**CENTENNIAL COLLEGE**

# Transferability Expectations and Realities

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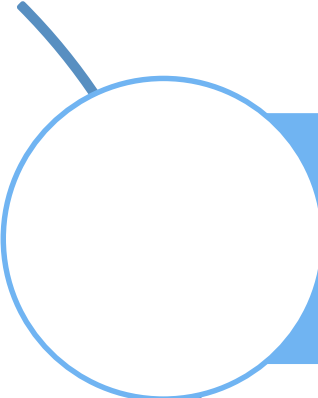
**Sean Woodhead**

**Centennial College**

**See where experience takes you.**

# Background

- Credit transfer college-college and university-college literature thin

- Centennial long-term RPL initiative (circa 2011)

- Moving from service patchwork to streamlined and centralized RPL process

# Research Questions

What expectation–reality gaps exist for incoming Centennial College RPL students (awarded credit and benefits; resources, sources and support; and policies and procedures)?

Does the first term academic progression affect students' satisfaction and attitudes regarding program and RPL experiences?

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# Recruitment

Centennial College students entering their first term at one of the Progress, Morningside, Ashtonbee or Story Arts Centre campuses

A transfer credit and/or PLAR form and fee was submitted to Enrolment Services, within Centennial College's marked deadline

Enrolment in coursework for the duration of the first term in a certificate, graduate certificate, diploma, advanced diploma or degree program

Domestic or international student status

# Three-Stage Design Summary

**Pre-Survey Invitation**
- At the beginning of the third week of classes, a pre-survey 'Letter of Invitation to Participate' was sent to students who met the selection criteria.

**Reminders**
- Weekly reminder emails were sent to transfer credit and PLAR students who had not yet responded to the survey.

**Post-Survey Invitation**
- Students self-selected whether to participate in the post-survey. Three weeks prior to the start of the Centennial College exam period, students were sent a 'Letter of Invitation to Participate'.

**Reminders**
- Weekly reminder emails were sent to transfer credit and PLAR students who had not yet responded to the survey.

**Focus Groups/ Interviews**
- Students self-selected whether to participate in a focus group/interview. Students signed up for a 60-minute focus group if they wished to discuss their transfer credit and PLAR experiences.

# Data Analysis

**Quantitative**

- Administrative data were collected via Centennial College's Banner student information system

- Administrative and survey data sources combined into a single file for analysis using SPSS 22.0

- Cross-tabulation, cross-validation and regression analysis

**Qualitative**

- Transcribed all audio files, utilized open coding procedure to name and categorize phenomena using Nvivo 10 and constructed a consensus/core ideas file

- Peer debriefers

# Profile of RPL Population and Survey Respondents

- *Population* refers to all students across the Fall, Winter and Summer 2013/2014 cohorts who met the selection criteria and were, therefore, eligible to participate in the distributed surveys.

- *Respondents* refer to those students who completed a minimum of 85% of both the pre- and post-surveys.

# Data Summary

- On average, the pre-survey response rate was 37% across all cohorts

- On average, the post-survey response rate was 66% across all cohorts

|  | Cohort I Fall | Cohort II Winter | Cohort III Summer | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Population** | 232 | 120 | 32 | 384 |
| **Pre-Survey Respondents** | 81 | 46 | 15 | 142 |
| **Post-Survey Respondents** | 53 | 31 | 10 | 94 |
| **Focus Groups and Interviews** | 24 | 13 | 3 | 40 |

# Demographic Comparisons

| | Respondents | Population |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 38% | 39% |
| Female | 62% | 61% |
| **Age (average)** | 27 | 26 |
| <20 | 4% | 7% |
| 20–24 | 41% | 47% |
| 25–29 | 31% | 24% |
| 30–39 | 14% | 14% |
| >40 | 10% | 7% |
| **Domestic** | 83% | 88% |
| **International** | 17% | 12% |
| **Time Passed Since High School (average)** | 6 | 5 |
| Less than 1 Year | 5% | 4% |
| 1–2 Years | 17% | 21% |
| 3–4 Years | 23% | 26% |
| 5–9 Years | 38% | 38% |
| 10+ Years | 21% | 10% |

# RPL Comparisons

| | Respondents | Population |
|---|---|---|
| **Transfer credit Applications (average)** | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| 1 | 41% | 49% |
| 2 | 28% | 21% |
| 3 | 12% | 11% |
| 4 | 11% | 7% |
| 5 | 4% | 7% |
| 6 or more | 5% | 6% |
| **Transfer credit Awarded (average)** | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| 0 | 11% | 13% |
| 1 | 40% | 45% |
| 2 | 30% | 19% |
| 3 | 8% | 9% |
| 4 | 9% | 5% |
| 5 | 1% | 5% |
| 6 or more | 2% | 4% |
| **Reduced Course Hours** | | |
| 1–50 Hours | 34% | 42% |
| 51–100 Hours | 27% | 19% |

# Previous Education



**Previous Postsecondary Education**

Respondents    Population

| Category | Respondents | Population |
|---|---|---|
| College-Ontario | 37% | 59% |
| College-Out of Province | 11% | 18% |
| College-International | 1% | 2% |
| University-Ontario | 44% | 28% |
| University-Out of Province | 26% | 18% |
| University-International | 16% | 10% |
| More than One | 33% | 34% |

