

**Post-Secondary Education in
Ontario: Managing Challenges
in an Age of Austerity –
Northern Ontario Results
February 2013**

Methodology

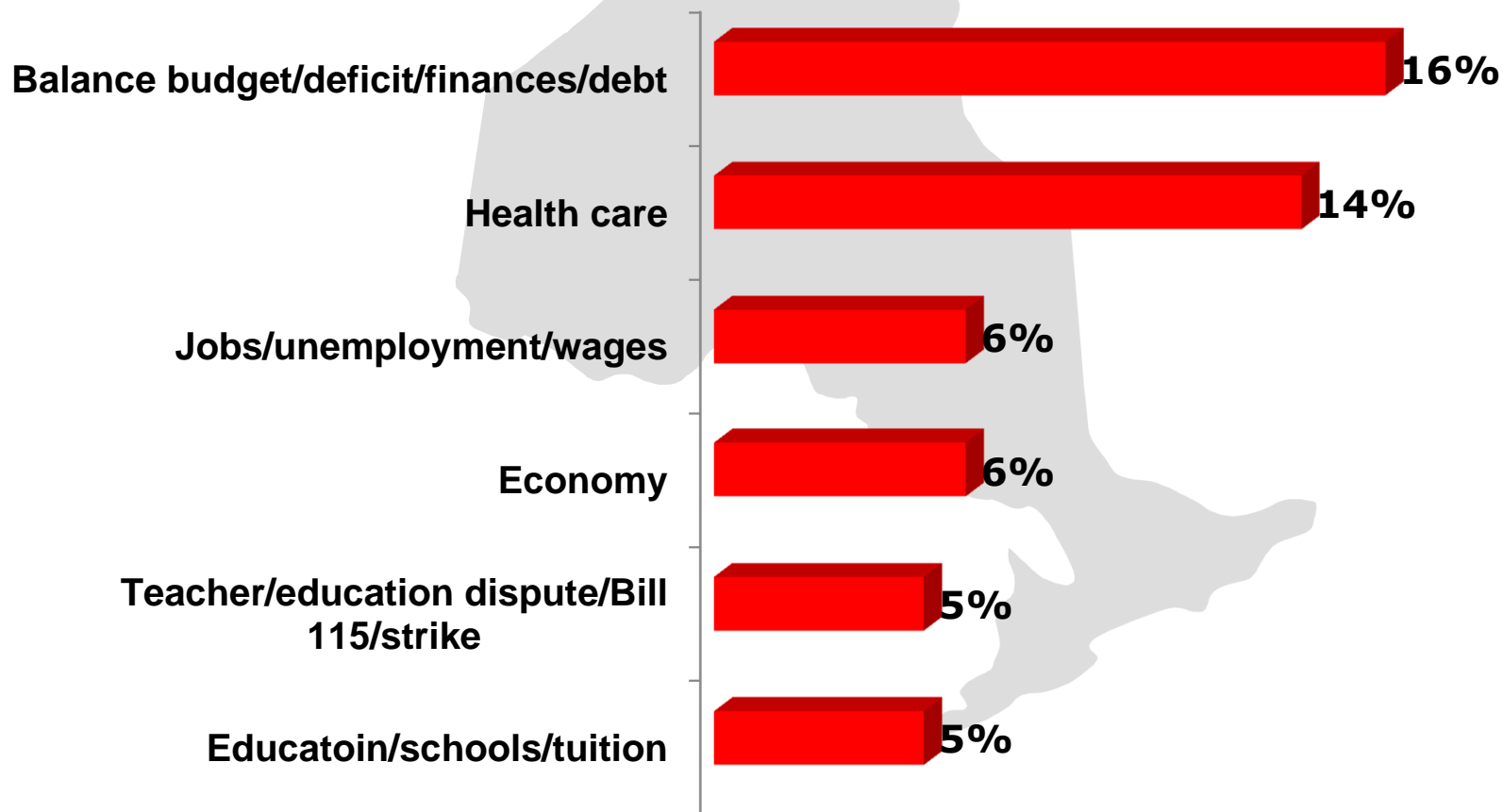
- **A total of 1,518 on-line interviews were conducted for the study between December 10th and 14th, 2012. The margin of error for a representative sample of this size is 2.5 percentage points within a 95% confidence interval. The margin of error is greater when looking at sub-segments of the population.**
- **The total sample for the Northern region of Ontario comprised 301 respondents. The margin of error for a representative sample of this size is 5.0 percentage points within a 95% confidence interval.**
- **The sample was designed to mirror the socio-demographic characteristics of the general Ontario adult population according to the latest census data.**
- **Detailed findings are outlined on the OCUFA website.**



