



EDUCATION  
NETWORK

Public Viewpoint

# The Power of Work-Based Learning

*March 16, 2022*

# Data Sources

## Baccalaureate and Beyond Survey (2016-2017)

- Nationally representative survey of bachelor's degree recipients, n=19,490.

## Strada-College Pulse Survey (December 2021)

- Nationally representative survey of current college students at four-year institutions, n=3,542.

## Strada-Gallup Education Survey (September-November 2021)

- Nationally representative survey of adults aged 18-65, n=9,028.

# Earnings



# +\$3,096

Predicted boost in one year post-graduation earnings associated with having a **paid internship**, controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, and field of study.

# Satisfaction

# Work-based learning is associated with higher income, career satisfaction, and value perceptions

## Bachelor's degree recipients

Annual personal income

**+\$13,859**

Career Satisfaction

**+7**

percentage points

Education was worth the cost

**+11**

percentage points

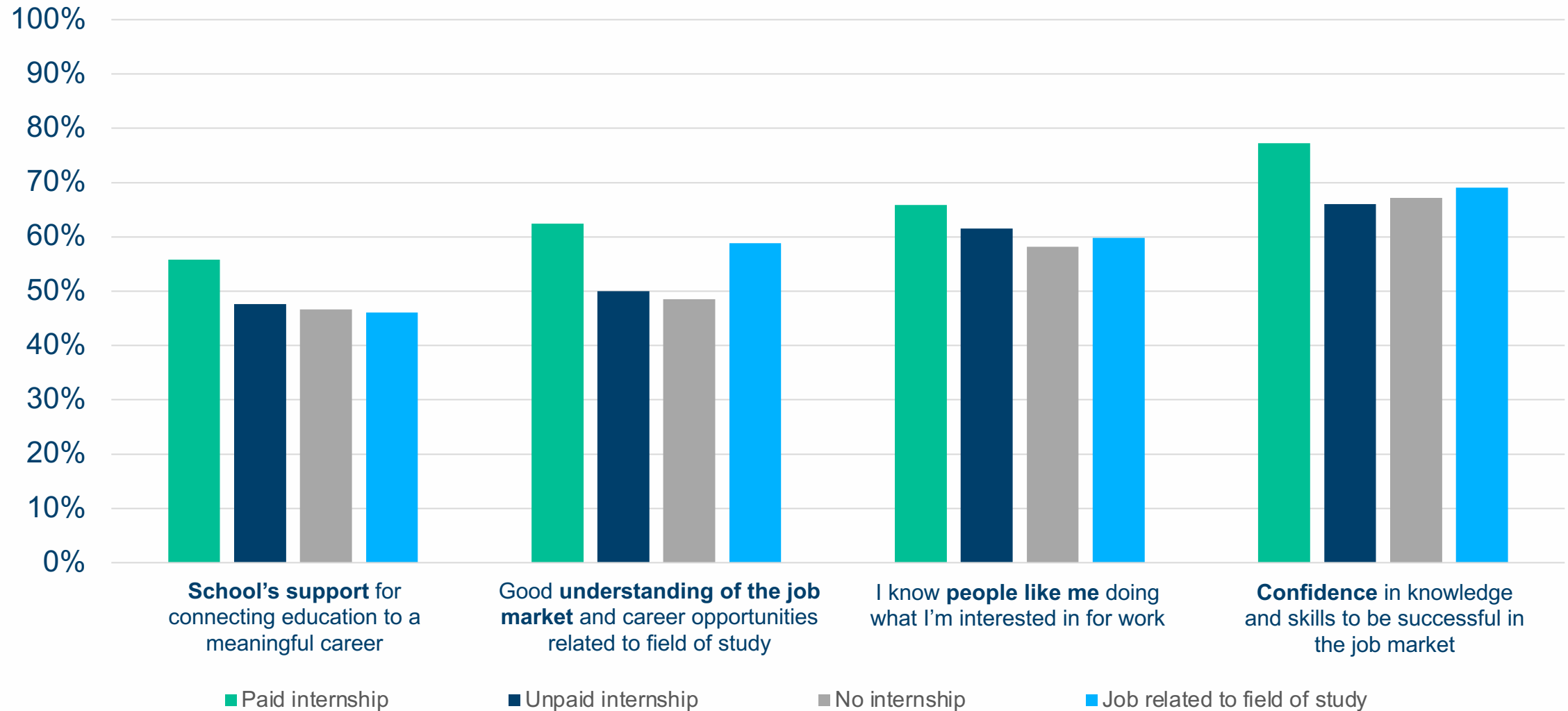
Education helped me to  
achieve my goals

