
A grey silhouette map of Ontario, Canada, with white outlines of its regional boundaries. The text is overlaid on the map.

Ensuring Quality and Affordability in Ontario Universities: The Public Opinion Evidence

January 21, 2005



Feedback
RESEARCH CORPORATION

Structure

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 - 2) The Public Opinion Environment**
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Methodology

- 
- ✦ **A total of 1000 telephone interviews were conducted with adult Ontarians between January 4th and 11th, 2005.**
 - ✦ **The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 3.1 percentage points within a confidence interval of 95%.**



The Public Opinion Environment



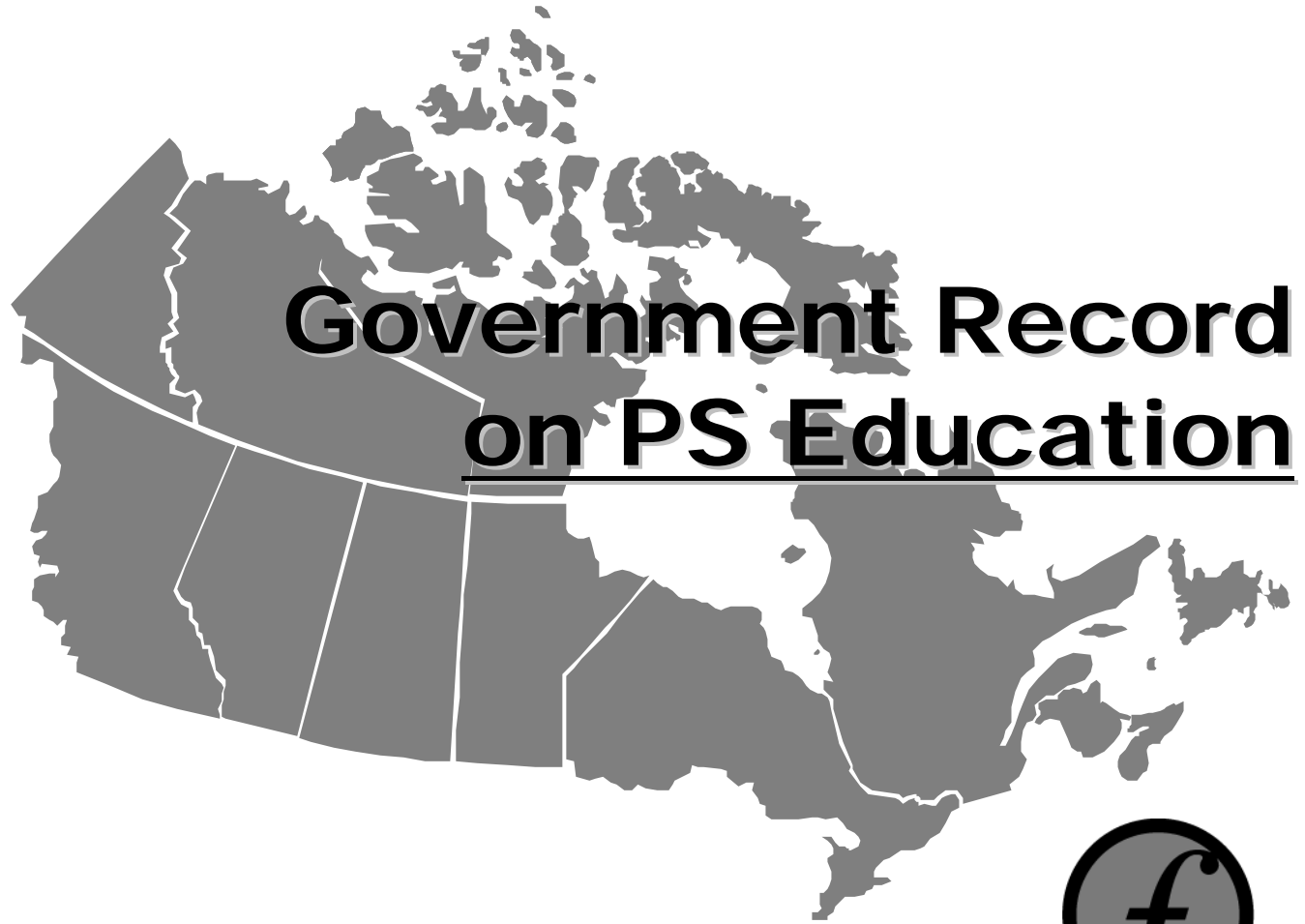
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Most Important Issue: Winter 2005

Q. What is the most important issue facing the Ontario provincial government today?

| Issue | Overall (%) |
|-------------|-------------|
| Health Care | 51 (+9) |
| Education | 16 (+8) |
| Economy | 6 (+2) |
| Taxes | 4 (-8) |
| Poverty | 3 |

() Denotes change since June 2004.



Government Record on PS Education



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PS Education: What Priority?

Q. Should post-secondary education be a very high priority, high priority, low priority or very low priority for the Ontario government?

| | Very high priority (%) | High priority (%) | Low priority (%) | Very low priority (%) |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Overall | 55 (+27) | 40 (-21) = 95% | 2 (-6) | <1 (-1) |
| Metro | 56 (+25) | 44 (-13) | <1 (-8) | <1 (n/c) |
| SC | 54 (+35) | 46 (-23) | <1 (-8) | <1 (-1) |
| East | 67 (+40) | 23 (-40) | <1 (-8) | 1 (n/c) |
| CN | 46 (+23) | 45 (-14) | 3 (-10) | <1 (-1) |
| North | 59 (+36) | 24 (-38) | 10 (-2) | <1 (n/c) |
| GTA | 52 (+20) | 40 (-18) | 5 (n/c) | <1 (-1) |

() Denotes change since June 2004.

Priority of PSE: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. Should post-secondary education be a very high priority, high priority, low priority or very low priority for the Ontario government?

| | Very high priority (%) | High priority (%) | Low priority (%) | Very low priority (%) |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Overall | 55 (+27) | 40 (-21) | 2 (-6) | <1 (-1) |
| Men | 56 (+30) | 41 (-19) | 1 (-7) | <1 (-1) |
| Women | 53 (+24) | 39 (-22) | 4 (-3) | <1 (n/c) |
| Kids | 51 (+17) | 44 (-10) | 3 (-3) | <1 (-1) |
| No kids | 57 (+27) | 38 (-23) | 2 (-5) | <1 (n/c) |

() Denotes change since June 2004.



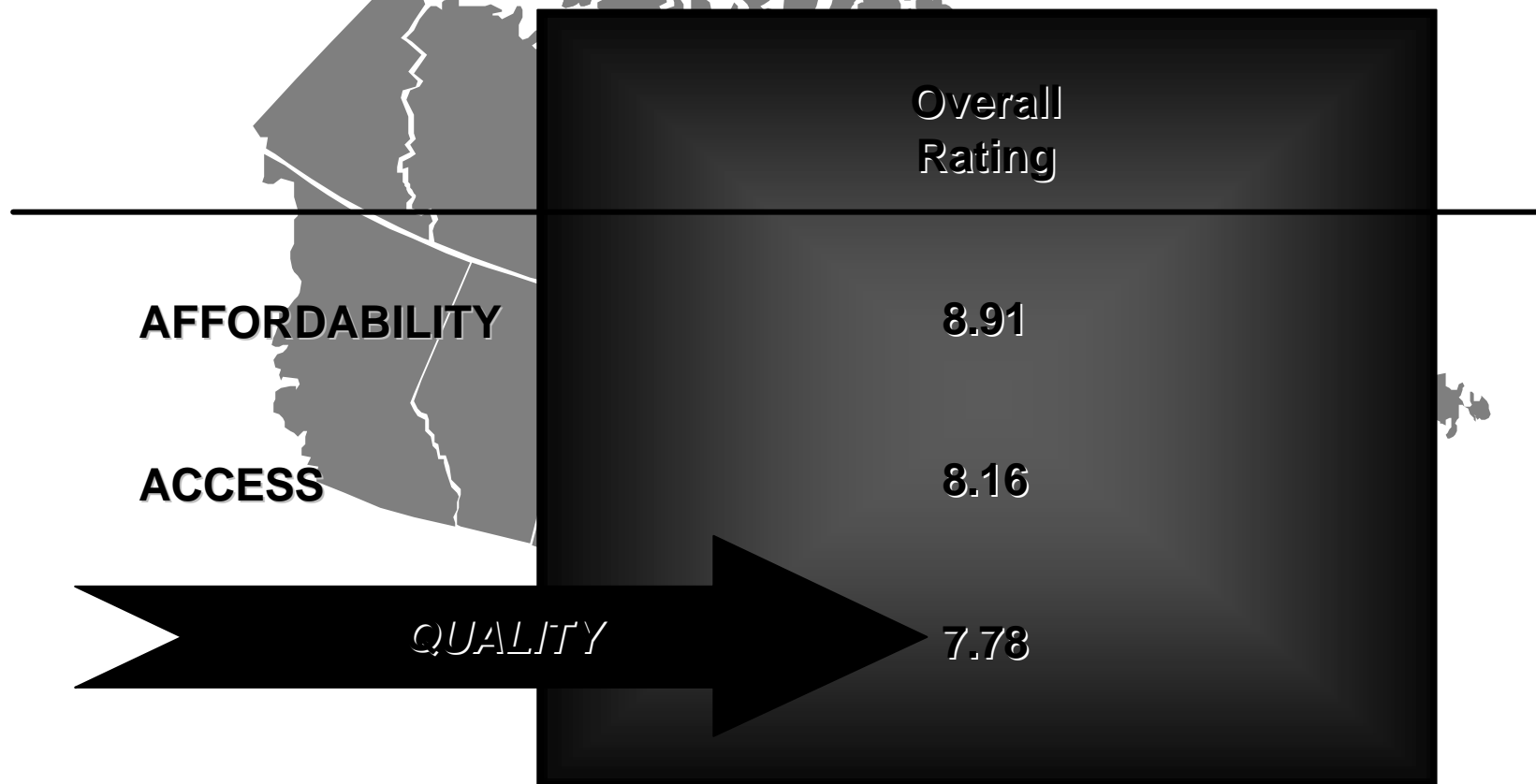
Focus:
QUALITY



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Major Axes of Investigation - Focus: QUALITY

Q. RE: post-secondary education in Ontario using a scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 10 is “very concerned,” how concerned are you with...



