

# Project KEEP US

Knowledge Enabling Efforts to Preserve University Students

[www.projectkeepus.com](http://www.projectkeepus.com)

***A community service endeavor of the Syracuse University students in the “Public Relations Research” class, PRL 315, taught during the fall 2004 semester by Jean Vincent, SU adjunct professor of public relations research and president of Vincent McCabe, Inc. and sponsored by Vincent McCabe, Inc.***



Conducted by:  
**Syracuse University**  
**Students in PRL 315**  
**Public Relations Research**

Sponsored by:



**Vincent McCabe**  
Marketing Intelligence

## I. Introduction

- **Project KEEP US (Knowledge Enabling Efforts to Preserve University Students) is a research study conducted this fall by students in the Public Relations Research Class PRL 315 at Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication.**
  
- **In one semester (15 weeks) 19 students learned about the many facets of public relations research and developed and executed Project KEEP US.**
  
- **Student Researchers:**
  - **Sally Alfis**
  - **Rebecca Baden**
  - **Holly Bernesser**
  - **Heather Bowes**
  - **Jenna Dalto**
  - **Luci Franklin**
  - **Alia Galal**
  - **Jody Gavin**
  - **Lauren Karis**
  - **Kathryn Mack**
  - **Nicole Moore**
  - **Lauren Munroe**
  - **Rebecca Neufeld**
  - **Rachel Nierenberg**
  - **Jacki Pilato**
  - **Rashi Ratan**
  - **Kim Tomasch**
  - **Sharleen Valentin**
  - **Matthew Werder**

## II. Acknowledgements

- **Brenda Dow, vice president of client services at Vincent McCabe, Inc. developed and championed the idea for Project KEEP US and acted as client liaison for the project.**
- **Dr. Dennis Kinsey, the public relations department chair at the SU S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication, approved presenting the idea to students.**
- **Chancellor Cantor also supported this student effort and her enthusiasm for the project helped the students through this very difficult assignment.**
- **Vincent McCabe, Inc. assisted in the completion of the project by allowing students to use its resources:**
  - **Design and data collection software package SNAP**
  - **SPSS software and statistical analysis staff support**
  - **Sponsoring the \$500 cash “chance to win” prize that was used as an inducement for students to complete the survey**
  - **Development of the project KEEP US website:**  
[www.projectkeepus.com](http://www.projectkeepus.com)

### III. Goal, Target Area and Objectives

#### Overall Goal

- **To add to the knowledge base to improve leaders’ decision-making when it comes to retaining area college graduates.**

#### Target Area

- **College students in the 12-County area outlined in the Essential New York Initiative, a report issued by the Metropolitan Development Association in February 2004.**

### III. Goal, Target Area and Objectives

#### Objectives

- **To determine if students at area colleges are staying, leaving or undecided about where to locate upon completing their college education.**
- **To determine factors that influence students’ decision to stay or go from the area where they attended college.**
- **To determine student characteristics (by location, by career choices, etc.) to better understand research results.**
- **To determine conditions or actions that may surface in the study that may be taken to keep graduates of area colleges in the area.**

## IV. Research Design

### Design Process

- **Secondary data collection – supported by Brenda Dow**
  
- **Students formed three consulting groups and made competitive presentations:**
  - **Super Seven Consulting**
  - **One Giant Leap Consulting**
  - **Orange Consulting**
  
- **These presentations were judged by Dow and public relations and marketing veterans from leading local agencies and major companies.**
  
- **The winning presentation became the foundation for the study, adjusted to include best practice research science, time constraints and incorporate the powerful ideas from each of the student teams.**

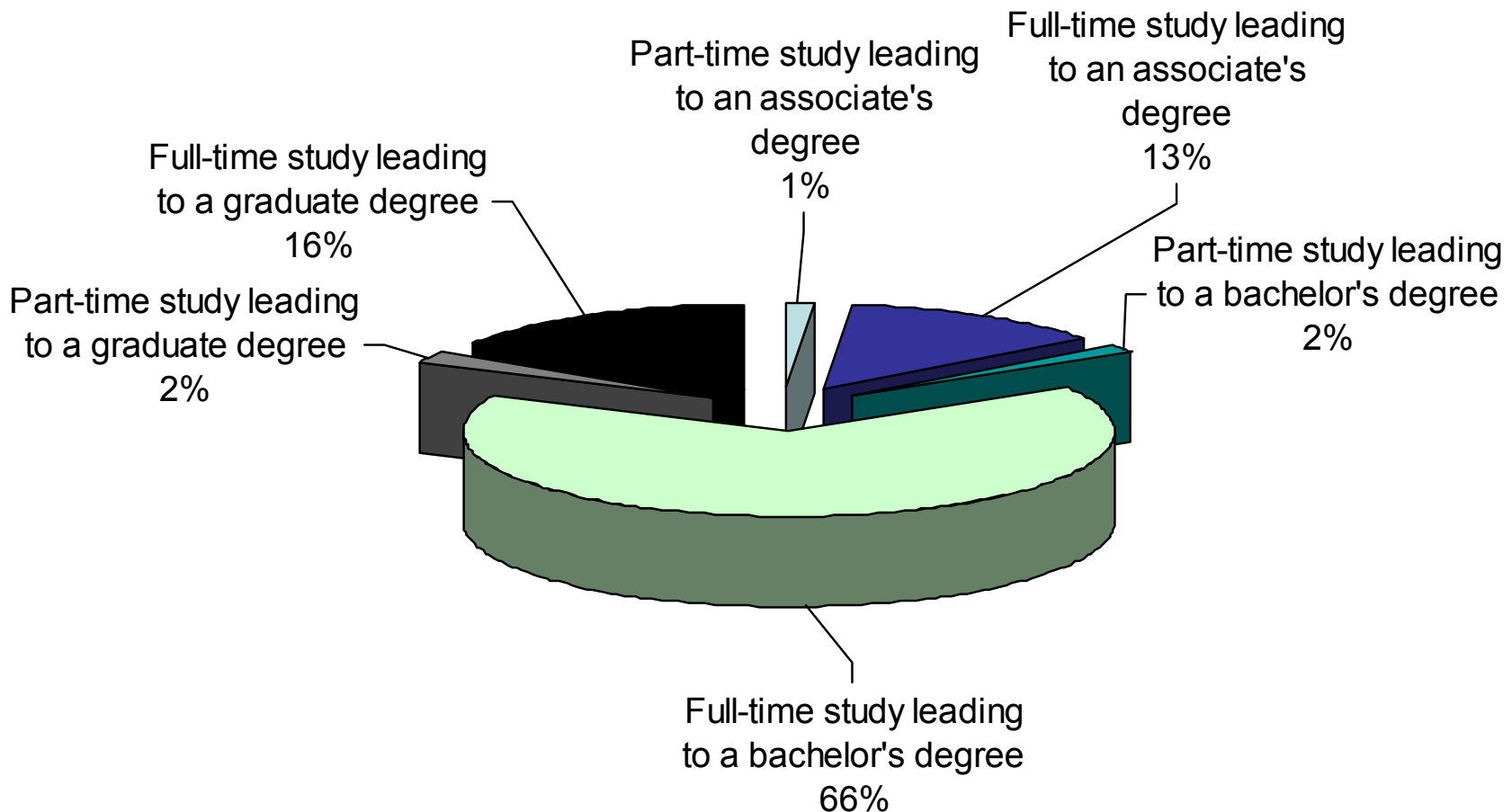
## IV. Research Design - Cross-sectional, Snapshot in Time

### Methodology

- **Phase One: Qualitative – the students conducted 55 personal interviews.**
- **Phase Two: Quantitative – A 28 multi-part question survey was posted to the internet.**
  - **Students did the following to recruit participants:**
    - **Called 225 people using school student directories.**
    - **Posted 1,000 flyers in student meeting places.**
    - **Sent 2,508 e-mails.**
    - **Posted messages on online forums visited by college students.**
  - **College/University Administrators assistance included:**
    - **15 institutions sent e-mails and placed flyers in student mailboxes: SUNY Canton, Cayuga Community College, Crouse School of Nursing, Cazenovia College, Clarkson University, Colgate University, Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF), Hamilton College, Herkimer County Community College, SUNY Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome, Mohawk Valley Community College, St. Joseph’s Hospital Health Center College of Nursing, Syracuse University, Upstate Medical University, Utica College**