The Political Environment

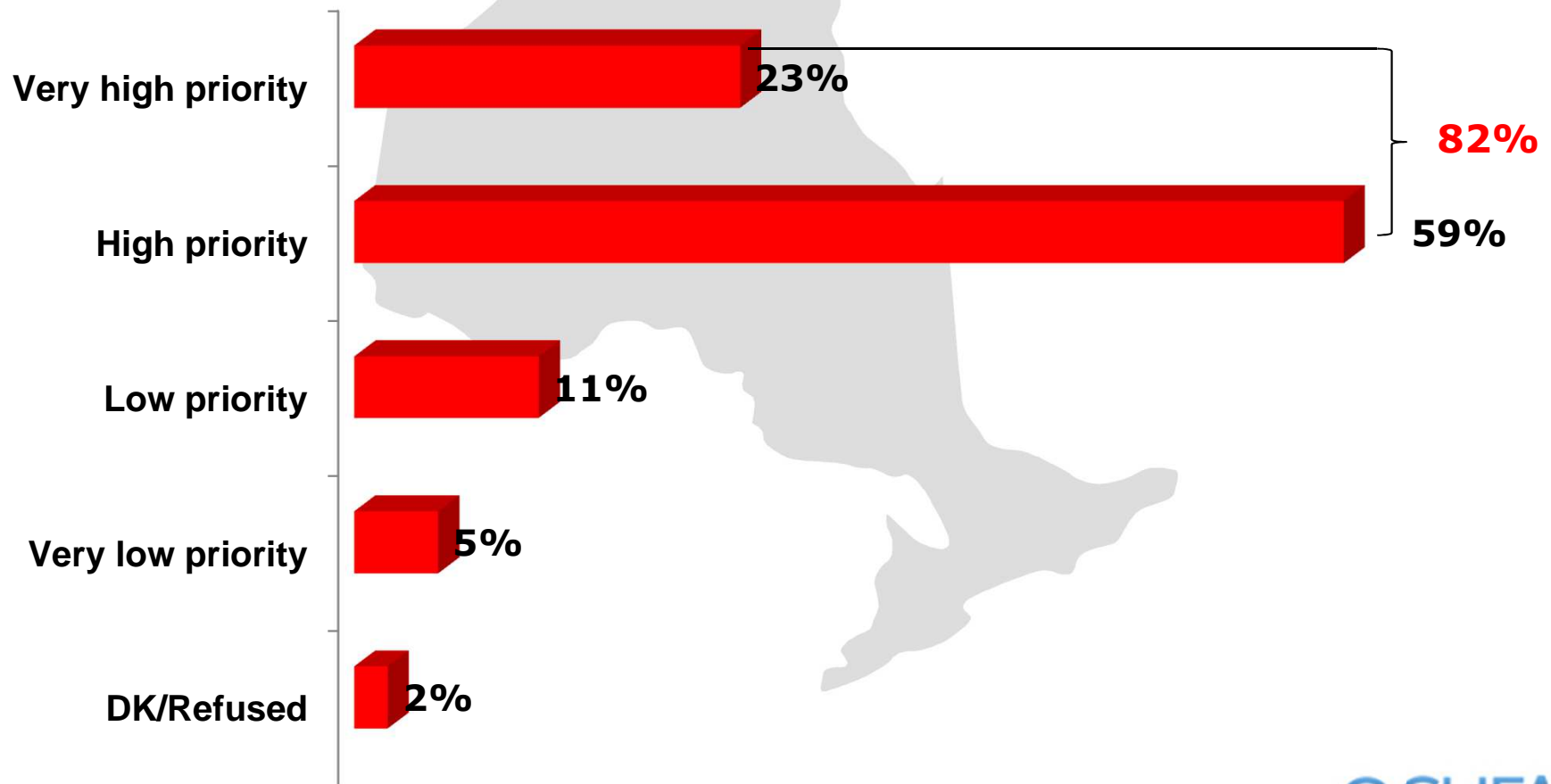
Most Important Issue in Ontario

- Residents of Northern Ontario are most likely to identify **“balance budget/deficit/finances”** as the most important issue currently facing the Ontario government.



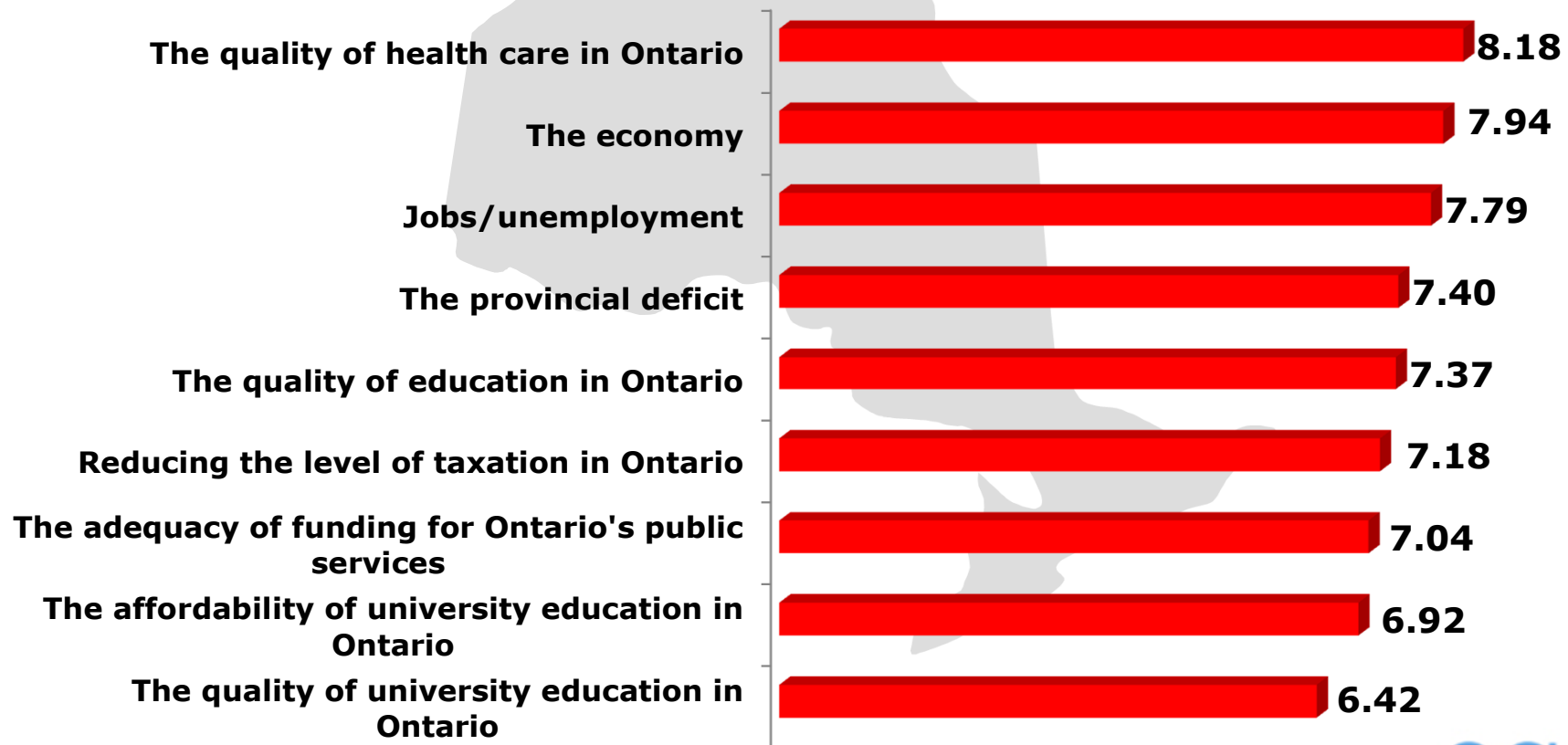
University Education: Level of Priority for Ontario Government

- Four in five Northern Ontario residents think that university education should be considered a **"high priority"** by the provincial government.



