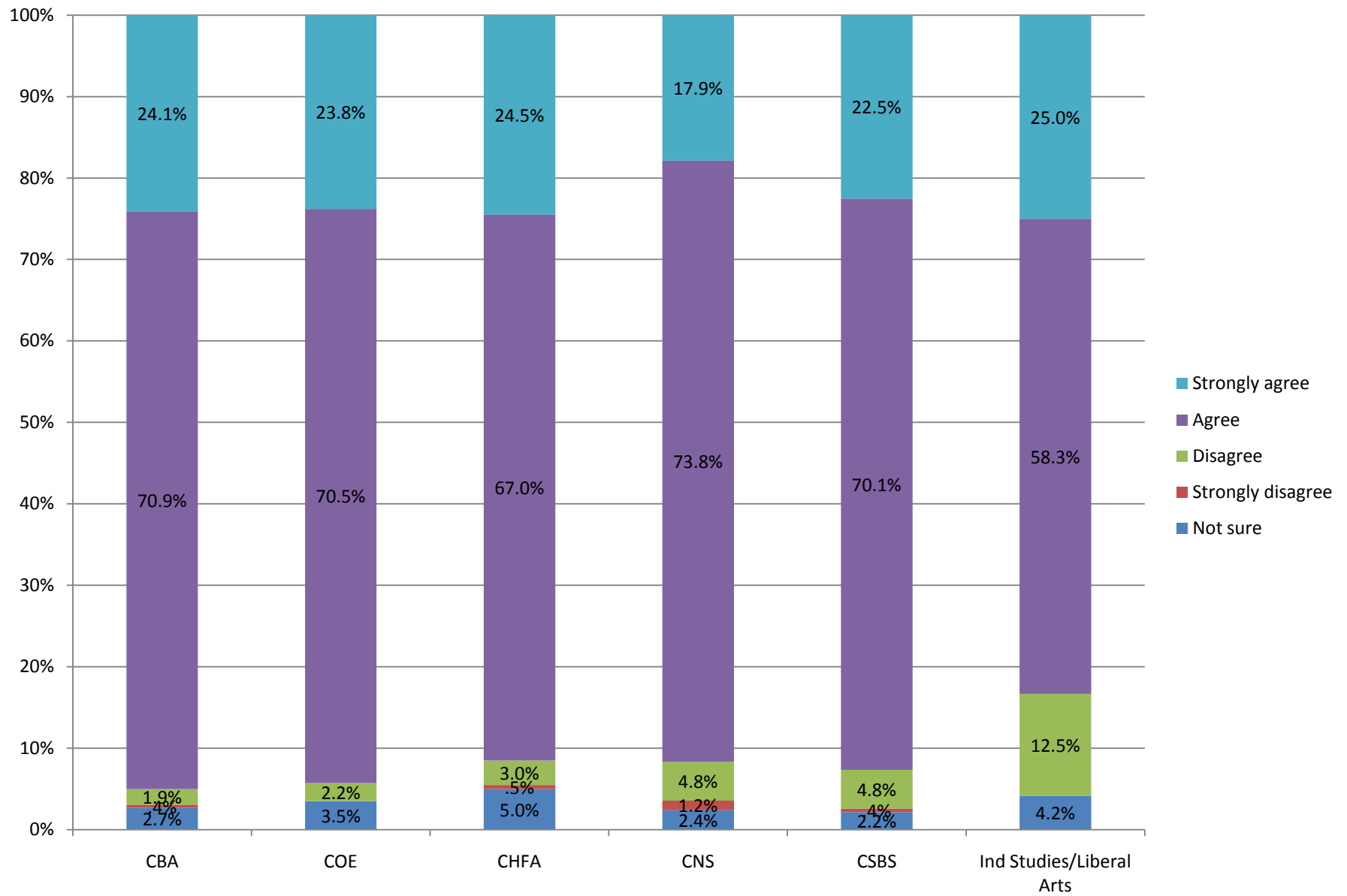




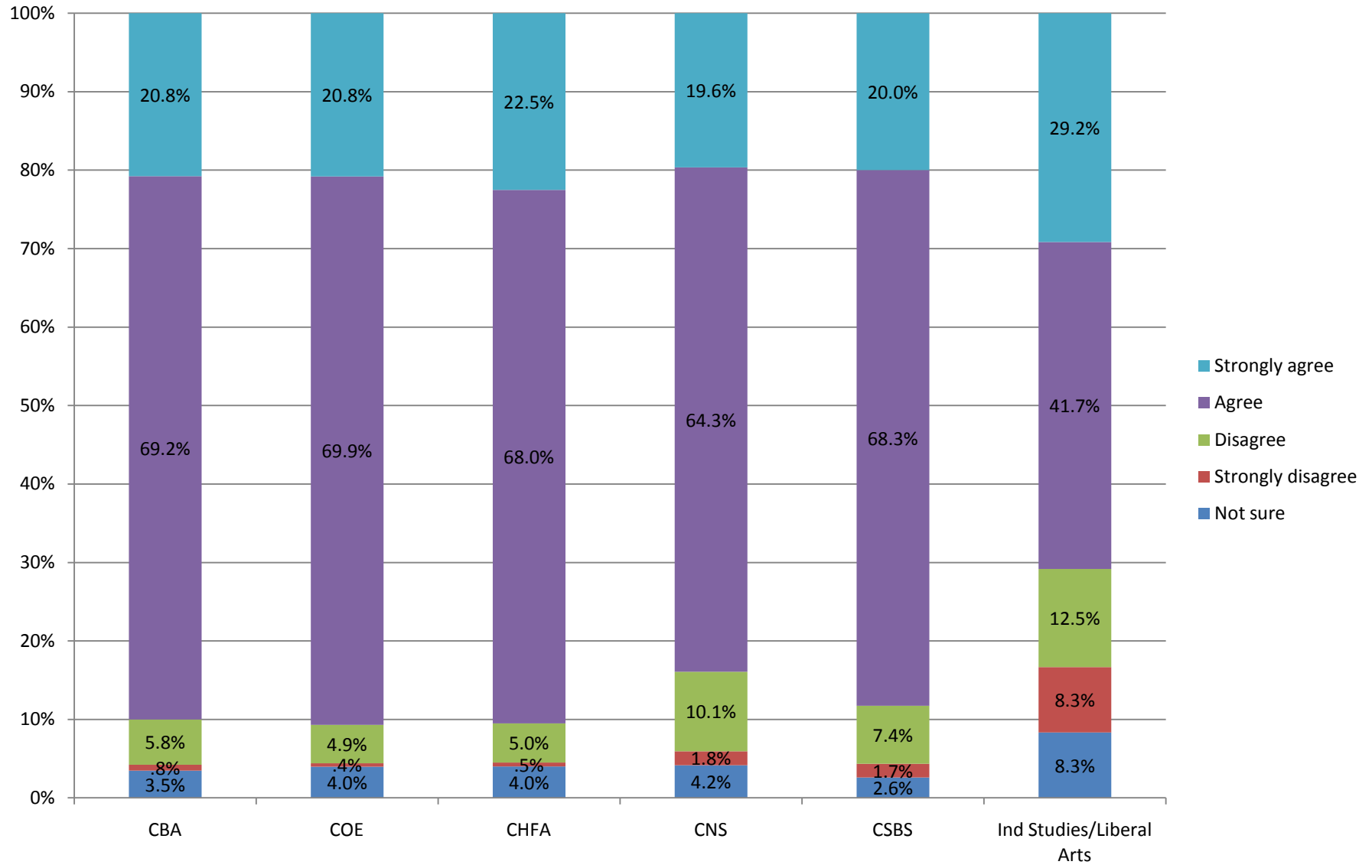
## The UNI community values excellence in all of its endeavors