## V. Sample Description

- **2,299 students participated (Approximate 5% rate of return)**



## V. Sample Description

- **Students from 25 different institutions of higher learning participated:**

Cayuga Community College, SUNY

Cazenovia College

Clarkson University

Colgate University

Cornell University

Cortland, SUNY

Crouse Hospital School of Nursing

Empire State College, SUNY – Syracuse and  
Auburn locations only

Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF),  
SUNY

Hamilton College

Herkimer County Community College

Ithaca College

Le Moyne College

Mohawk Valley Community College

Onondaga Community College (OCC), SUNY

Saint Joseph's Hospital Health Center  
College of Nursing

Saint Lawrence University

SUC Potsdam

SUNY College of Technology at Canton

SUNY Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome

Syracuse University

Tompkins-Cortland Community College,  
SUNY

Upstate Medical University, SUNY

Utica College

Wells College

## V. Sample Description

### ■ Participating students represent a broad range of hometowns

(Hometown = place where the student lived most of his/her life prior to attending the current college)

	% of Students
Cayuga County, NY (Auburn, Aurora area)	1.70%
Cortland County, NY (Cortland, Dryden area)	0.52%
Herkimer County, NY (Herkimer, Old Forge area)	1.49%
Jefferson County, NY (Watertown area)	1.27%
Lewis County, NY (Lowville area)	0.48%
Madison County, NY (Cazenovia, Hamilton, Morrisville, Oneida)	2.66%
Oneida County, NY (Clinton, Rome, Utica area)	6.51%
Onondaga County, NY (Syracuse area)	11.93%
Oswego County, NY (Oswego area)	2.36%
Seneca County, NY (Seneca Falls area)	0.31%
St. Lawrence County, NY (Canton, Potsdam area)	6.99%
Tompkins County, NY (Ithaca area)	0.44%
Another county within New York state	24.90%
Another U.S. state (not New York state)	34.64%
Outside of the 50 United States	3.80%
	100.00%

## V. Sample Description

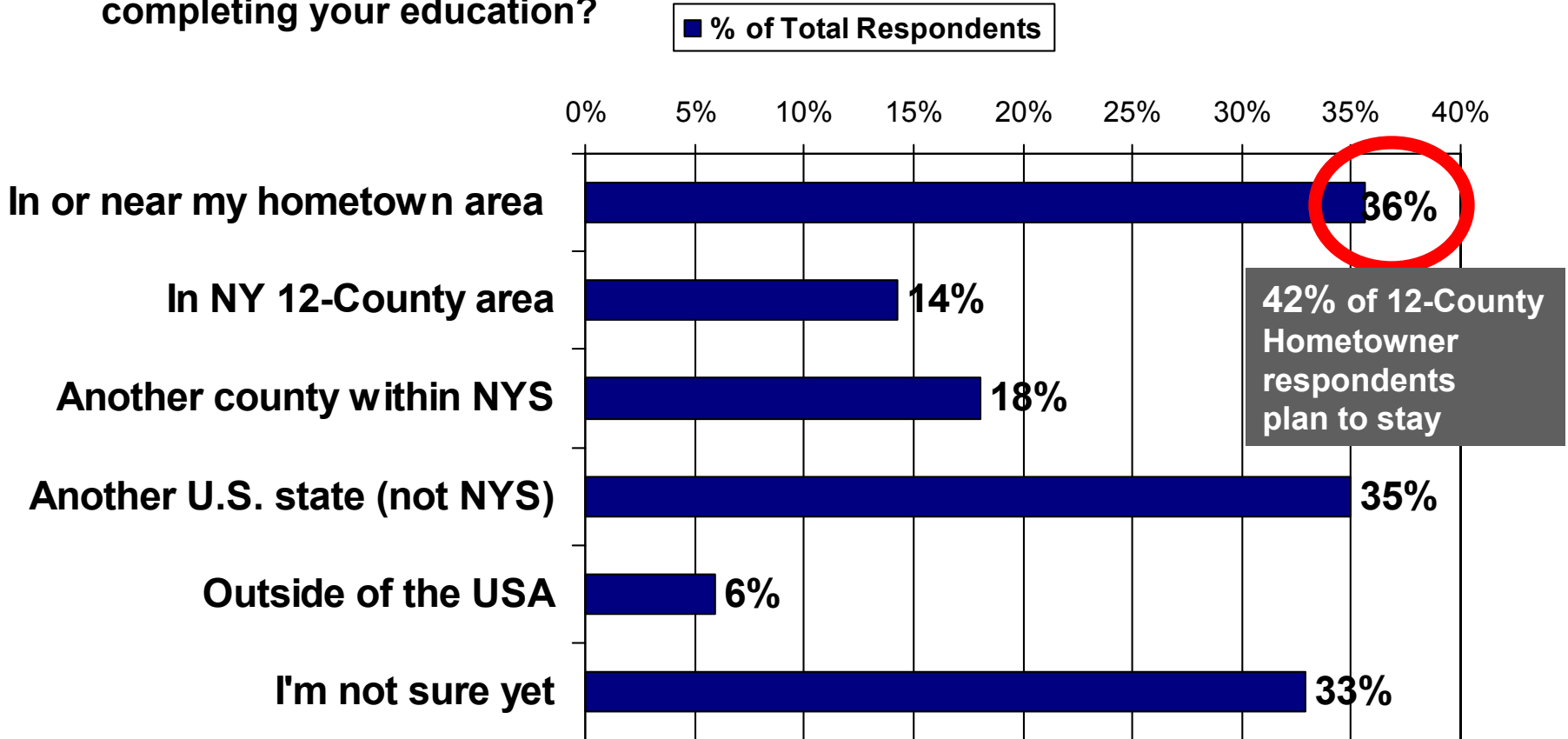
- **While our sample was broad and diverse, there is a high degree of concurrence (agreement) among the students on some topics.**

**87% of the responding students think it is important or very important that they can immediately get or start a job that at the very least will pay the bills.**

- **Thanks to this similarity in response patterns, the study data can be used to make projections for the students in the 12-County area as well as offer insights into student differences.**
- **Results from the entire sample have a confidence interval (accuracy) similar to professional studies.**

## VI. Findings

- Students were asked: **Where do you plan to live and work immediately after completing your education?**