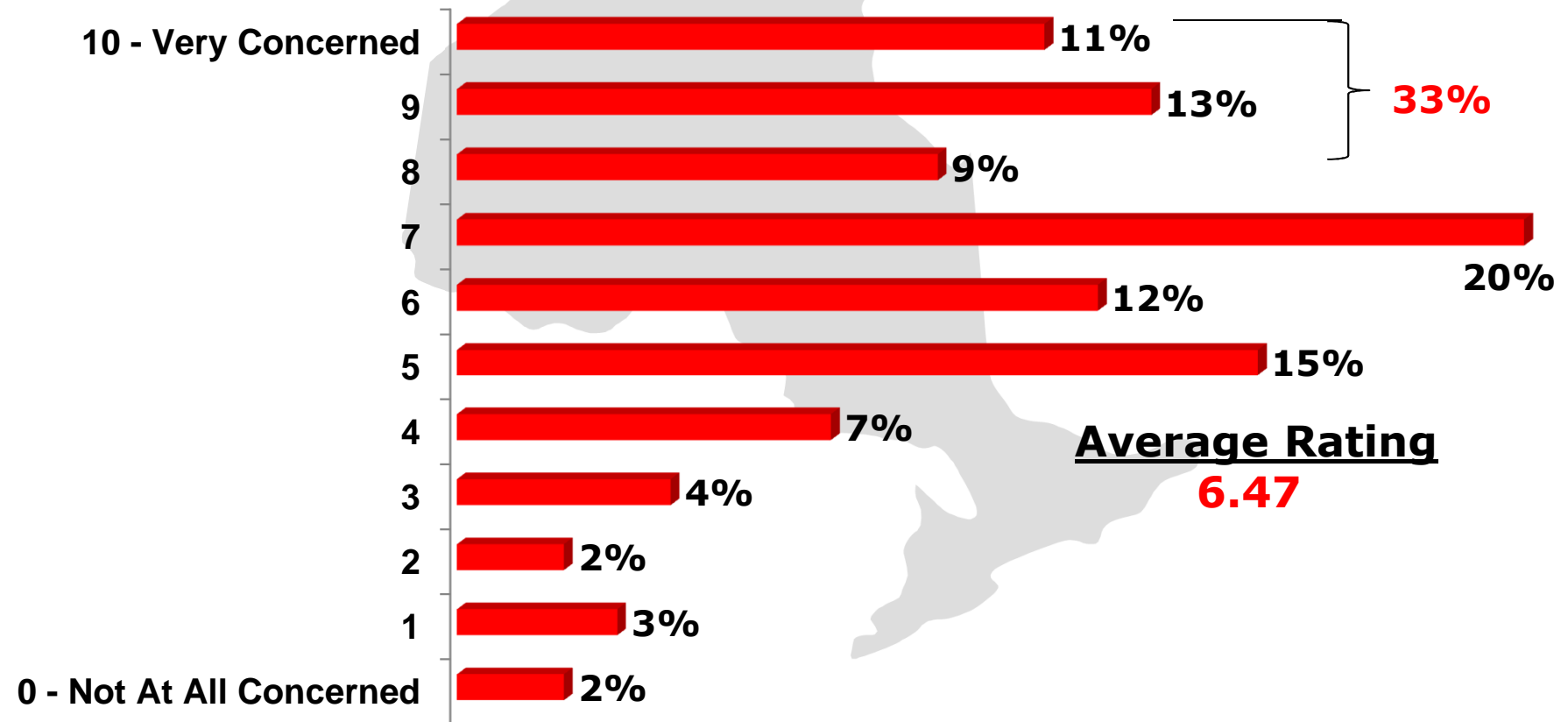
Provincial Issues: Present Level of Concern

- “The quality of health care” is the issue generating the highest level of concern among Northern Ontario residents. The **affordability** and the **quality** of university education receive moderate concern-ratings in this region.



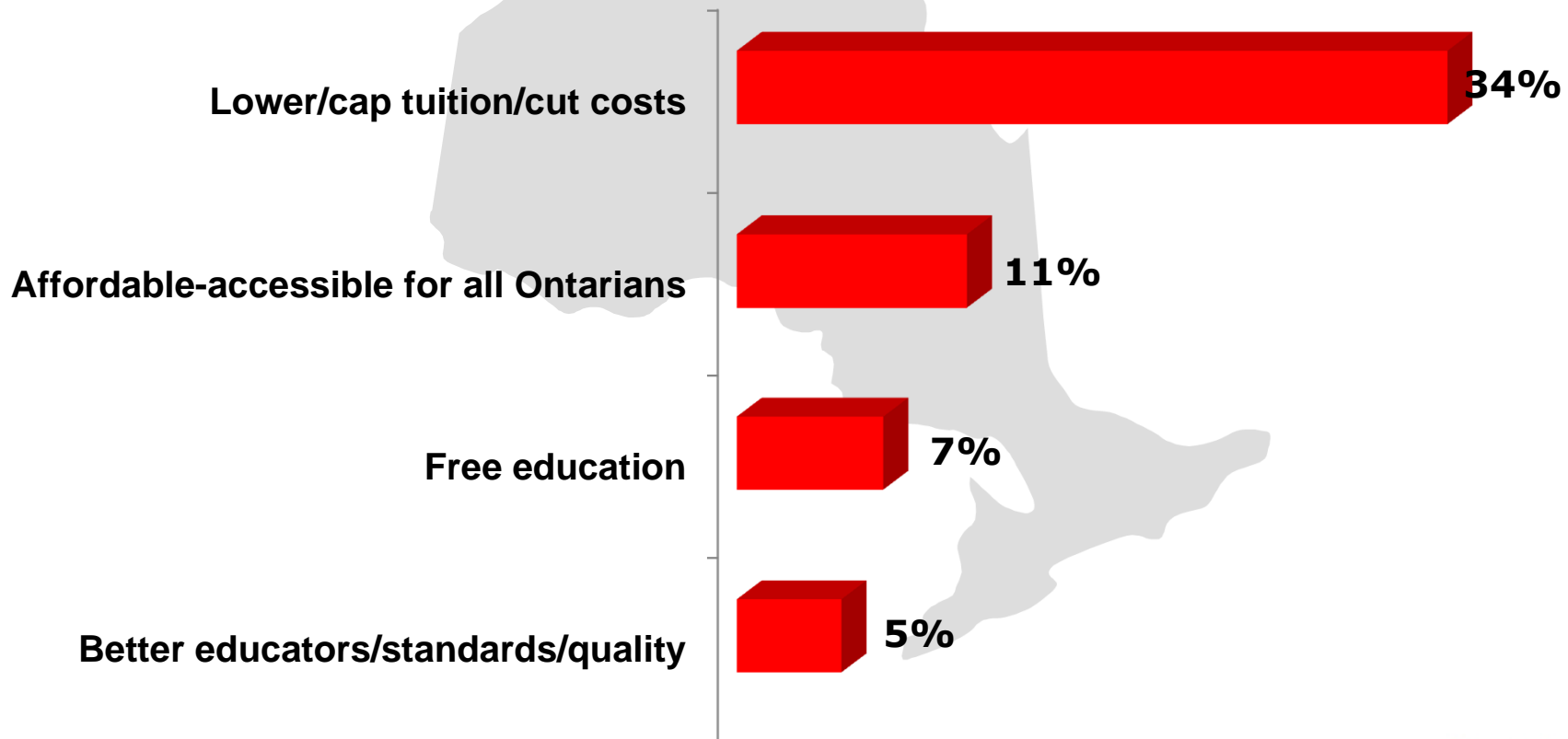
Quality of University Education in Ontario: Level of Concern

- One-third of Northern Ontario residents are **highly concerned** about the quality of university education in Ontario (rating of 8,9 or 10). The average concern-rating in this region is moderate at 6.47.



