UW School of Public Health Strategic Planning Stakeholder Research Findings

January 2020

PYRAMID COMMUNICATIONS

The Research Completed

Stakeholder Research Completed

SPH Executive Team Meeting

SPH Advisory Board Meeting

- *Carey Farquher*
- *Susan Morgensztern*
- *Charlie Nolan*
- *Megan Ingram*
- *Jeff Lehman*
- *Charles Stevens*
- *Kelsea Shannon*
- *Sanjay Chheda*

Department and Interdisciplinary Programs Meetings

- *Between 7 and 30 individuals at each meeting*

Stakeholder Research Completed

All-School Meeting

- *~70 attendees*

Stakeholder Interviews

- *Amy Snover, PhD, University of Washington*
- *Chris Elias, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*
- *Diana S. Buist, Kaiser Permanente Washington Research Institute*
- *Esther Lucero and Dr. Rose James, Seattle Indian Health Board*
- *Garnet Anderson, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center*
- *Joe Kendo, Washington State Labor Council*
- *John Wiesman, Washington State Department of Health*
- *Katie Bell, Group Health Foundation*
- *Rogelio Riojas, SeaMar*

Stakeholder Research Completed

All-Stakeholder Survey

- *304 total internal responses*
  - *91 Staff*
  - *135 Faculty*
  - *69 Students*
  - *9 Other*
- *298 external responses*
  - *269 Alumni*
  - *10 Partners*
  - *1 Advisor*
  - *4 Other*

Student Session

- *~25 students, mostly graduate students*

What We Heard: Strengths

SPH Has a Very Good Reputation

- Ranked as #7 school of public health

- Known for extraordinary research

- Strong, reputable departments

- Strong undergraduate and graduate programs

- Known among students as having a more collaborative, friendly environment than other schools

- Benefits from world-class reputation of University of Washington

Other Key Strengths

- **Exceptional faculty, staff and students**
  - Passionate, talented faculty with incredibly diverse expertise and exemplary enthusiastic students with a deep commitment to improving public health

- **Located in a research-global health-innovation hub**
  - Top-tier research, global health, biotech, technology institutions and funders (Fred Hutch, PATH, Microsoft, Tableau, Seattle Genetics, Gates, Group Health Foundation, etc.)

- **A breadth and depth of partnerships**

- **Global reach and impact**
  - Infrastructure of relationships/partners globally allowing for collaboration and in-service opps