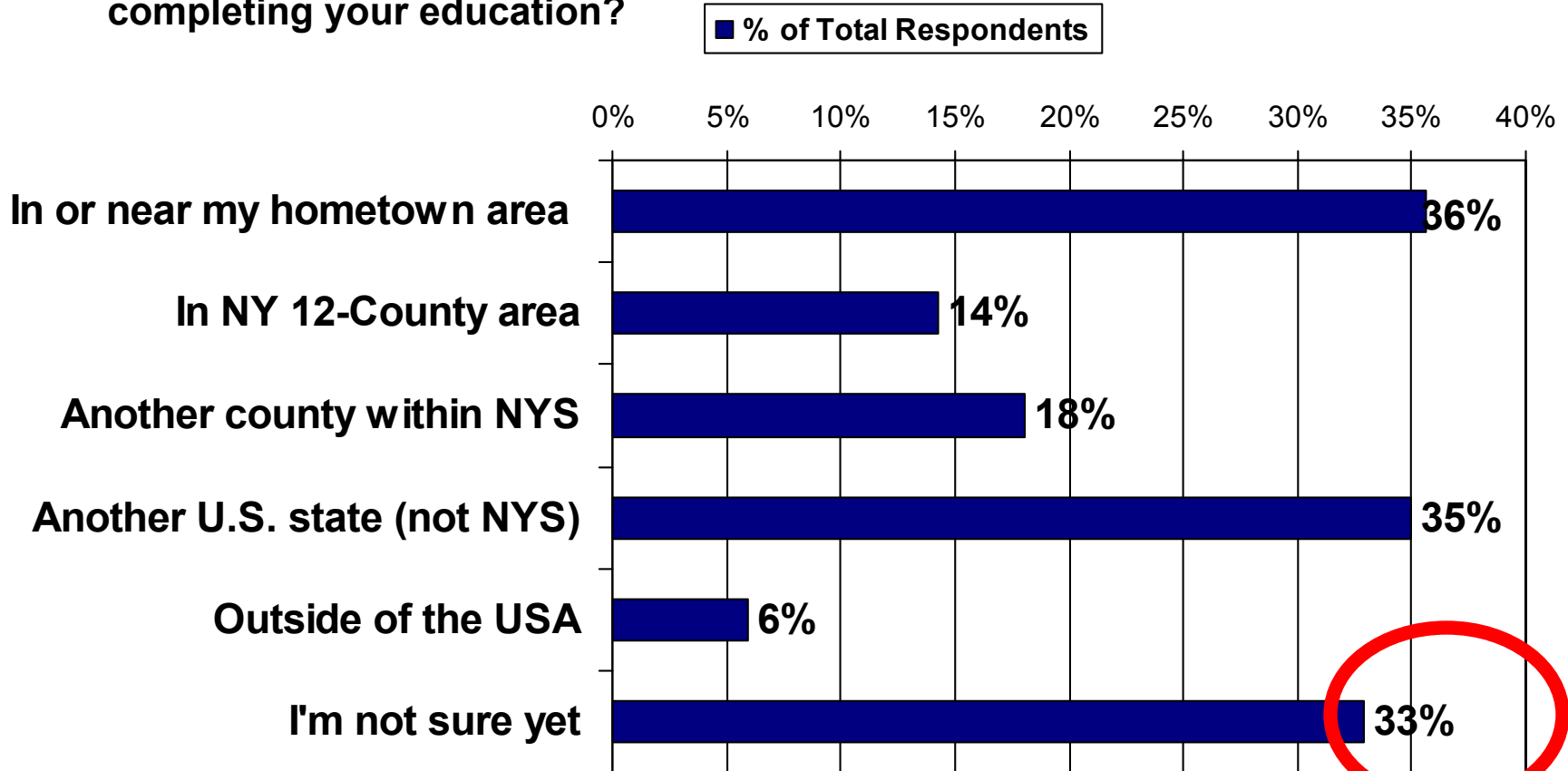


**Many want to live in their hometowns!**

Note: Will not add to 100% due to multiple responses.

## VI. Findings

- Students were asked: **Where do you plan to live and work immediately after completing your education?**



**Many still undecided!**

Note: Will not add to 100% due to multiple responses.

## VI. Findings

When it comes to the complex decision of where to live after graduation from college or graduate school, there is not “one” typical student profile. Rather there are different types of students with different motivators and needs.

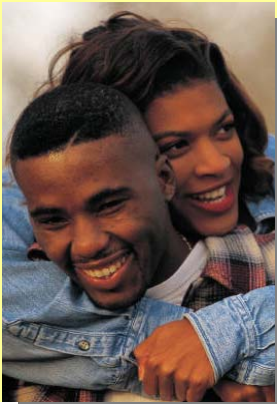
In fact, there are FIVE different student clusters each of which are motivated in a different way.