Most Important Strategy for University Education in Ontario?

- A third of Northern Ontario residents identify **lowering or capping tuition fees** as the “single most important thing” the provincial government should do for university education in Ontario.

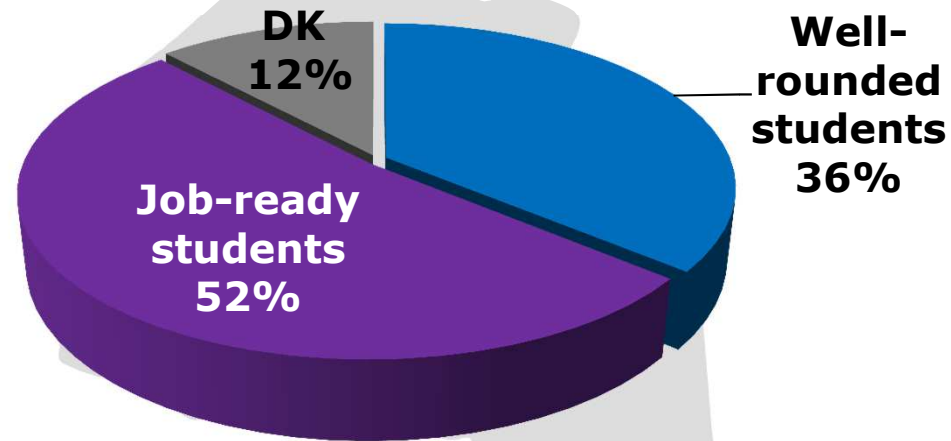




What Kind of University Education Do We Want?

Job-Ready or Well-Rounded Students?

- Northern Ontario residents are considerably more likely to identify “job-readiness” as the primary goal of university education.



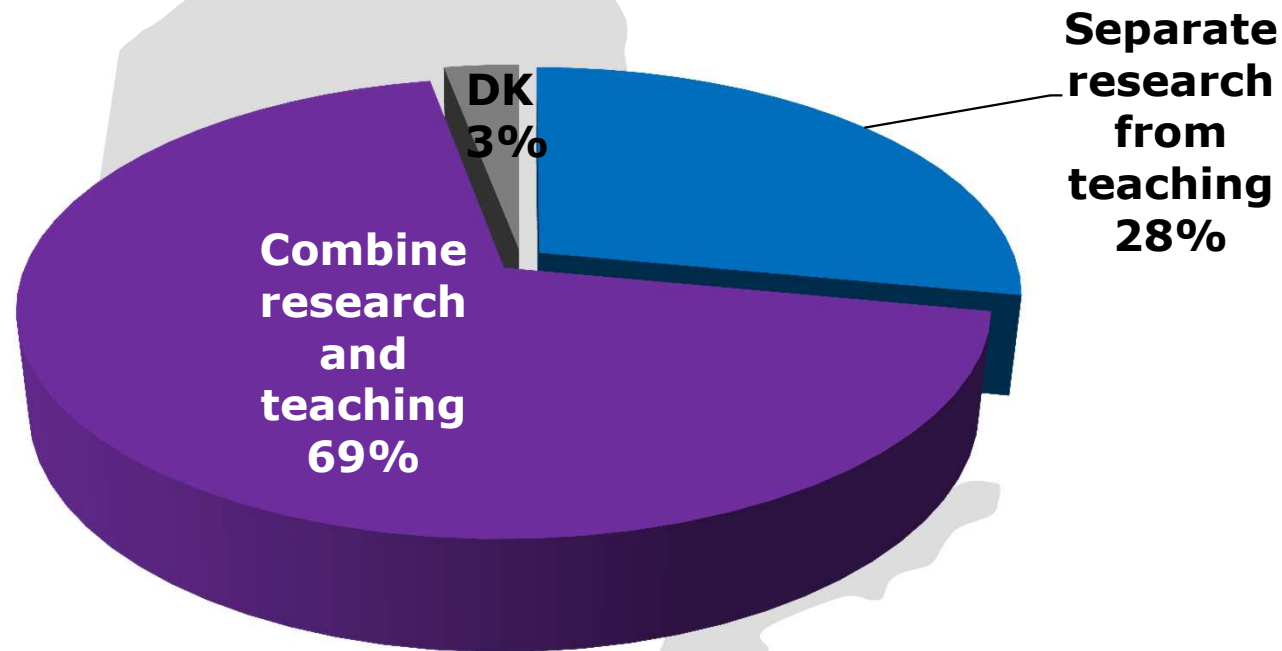
Tracking Results

Focus of university education should be...	2012 %	2011 %
Job-ready students*	52	53
Well-rounded students	36	44

*In 2011, this question used the phrase “students with specific skills.”

Best Model of Delivery?

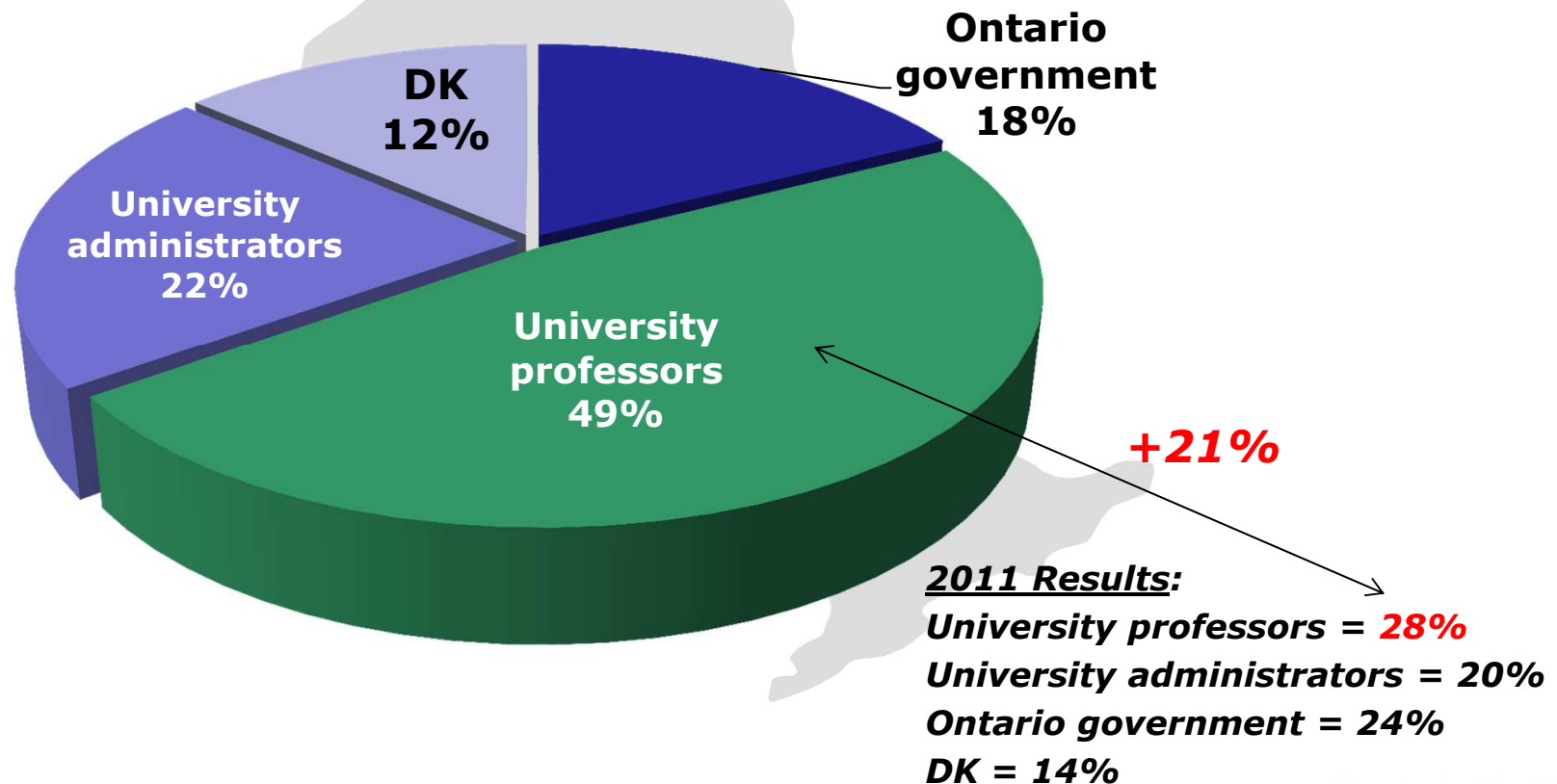
- Seven in ten Northern Ontarians believe that to fulfill their mandate universities must **combine research with teaching**.