Quality of PS Education: Level of Concern

Q. Using a scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 10 is “very concerned,” how concerned are you with the overall quality of post-secondary education in Ontario?

| | Rating | | Rating |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 7.78 (+0.50) | | |
| Metro | 8.55 (+1.30) | Men | 7.05 (+0.12) |
| GTA | 8.23 (+0.41) | Women | 8.45 (+0.83) |
| SC | 7.92 (+1.06) | | |
| North | 7.52 (+0.95) | Kids | 7.75 (-0.31) |
| CN | 6.72 (-0.17) | No Kids | 7.76 (+0.22) |
| East | 5.42 (-1.84) | | |

Post-Secondary Education: Improved?

Q. Do you think the quality of post-secondary education in Ontario has improved since the Liberals first took power?

| | Improved (%) | Stayed the same (%) | Declined (%) | Don't know (%) |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Overall | 9 | 49 | 24 | 18 |
| Metro | 8 | 41 | 44 | 7 |
| SC | <1 | 65 | 5 | 29 |
| East | 3 | 41 | 15 | 41 |
| CN | 22 | 34 | 28 | 16 |
| North | 17 | 38 | 21 | 24 |
| GTA | 14 | 56 | 18 | 12 |

Improved PSE?: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. Do you think the quality of post-secondary education in Ontario has improved since the Liberals first took power?

| | Improved (%) | Stayed the same (%) | Declined (%) | Don't know (%) |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Overall | 9 | 49 | 24 | 18 |
| Men | 9 | 46 | 28 | 17 |
| Women | 10 | 52 | 20 | 19 |
| Kids | 8 | 70 | 11 | 11 |
| No Kids | 11 | 34 | 33 | 23 |

High Quality PS Education: Key Elements

Q. On a scale where 1 is “not at all important” and 10 is “very important,” how important are the following to ensure a high-quality post-secondary education?

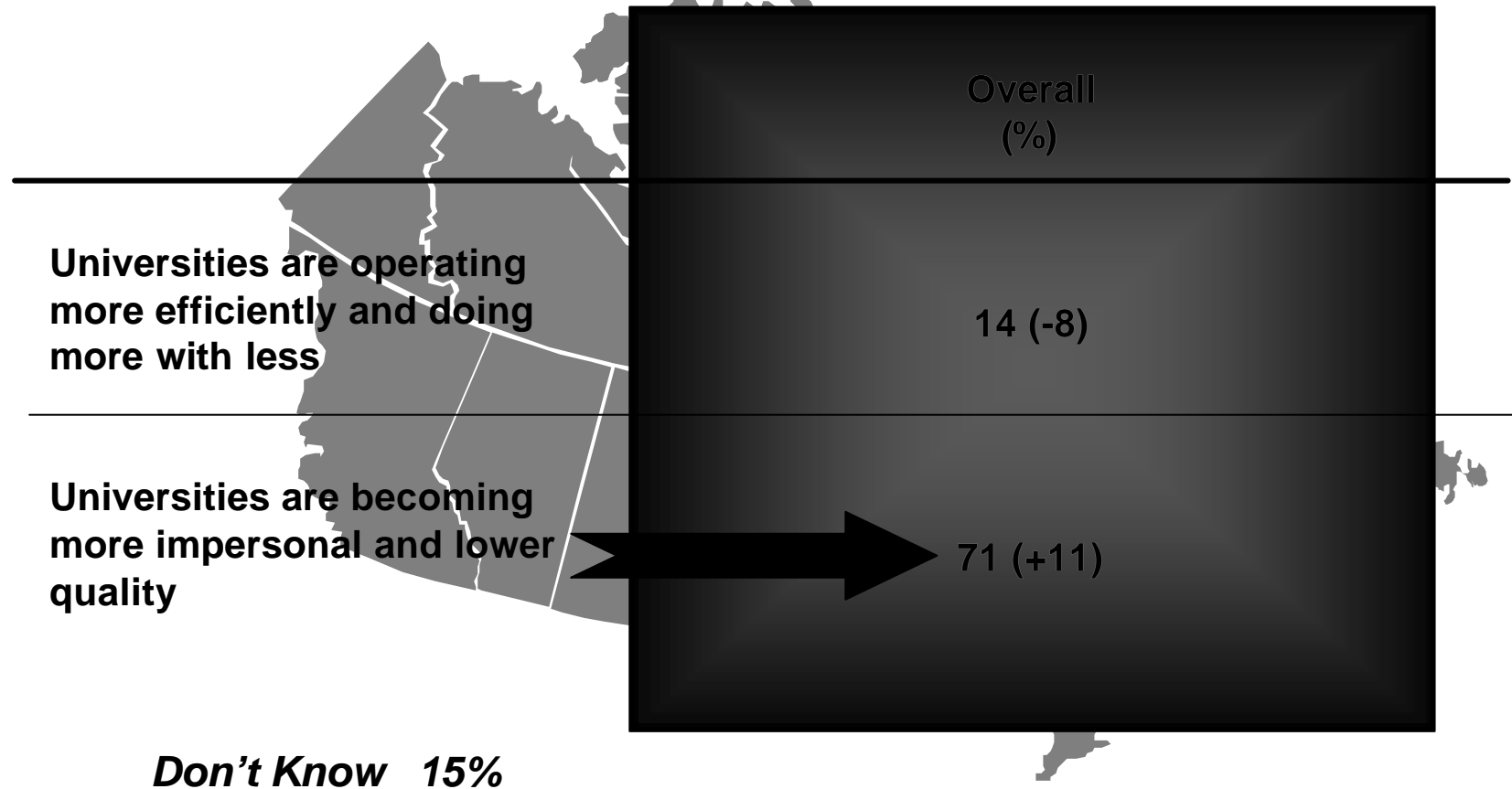
Elements

| Elements | Overall Rating |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| More up-to-date technology | 8.34 (+0.37) |
| More government funding | 8.15 (+0.21) |
| Expanded grant & loan programs | 7.97 (+0.07) |
| Smaller class sizes | 7.79 (+0.60) |
| More full-time faculty | 7.58 (+0.09) |
| Lower student-faculty ratio | 7.54 (+0.56) |
| Updated buildings and facilities | 7.17 |
| More part-time/contract faculty | 6.55 |
| Higher admission standards | 6.52 (+0.56) |

() Denotes change since June 2004.

Professor/Student Ratio: Public Opinion

Q. RE: High P/S ratios which is closer to your own view...?



Professor/Student Ratio: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. RE: High P/S ratios which is closer to your own view...?

| | Overall (%) | Men (%) | Women (%) | Kids (%) | No kids (%) |
|---|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Universities are using resources efficiently. | 14 (-8) | 15 (-10) | 14 (-4) | 15 (-4) | 14 (-7) |
| Universities are becoming more impersonal. | 71 (+11) | 63 (+9) | 78 (+13) | 80 (+15) | 66 (+2) |
| DK | 15 (-4) | 22 (+1) | 8 (-8) | 5 (-11) | 19 (+5) |