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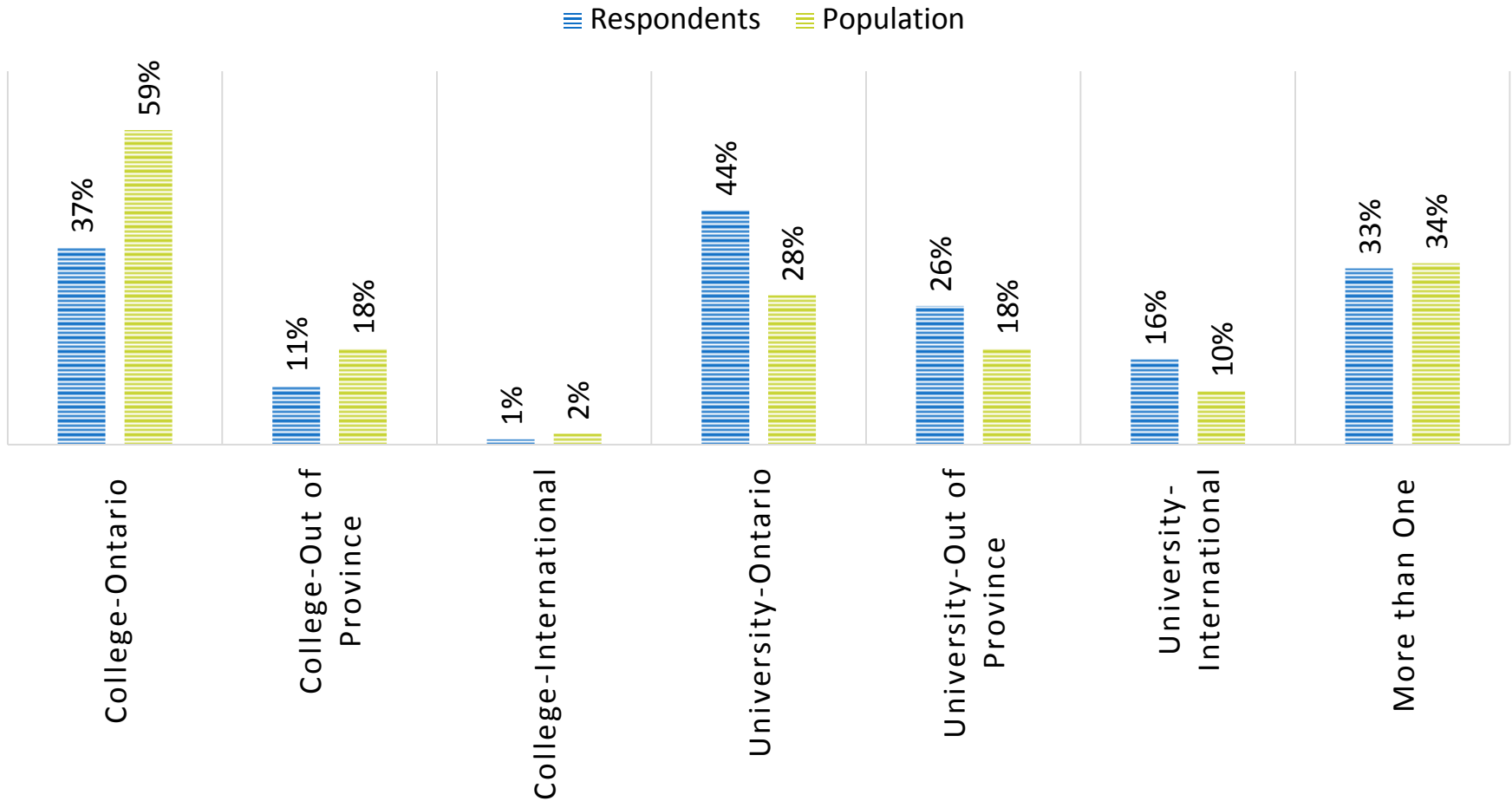
# What Expectation–Reality Gaps Exist for Incoming Centennial College RPL Students?