Question: Earlier you indicated that university education should focus on producing [job-ready/well-rounded students]...which model of delivery of university education would best achieve this objective?

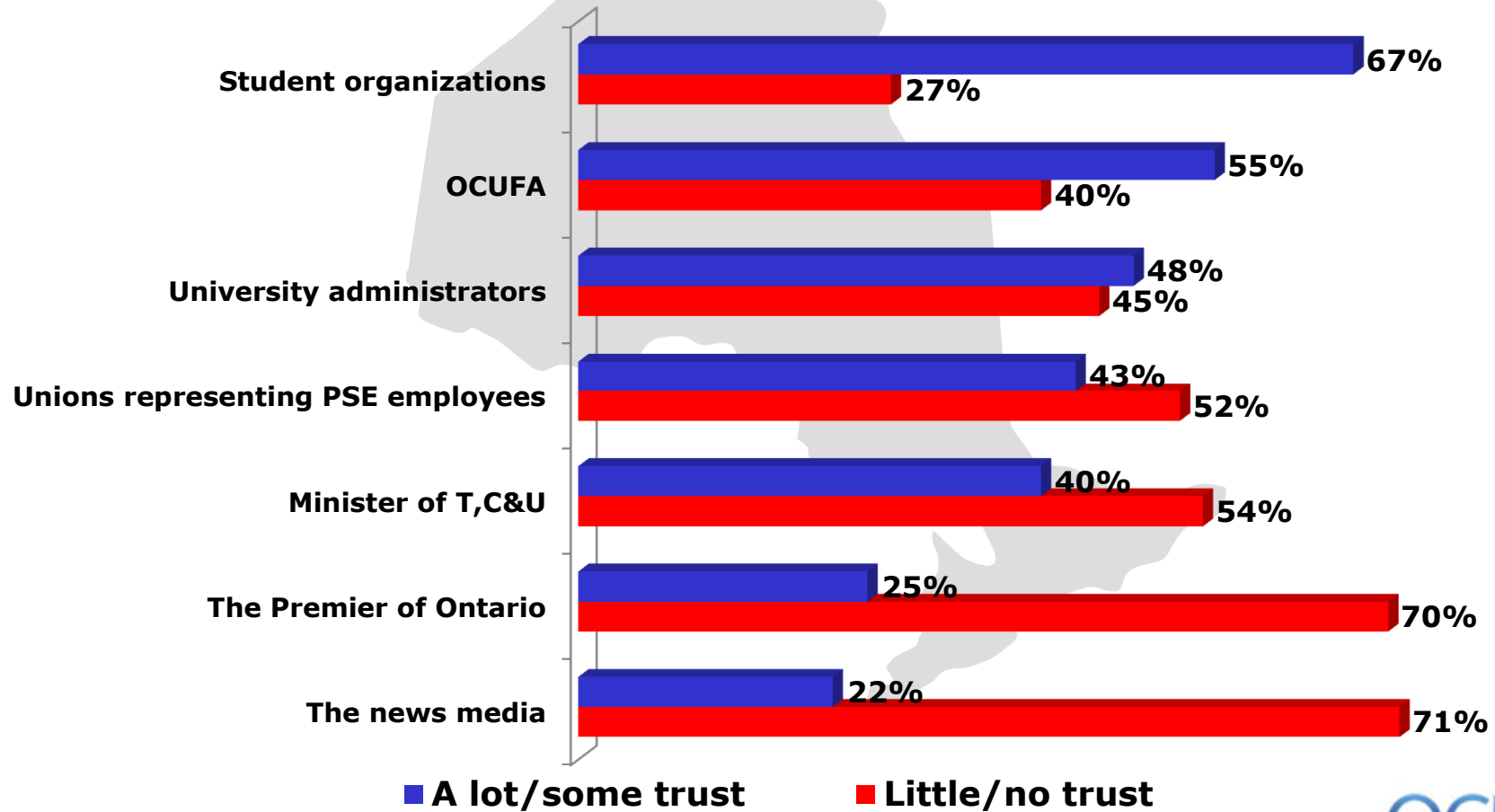
Ensuring A High Quality University Education: Who Do You Trust?

- Half of Northern Ontarians say they **trust university professors** most to ensure that students receive a high quality university education.