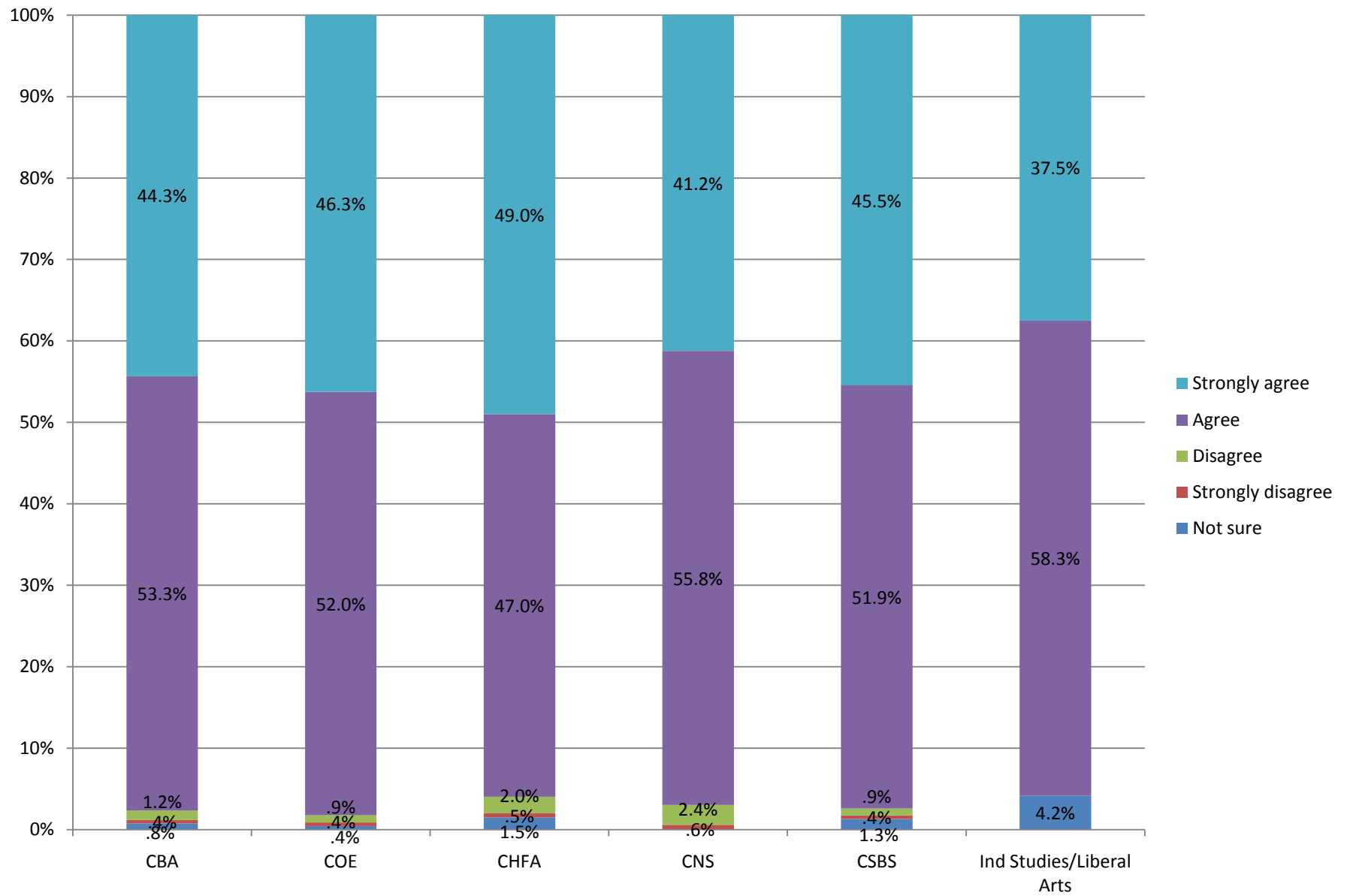
## The UNI community values intellectual vitality



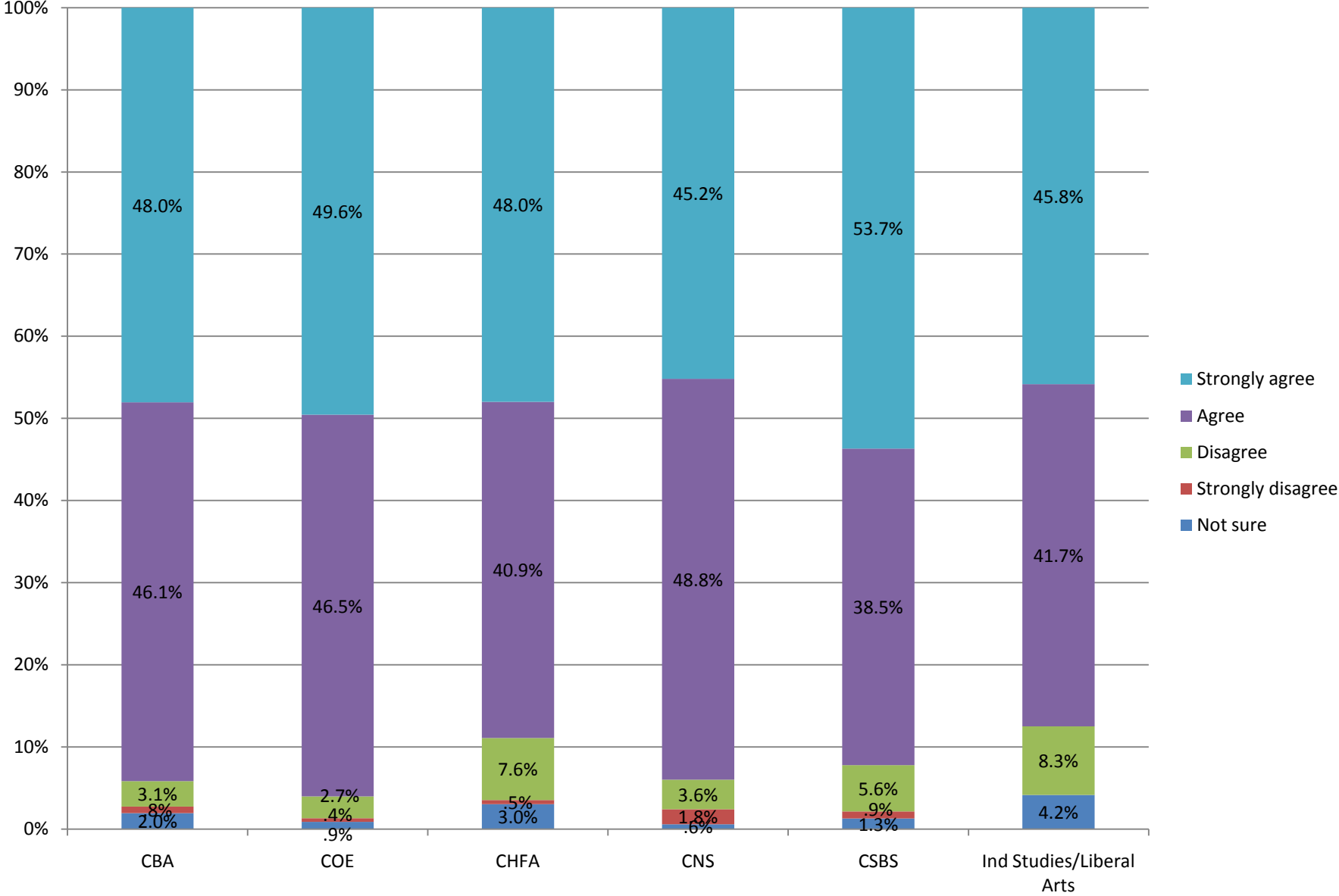
## The UNI community encourages the examination of diverse and controversial ideas