Focus:
OPPORTUNITY

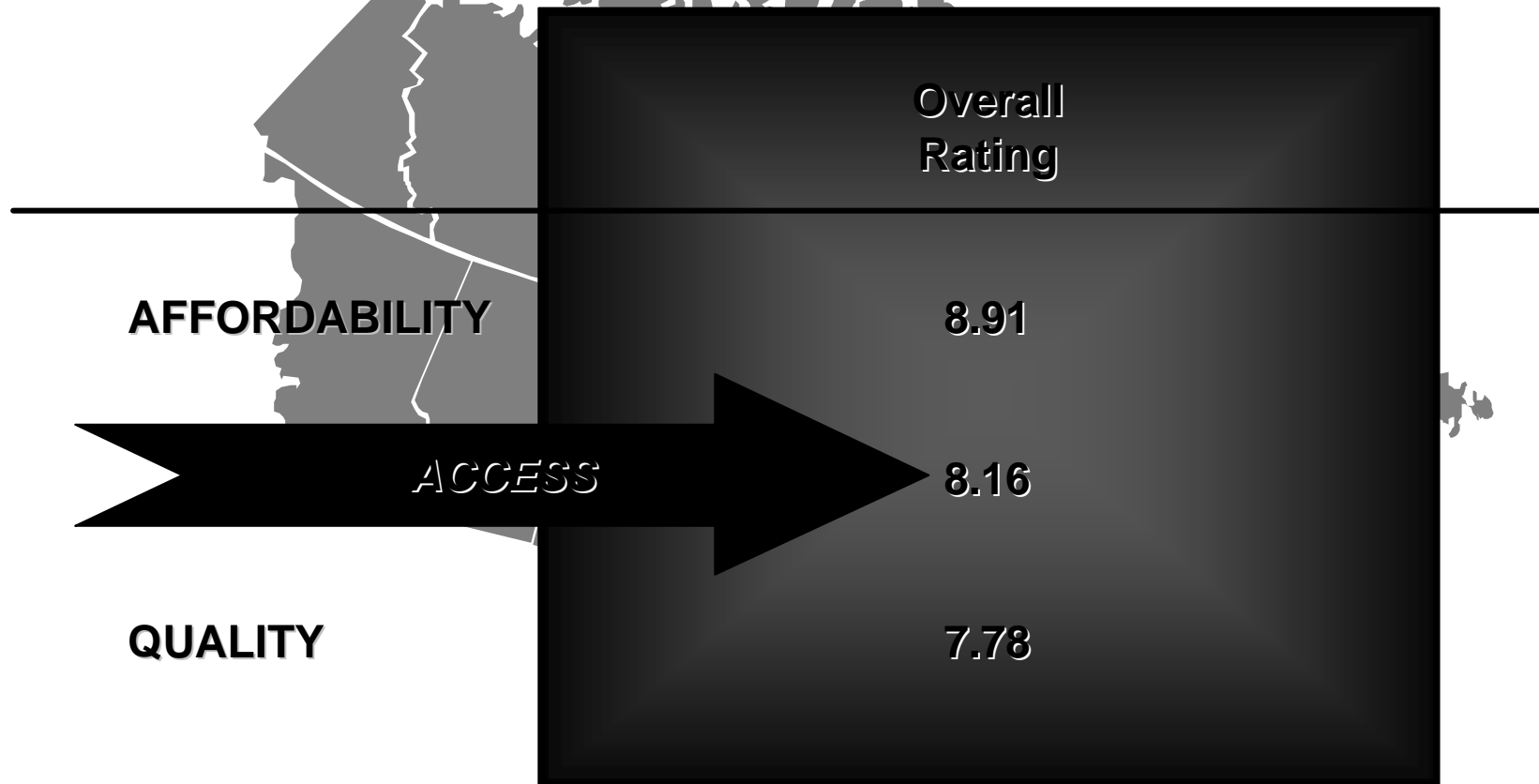


Feedback
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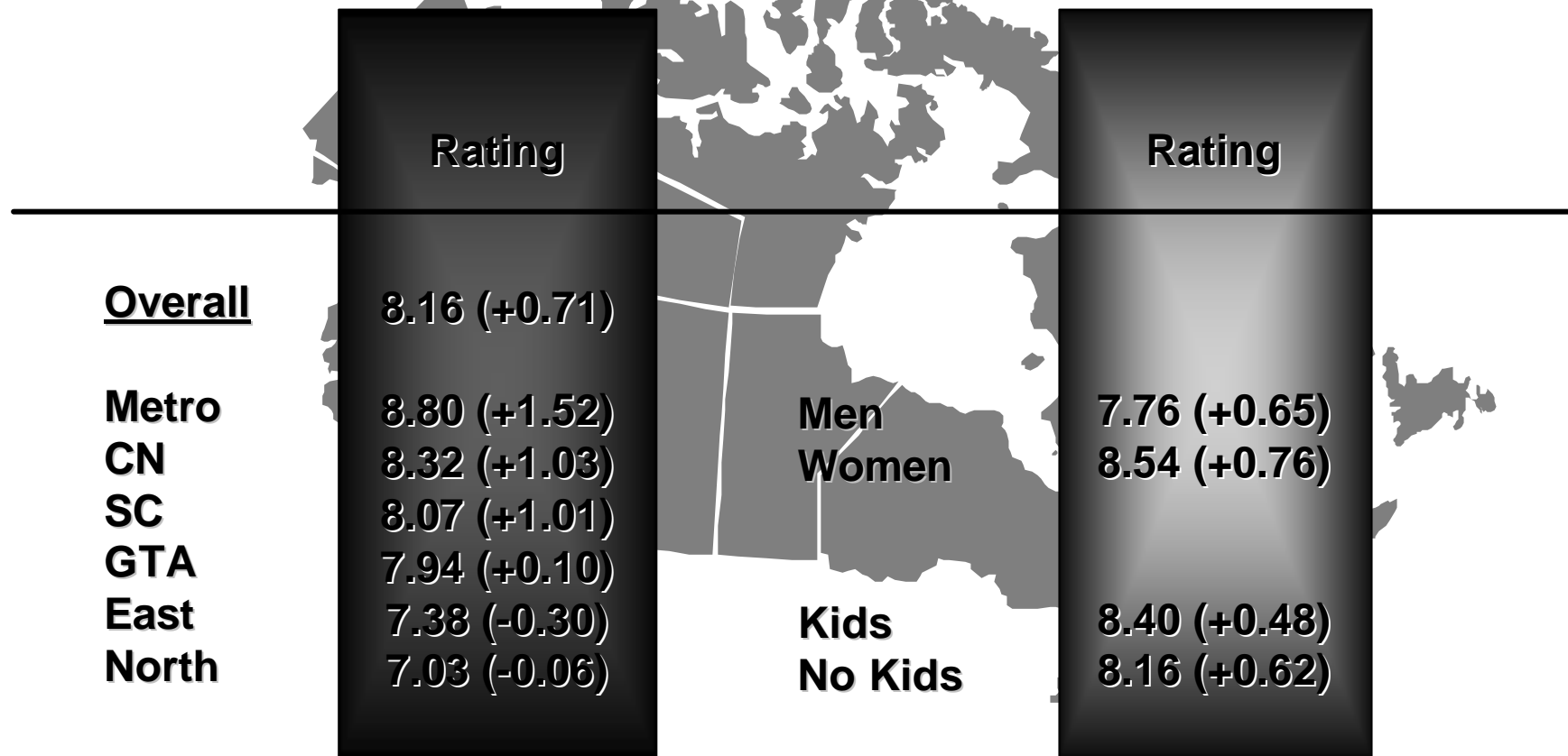
Major Axes of Investigation - Focus: OPPORTUNITY

Q. RE: post-secondary education in Ontario using a scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 10 is “very concerned,” how concerned are you with...



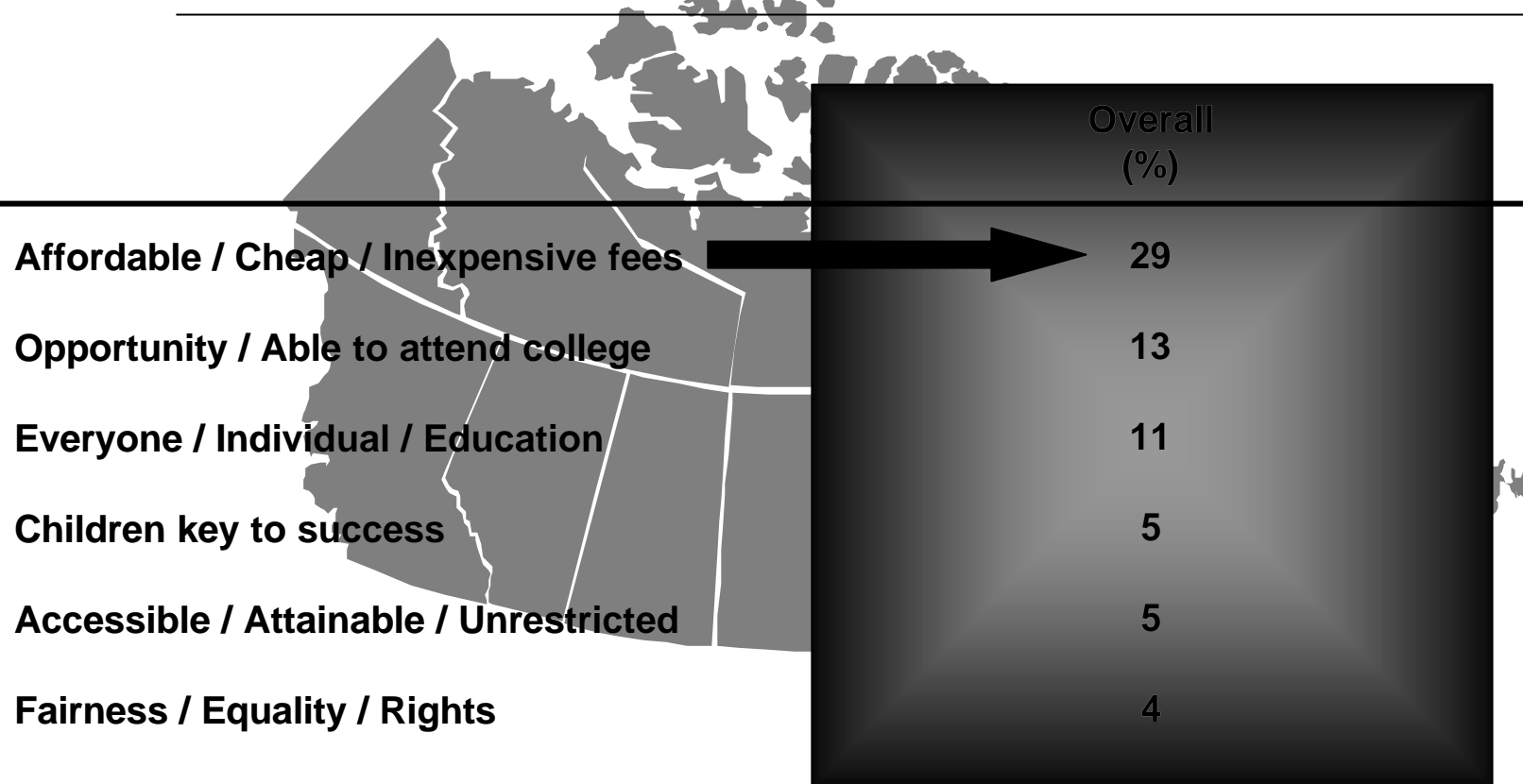
Access to PS Education: Level of Concern