- Understanding of Concepts

- Awarded Transfer Credit/PLAR

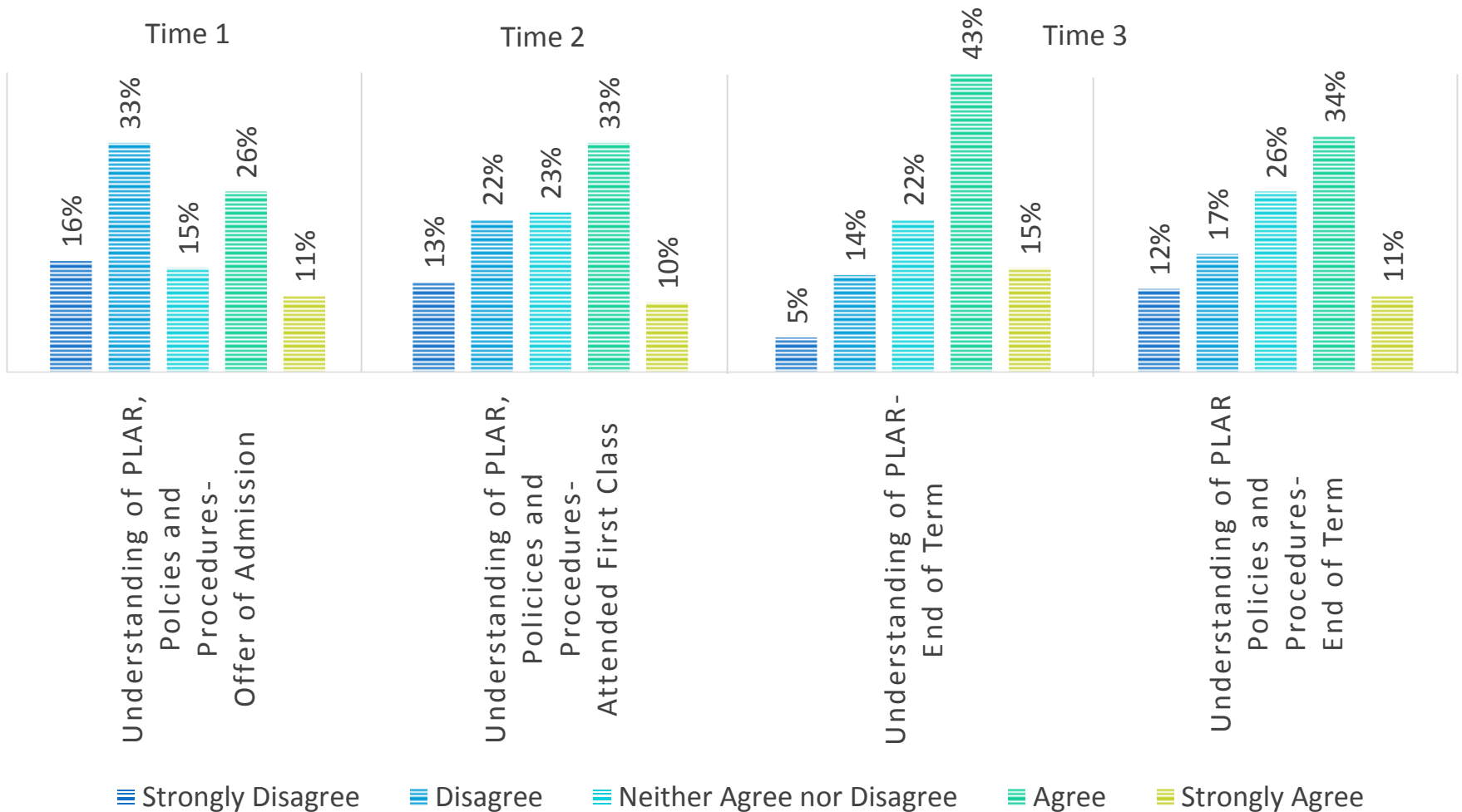- Resources, Sources and Support

- Policies and Procedures

# Understanding TCR



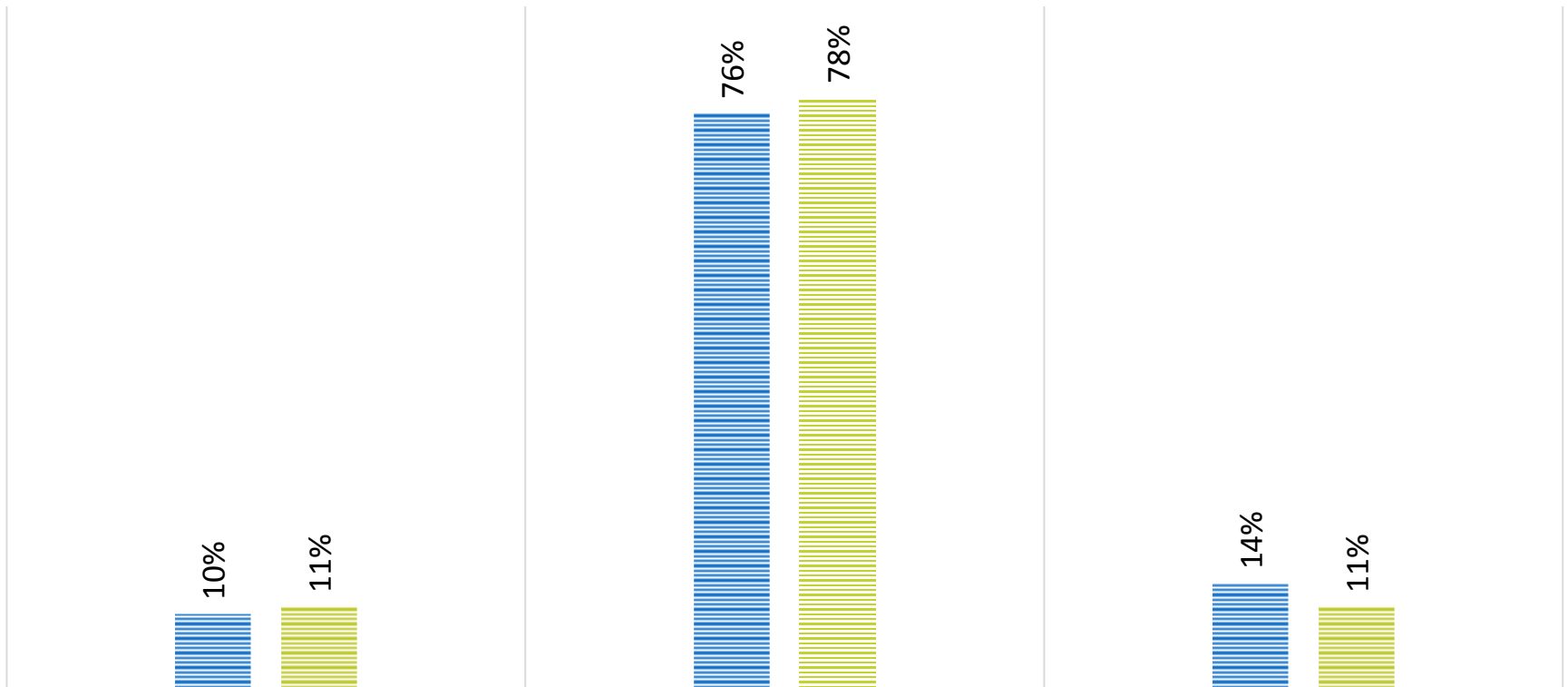Understanding of Credit Transfer, Policies and Procedures
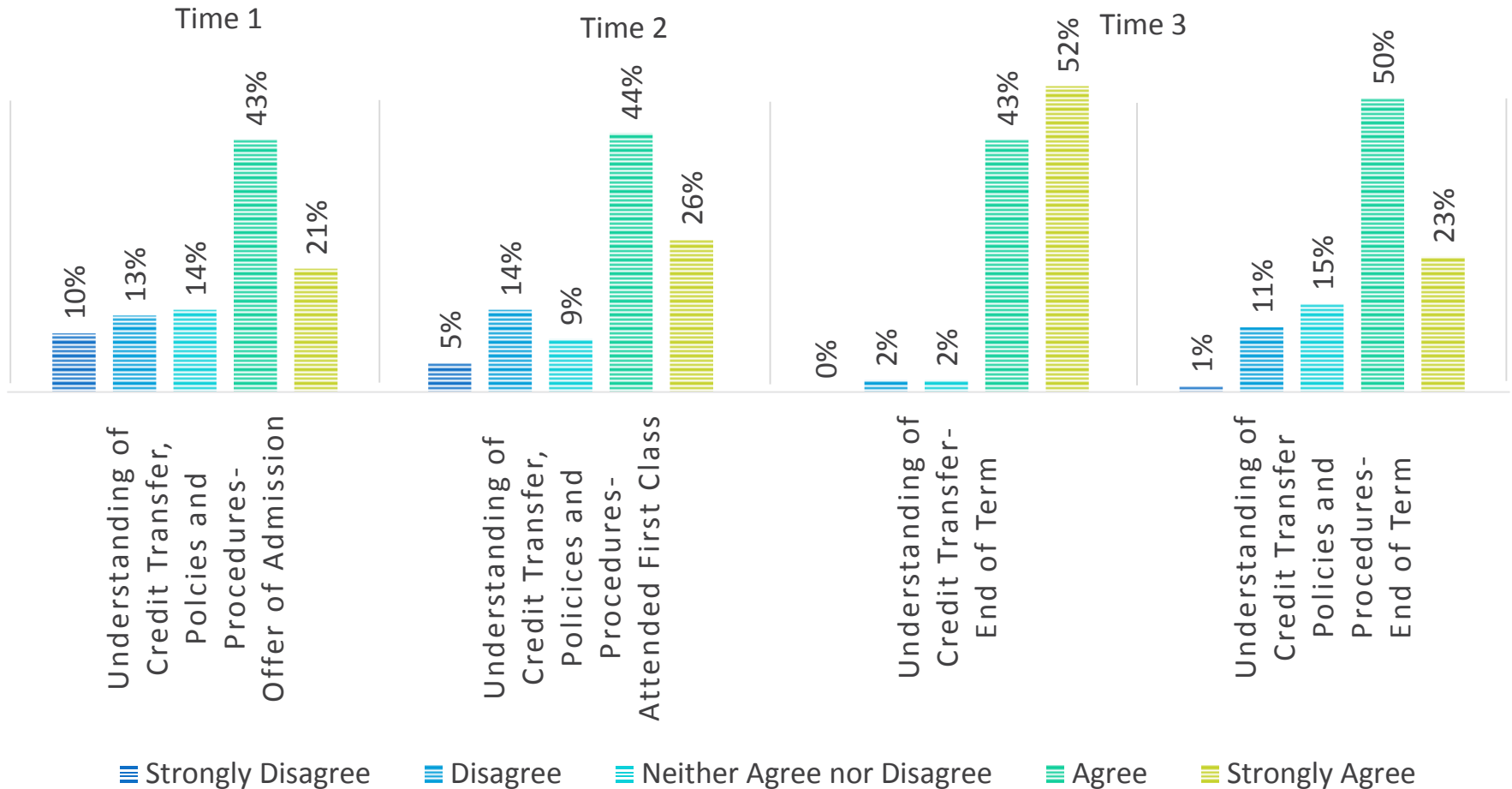
# Understanding PLAR

## Understanding of PLAR, Policies and Procedures



Time 1

Time 2

Time 3

Understanding of PLAR, Polcies and Procedures- Offer of Admission: 16%, 33%, 15%, 26%, 11%

Understanding of PLAR, Policies and Procedures- Attended First Class: 13%, 22%, 23%, 33%, 10%

Understanding of PLAR- End of Term: 5%, 14%, 22%, 43%, 15%

Understanding of PLAR Policies and Procedures- End of Term: 12%, 17%, 26%, 34%, 11%

Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Neither Agree nor Disagree    Agree    Strongly Agree

# Expected-Actual TCR

## Expected and Actual Transfer Credit Received

■ Expected    ■ Actual

| Category | Expected | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| No Transfer Credit | 10% | 11% |
| 1-3 Transfer Credits | 76% | 78% |
| More Than 3 Transfer Credits | 14% | 11% |