**+7**

percentage points

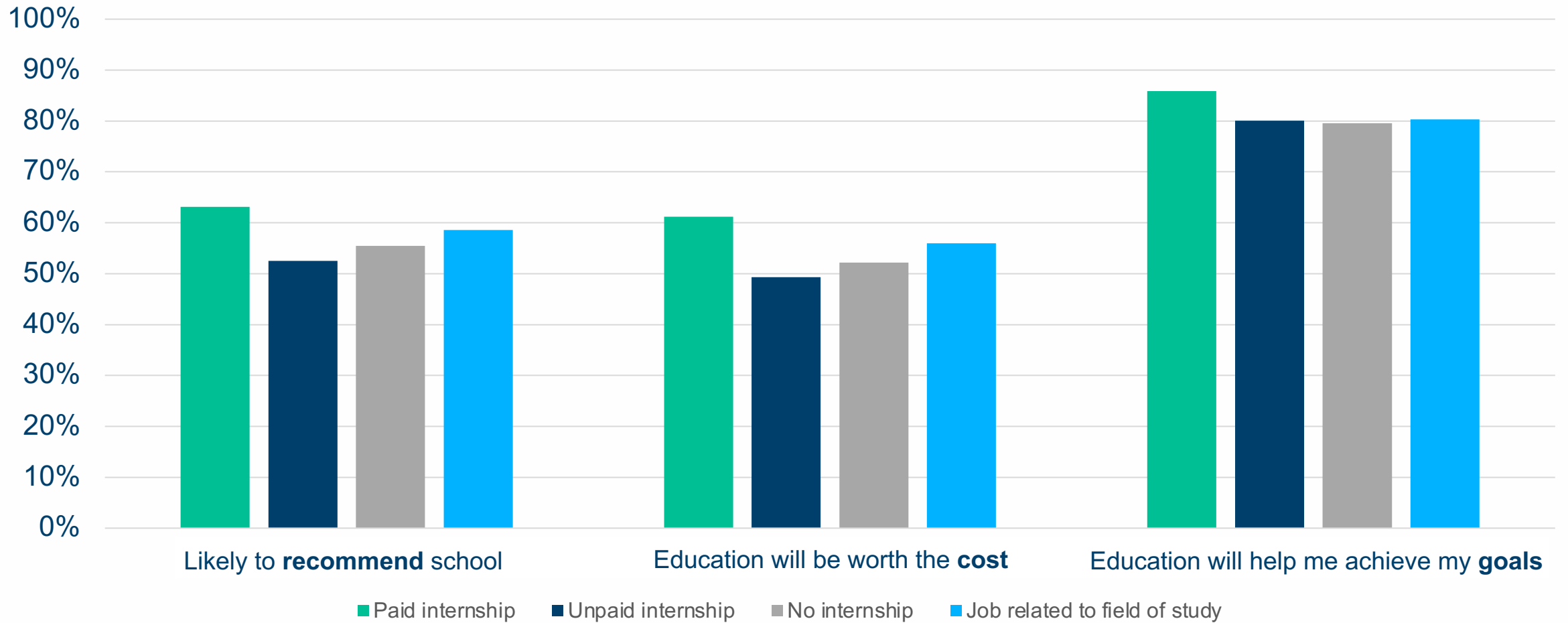
# Confidence

# Students who have had paid internships feel more confident and knowledgeable about career opportunities





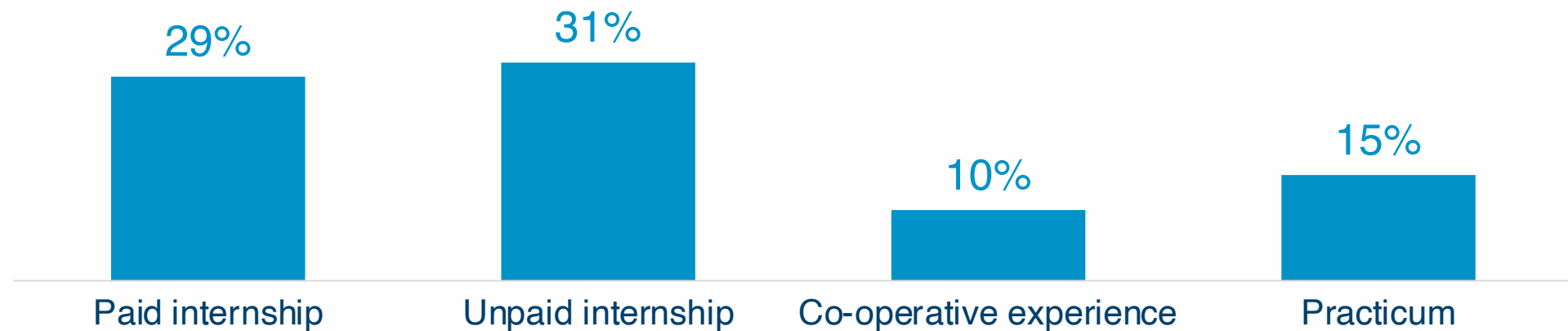
# Students who have had paid internships see higher value in their education