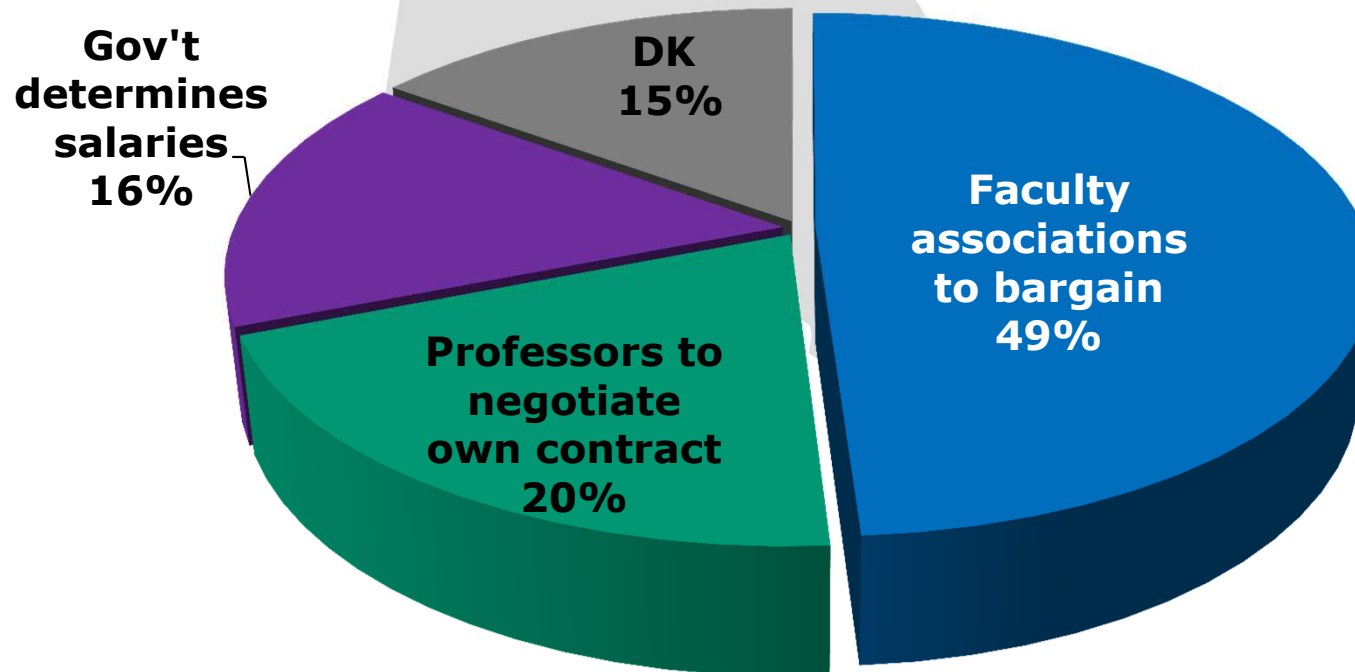
Sources of Information: Who Do You Trust?

- A majority of Northern Ontario residents consider **student organizations** and **OCUFA** trustworthy sources of information about Ontario's universities.



University Professors: Salaries & Working Conditions

- Half of Ontarians in the North think the best way to determine the salaries and working conditions of university professors is to **continue to allow collective bargaining** between faculty associations and university administration.



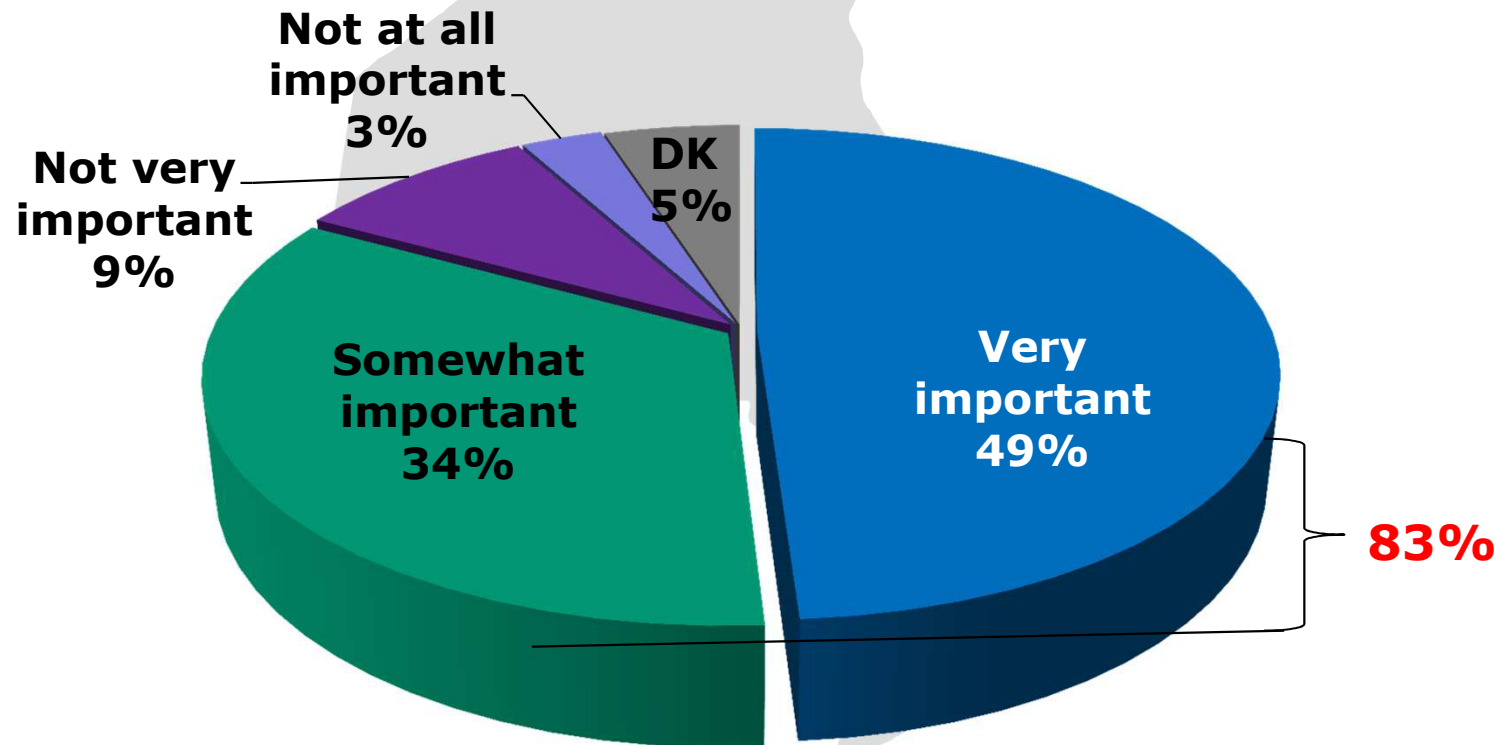


At What Cost?