Q. Using a scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 10 is “very concerned,” how concerned are you with access to post-secondary education in Ontario?



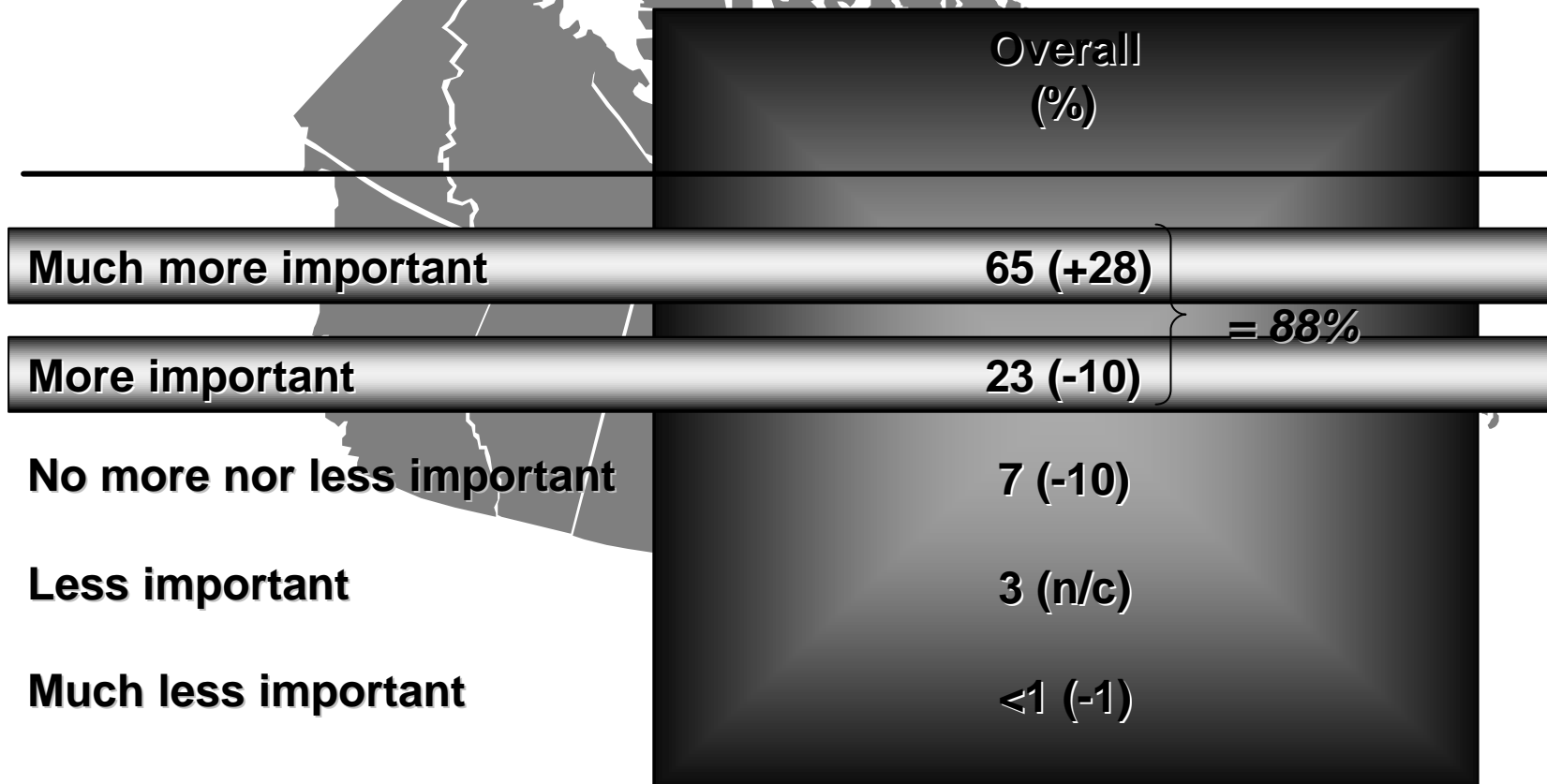
"Access" to PS Education: Public Perception

*Q. RE: the "access" to post-secondary education in Ontario,
what does it mean to you?*



PS Education: Future Importance?

Q. How important do you think it will be to have a university degree 10 years from now compared to its importance today?





Focus:

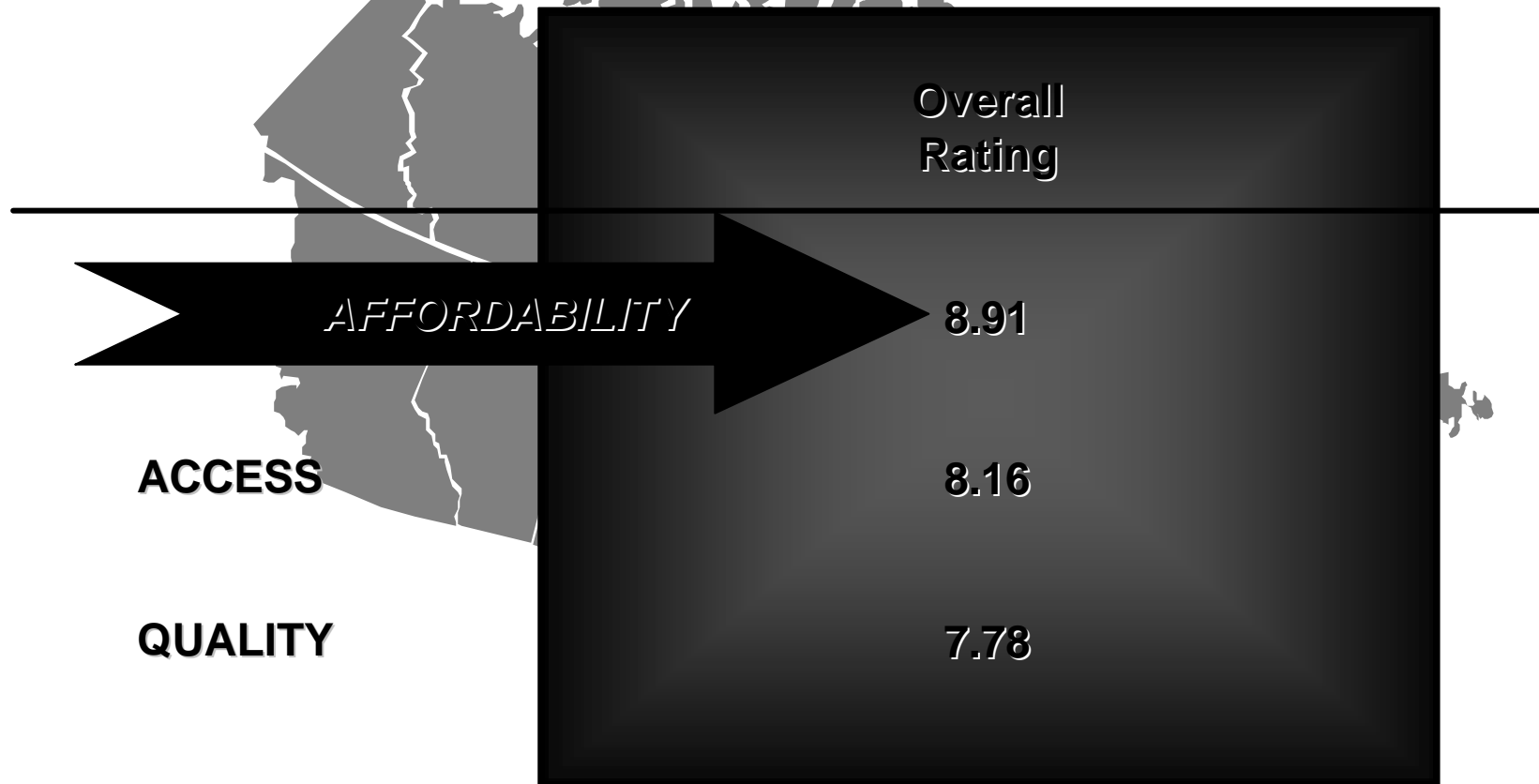
AFFORDABILITY



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Major Axes of Investigation - Focus: OPPORTUNITY

Q. RE: post-secondary education in Ontario using a scale where 1 is “not at all concerned” and 10 is “very concerned,” how concerned are you with...



