

# HOPE FROM THE FUTURE: FEASIBILITY OF A MEDICAL STUDENT-ALUMNI SUPPORT NETWORK

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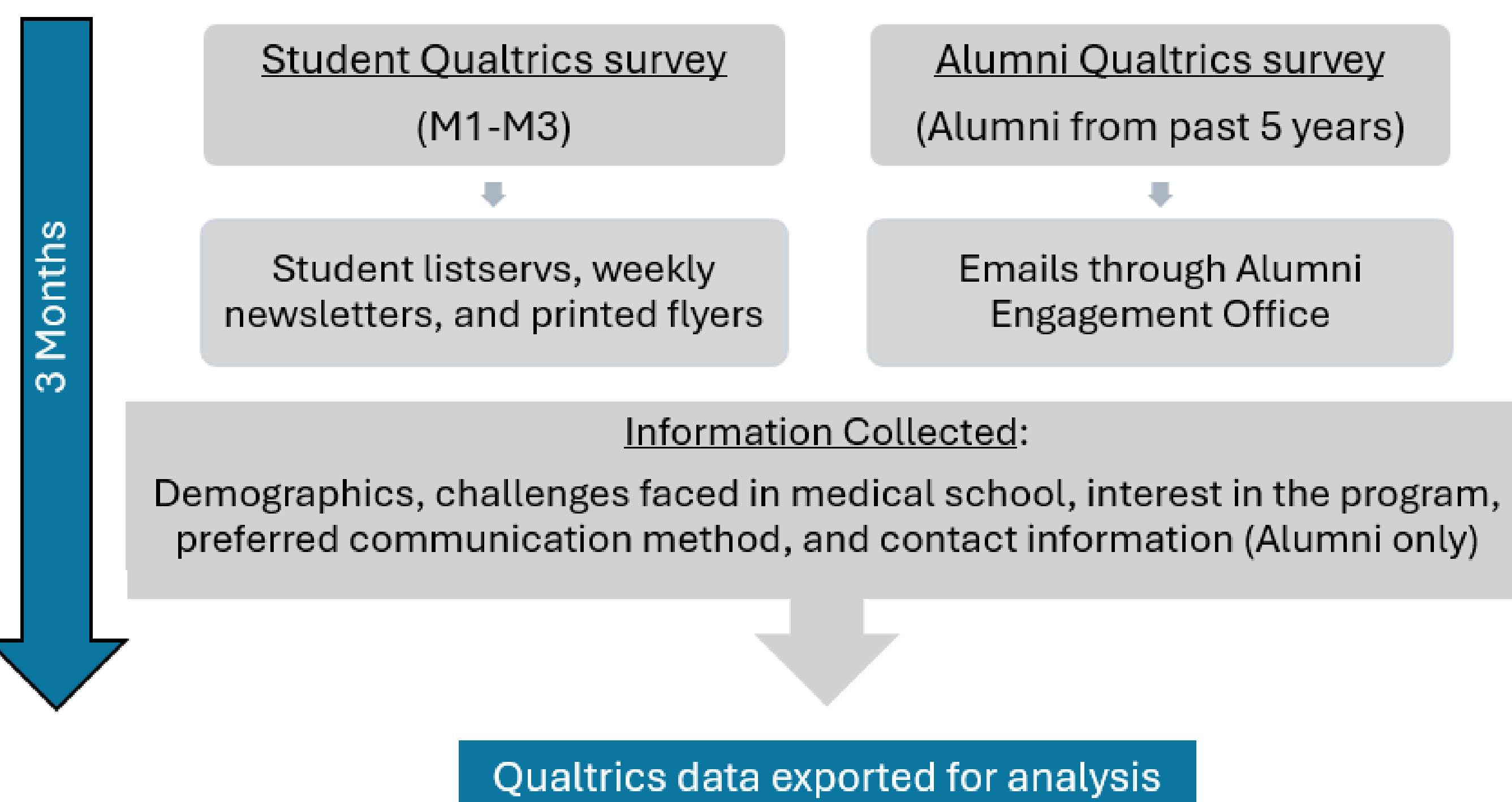
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## Background

- Medical students face a higher prevalence of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress compared to the average population. They also undergo multiple challenges that exacerbate stress and lead to burnout or thoughts of withdrawal, with 1.2% academic and 1.8% non-academic causes<sup>1,6</sup> attributed towards annual average withdrawal.
- Social support aids medical students in coping with stressors, while peer connection establishes a higher resilience than supervising physicians<sup>3,4,5</sup>. However, the literature lacks well-being interventions that involve near-peers like recent alumni.
- Here, we assess the feasibility of a Student-Alumni Network by measuring:
  - (1) **Quantity** of students and alumni expressing interest
  - (2) **Concordance** of demographics and experiences
  - (3) Preferred **communication modalities** for each party