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# Expected-Actual PLAR

## Expected and Actual PLAR Credit Received

Expected ▦ Actual ▦

| Category | Expected | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| No PLAR | 66% | 99% |
| 1-3 PLAR Credits | 29% | 1% |
| More Than 3 PLAR Credits | 6% | 0% |
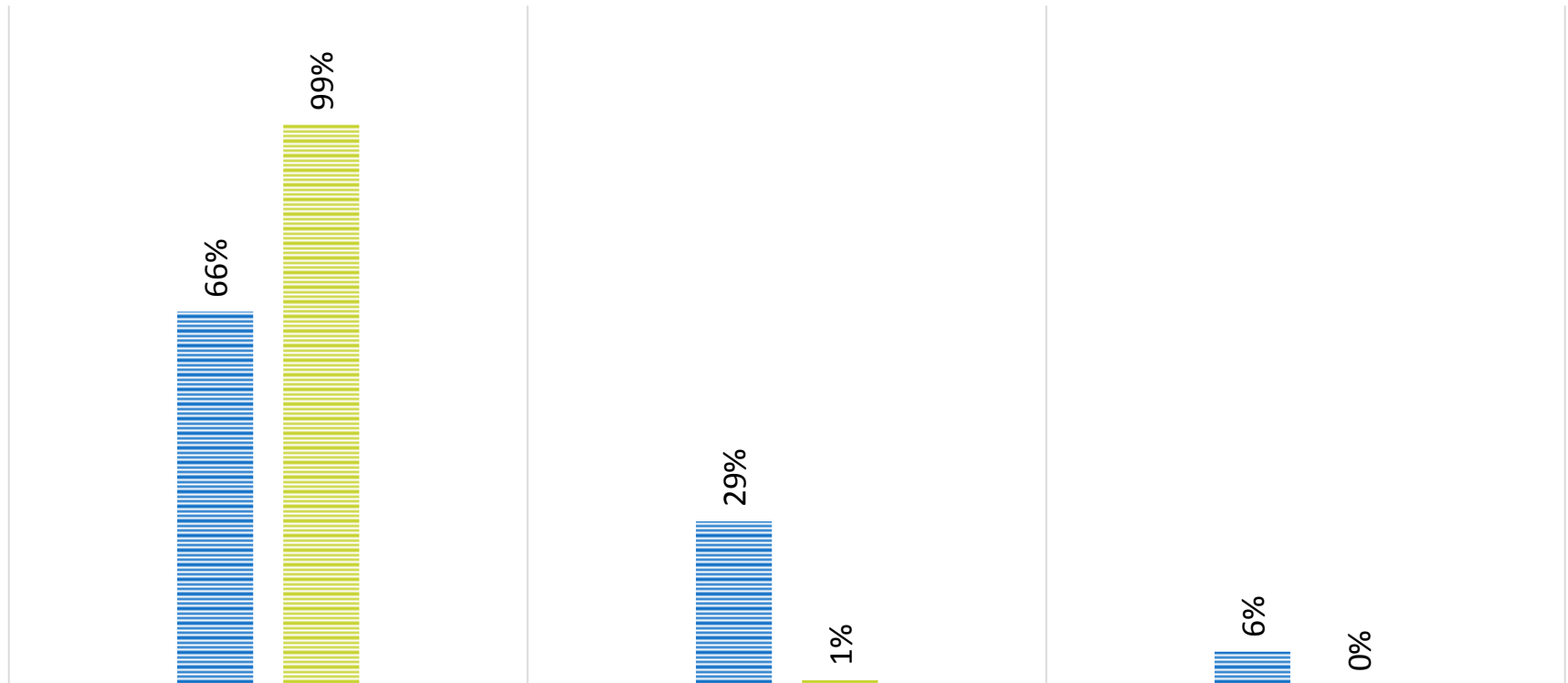
No PLAR          1-3 PLAR Credits          More Than 3 PLAR Credits

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# Resources/Sources for TCR

| | Pre-Survey | Post-Survey |
|---|---|---|
| **Centennial College website** | 48% | 48% |
| **Centennial College on-campus staff** | 34% | 47% |
| **Friends and coworkers** | 22% | 20% |
| **Centennial College recruitment team or their agents** | 12% | 15% |
| **Other institution website** | 11% | 13% |
| **Family** | 7% | 9% |
| **Secondary school teacher(s) and/or guidance counselor(s)** | 5% | 9% |
| **Other institution staff** | 5% | 10% |

# Support for RPL

| | Pre-Survey | Post-Survey |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Clear information regarding eligible credits** | 80% | 47% |
| **Guidance on application procedures** | 52% | 51% |
| **Assistance understanding transfer and/or PLAR assessments and decisions** | 43% | 23% |
| **Assistance managing your transfer credit/PLAR files** | 38% | 24% |
| **Program advising** | 28% | 18% |
| **Assistance with grade calculations** | 14% | 2% |