What are the top 3 strengths of the School of Public Health?
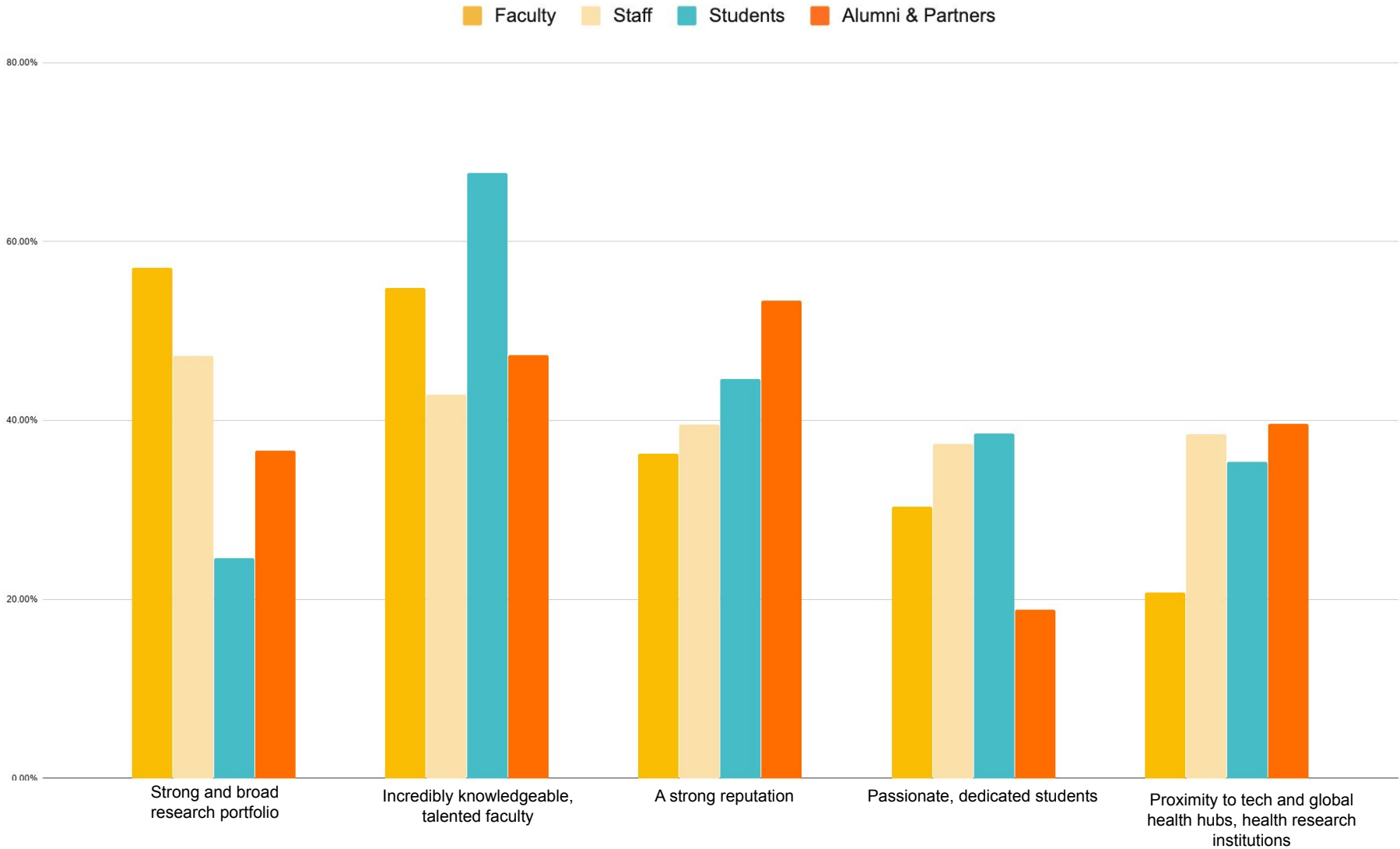