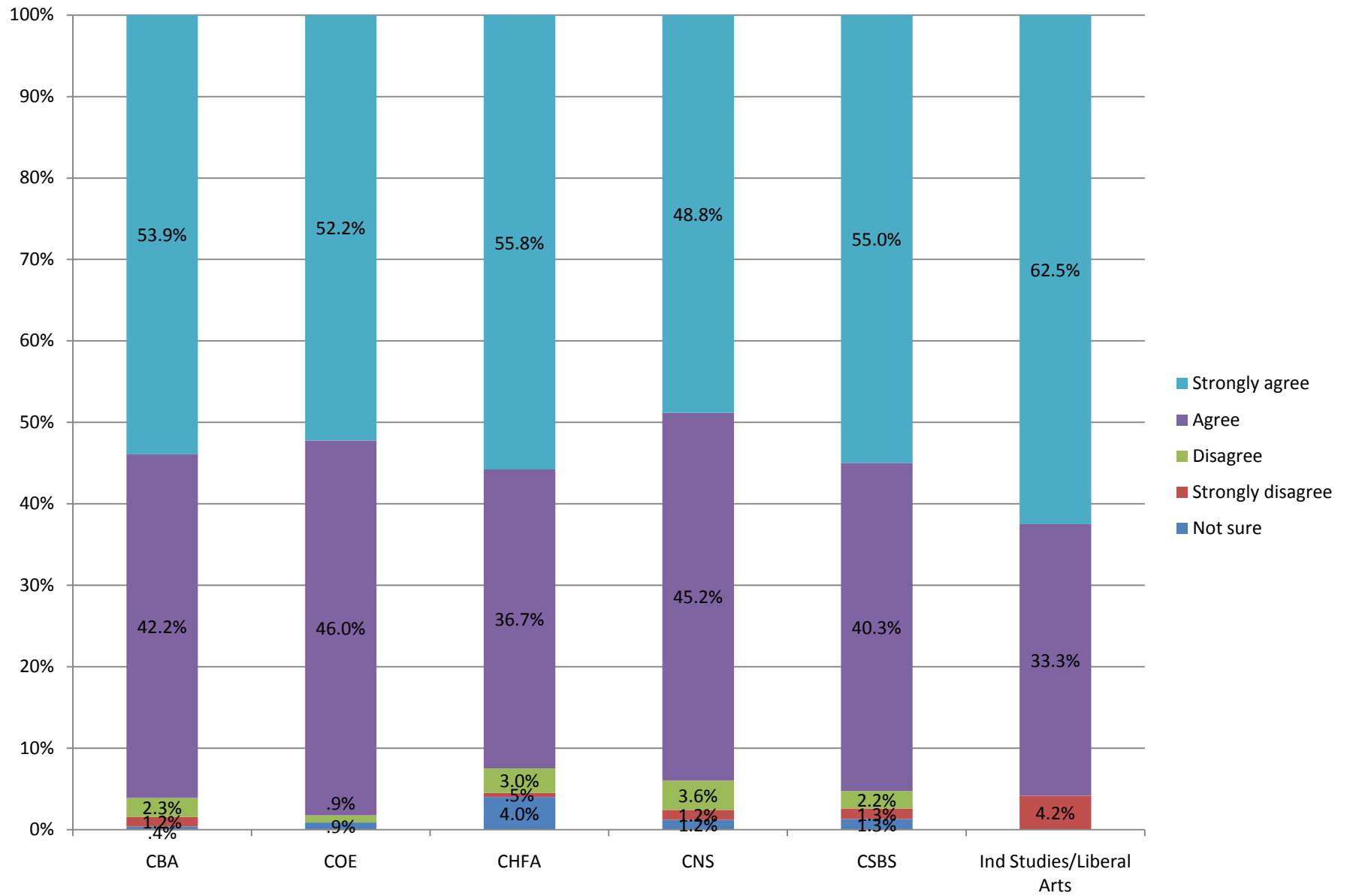
## I believe I have received a high quality education from UNI