"Affordability" of PS Education: Level of Concern

Q. Using a scale where 1 is "not at all concerned" and 10 is "very concerned," how concerned are you with the affordability of post-secondary education in Ontario?

| | Rating | | Rating |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 8.91 (+0.68) | | |
| Metro | 9.70 (+1.46) | Men | 8.58 (+0.75) |
| East | 8.92 (+0.89) | Women | 9.22 (+0.62) |
| CN | 8.75 (+0.06) | | |
| GTA | 8.68 (+0.07) | Kids | 9.32 (+0.48) |
| SC | 8.40 (+0.75) | No Kids | 8.61 (+0.16) |
| North | 7.45 (+0.15) | | |

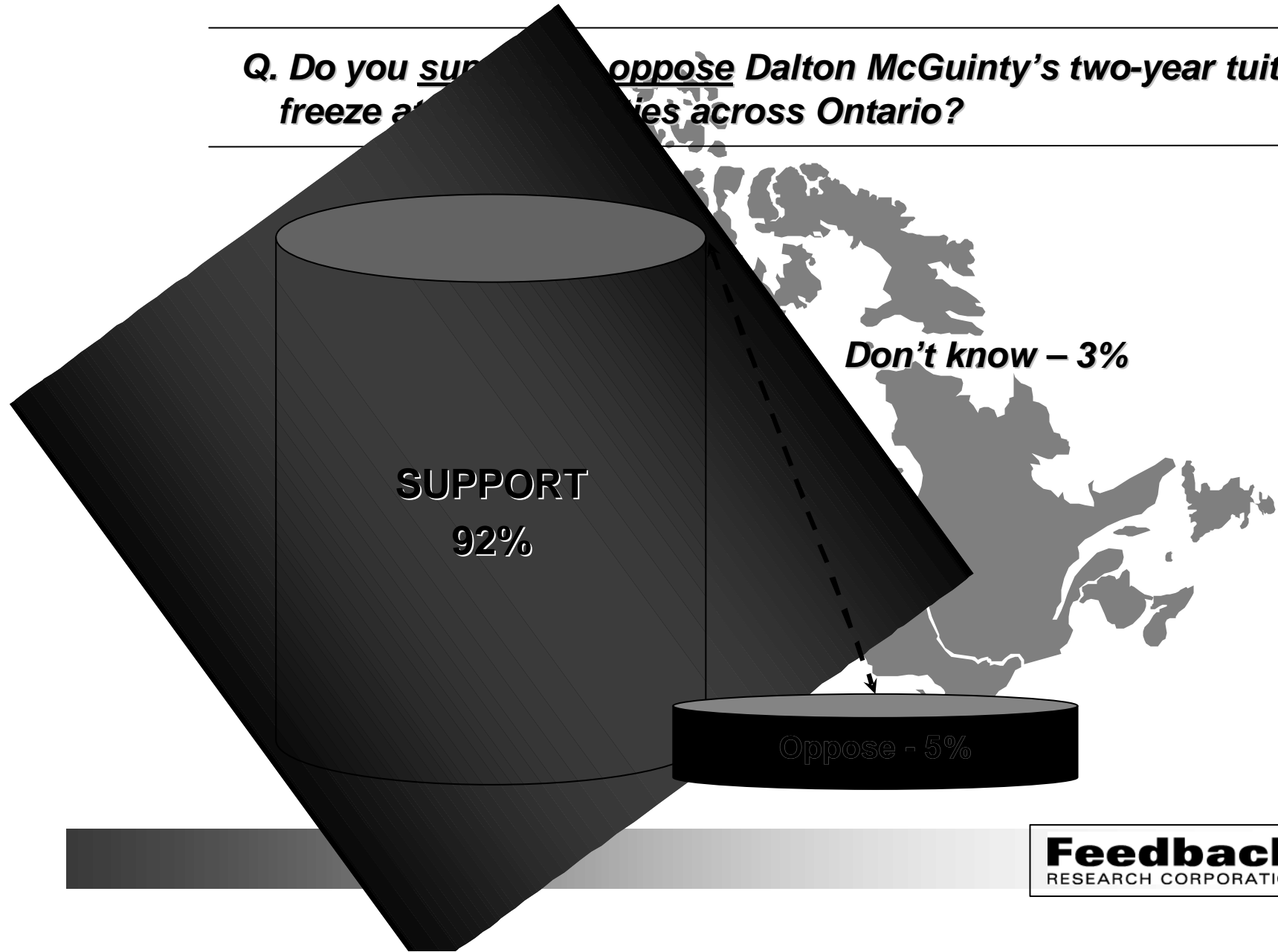
Current Student Tuition: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. Do you think current student tuition fees at Ontario's public universities are too high, too low or about right?

| | Too high (%) | Too low (%) | About right (%) | Don't know (%) |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Overall | 65 (+2) | 3 (+2) | 22 (+2) | 11 (-6) |
| Men | 57 (+1) | 3 (+1) | 29 (+7) 15 (-2) | 11 (-9) |
| Women | 73 (+3) | 3 (+3) | | 10 (-3) |
| Kids | 71 (-2) | 2 (+2) | 13 (-2) 26 (+2) | 15 (+3) |
| No Kids | 63 (-1) | 3 (+2) | | 8 (-4) |

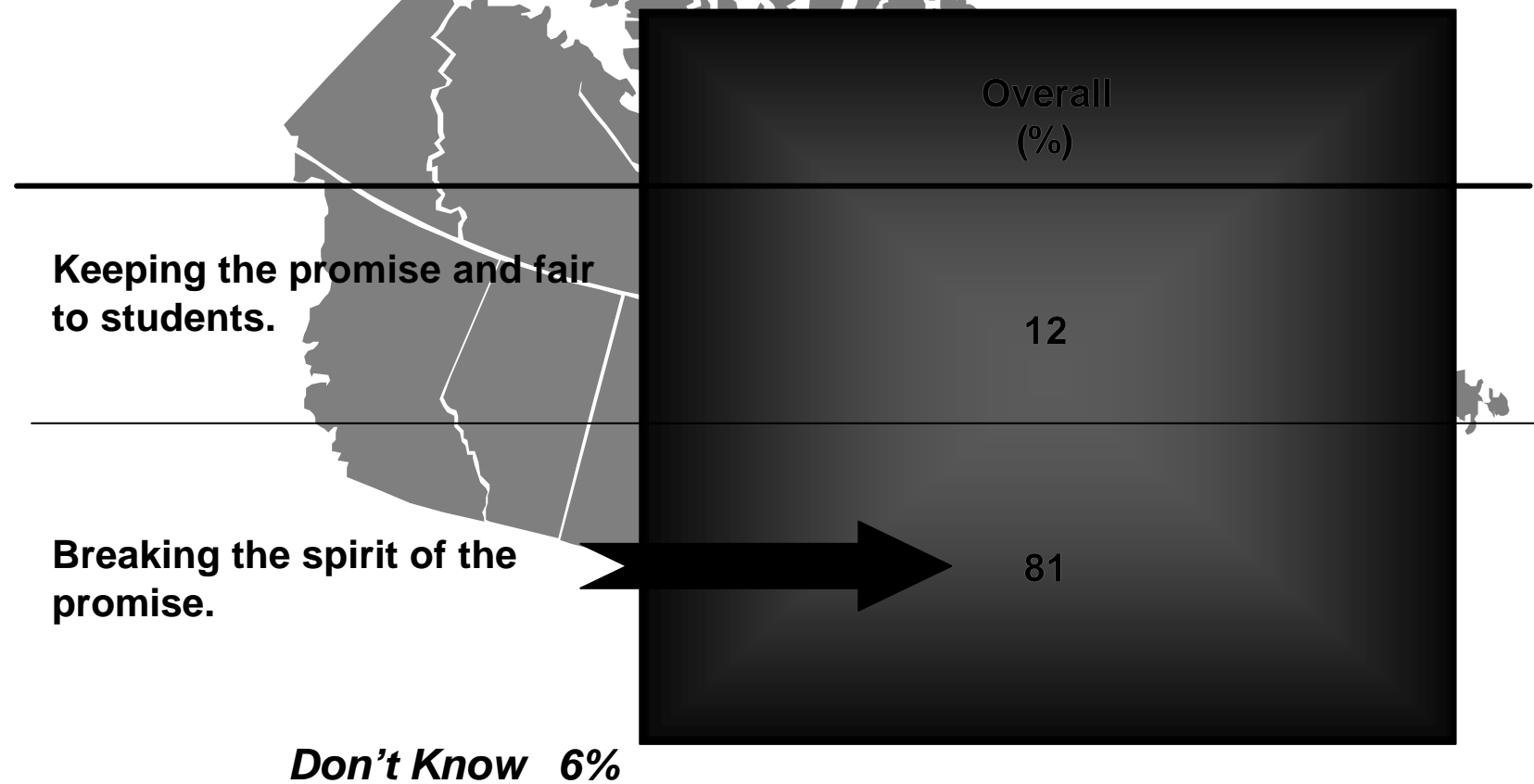
Tuition Freeze: Public Support

Q. Do you support or oppose Dalton McGuinty's two-year tuition freeze at universities across Ontario?



Promise of Tuition Freeze: Public Opinion

Q. If the government keeps its promise, but then introduces a substantial tuition increase immediately after the freeze ends, is that...?