## VI. Findings

**Statistical analysis determined that there are five distinct student clusters:**

**Student  
Cluster  
One**

**Better Life  
Seekers**



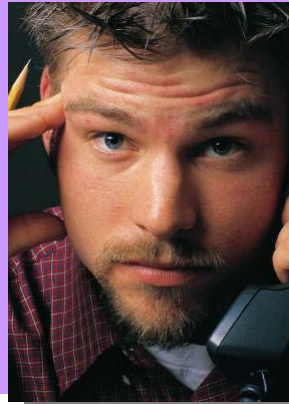
**Student  
Cluster  
Two**

**Homebodies**



**Student  
Cluster  
Three**

**Dreamers**



**Student  
Cluster  
Four**

**Recruitables**



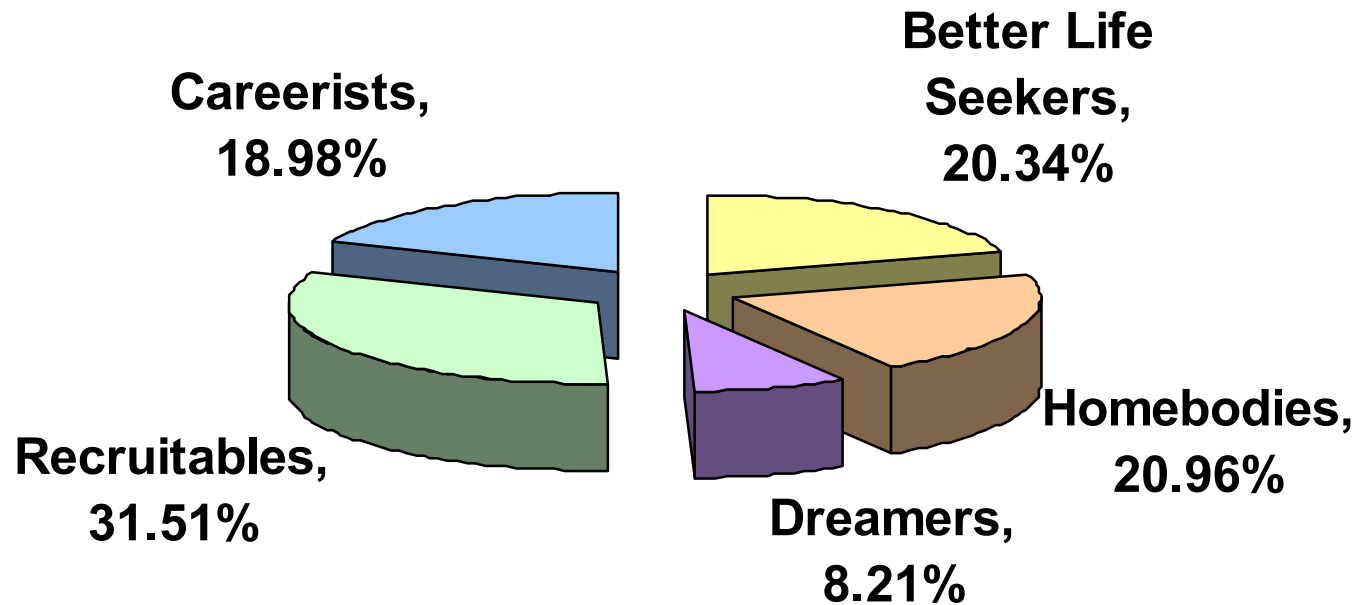
**Student  
Cluster  
Five**

**Careerists**



## VI. Findings

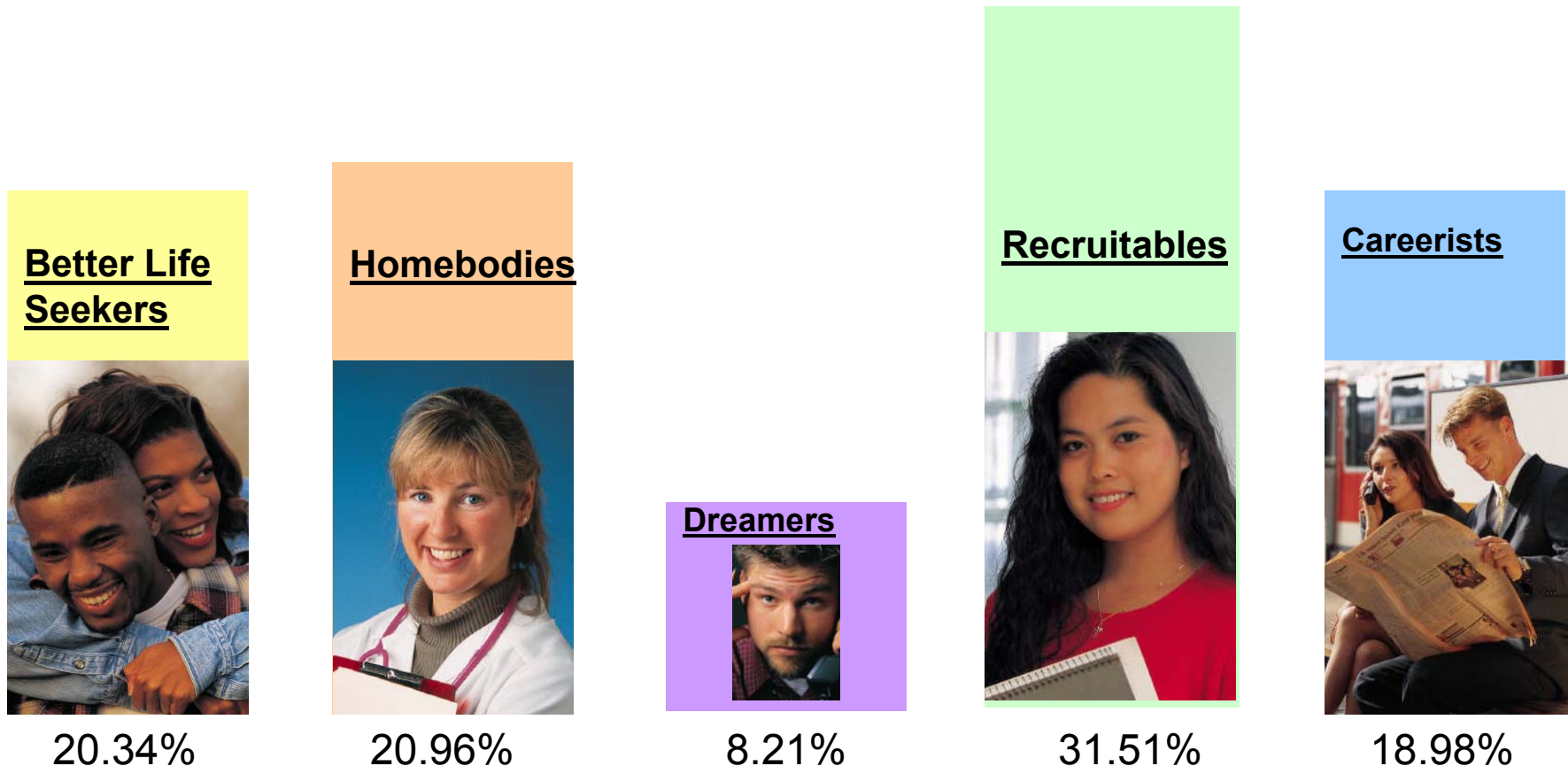
The percent of student respondents in each cluster is shown below:



461	475	186	714	430
Better Life Seekers	Homebodies	Dreamers	Recruitables	Careerists
20.34%	20.96%	8.21%	31.51%	18.98%

## VI. Findings

### Profile of the 25 Colleges – 12-County Area

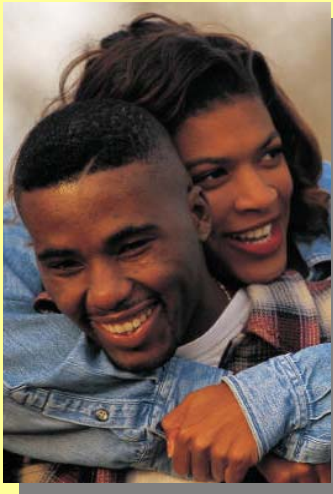


## VI. Findings

### Better Life Seekers

Student  
Cluster  
One

#### Better Life Seekers



20.34%

#### What's important to the Better Life Seekers?

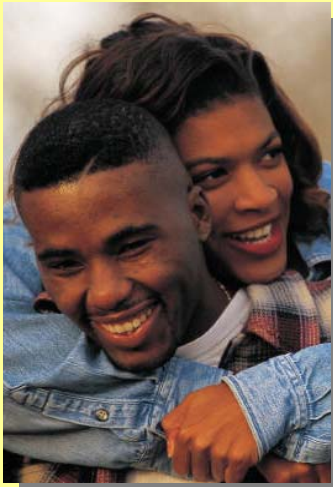
- Reasonable cost of living (housing, taxes, transportation, utilities, etc.).
- Housing options: sufficient amount, quality of facilities, neighborhood locations.
- A safe environment, feeling of being safe.
- Diverse and/or tolerant population.
- *Better Life Seekers don't care if the better life is in their hometown and won't move to a place just for the money.*

## VI. Findings

### Better Life Seekers

Student  
Cluster  
One

#### Better Life Seekers



20.34%

What's important to them in their own words.

- ***“It’s the cost of living and the atmosphere of community.”***
- **Dream Job: Web development manager**
- ***“It must be a nice place with nice people that I will be able to raise my daughter in. I want to be able to live somewhere that I don’t have to lock her up.”***
- **Dream Job: Lawyer**
- ***“Unique affordable housing and progressive neighbors.”***
- **Dream Job: Engineering manager**
- ***“If the residents around are friendly and the place is safe.”***
- **Dream Job: Quality controller**

## VI. Findings

### Homebodies

Student  
Cluster  
Two

#### Homebodies



20.96%

#### What's important to Homebodies?

- **Being near my family.**
- **Being very familiar with the area.**
- **Can live with family to save money.**
- ***Homebodies are not motivated by things that motivate a Better Life Seeker nor do employment incentives that Recruitables want motivate Homebodies, unless, of course, the offers are from their hometown.***

## VI. Findings

### Homebodies

Student  
Cluster  
Two

#### Homebodies



20.96%

What's important to them in their own words.

- ***“Where I grew up is where I want to live.”***
- **Dream Job: Nurse Practitioner**
- ***“Probably the fact that I get homesick and it would be too hard not to go home because I love my friends and family very much.”***
- **Dream Job: Teacher**
- ***“I’m not sure I’m ready to be away from what I know.”***
- **Dream Job: Accountant**
- ***“It’s my hometown and the place I feel most comfortable.”***
- **Dream Job: Information Systems Manager**

## VI. Findings

### Dreamers

Student  
Cluster  
Three

#### Dreamers



8.21%

#### What's important to Dreamers?

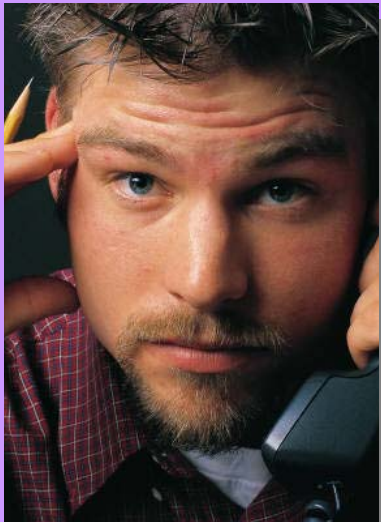
- Their compelling vision of what they want to do.
- They don't care if there are a lot of jobs in the field or if they'll get a high salary.
- They don't care if they have a good standard of living.
- They will sacrifice or forego relationships for the sake of the dream.
- *Dreamers will sacrifice to realize their dream, and wildcard motivators unique to their vision transcend other issues.*

## VI. Findings

### Dreamers

Student  
Cluster  
Three

#### Dreamers



8.21%

What’s important to them in their own words.

- ***“I want to discover new ideas.”***
- **Dream Job: Professor at a major university**
- ***“It depends on where God takes me.”***
- **Dream Job: Veterinary technician**
- ***“Desire to gain experience working with international and underserved populations.”***
- **Dream Job: HIV prevention specialist**
- ***“Skiing in the area.”***
- **Dream Job: Automobile racing and development**
- ***“I’ve had a plan since childhood.”***
- **“Dream Job: Working with orphans in Africa**

## VI. Findings

### Recruitables

Student  
Cluster  
Four

#### Recruitables



31.5%

#### What's important to Recruitables?

- **Efforts made by a company or community representative to recruit them.**
- **Recommendations from trusted professors or colleagues.**
- **Benefits and/or special incentives (e.g. loan payback programs from employers.)**
- **Near professional contacts or prior internship, fieldwork or clinical site.**
- ***Recruitables are looking for the best deal overall and they are not sensitive to a particular location.***

## VI. Findings

### Recruitables

Student  
Cluster  
Four

#### Recruitables



31.5%

What's important to them in their own words.