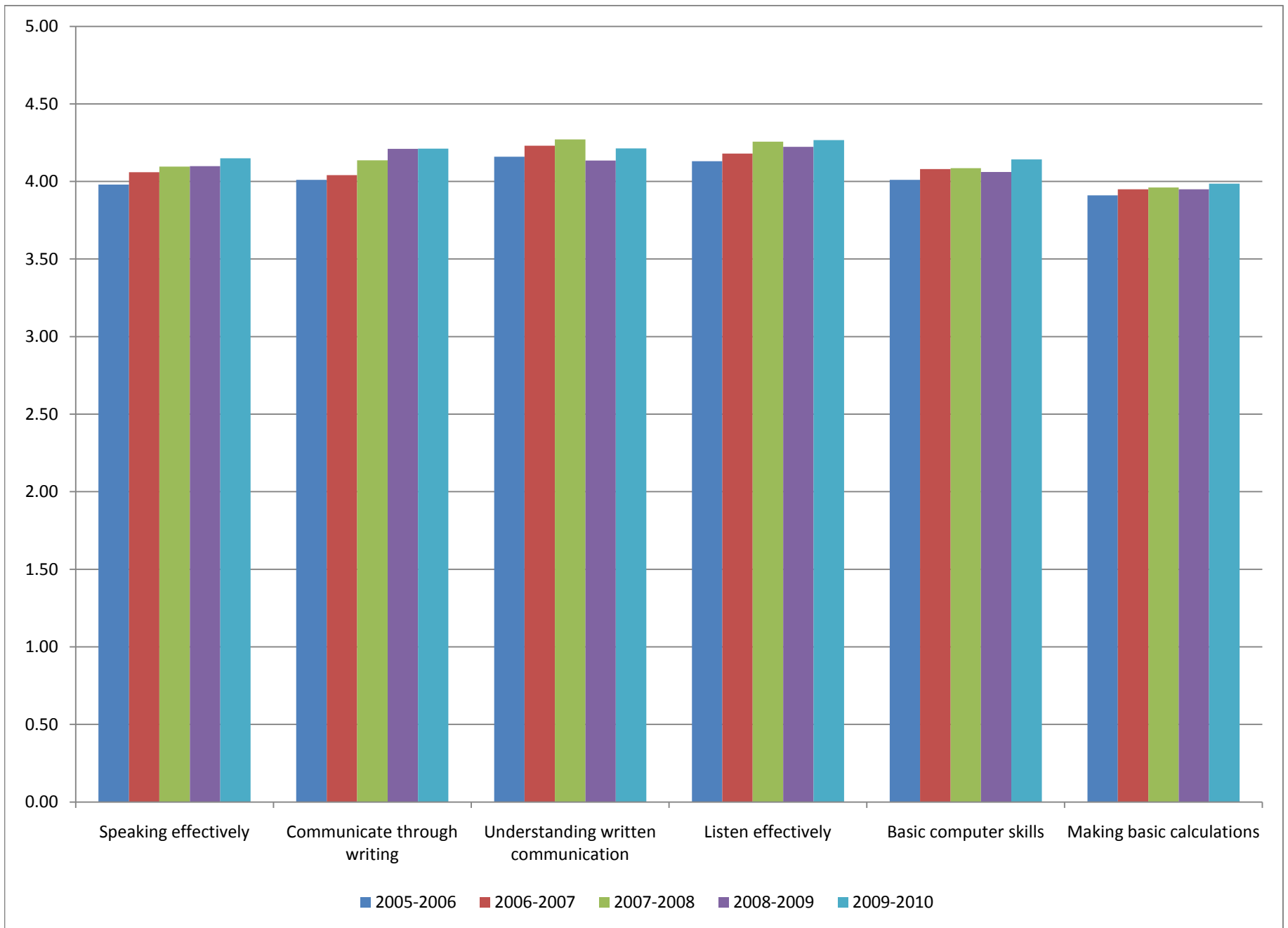
# I would recommend my major to a prospective student



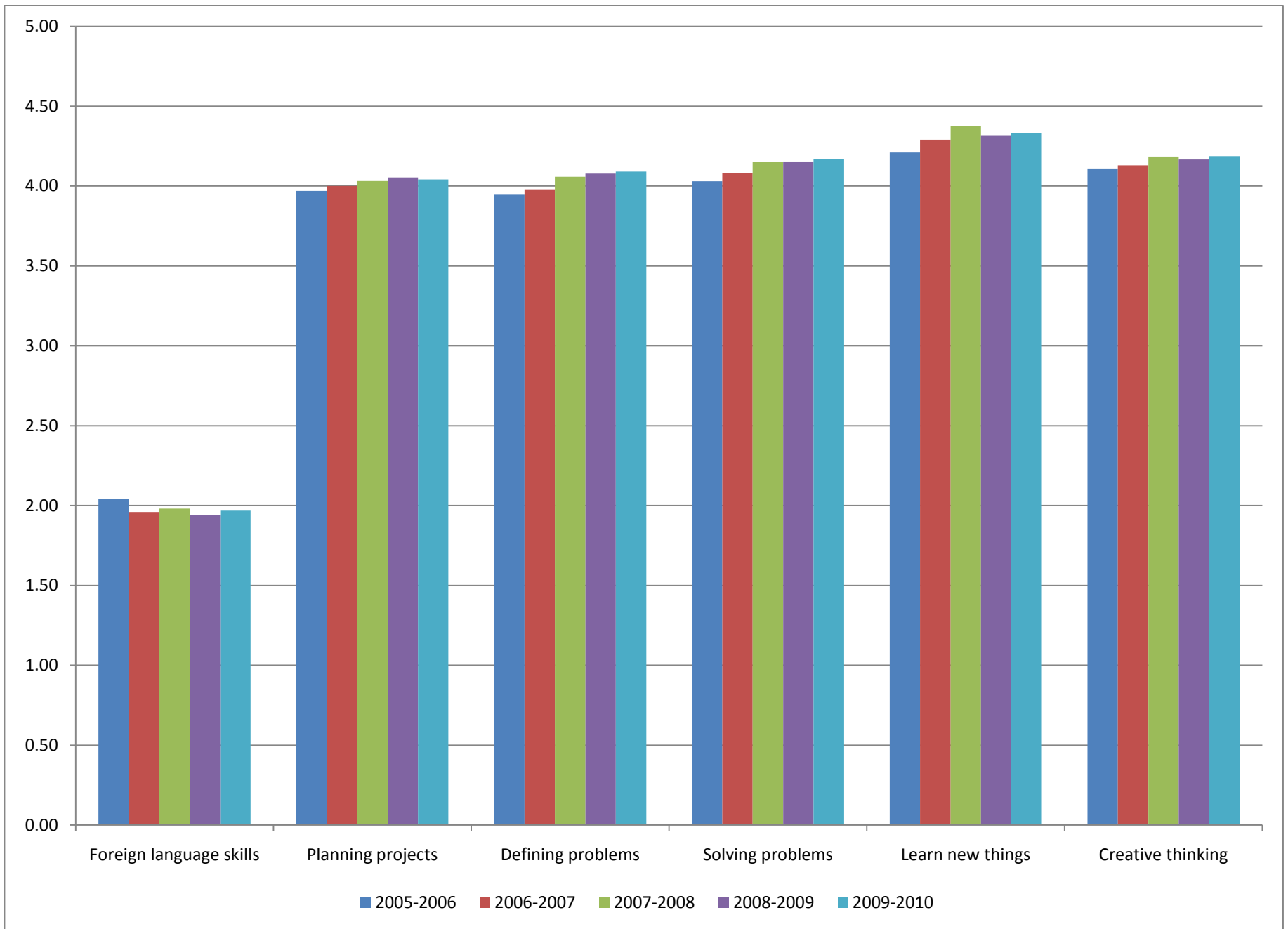
## I would recommend UNI to a prospective student