Promise of Tuition Freeze: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. If the government keeps its promise, but then introduces a substantial tuition increase immediately after the freeze ends, is that...?

| | Overall (%) | Men (%) | Women (%) | Kids (%) | No kids (%) |
|---|-------------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Keeping the promise and fair to students. | 12 | 6 | 18 | 9 | 14 |
| Breaking the spirit of the promise. | 81 | 89 | 74 | 87 | 77 |
| DK | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 8 |

Ability to Attend Universities: Level of Concern

Q. Are you concerned that young Ontarians will not be able to attend a university, even if they are qualified?

| | Very concerned (%) | Somewhat concerned (%) | Not very concerned (%) | Not at all concerned (%) |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Overall | 68 | 26 | 3 | 1 |
| Metro | 92 | 8 | <1 | <1 |
| SC | 70 | 25 | 5 | <1 |
| East | 54 | 32 | 3 | <1 |
| CN | 57 | 34 | 6 | 3 |
| North | 86 | 7 | <1 | 7 |
| GTA | 52 | 42 | 3 | 2 |

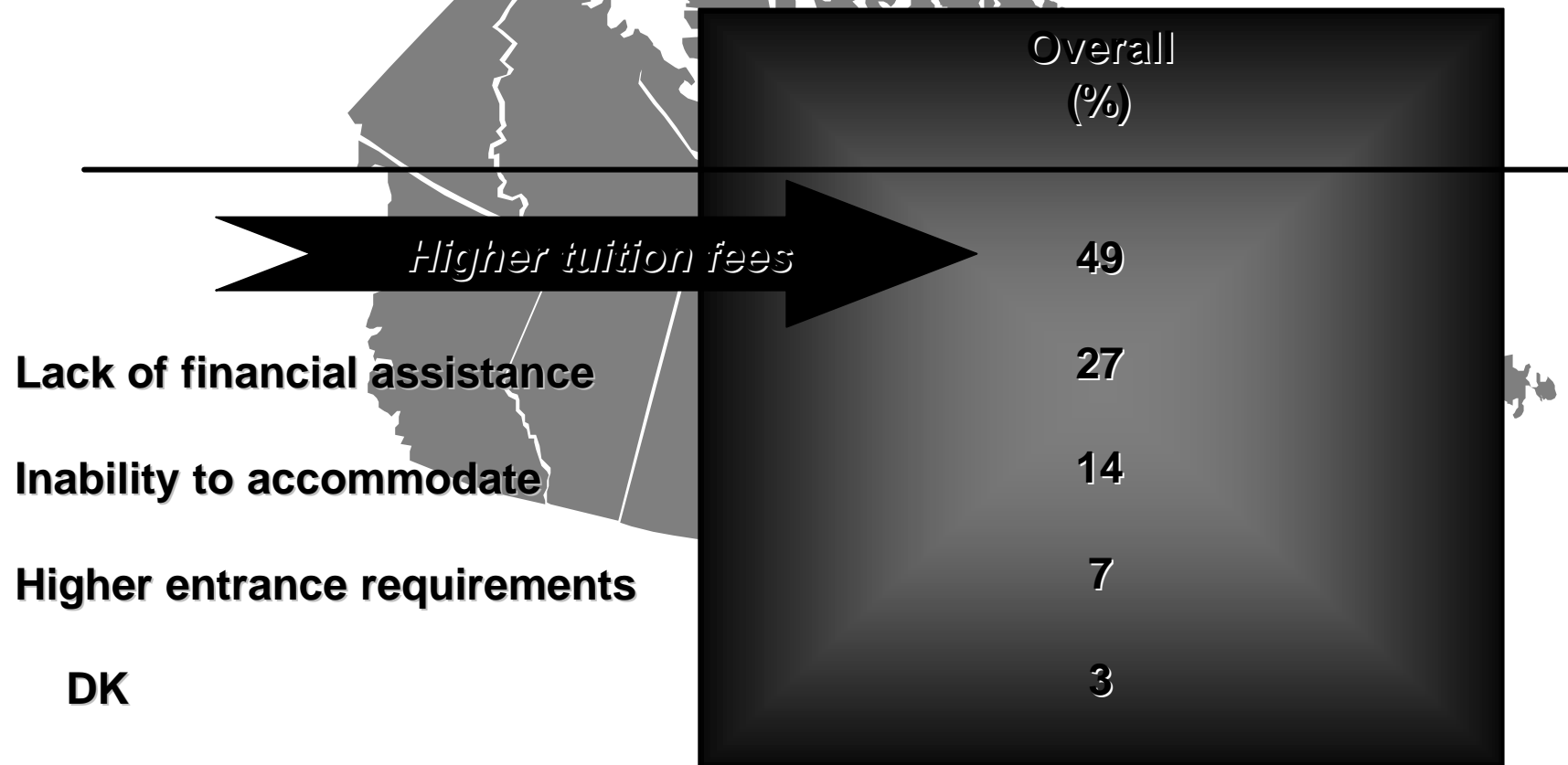
Ability to Attend Universities: Level of Concern

Q. Are you concerned that young Ontarians will not be able to attend a university, even if they are qualified?

| | Very concerned (%) | Somewhat concerned (%) | Not very concerned (%) | Not at all concerned (%) |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Overall | 68 | 26 | 3 | 1 |
| Men | 73 | 19 | 6 | <1 |
| Women | 64 | 33 | <1 | 2 |
| Kids | 62 | 37 | <1 | 1 |
| No Kids | 74 | 20 | 3 | 1 |

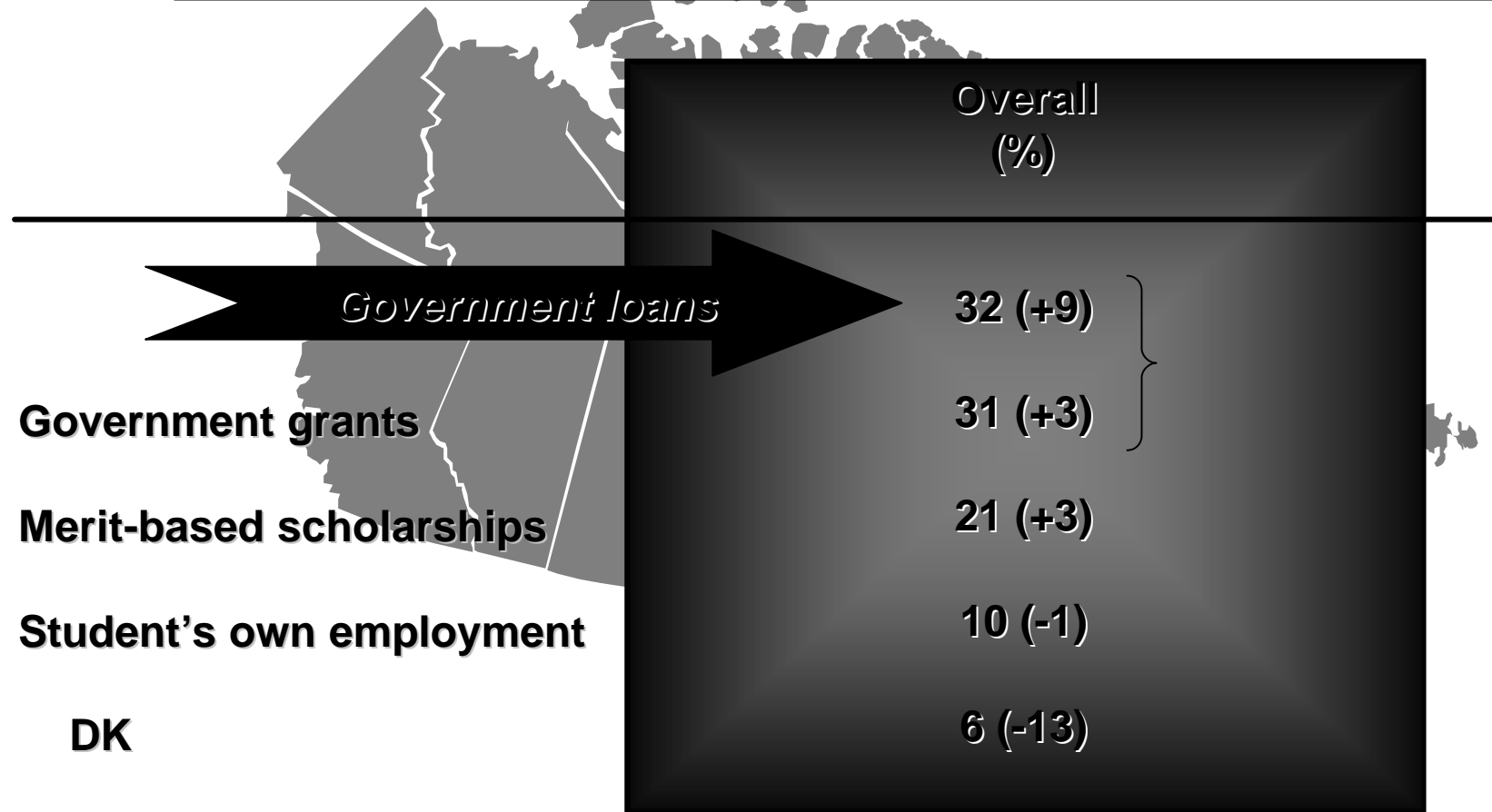
Ability to Attend University: Reason for Concern