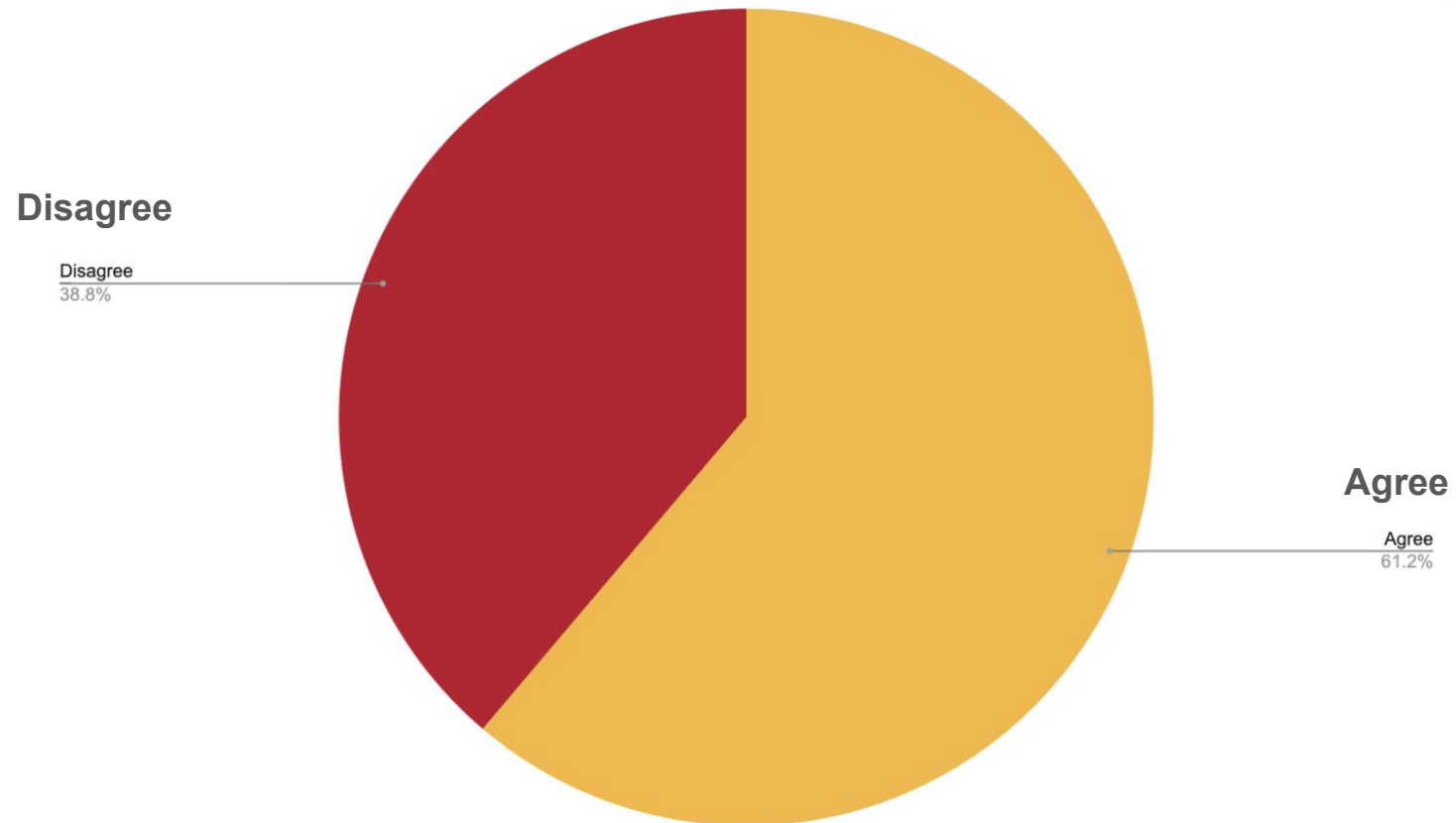# What We Heard: Issues