## Methods

Parties Consulted: Student Wellness Committee, Center for Integrated Health, Office of Student Affairs, Department of Medical Education



## Results

Table 1: Responses

Interest Level	Students (n=78)	Alumni (n=36)
Yes	55	33
No	4	1
Maybe	19	2

### Factors of Student Interest

- Limited personal time
- Not yet experienced a unique hardship

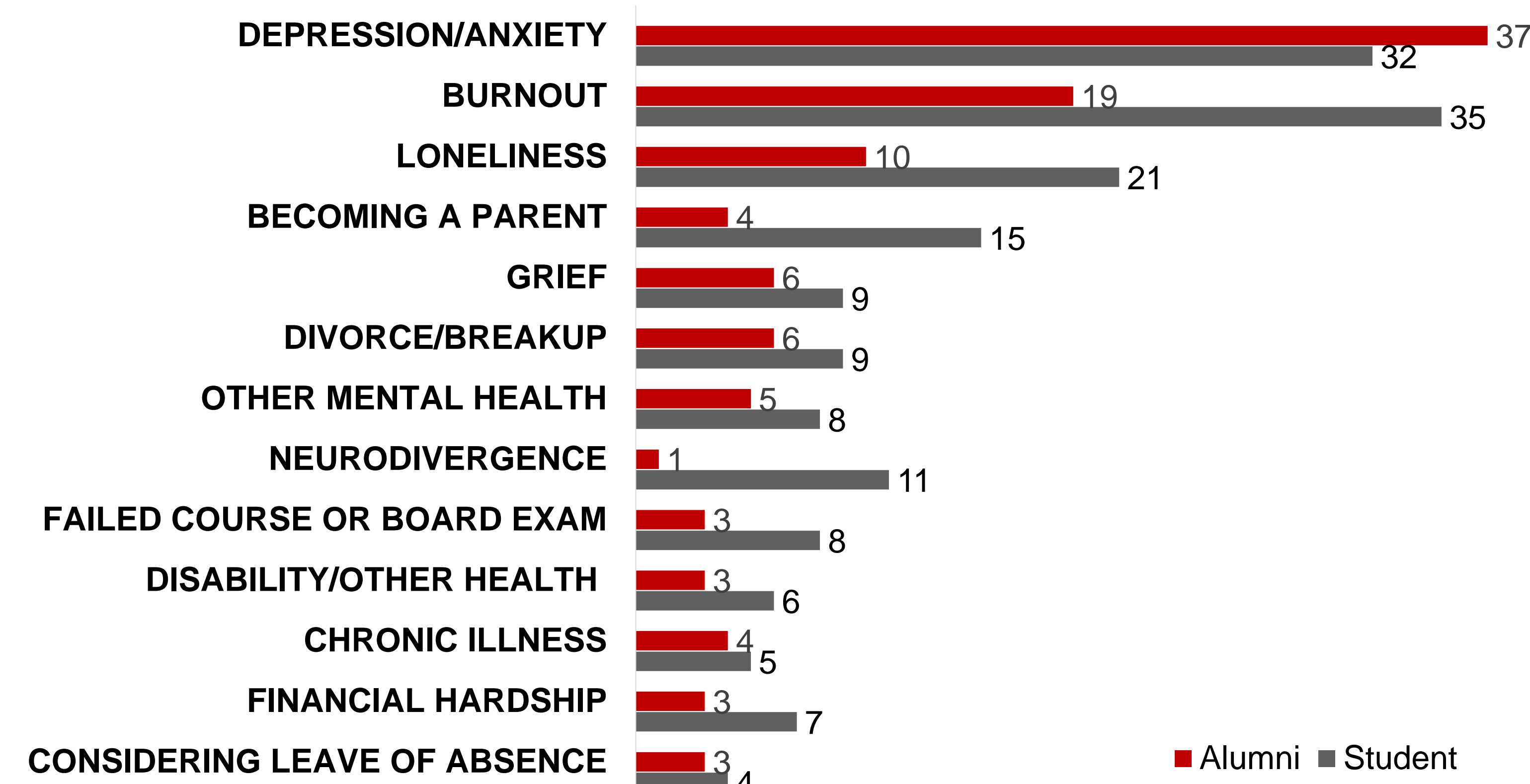
### Factors of Alumni Interest

- Uncomfortable giving advice when still working on their own mental health

Table 2: Demographics

	Students	Alumni
<b>GENDER</b>		
Female	62%	60%
Male	35%	37%
Non-binary	1%	3%
Undisclosed Gender	1%	0%
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>		
White/Caucasian	64%	71%
Black/African American	8%	11%
Hispanic/Latinx	14%	3%
East Asian	7%	6%
South Asian	15%	17%
Native American	0%	6%