- ***“I’ll go to the place where the employer offers the most benefits and I feel most comfortable.”***
- **Dream Job: School Teacher**
- ***“Internship opportunities are beginning to influence my decisions because I may receive an offer after my internship next summer for a full-time position.”***
- **Dream Job: Retail buyer**
- ***“The employer needs to offer what I am looking for.”***
- **Dream Job: Health service administrator**
- ***“I have a lot of connections for jobs and internships in the area that I’m considering.”***
- **Dream Job: Advertising agency executive**

## VI. Findings

### Careerists

Student  
Cluster  
Five

#### Careerists



18.98%

#### What's important to Careerists?

- **The Career. The Career. The Career**
- **High salaries for jobs in my field.**
- **Excellent opportunity to land the dream job.**
- **Can immediately get or start a job that will at least pay the bills.**
  
- ***Careerists are not concerned about reasonable cost of living, housing options, neighborhood facilities or a safe, diverse environment unless it's in a place that is known for their field.***

## VI. Findings

### Careerists

Student  
Cluster  
Five

#### Careerists



18.98%

What's important to them in their own words.

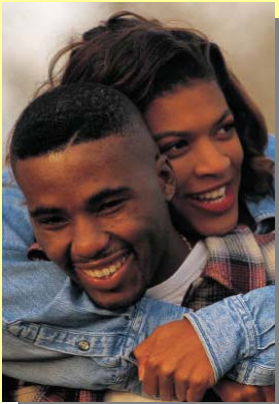
- ***“I need to go where musical theatre is very prevalent; there is no better place than New York City.”***
- **Dream Job: Musical theater actress**
- ***“I’ll go where I can get a job in my field. There are no jobs around here for my kind of work.”***
- **Dream Job: Video game consultant**
- ***“It depends where I can get the best job. I am willing to move to wherever the best opportunity for my career is.”***
- **Dream Job: Television**
- ***“Finding a job with my major that has opportunity for advancement in my career.”***
- **Dream Job: Design engineer**