Overarching Issues that Rose to the Top

- **Recurring theme that school is very, very good, but not meeting its potential**
  - "We have strengths in key areas, but it's not uniformly cutting-edge"
  - Recent dropped in US News and World Report rankings

- **Siloes are common, and interdisciplinary programs feel it significantly**

- **Culture is very process-oriented, which may be inhibiting progress in some areas**
  - "We talk, but we're not necessarily making tough decisions and actions"

- **Perceived lack of transparency by some across and within departments**

- **The school's funding model is a perceived barrier—internally and externally**

- **Pay is low for grad students and faculty in comparison to competitors, and Seattle is an expensive place to live**

Other Overarching Issues that Rose to the Top

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I feel like the School makes an effort to be transparent and communicative about issues, decisions, and processes."
(All-Stakeholder Survey, Internal)

Disagree

Disagree
38.8%

Agree

Agree
61.2%

What are the 3 most pressing issues the school must address to move forward effectively?
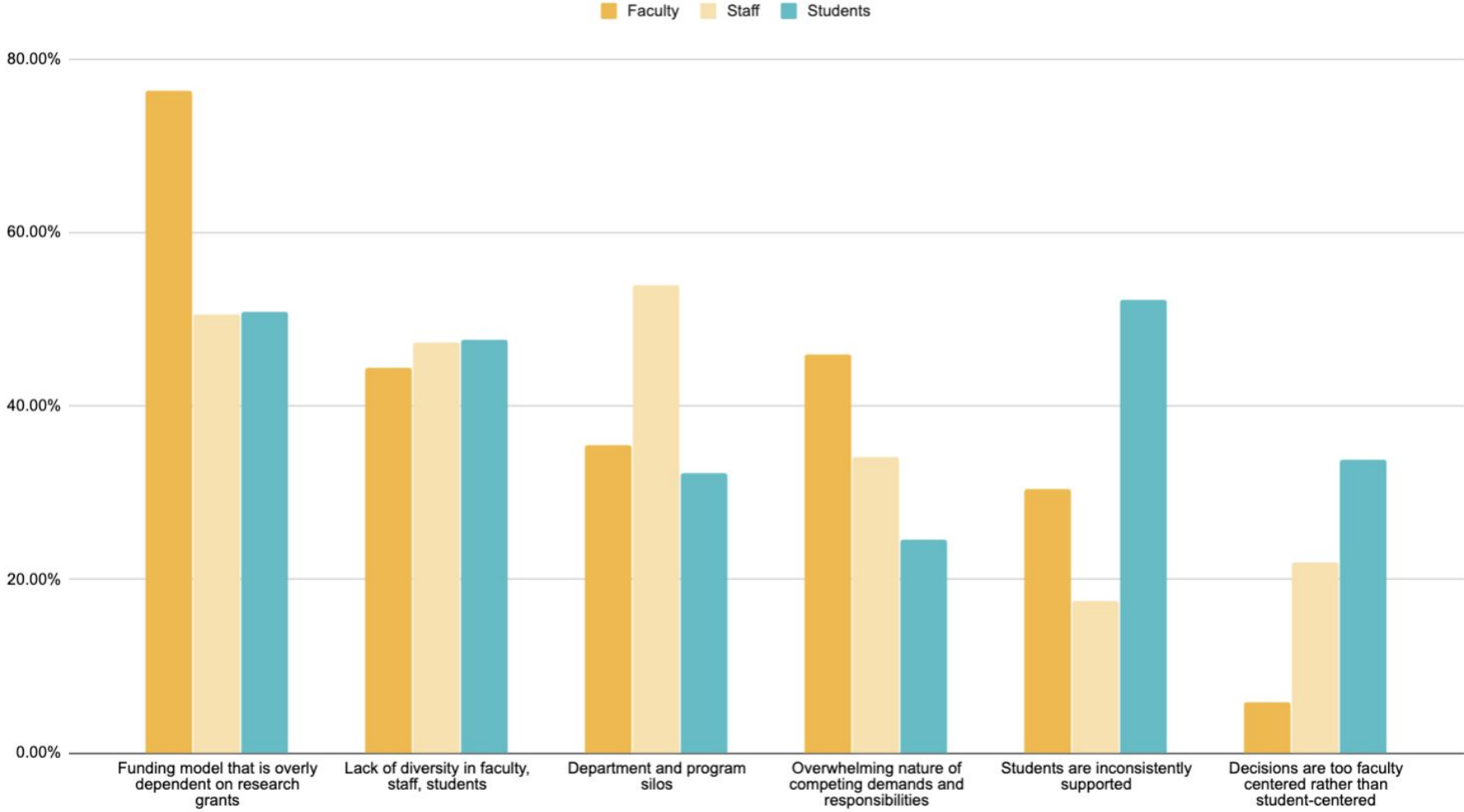
What We Heard: Aspirations

Aspirations

1. Be the #1, go-to school of public health

2. Become the vanguard academic institution to help break down structures of racism and promote health equity

3. Develop increased funding to stabilize faculty and staff and create greater opportunities to impact public health

4. Become a place where students, faculty and staff thrive, feel fulfilled and make meaningful impact

5. Develop and be known for a highly collaborative, innovative culture

6. Develop a vision for impact and a cohesive, clear identity that is successfully conveyed to external audiences

7. Increase and deepen our partnerships

1. Be the #1, Go-to School of Public Health

The Vision

- Most attractive school for students who want to shift the landscape of public health, consistently ranking in the top 5 schools.
- National leader in MPH education, with highly regarded, top-tier research *and* practice programs.
- Graduates are in public health leadership positions nationally and internationally, and well prepared to tackle today's complex public health issues.
- Consistently disseminate solutions to public health issues, demonstrating adaptive, responsive leadership in the field.

2. Become the Vanguard Academic Institution to Help Break Down Structures of Racism and Promote Health Equity

The Vision

- SPH embodies the equity mindset and builds a reputation for being a diverse, equitable, inclusive school.
- Everyone is trained in and understands what EDI means and looks like, integrating it into all decision-making points: hiring, admissions, training, support, evaluation.
- Diverse faculty, staff and students are proactively recruited and retained, creating a population that mirrors the community served.
- School environment is supportive and equitable.
- School leads on root causes of health inequities.