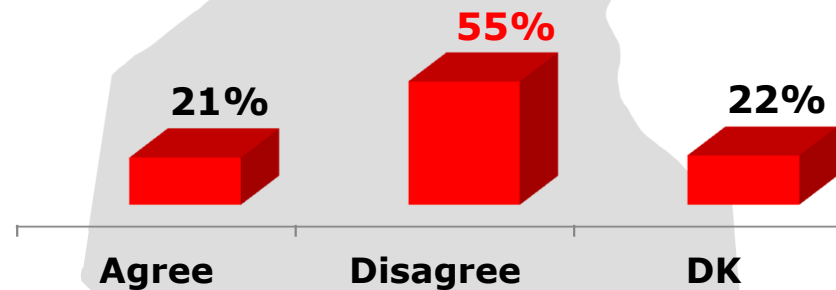
Importance of Provincial Deficit Reduction

- Over four in five Northern Ontarians believe it is important for the provincial government to reduce the provincial budget deficit.

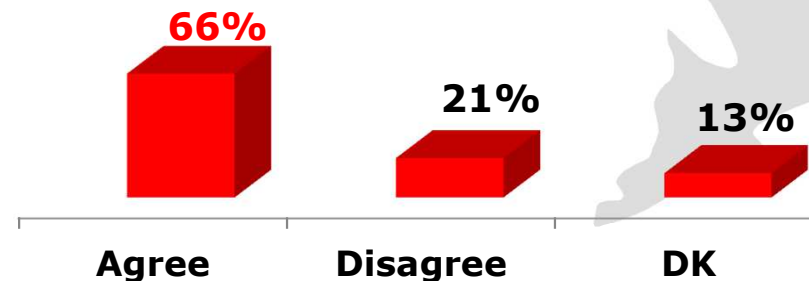


Deficit Reduction Strategies: Agree or Disagree?

- To meet deficit-reduction targets, government should override the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers.

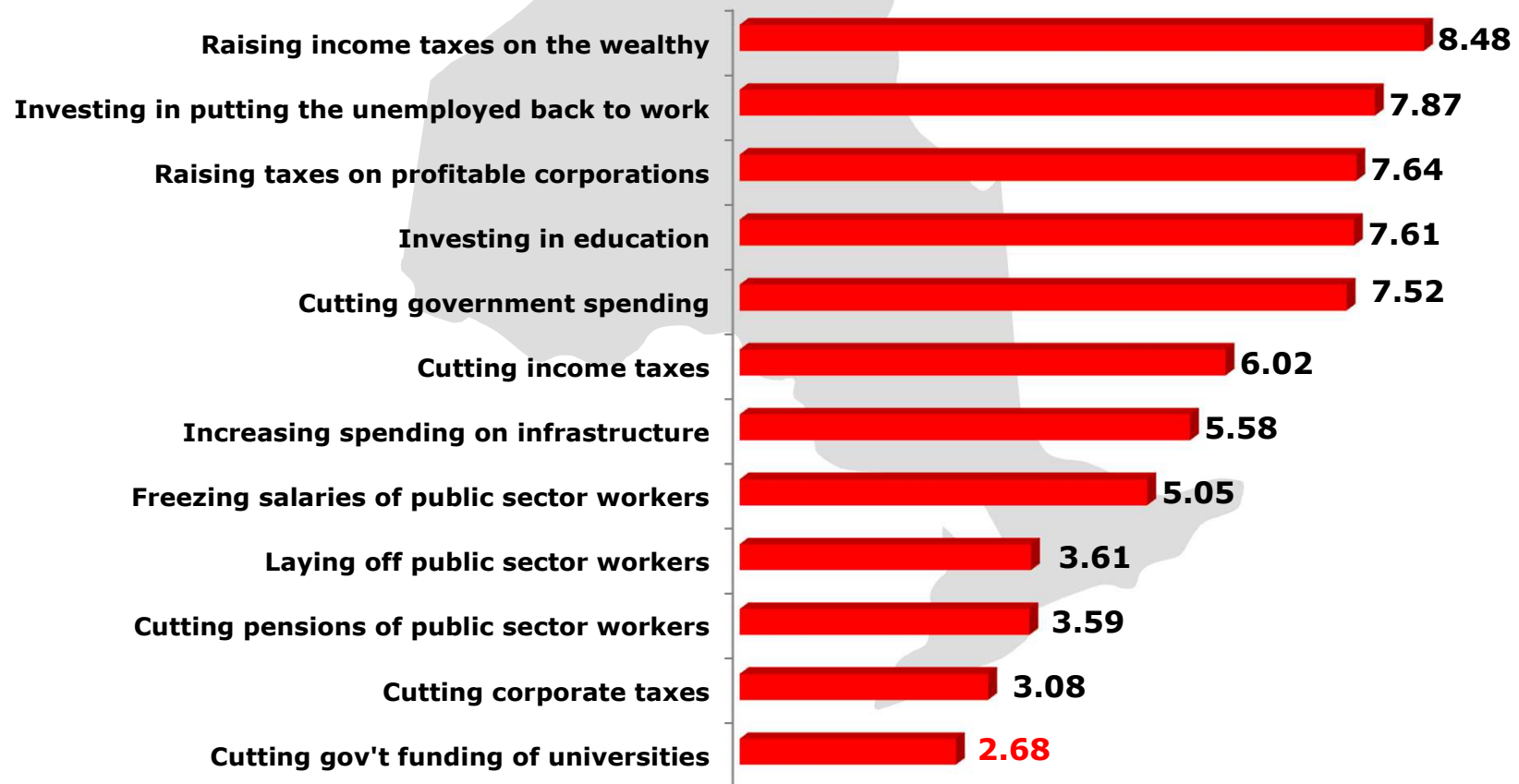


- Government should allow public sector workers to freely negotiate their working conditions and wages through a collective bargaining process.



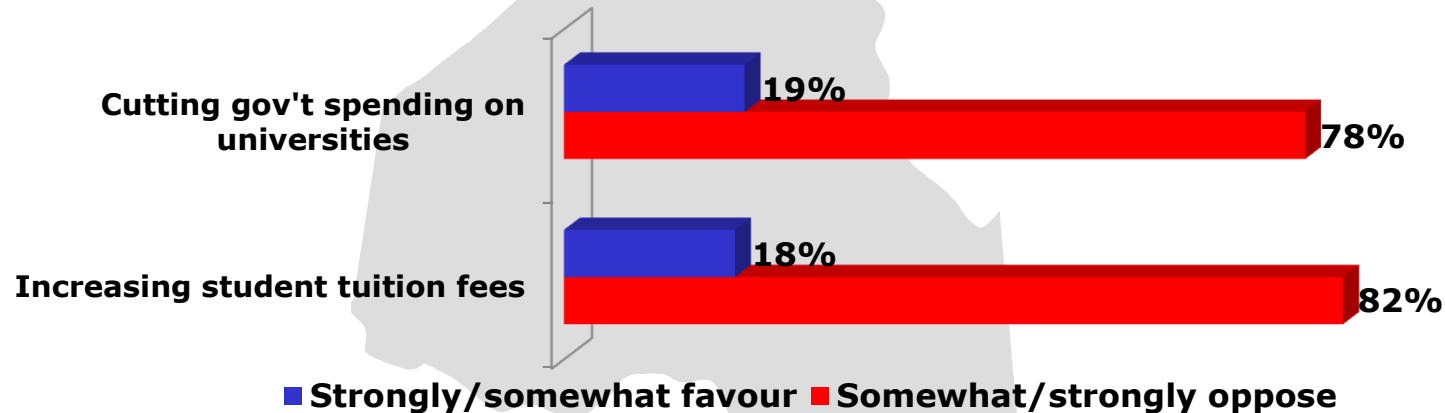
Strategies to Manage Fiscal Situation in Ontario: Level of Support

- A mix of stimulus and cost-cutting measures receive high to moderately-high levels of support from Northern Ontarians (i.e., a rating of 7 or greater). **Cutting funding for universities** received the lowest support-rating on average.