Q. Why are you concerned about young Ontarians not being able to attend university in Ontario?



Making PSE Affordable: Solutions

Q. What do you think would be the best solution for qualified students who can't afford university tuition?



"Go Now, Pay Later" Policy (1): Public Opinion

Q. Would you support higher tuition fees if the gov't put in place a "go now, pay later" policy so that students don't pay until after they leave school?

| | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 42 | 54 | 4 |
| Metro | 48 | 52 | <1 |
| SC | 34 | 58 | 8 |
| East | 53 | 44 | 3 |
| CN | 51 | 49 | <1 |
| North | <1 | 75 | 25 |
| GTA | 31 | 61 | 8 |

"Go Now, Pay Later" Policy (1): Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. Would you support higher tuition fees if the gov't put in place a "go now, pay later" policy so that students don't pay until after they leave school?

| | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 42 | 54 | 4 |
| Men | 44 | 56 | <1 |
| Women | 40 | 53 | 8 |
| Kids | 21 | 68 | 12 |
| No Kids | 52 | 48 | 1 |

"Go Now, Pay Later" Policy (2): Public Opinion

Q. Would you support the "go now, pay later" plan, even if it resulted in higher tuition fees and a decrease in government funding?

| | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 29 | 65 | 6 |
| Metro | 8 | 85 | 7 |
| SC | 36 | 50 | 14 |
| East | 47 | 48 | 5 |
| CN | 9 | 88 | 3 |
| North | 52 | 41 | 7 |
| GTA | 45 | 55 | <1 |

“Go Now, Pay Later” Policy (3): Public Opinion

Q. Would you support the “go now, pay later” plan, even if it resulted in a higher overall debt load than students currently have?

| | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 19 | 78 | 3 |
| Metro | 4 | 96 | <1 |
| SC | 10 | 80 | 11 |
| East | 35 | 60 | 5 |
| CN | 16 | 84 | <1 |
| North | 10 | 76 | 14 |
| GTA | 35 | 65 | <1 |

Income Tax Surcharge: Public Opinion

Q. Would you support higher tuition fees if the gov't put in place a program so that students only paid fees through surcharges on their income taxes after they leave school?

| | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 71 | 21 | 8 |
| Metro | 70 | 30 | <1 |
| SC | 49 | 13 | 37 |
| East | 74 | 11 | 15 |
| CN | 52 | 42 | 6 |
| North | 62 | 38 | <1 |
| GTA | 85 | 15 | <1 |

Income Tax Surcharge: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. Would you support higher tuition fees if the gov't put in place a program so that students only paid fees through surcharges on their income taxes after they leave school?

| | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 71 | 21 | 8 |
| Men | 62 | 33 | 5 |
| Women | 80 | | 8 |
| Kids | 70 | 25 | 5 |
| No Kids | 76 | | 18 |



Focus:

FUTURE FUNDING



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Current Level of Funding: Public Opinion

Q. Do you think Ontario's post-secondary institutions are over-funded, under-funded or funded properly?

| | Over-funded (%) | Under-funded (%) | Funded properly (%) | Don't know (%) |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Overall | 5 | 54 | 21 | 20 |
| Metro | <1 | 37 | 25 | 38 |
| SC | 16 | 59 | 25 | <1 |
| East | 8 | 69 | 13 | 11 |
| CN | 3 | 76 | 21 | <1 |
| North | 7 | 62 | 17 | 14 |
| GTA | 3 | 51 | 17 | 28 |

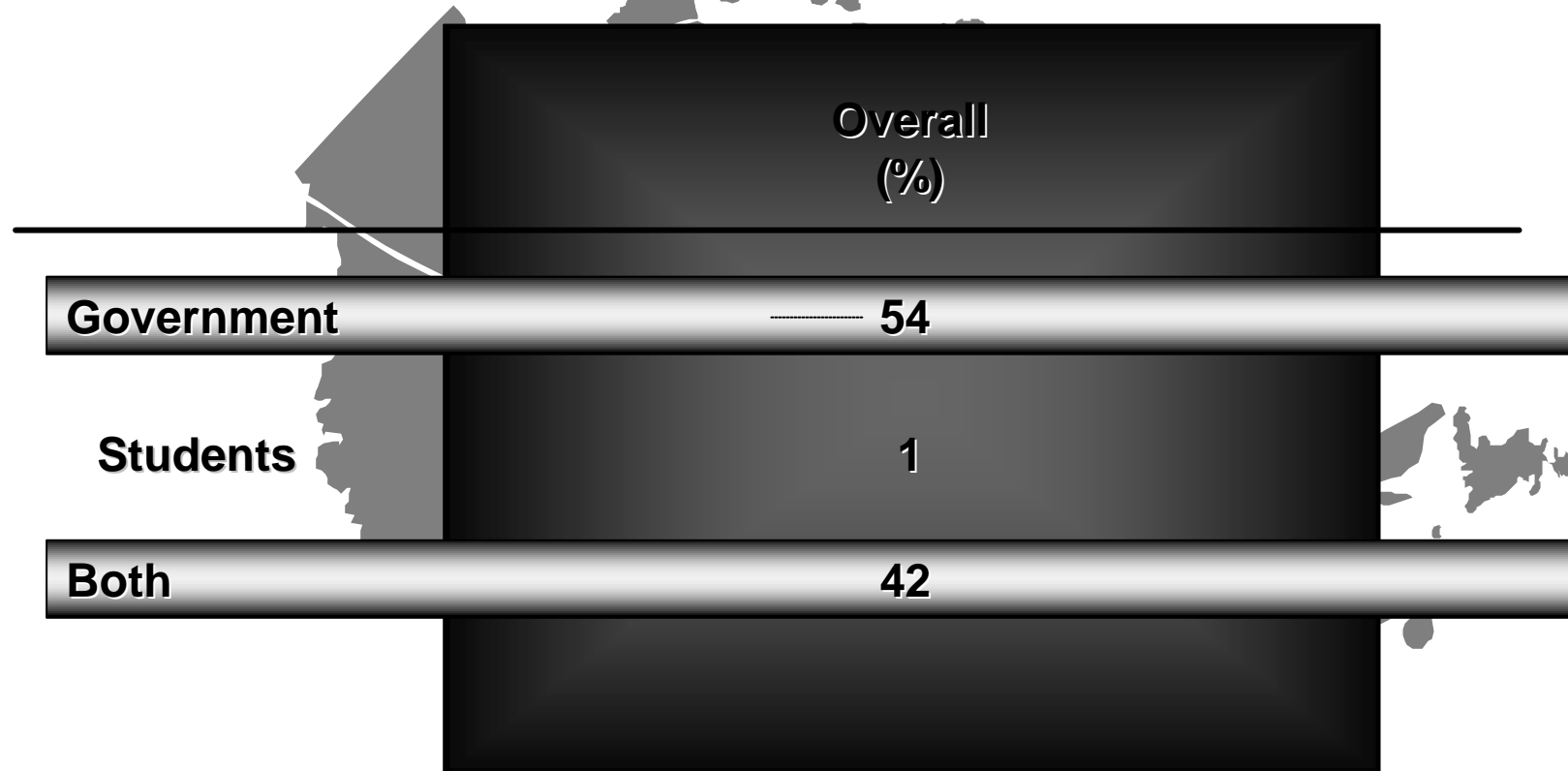
Current Funding Level: Socio-Demographic Groups

Q. Do you think Ontario's post-secondary institutions are over-funded, under-funded or funded properly?

| | Over-funded (%) | Under-funded (%) | Funded properly (%) | Don't know (%) |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Overall | 5 | 54 | 21 | 20 |
| Men | 10 | 54 | 22 | 14 |
| Women | 1 | 54 | 19 | 26 |
| Kids | 6 | 65 | 13 | 16 |
| No Kids | 5 | 48 | 24 | 23 |