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# Identified Correct Steps



**Identified Correct Steps in the Transfer/PLAR Process**

First Step | Middle Steps | Last Step

- Confirm Requirements for Transfer Credit and/or PLAR with an Advisor — 33% (Pre-Survey), 45% (Post-Survey)
- Complete the Transfer Credit and/or PLAR Applications — 55% (Pre-Survey), 60% (Post-Survey)
- Submit all Applications and Pay Any Applicable Fees — 67% (Pre-Survey), 90% (Post-Survey)
- Provide Documentation and/or Complete Assessment with an RPL Assessor — 79% (Pre-Survey), 80% (Post-Survey)
- Transfer Credit and/or PLAR Assessment Received — 56% (Pre-Survey), 78% (Post-Survey)
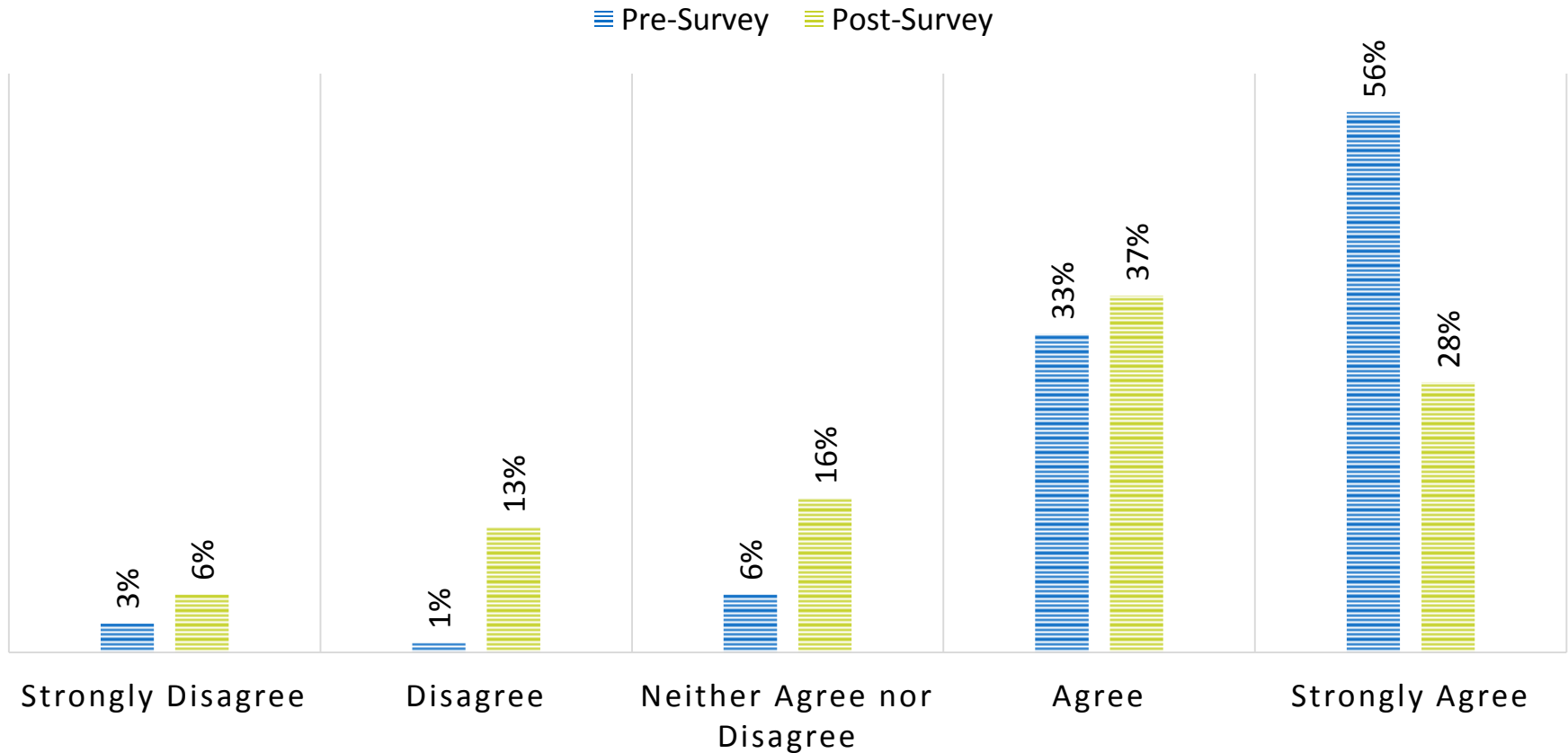
■ Pre-Survey  ■ Post-Survey

# Does the First Term Academic Progression Affect Students' Satisfaction and Attitudes Regarding Program and RPL Experiences?

- Approval Process, Amount of Credit and Timing

- Credit Transfer/PLAR Process- Quickness, Fairness and Clarity

# Approval and Satisfaction



**Approval Process and Satisfaction with Transfer Credit Received**

Pre-Survey    Post-Survey

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Survey | 3% | 1% | 6% | 33% | 56% |
| Post-Survey | 6% | 13% | 16% | 37% | 28% |

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# Predictors: RPL Credit Satisfaction

| |
|---|
| Female |
| Domestic |
| Age |
| Ont. Coll. |
| Ont. Univ. |
| Other PSE |
| |
| TCR Understanding |
| Pre-TCR Expectation |
| Success Rate |
| RPL was Quick |
| RPL was Fair |
| RPL was Clear |
| College Satisfaction |
| |
| Business |
| Communication |
| Health Studies |
| Engineering |
| Ont. Coll. Diploma |
| Ont. Coll. Grad. Cert. |
| Ont. Coll. Adv. Dip. |

Transfer credit understanding (0.23***)

Success rate (1.01**)

Quickness (0.33***)

Fairness (0.67***)

Clarity (-0.51***)

College satisfaction (0.14*)

# Predictors: RPL Credit Success

| |
|---|
| Female |
| Domestic |
| Age |
| Ont. Coll. |
| Ont. Univ. |
| Other Cdn. Coll. |
| Other Cdn. Univ. |
| Int. College/Univ. |
| Other PSE |
| |
| TCR Understanding |
| High Grade Expectation |
| Steps Correct |
| Used Cent. Supports |
| |
| Business |
| Communication |
| Health Studies |
| Engineering |
| Ont. Coll. Diploma |
| Ont. Coll. Grad. Cert. |
| Ont. Coll. Adv. Dip. |