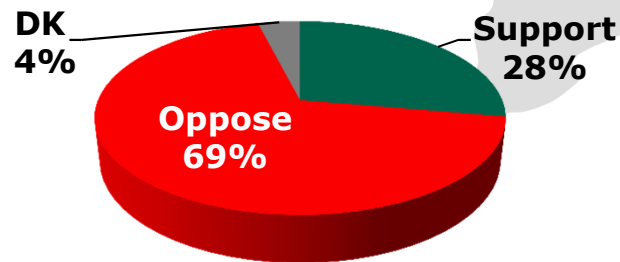


University Financing Strategies: Support for Government Investment

- About eight in ten Northern Ontarians oppose **increasing student tuition** and **cutting government spending on universities** as strategies to reduce university costs.



- Seven in ten Northern Ontario residents oppose the idea of **increasing student tuition** in programs expected to yield higher salaries after graduation.



Government Spending Freeze: Perceived Impact

- A majority of Northern Ontarians believe that a **freeze on spending on universities** and a **freeze on professors' salaries** would have a negative impact on the quality of university education in the province.

Impact of the following on quality of university education:	Positive Impact (%)	Negative Impact (%)	No Impact (%)
Government spending freeze on universities	5 (-12)	60 (+16)	21 (-11)
Freeze on professors' salaries	11 (-10)	55 (+13)	23 (+10)

() Denotes percentage change since 2011.

Deficit Reduction in Context

- Most Northern Ontario residents disagree with government measures to reduce the deficit in the context of three specific circumstances: 1) reduced education quality; 2) increased costs of education for students and families; and, 3) higher personal taxes.

How much do you agree or disagree that the provincial government should pursue measures to <u>reduce the deficit</u> ...	Agree strongly/ somewhat (%)	Disagree somewhat/ strongly (%)
...even if these measures will <u>reduce the quality</u> of university education.	24	74
...even if these measures will <u>increase the cost</u> of university education for students and their families.	35	63
...even if that means I would personally have to <u>pay more in taxes</u> .	37	61

*Would you support or oppose cuts to public services if it meant a negative impact on employment and economic growth?

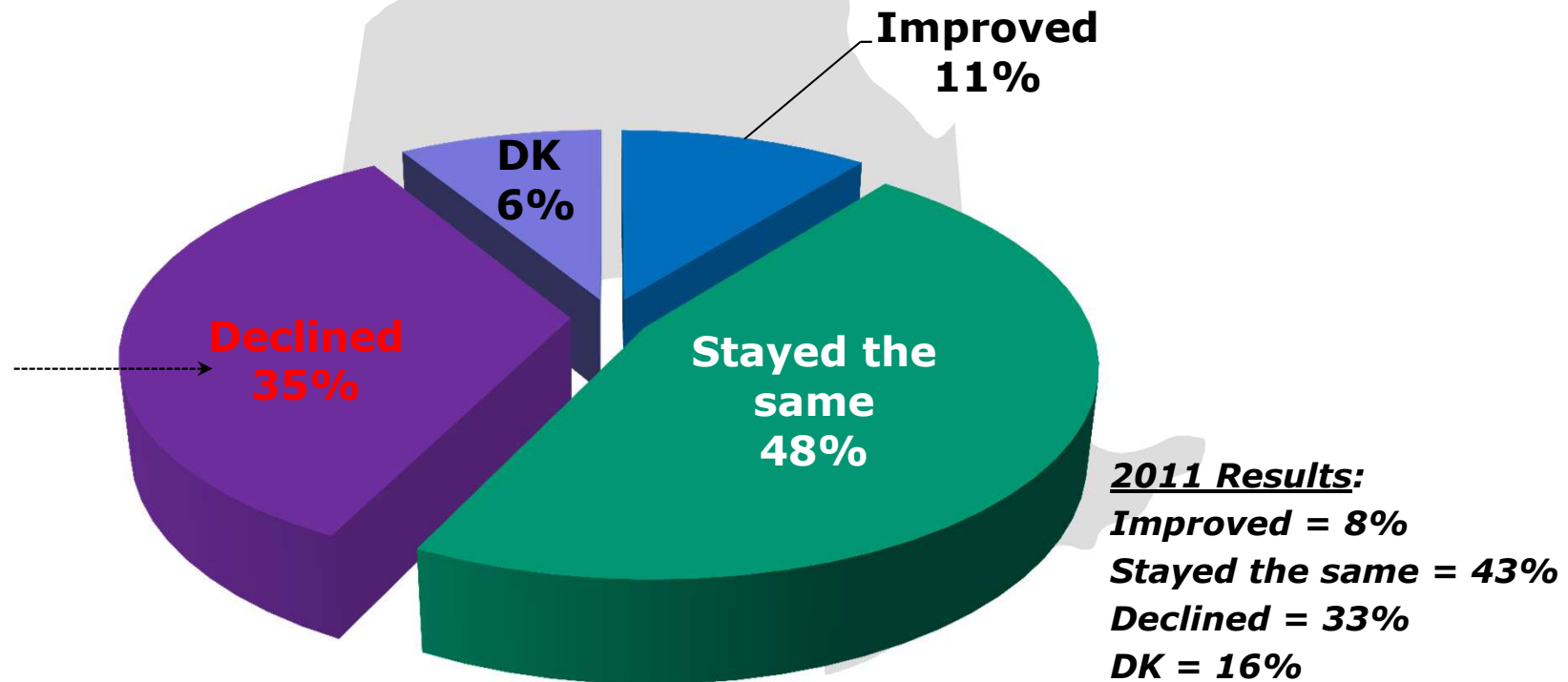
Support = 26%  Oppose = 74%



Looking Ahead: Political Leadership

McGuinty Government: Impact on Quality of University Education

- Over one-third of Northern Ontarians believe that the quality of university education has declined under the McGuinty government. By contrast, one in ten say that the quality of university education has improved during McGuinty's tenure.



Quality of University Education: Which Political Party Is Best?

- Over one in four residents of the North consider the **NDP** the political party most likely to improve the quality of university education in Ontario.