## VI. Findings

**Statistical analysis determined that there are five distinct student clusters:**

Student  
Cluster  
One

**Better Life  
Seekers**



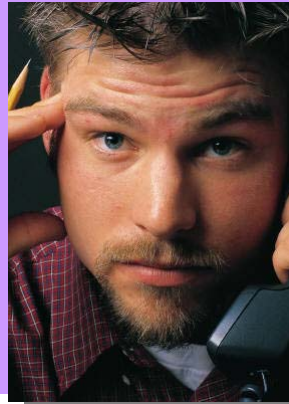
Student  
Cluster  
Two

**Homebodies**



Student  
Cluster  
Three

**Dreamers**



Student  
Cluster  
Four

**Recruitables**



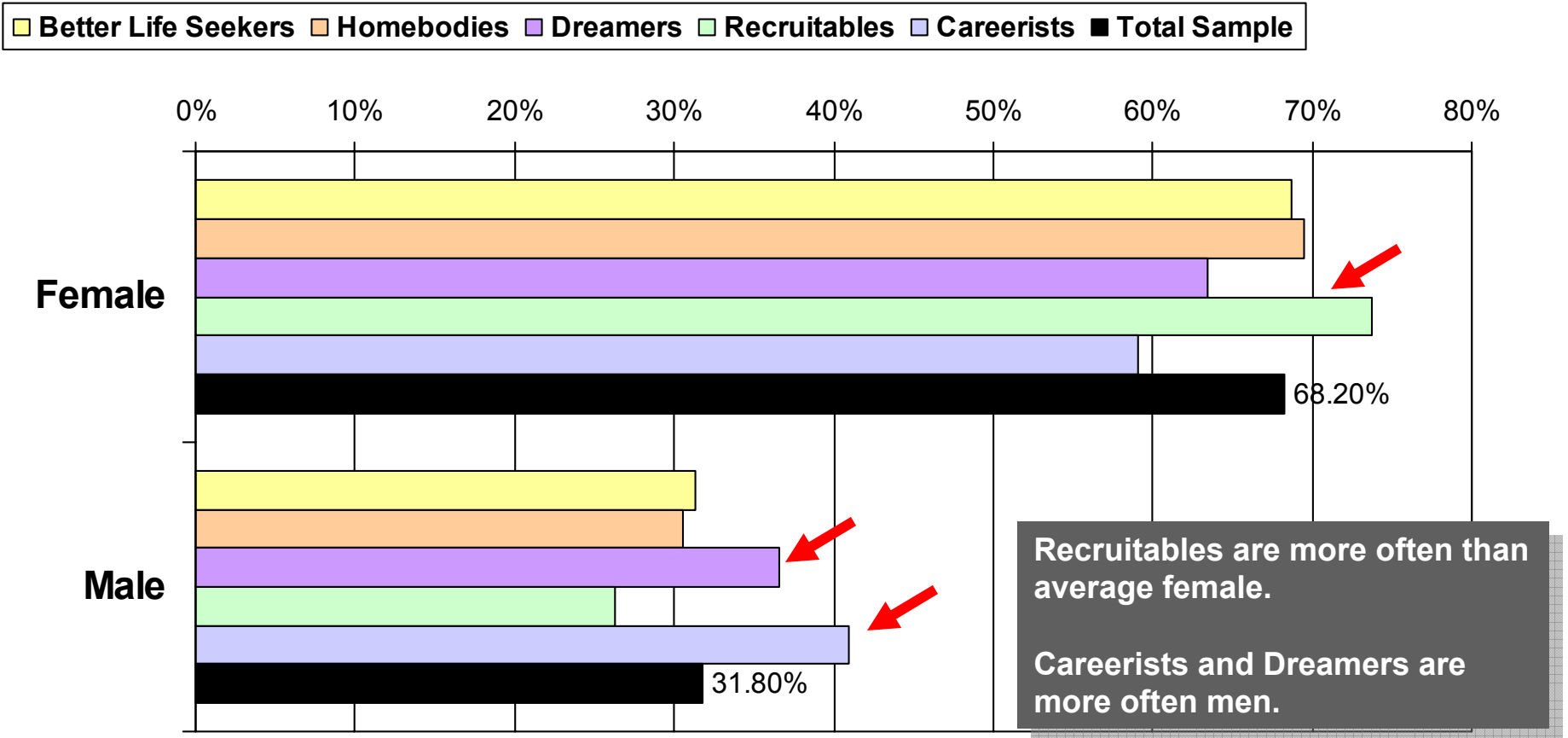
Student  
Cluster  
Five

**Careerists**



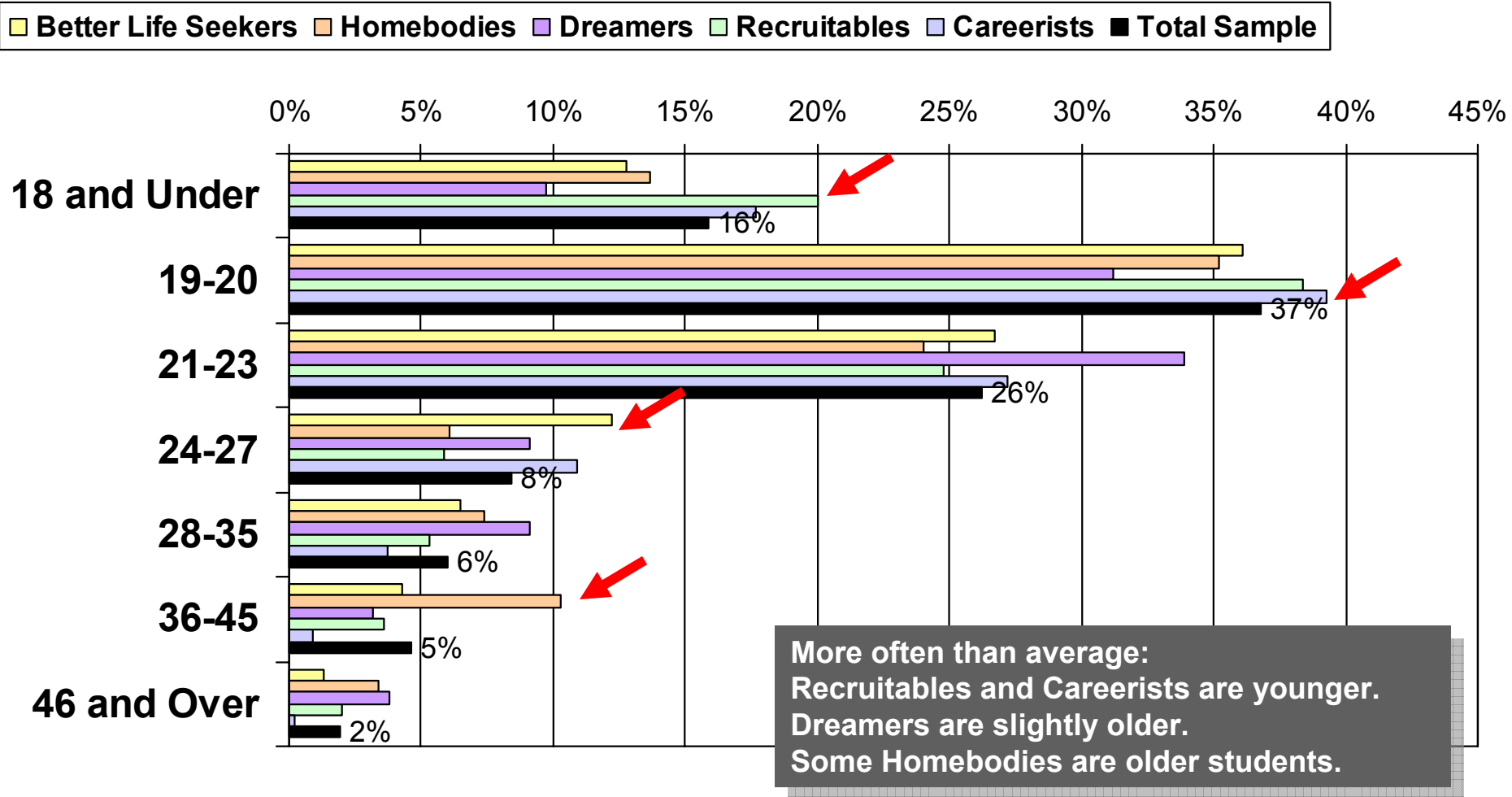
## VI. Findings

- Sex – % of respondents in each cluster



## VI. Findings

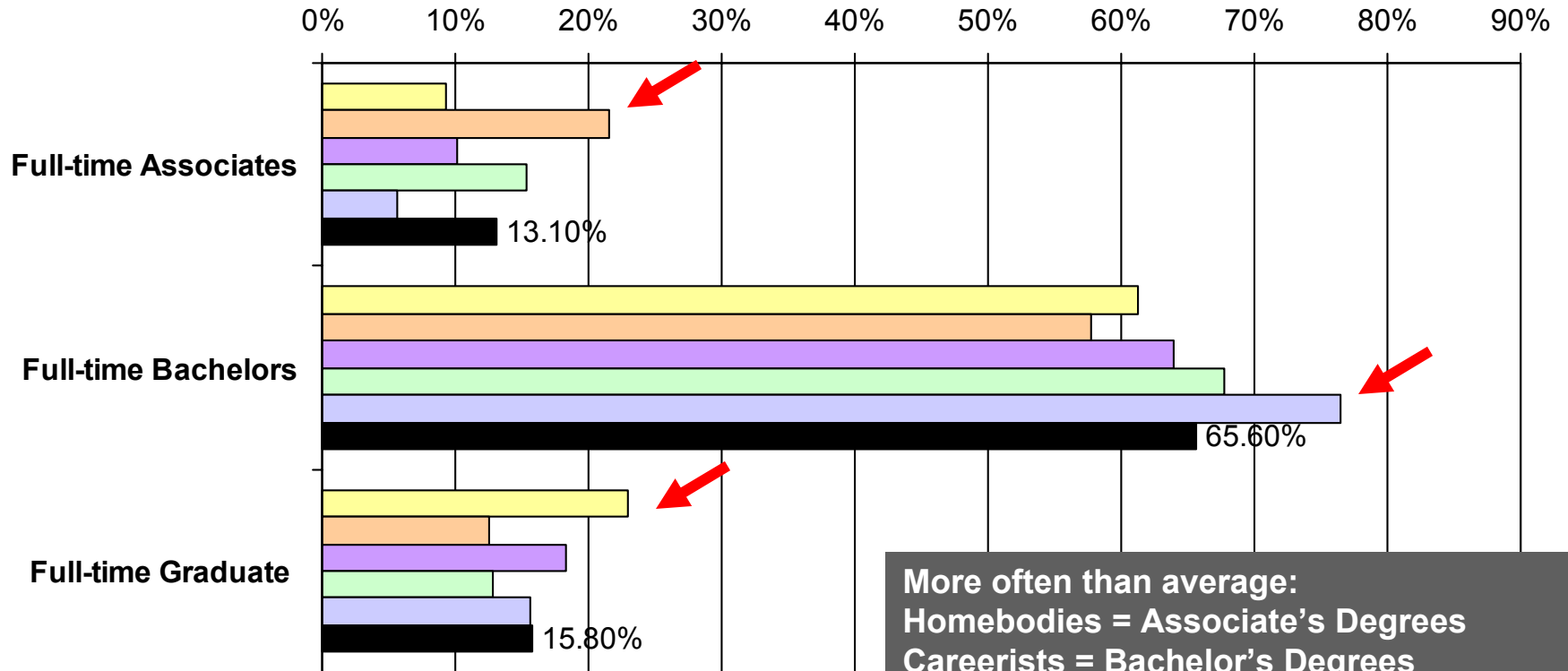
### Age – % of respondents in each cluster



## VI. Findings

### Type Degree – % of respondents in each cluster

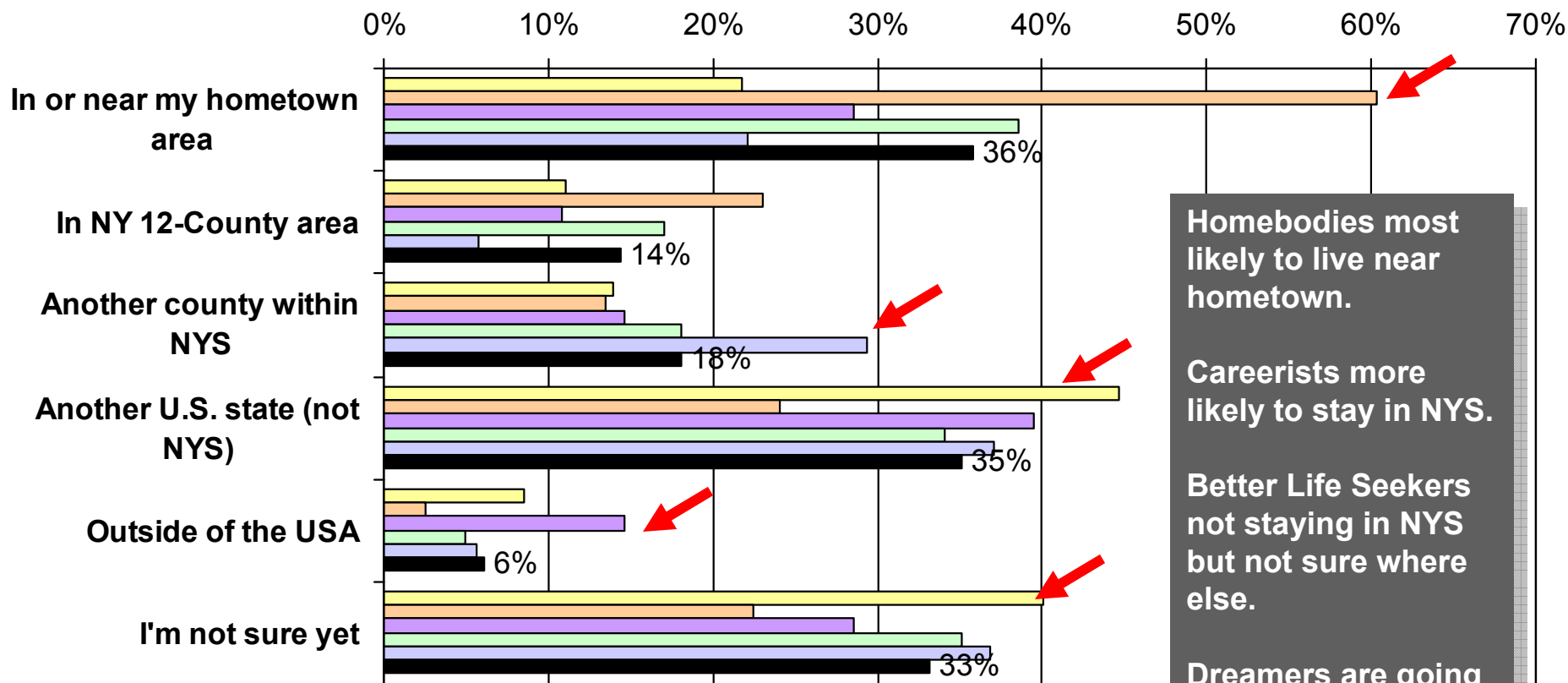
■ Better Life Seekers 
 ■ Homebodies 
 ■ Dreamers 
 ■ Recruitables 
 ■ Careerists 
 ■ Total Sample