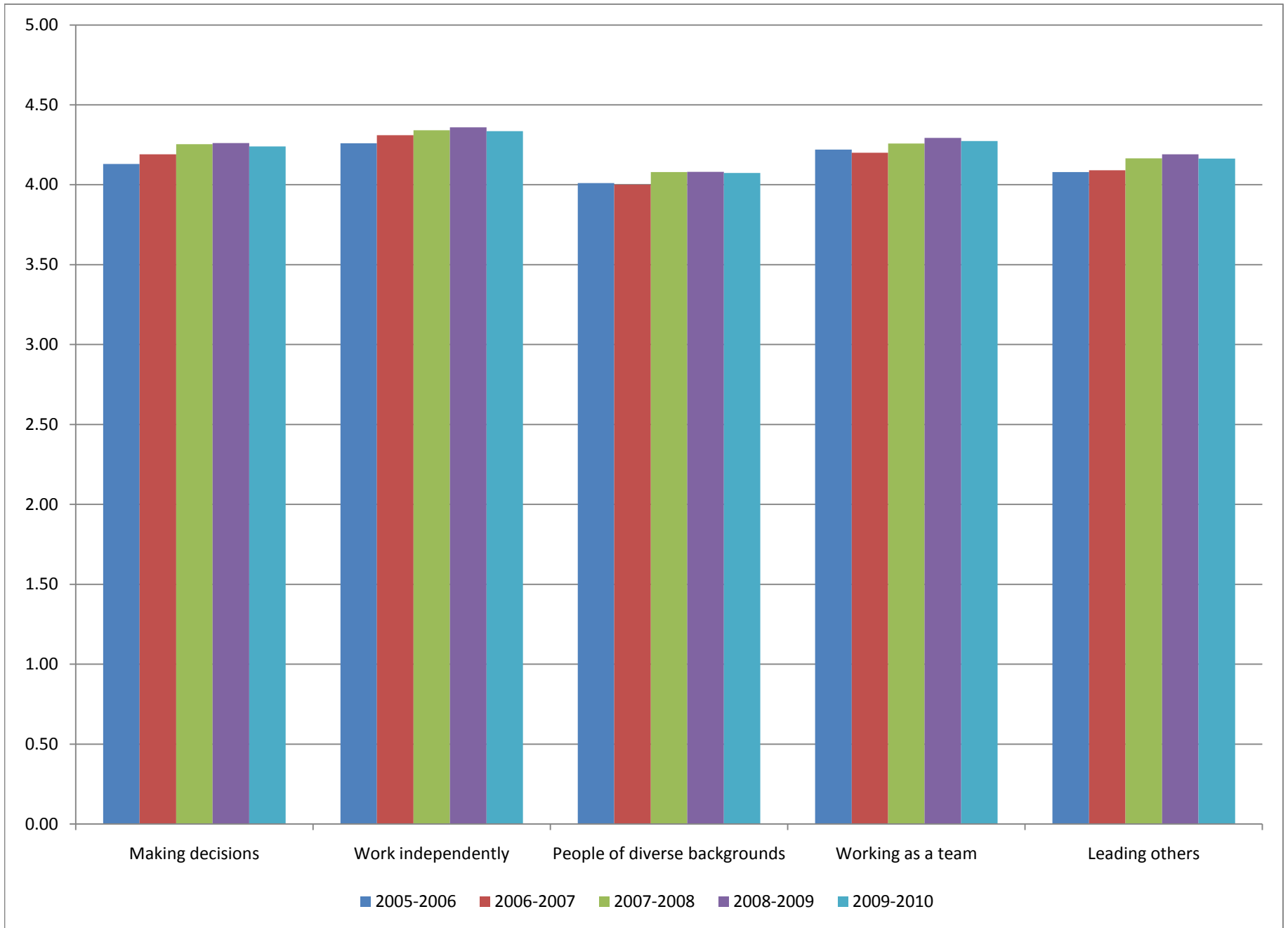


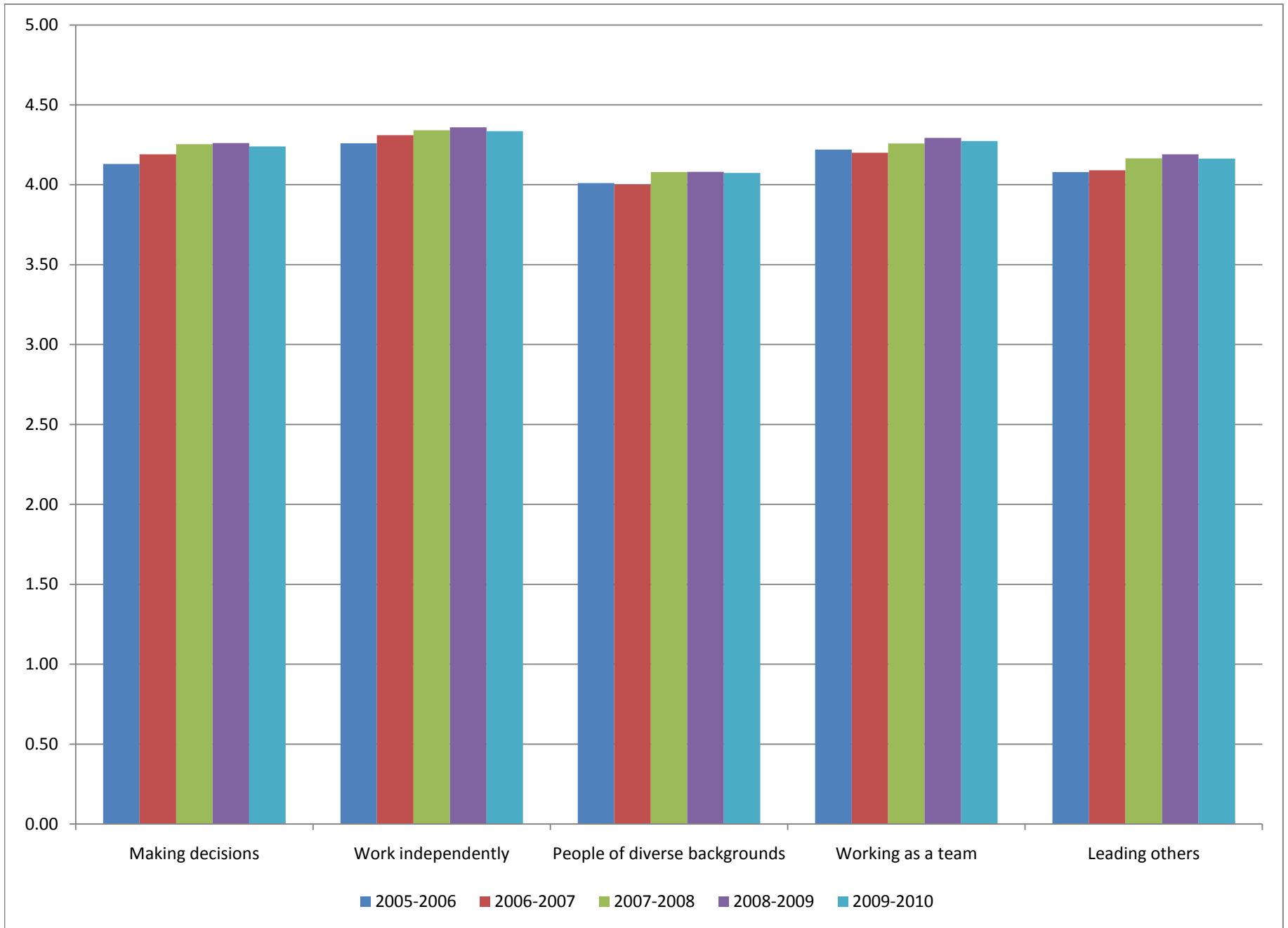
**Multiple Year Comparison of the UNI Graduating Senior Survey:  
2005-2010**