Transfer credit understanding (0.07*)
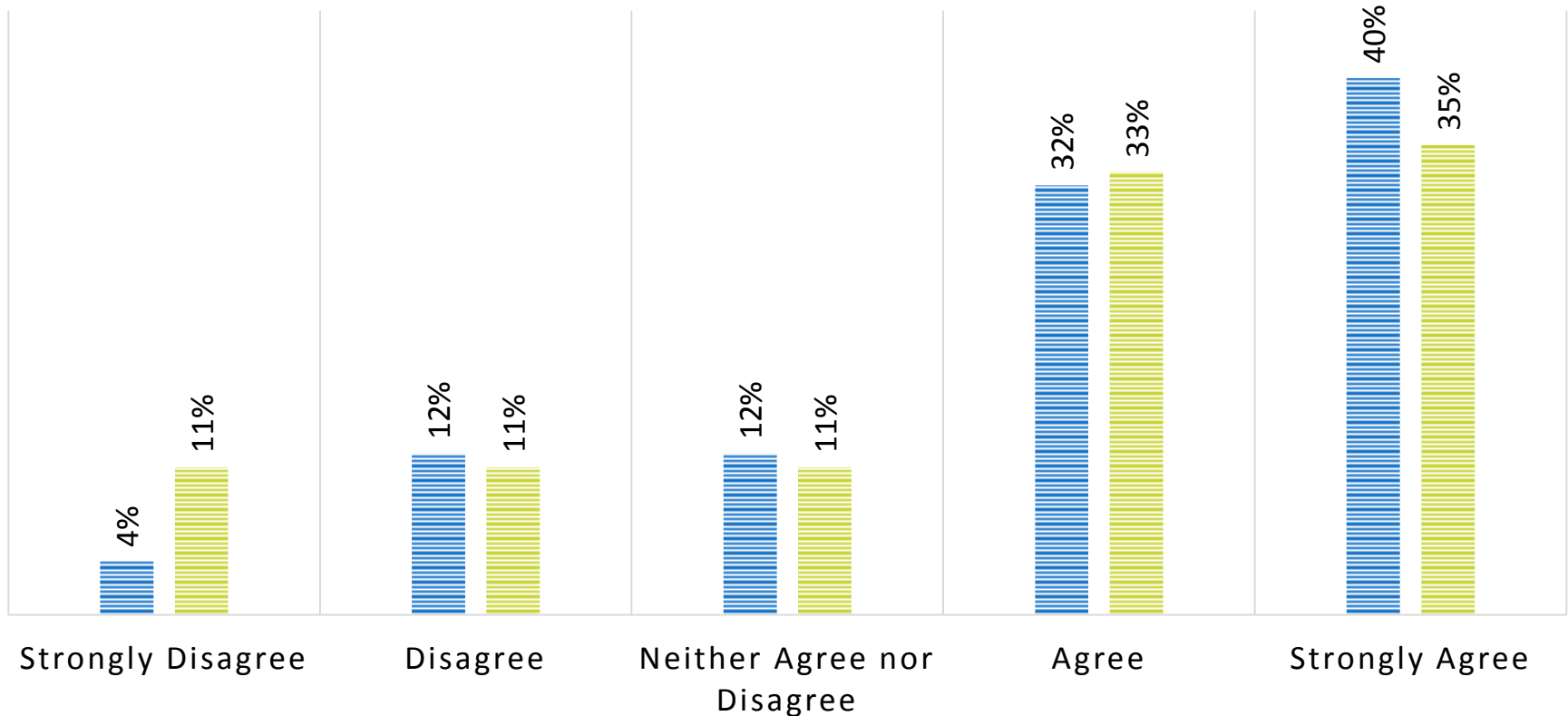
# RPL Credit Quickness