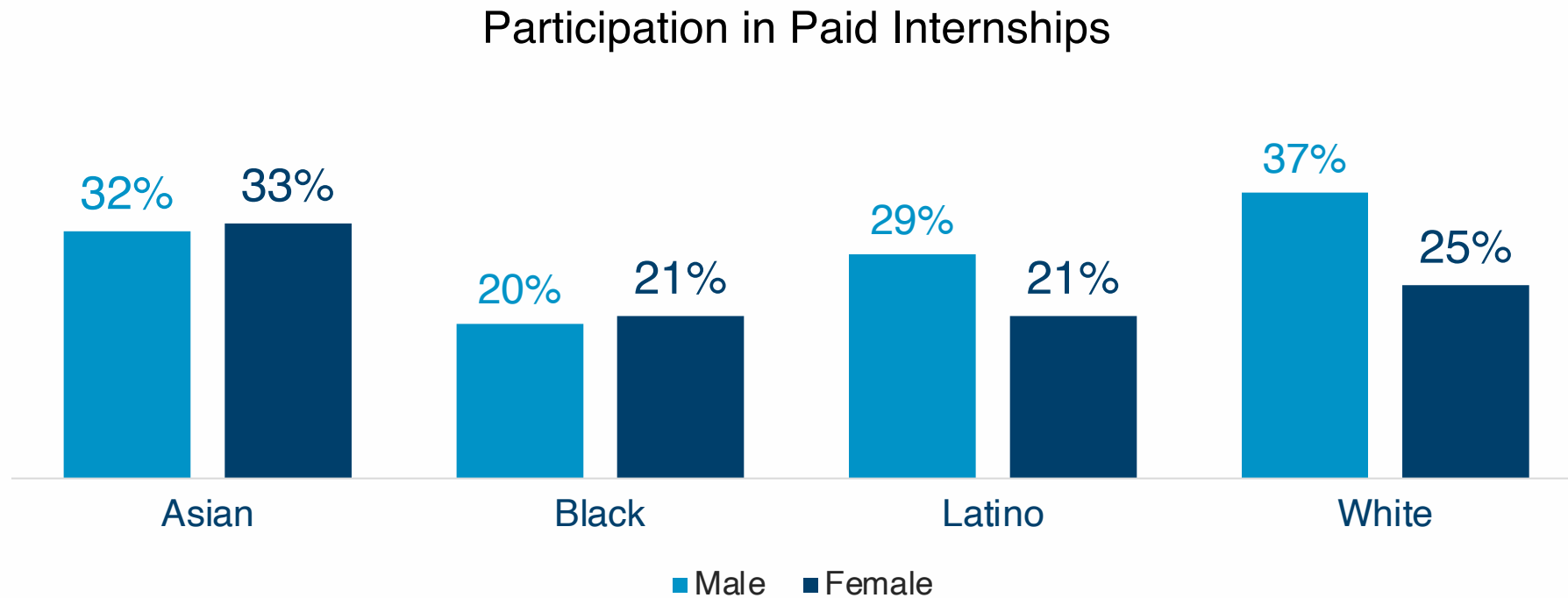
# Access

# Less than one-third of bachelor's degree recipients report having had a paid internship as an undergraduate

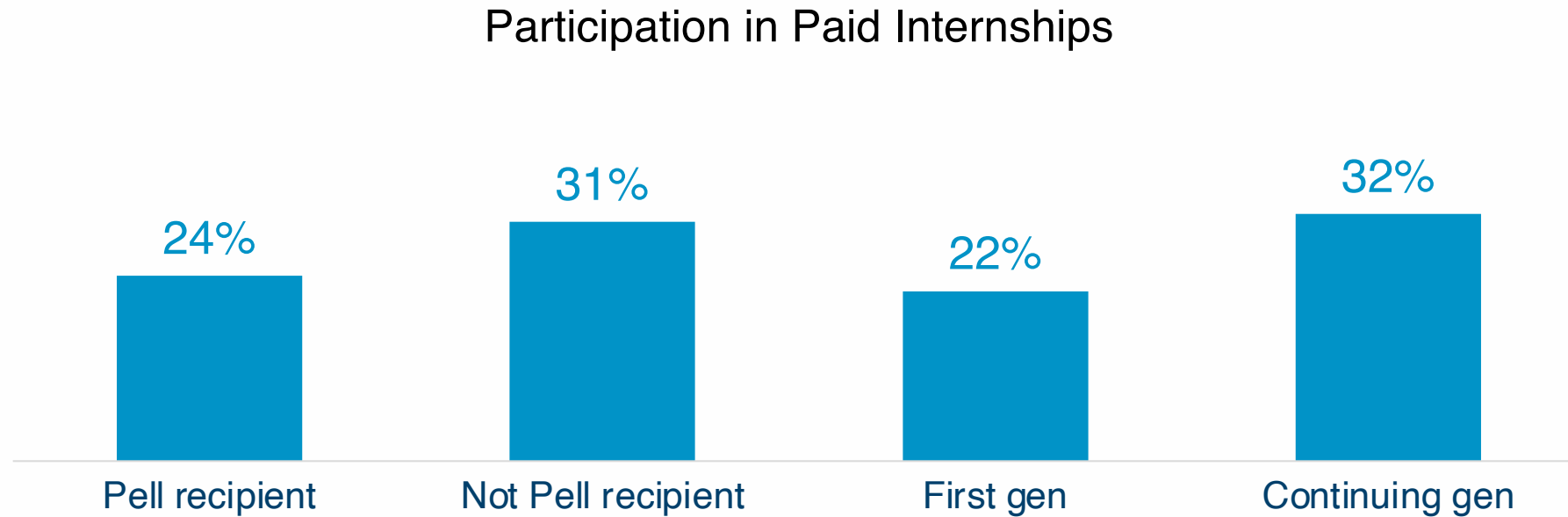
Participation in Work-Based Learning



# White men are most likely to have had a paid internship

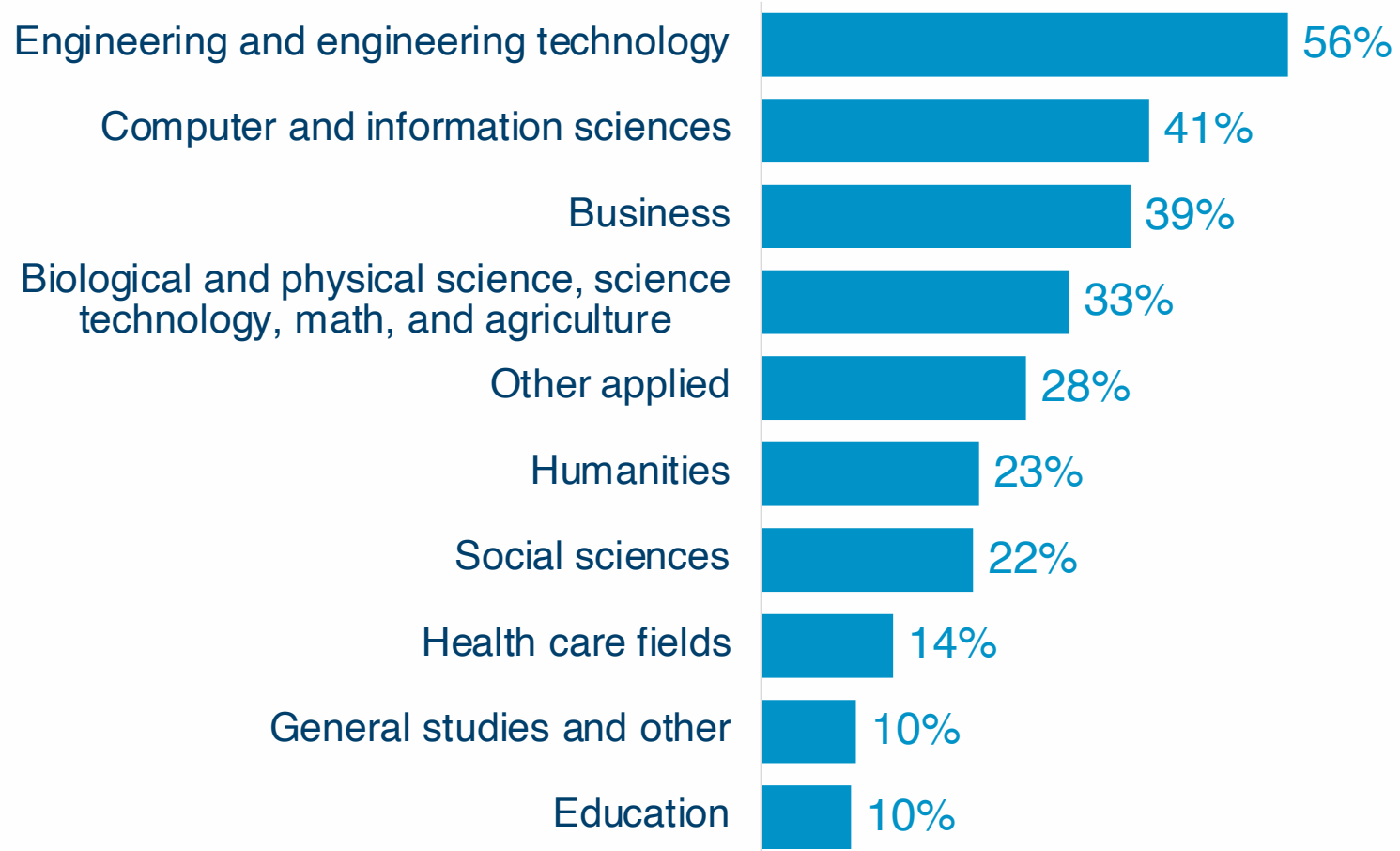


# Low-income and first-generation students are less likely to have had a paid internship



# Participation in paid internships varies widely by major

## Participation in Paid Internship During Undergraduate Education



# After controlling for field of study, access gaps remain

Less likely to have had a paid internship:

Women

**-2**

percentage points

Latino students

**-8**

percentage points

Black Students

**-13**

percentage points

# Key Findings

- 1. Paid internships are linked to getting paid more after graduation.** College students who completed a paid internship during their undergraduate education have higher-paying first jobs a year after graduation — even when accounting for differences in pay based on field of study, gender, and race/ethnicity. Other work-based learning experiences — unpaid internships, practicums, and cooperative learning — are not associated with an earnings benefit one year after graduation.
- 2. Work-based learning is tied to noneconomic post-graduation success.** Bachelor's degree holders who had a work-based learning experience report greater career satisfaction and are more likely to say their education helped them to achieve their goals and was worth the cost.
- 3. Among current students, paid internships are linked with greater confidence they will be successful in the job market and confidence in the value of their education.** Students who have a paid internship report higher levels of knowledge and confidence about their career, feel more supported by their college or university, are more likely to feel their education was worth the cost and helped them to achieve their goals, and are more likely to recommend their college or university to others.
- 4. Access to paid internships is uneven.** Students who are Black, Latino, female, low-income or first-generation college students are less likely to experience a paid internship. Even when controlling for variation across majors, these disparities remain.



Learn more at  
[StradaInsights.org](https://StradaInsights.org)