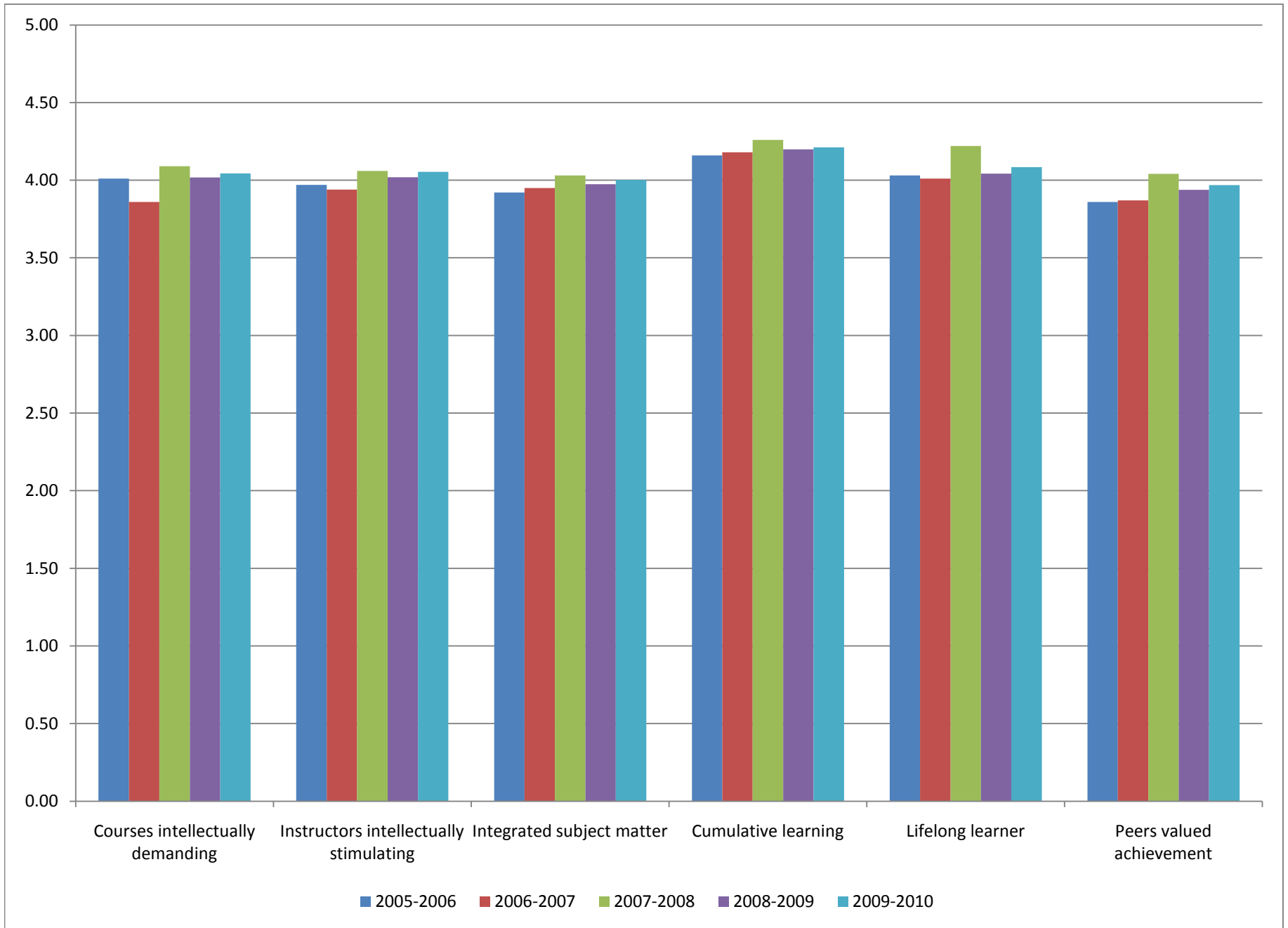


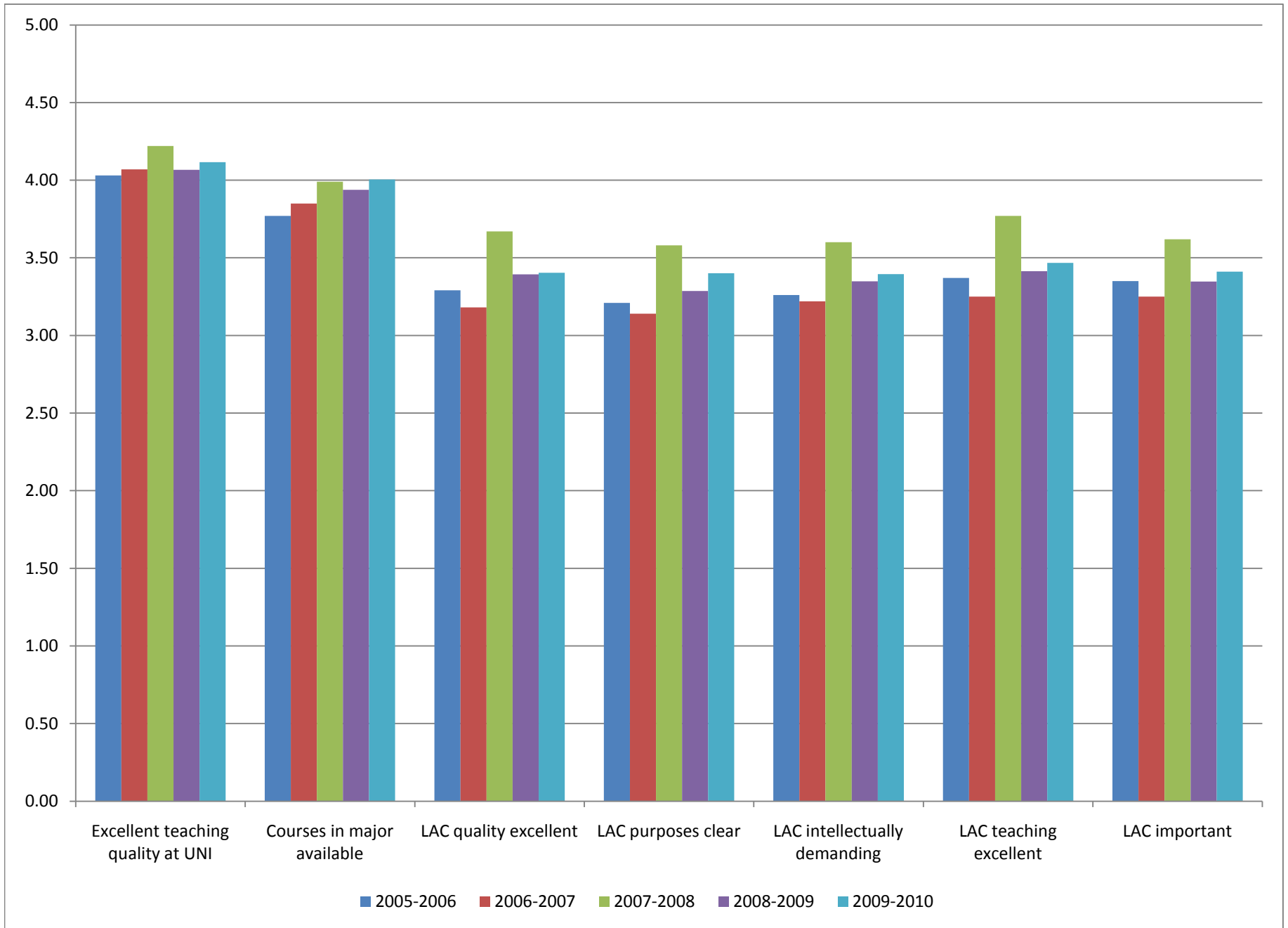


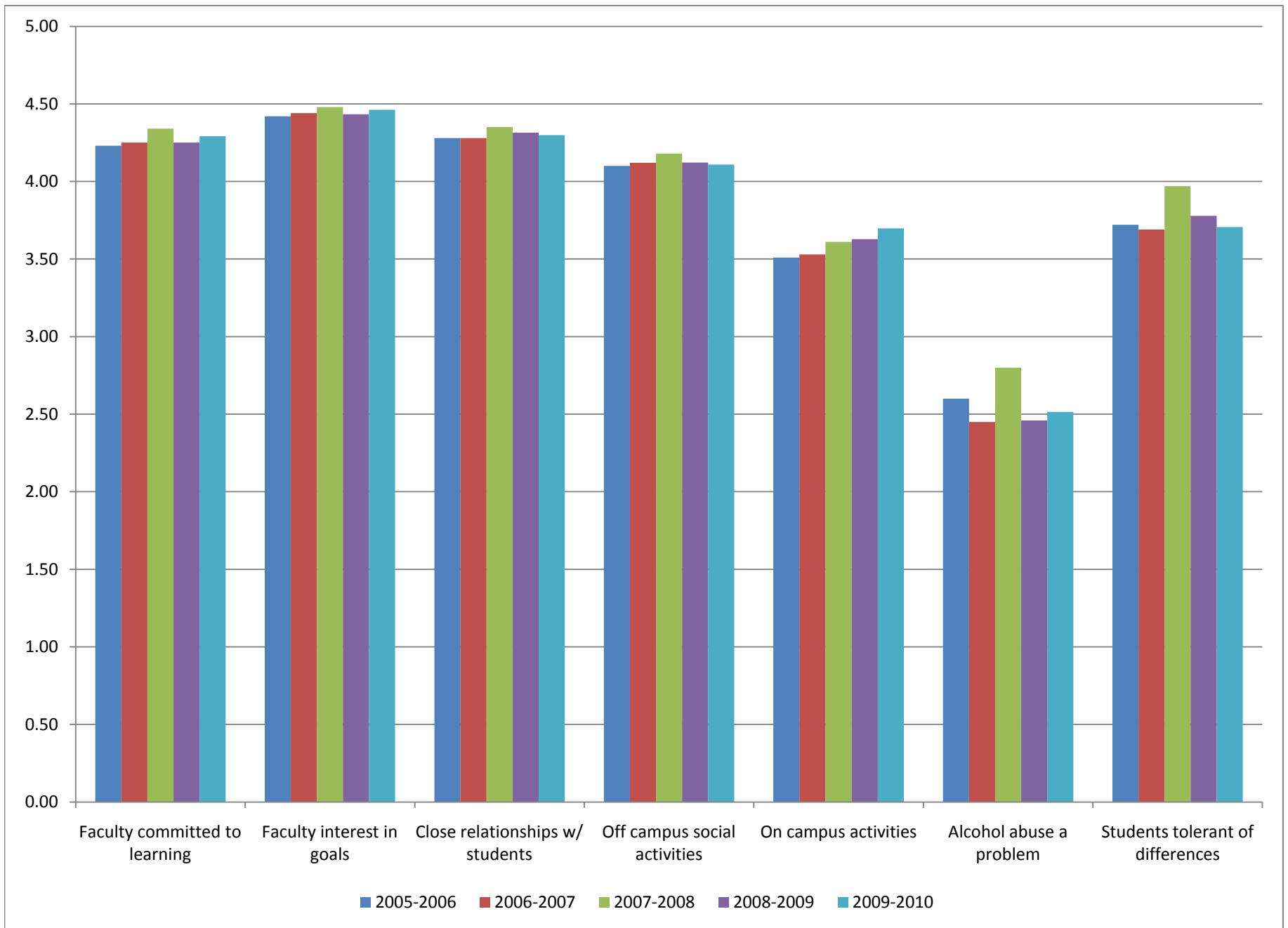


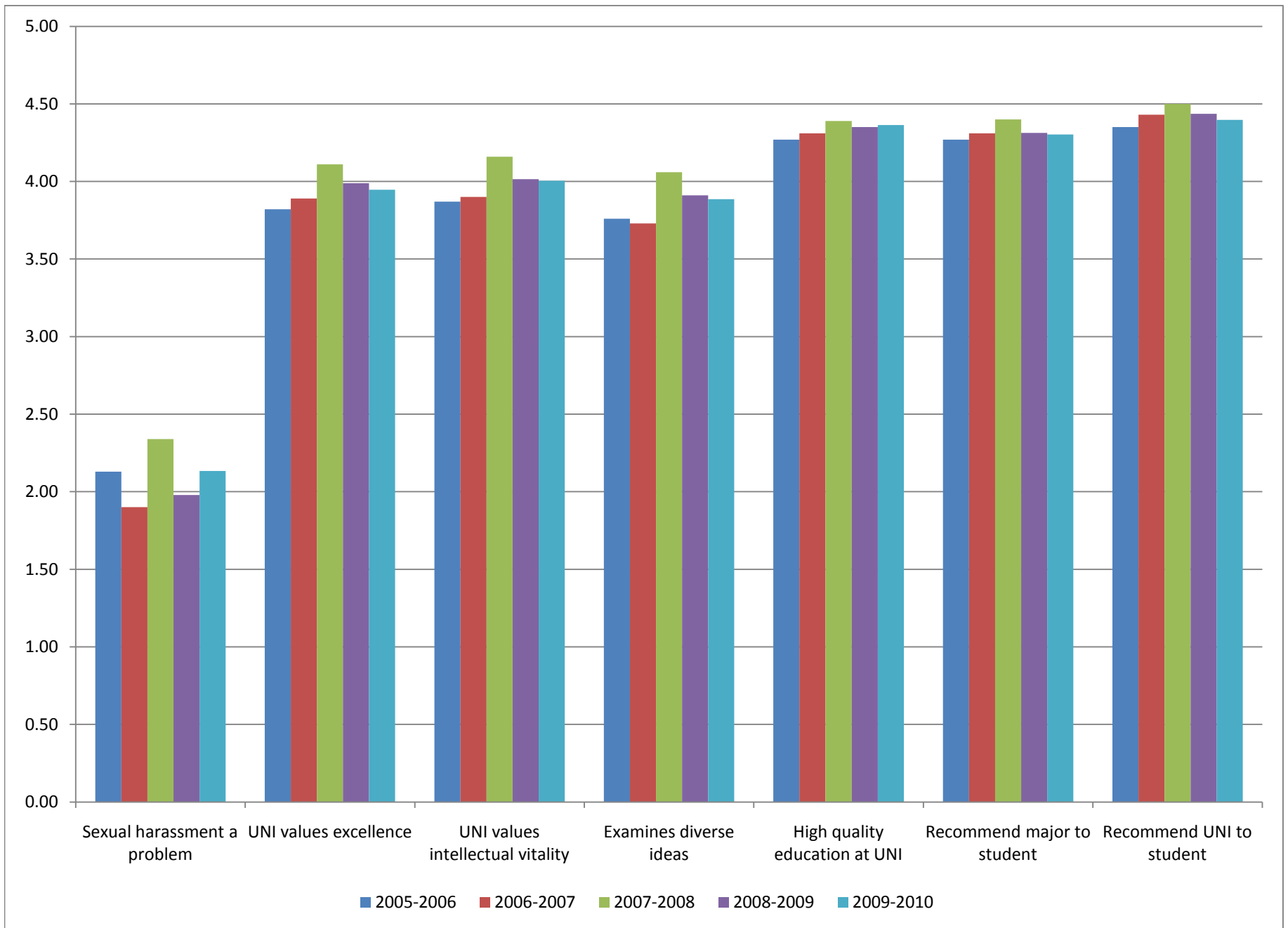












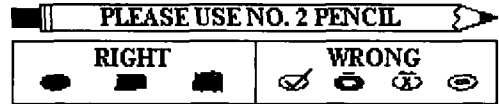
**Appendix A**  
**UNI Graduating Senior Survey Instrument**



# GRADUATING SENIOR SURVEY

May 2010

CONGRATULATIONS on your graduation! Your response to this survey will be used for program improvement and will not be linked in any way with your permanent records. Individual responses to this survey will be confidential. Survey findings will be reported in aggregate only. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. Please complete all six sections.



Student ID Number

## SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9

Non-UNI E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 2: PLANS FOLLOWING GRADUATION

What is MOST LIKELY to be your PRINCIPAL activity upon graduation?

- 1 Employment, full-time paid
- 2 Employment, part-time paid
- 3 Graduate or professional school, full-time
- 4 Graduate or professional school, part-time
- 5 Additional undergraduate coursework
- 6 Military service
- 7 Volunteer activity (e.g., Peace Corps)
- 8 Starting or raising a family
- 9 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of employing organization:  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Salary (\$): \_\_\_\_\_ (will be kept confidential)

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your current job / accepted job offer in the state of Iowa?

Y Yes  N No

If your job after graduation is outside of Iowa, would you return to Iowa if given the opportunity?

Y Yes  N No

## SECTION 3: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

Think about your future/career goals. Using the scale on the left, please rate how well UNI has prepared you for...

Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Cannot Evaluate
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0
5	4	3	2	1	0

- Speaking effectively
- Communicating through writing
- Understanding written communication