Quickness of Transfer and PLAR Credit Decisions

# RPL Credit Fairness
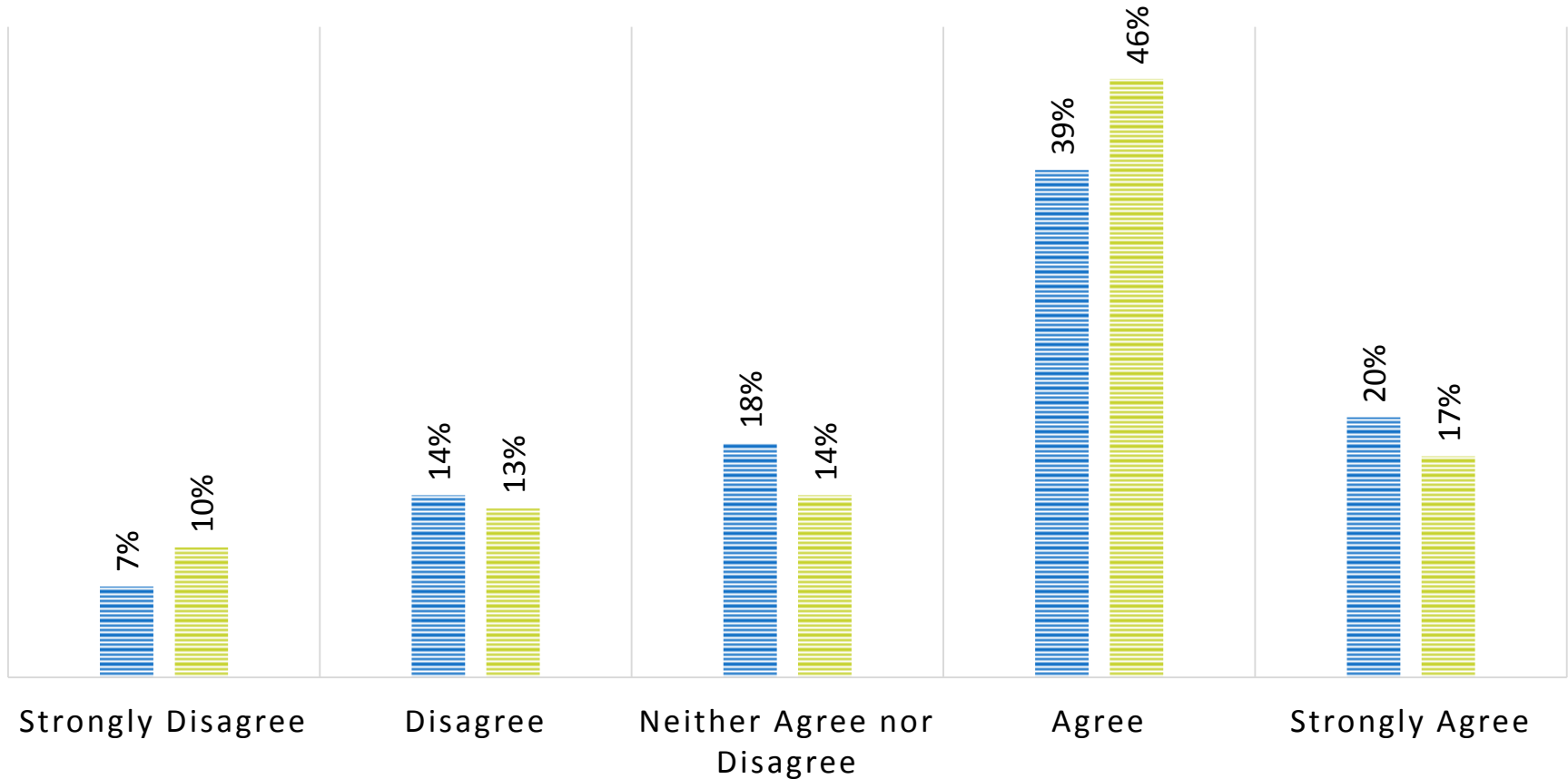


Fairness of Transfer and PLAR Credit Decisions
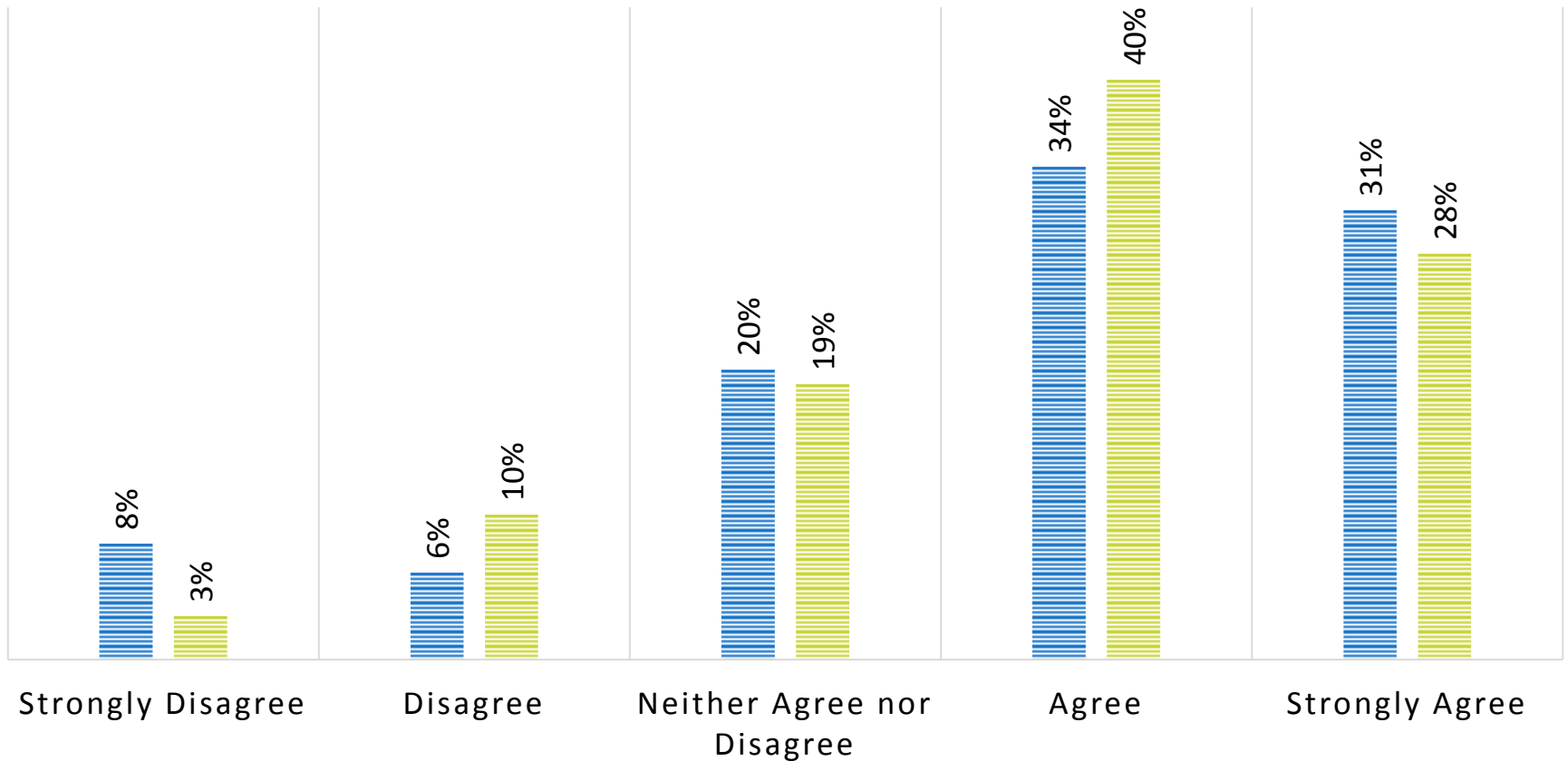
# RPL Credit Clarity

**Clarity of Transfer and PLAR Credit Process**

Pre-Survey  Post-Survey

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Survey | 7% | 14% | 18% | 39% | 20% |
| Post-Survey | 10% | 13% | 14% | 46% | 17% |

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# Recommendations

Increase initial support

Further automate and streamline processes

Clarify realistic benefit experiences

Centralize RPL support

Policies and procedures

Improve RPL staff visibility and expertise

Peer mentoring

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# Questions and Comments

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