**More often than average:**  
 Homebodies = Associate's Degrees  
 Careerists = Bachelor's Degrees  
 Better Life Seekers = Graduate Degrees

## VI. Findings

### Where they plan to live and work immediately after graduation – % of respondents



Homebodies most likely to live near hometown.

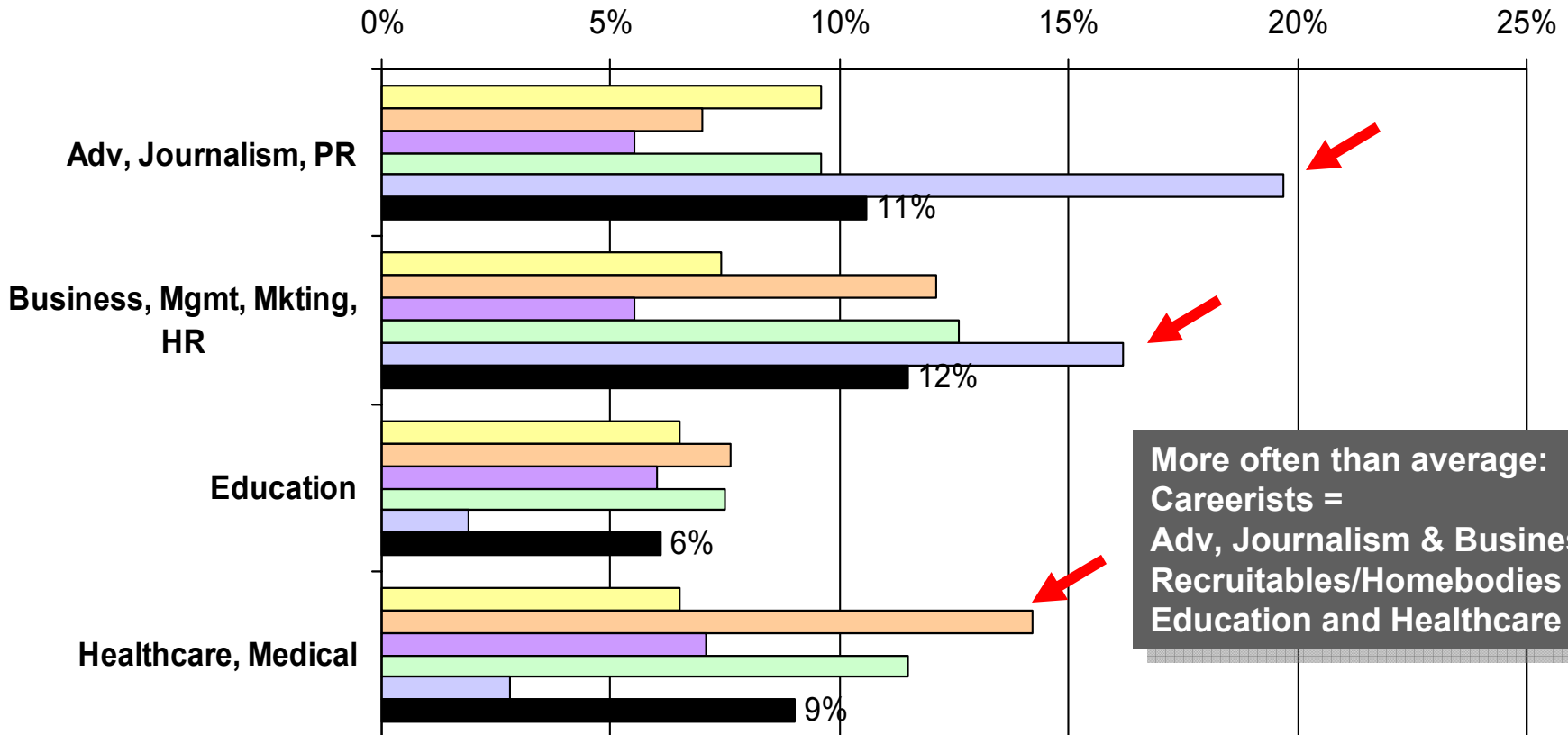
Careerists more likely to stay in NYS.

Better Life Seekers not staying in NYS but not sure where else.

Dreamers are going overseas.