- Listening effectively
- Using basic computer skills (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.)
- Making basic calculations and computations
  
- Using foreign language skills
- Planning projects
- Defining problems
- Solving problems
- Learning new things
  
- Thinking creatively
- Bringing information/ideas together from different areas
- Using research skills
- Conducting yourself in a professional manner
- Upholding ethical standards
- Adapting to change
- Working under pressure
  
- Making decisions
- Working independently
- Working with people of diverse backgrounds
- Working as a team
- Leading others

Please turn over to complete other side.

## SECTION 4: ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
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4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

### Teaching and Learning Environment

Most of the courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding.  
 Most of my instructors were intellectually stimulating.  
 Most of my courses required integration of subject matter from several academic areas.  
 My learning experience was cumulative over a series of courses.

My academic experience at UNI made me want to be a lifelong learner.  
 Most of my student peers valued high academic achievement.  
 The overall quality of teaching at UNI is excellent.  
 Most of the courses in my major were readily available when I wanted to take them.

The overall quality of most Liberal Arts Core courses is excellent.  
 The purposes of most Liberal Arts Core courses are very clear.  
 Most of the Liberal Arts Core courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding.  
 The overall quality of teaching in the Liberal Arts Core at UNI is excellent.  
 I believe the Liberal Arts Core has been an important part of my education.

### Faculty and Student Interaction

The faculty I had contact with were very committed to advancing student learning.  
 At least one faculty member showed an active interest in my educational/career goals.  