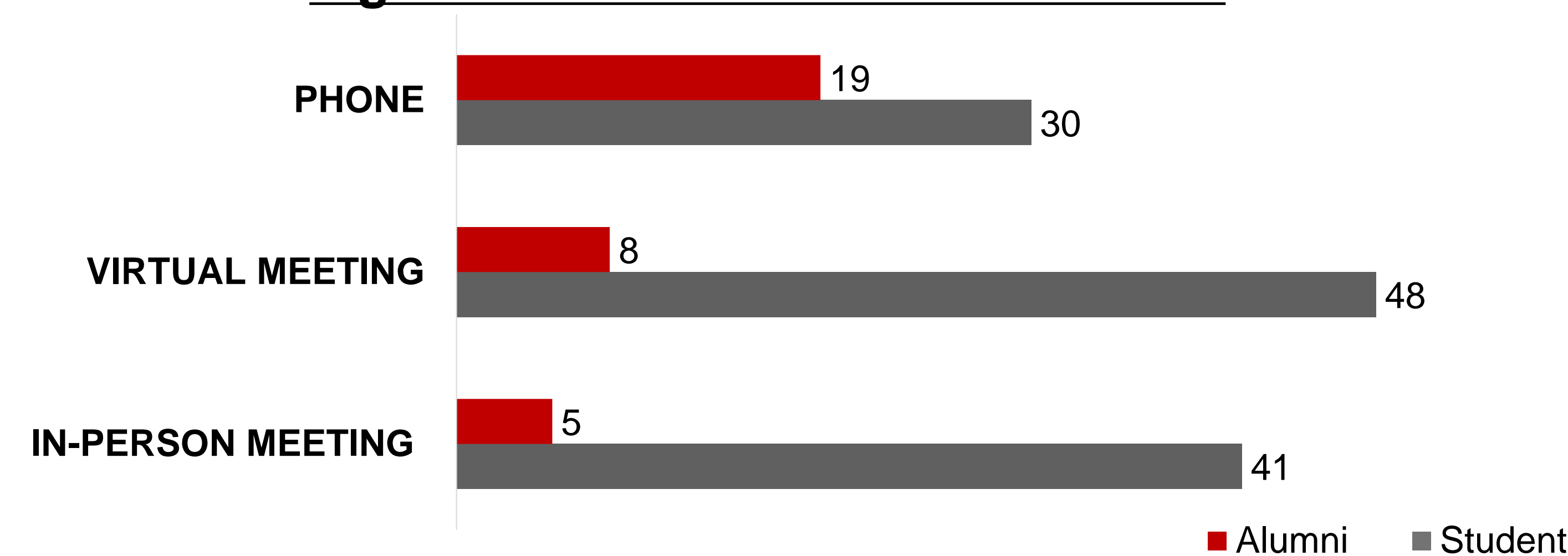
Figure 1: Experiences



### Additional Reported Student Experiences

- First generation
- Non-traditional students
- Long-distance relationships
- Military scholarship commitments
- Being a primary caregiver
- Loss of a patient or codes

Figure 2: Communication Modalities



## Conclusions

The majority of respondents were interested in a Student-Alumni Network as a feasible means of support.

- Over twice as many students than alumni responded.
- Gender and racial/ethnicity concordance except for low representation of Hispanic/Latinx alumni.
- Students wanting to discuss “becoming a parent” or “neurodivergence” outnumber alumni with these experiences.
- The communication modality with the greatest overlap for initial contact was via phone.

## Discussion

- Lack of hardships and limited time were identified as barriers. Frequent advertising will be useful in capturing students as hardships arise, and meeting times should be flexible.
- Since depression/anxiety was the most common experience, categories should be more discrete in the future.
- The greater amount of neurodivergence in students may be due to fewer alumni responses than student responses, or to an increase in the prevalence of adult ADHD diagnoses<sup>2</sup>.
- Students identified military commitments and first-generation challenges as additional experiences to discuss. Alumni in these subgroups can be intentionally recruited in the future.
- Limitations: (1) Sparse literature regarding what number of students and alumni to aim for. (2) More alumni could be reached in the future via personal rather than school alumni addresses.

## Next Steps

Assess effectiveness of this intervention:

- The Network will be on the student landing page.
- Students filter alumni search criteria derived from this study.
- Student Wellness Committee’s Network representative will assist students in finding matches.
- We will track the usage and impressions of students and alumni.

## References

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