## VI. Findings

### ■ Courses of Study – % of respondents in each cluster

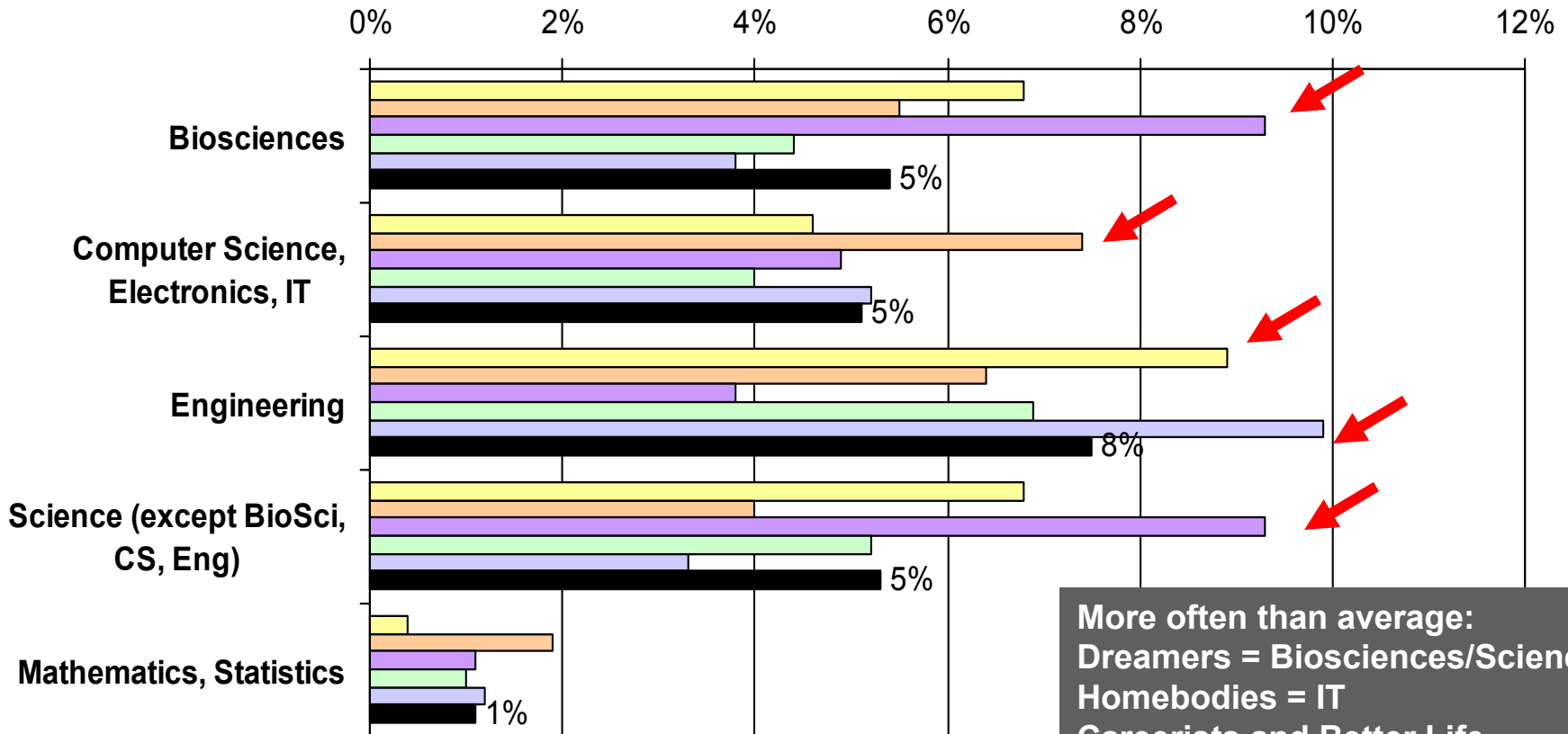


More often than average:  
 Careerists =  
 Adv, Journalism & Business  
 Recruitables/Homebodies =  
 Education and Healthcare

## VI. Findings

### ■ Courses of Study – % of respondents in each cluster

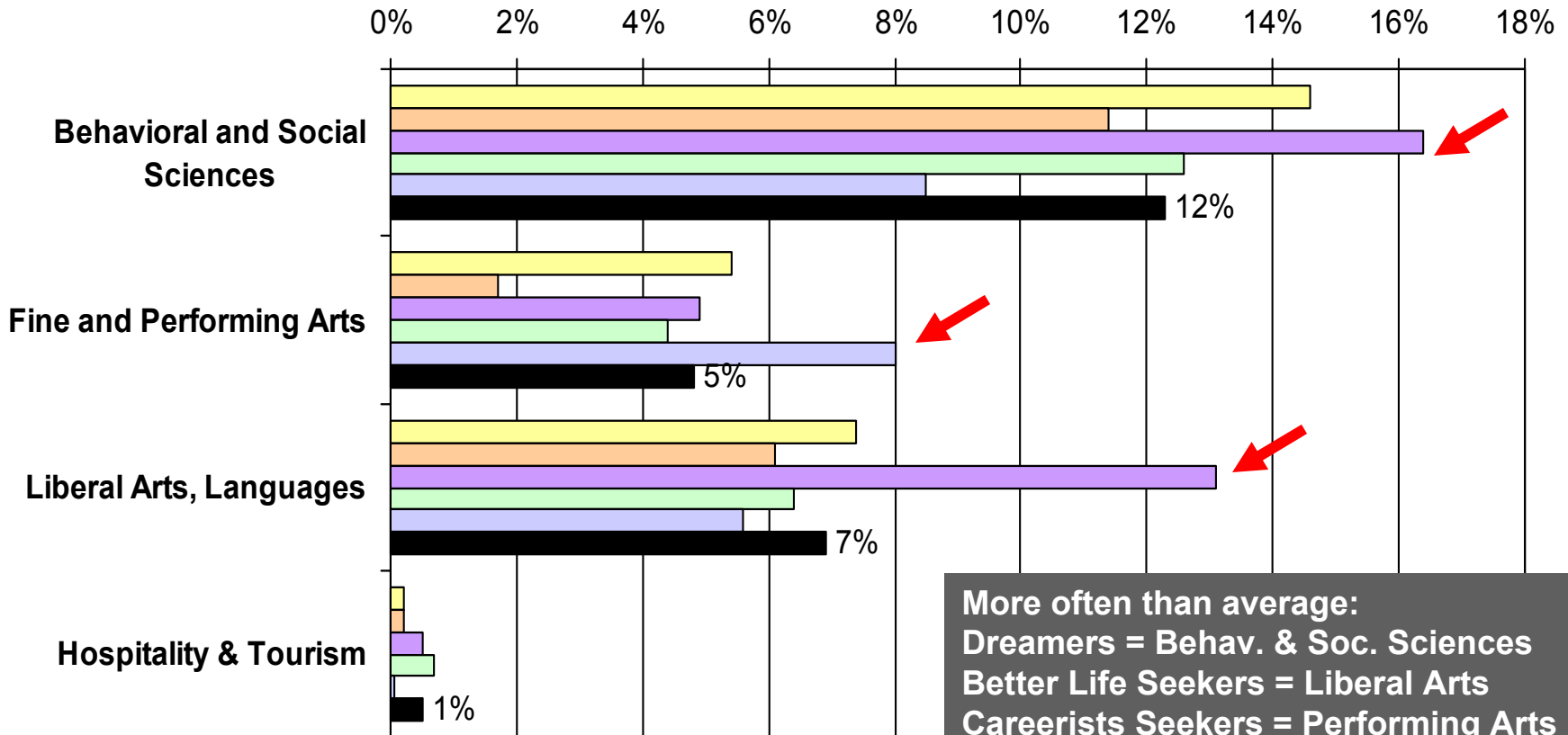
■ Better Life Seekers 
 ■ Homebodies 
 ■ Dreamers 
 ■ Recruitables 
 ■ Careerists 
 ■ Total Sample



**More often than average:**  
 Dreamers = Biosciences/Science  
 Homebodies = IT  
 Careerists and Better Life Seekers = Engineering

## VI. Findings

### ■ Courses of Study – % of respondents in each cluster



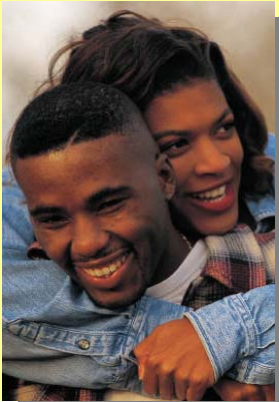
**More often than average:**  
 Dreamers = Behav. & Soc. Sciences  
 Better Life Seekers = Liberal Arts  
 Careerists Seekers = Performing Arts

## VI. Findings

Statistical analysis determined that there are five distinct student clusters:

Student  
Cluster  
One

**Better Life  
Seekers**



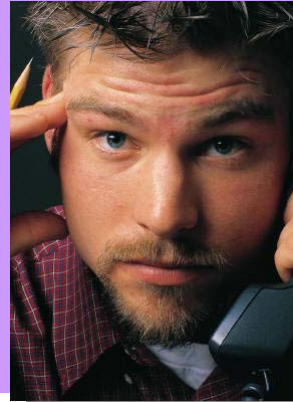
Student  
Cluster  
Two

**Homebodies**



Student  
Cluster  
Three

**Dreamers**



Student  
Cluster  
Four

**Recruitables**



Student  
Cluster  
Five

**Careerists**



Remember: This is a model to better handle understanding a complex situation. Unknown factors of importance and wildcards still play a role.

## VII. More Information

- **Students were also asked: What can the area do to better familiarize you with what it has to offer new college graduates?**
  - Over 1,700 suggestions were provided including:
    - Job fairs for local companies.
    - Transportation to locations surrounding campus.
    - Special student-centered website with information of special interest to students.
  - Many respondents indicated that they did not know a lot about the area surrounding the campus and would like to know more.

## VIII. Next Steps

- **Public Relations Campaign’s Class – will consider use of this research data as a foundation for a campaigns project.**
- **Project KEEP US will live on in its website [www.projectkeepus.COM](http://www.projectkeepus.COM) where the survey data will be posted for use by the 12-County community economic and business development entities.**
- **Scratching the analytical surface.**

Sponsored by:



## **Project KEEP US**

**Knowledge Enabling Efforts to Preserve University Students**

Conducted by:

**Syracuse University**

**Students in Class PRL 315 (MW)**

**“Public Relations Research”**

## VIII. Q&A