 I developed close relationships with other students.  
 I often engaged in social activities with other students off campus.  
 I often participated in University or student sponsored activities on campus.

### Academic and Social Climate

Alcohol abuse is a major problem among students at UNI.  
 Most UNI students are tolerant of people whose lifestyles are different from their own.  
 Sexual harassment is a problem at UNI.  
 The UNI community values excellence in all of its endeavors.  
 The UNI community values intellectual vitality.  
 The UNI community encourages the examination of diverse and controversial ideas.

### Public Relations and University Image

I believe I have received a high quality education from UNI.  
 I would recommend my major to a prospective student.  
 I would recommend UNI to a prospective student.

## SECTION 5: PLANS FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

### What are your continuing education plans?

- 1 Accepted to a graduate/professional program
- 2 Currently applying to programs, not yet accepted
- 3 Accepted to another undergraduate program
- 4 None (please go to Section 6)

### Will you be attending:

- F Full-time
- P Part-time

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Study: \_\_\_\_\_ Intended degree: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 6: FACULTY AND STAFF RECOGNITION

Please list the name(s) of any **faculty** who have had a positive influence on your development as a student at UNI.

Faculty member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the name(s) of any **staff members** who have had a positive influence on your development as a student at UNI.

Staff member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the name(s) of any **high school teacher or high school counselor** who made a difference in your coming to and/or succeeding at UNI.

Teacher(s) / Counselor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ High School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You and Good Luck!**

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