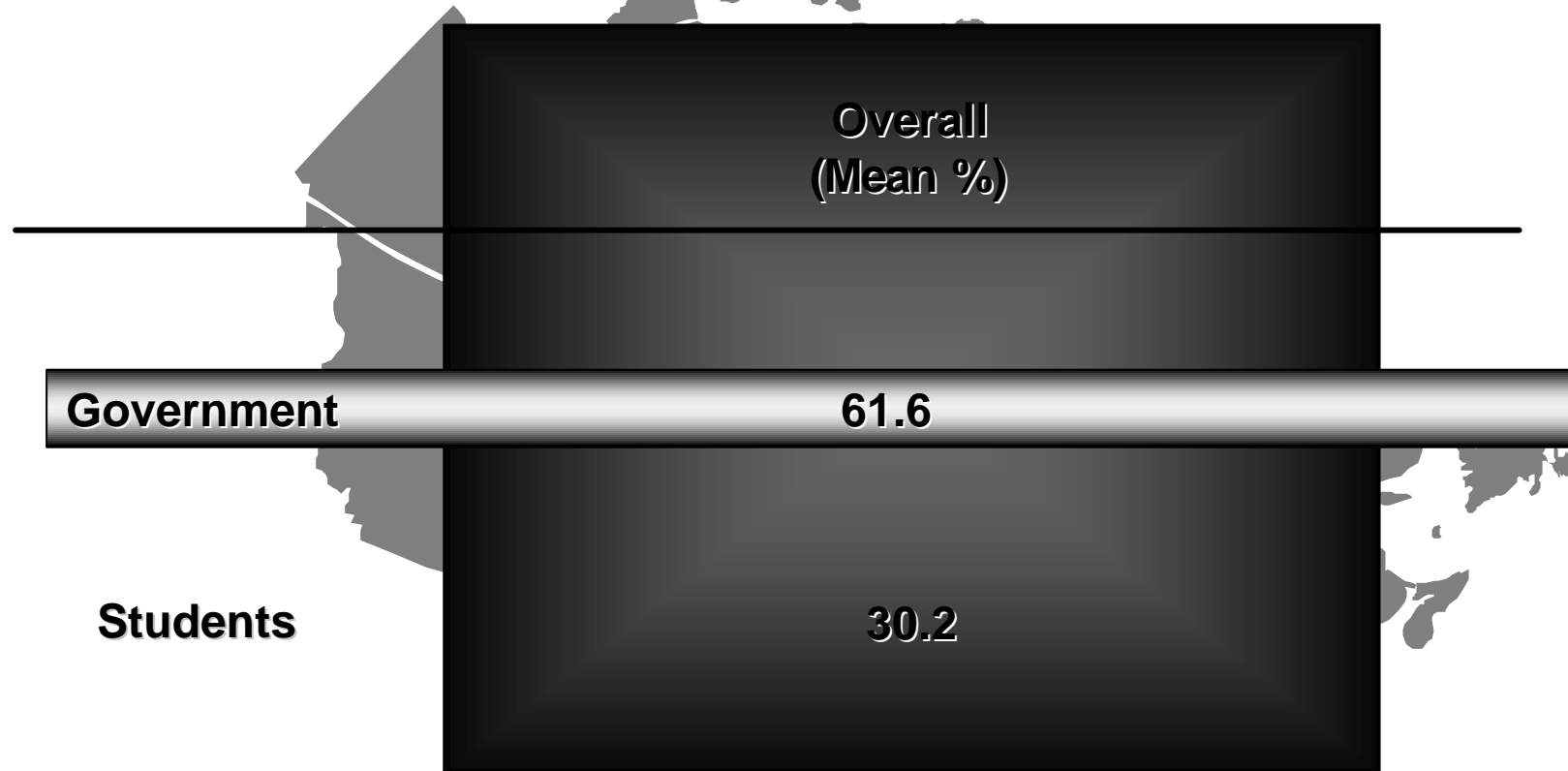
Source of Additional Funding: Public Opinion

Q. Do you think more funding should come primarily from the government, or from students via higher tuition, or both?



Allocation of Costs: Public Opinion

Q. What percentage of university operating costs do you think should come from government; from students?





Focus:

ACCOUNTABILITY



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University Management: Public Preference

Q. Thinking about the way universities are managed, which of the following would be your preference?



University Transfer Credits: Not Easy Enough?

Q. Do you think it is unreasonably difficult for students to transfer credits from one university to another?

| | Yes (%) | No (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 26 | 25 | 49 |
| Metro | 7 | 26 | 67 |
| SC | 15 | 35 | 50 |
| East | 11 | 35 | 54 |
| CN | 37 | 13 | 50 |
| North | 45 | 14 | 41 |
| GTA | 50 | 20 | 30 |

University to College Transfer Credits: Not Easy Enough?

Q. Do you think it is unreasonably difficult for students to transfer credits from a community college to a university?

| | Yes (%) | No (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 36 | 11 | 54 |
| Metro | 12 | 12 | 77 |
| SC | 30 | 10 | 60 |
| East | 45 | 4 | 50 |
| CN | 41 | 9 | 50 |
| North | 69 | <1 | 31 |
| GTA | 53 | 14 | 33 |

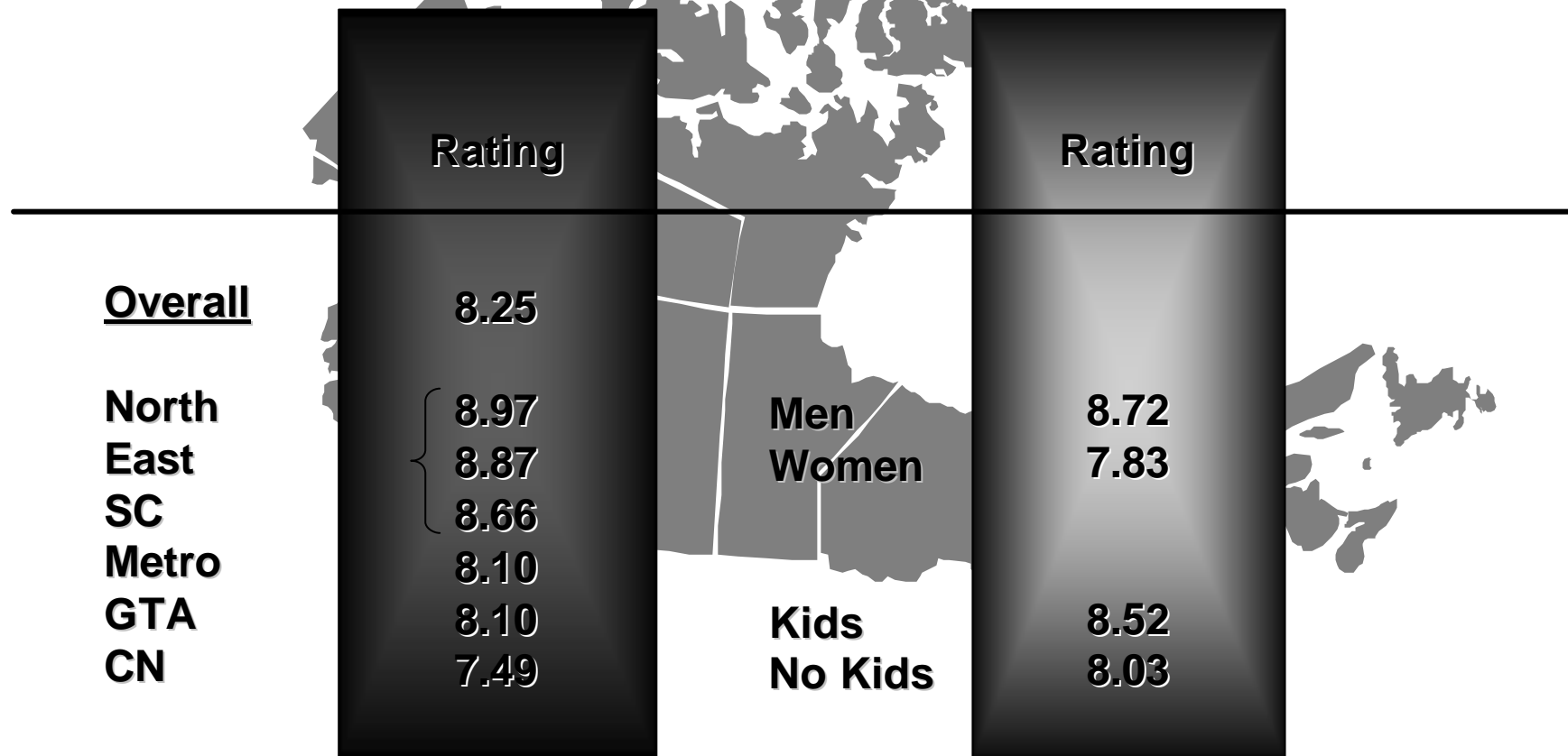
Degrees Vs. Diplomas: Meeting Student Needs?

Q. Generally, universities offer more academic courses and award degrees, whereas colleges offer more technical courses and award diplomas. Does this meet students' needs?

| | Yes (%) | No (%) | Don't know (%) |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|----------------|
| <u>Overall</u> | 64 | 25 | 11 |
| Metro | 55 | 30 | 15 |
| SC | 81 | 5 | 14 |
| East | 81 | 3 | 16 |
| CN | 75 | 22 | 3 |
| North | 79 | 7 | 14 |
| GTA | 48 | 46 | 6 |

University Research: Level of Importance

Q. Using a scale where 1 is “not at all important” and 10 is “very important,” how important is it that universities conduct research in addition to teaching students?



Recommendations to Provincial Gov't: Rae's Credibility on Support

Q. Ideas in this survey might be part of the recommendations made by Bob Rae to the Ontario gov't. Does knowing that make you any more or less likely to support these ideas?