2. Become the Vanguard Academic Institution to Help Break Down Structures of Racism and Promote Health Equity

The Issues

- White supremacy/patriarchy is the dominant frame.
- Faculty compensation model is inequitable.
- Faculty of color carry a disproportionate burden, being tasked with mentoring students of color and frequently asked to serve on committees, and are not compensated in time or resources.
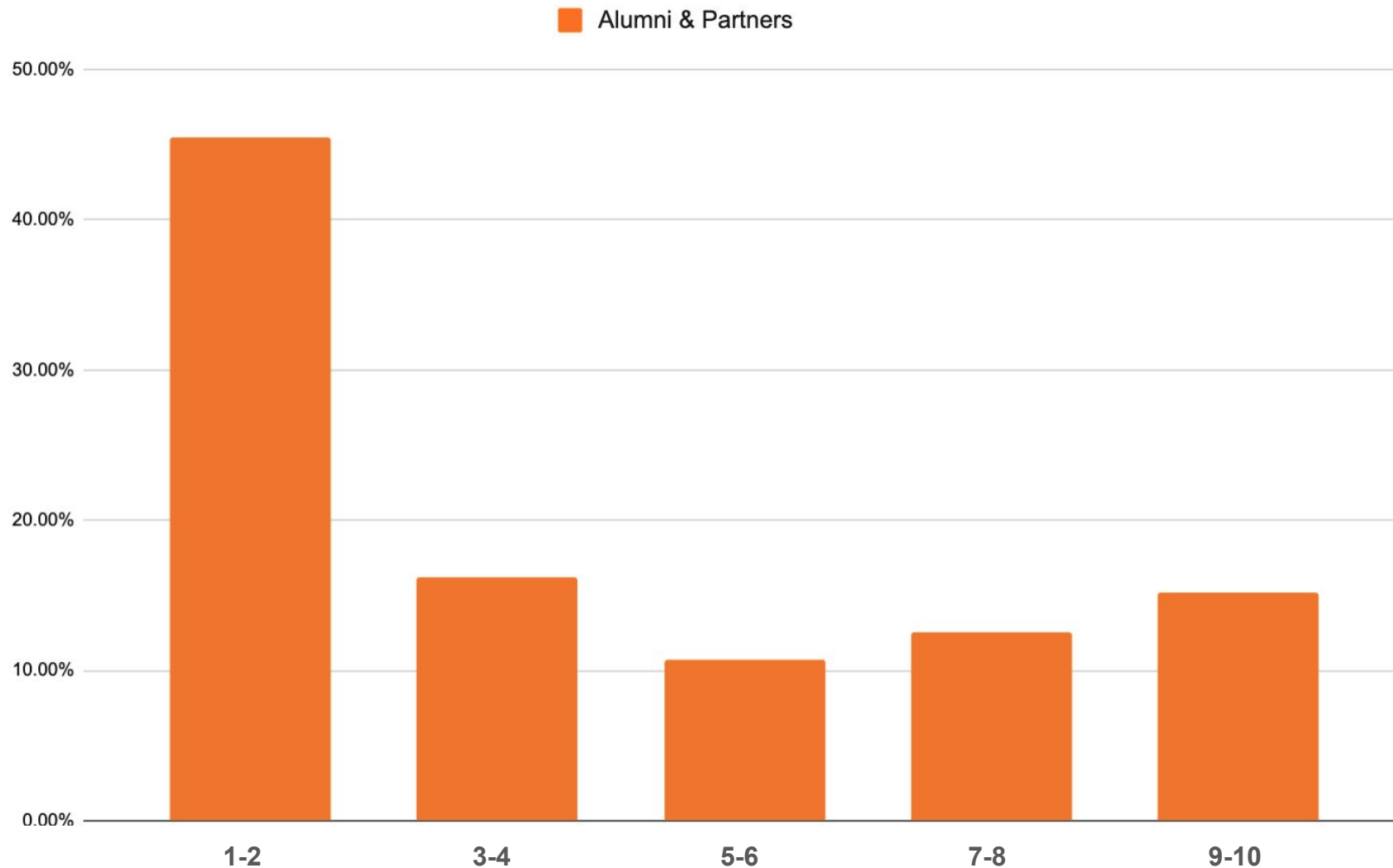
On scale of 1 to 10, how essential is it that the School focus internally on equity, diversity, and inclusion?
(1=absolutely essential, 10=not essential at all)
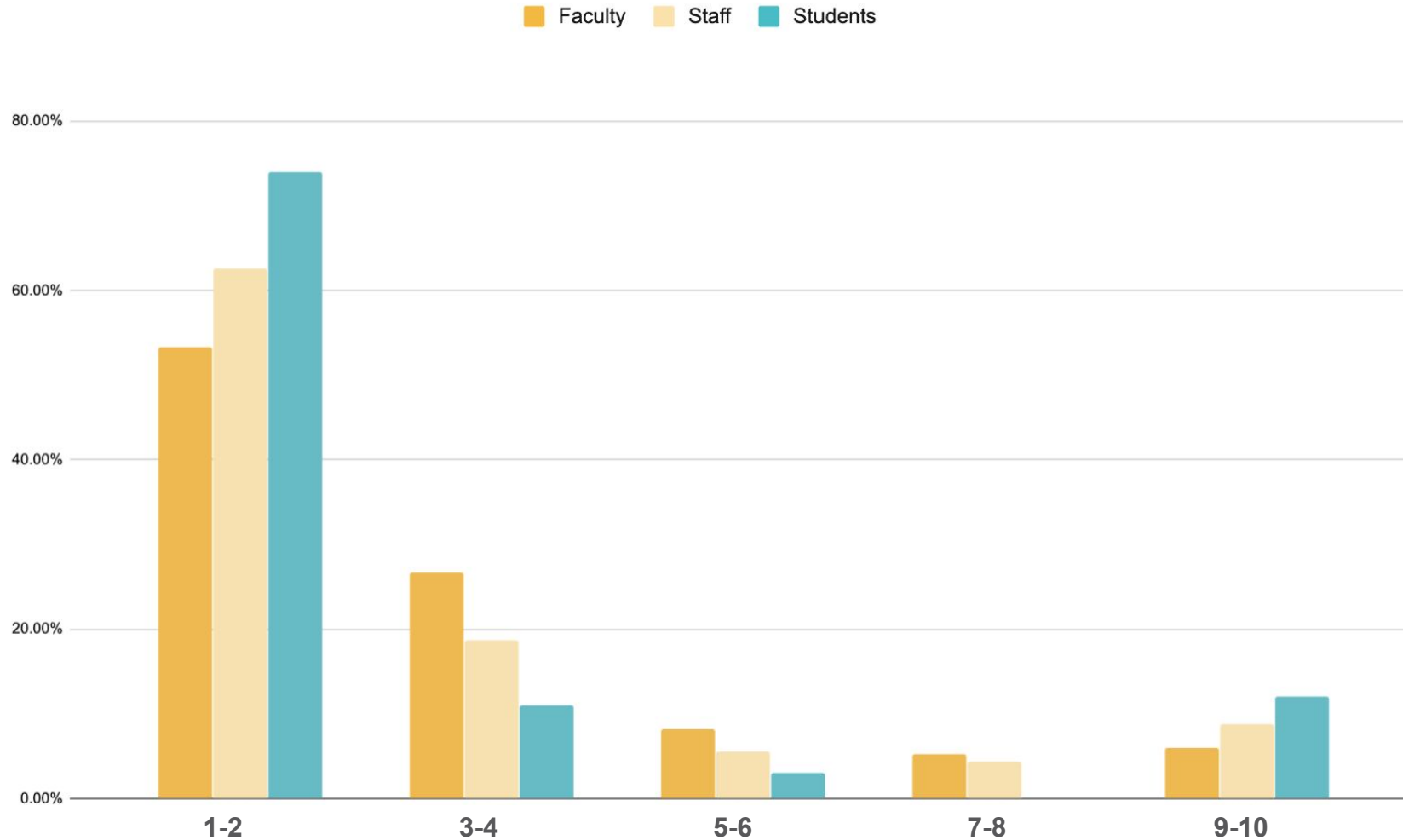
On scale of 1 to 10, how essential is it that the School be a leader in social justice and equity, diversity, inclusion in the field of public health? *(1=absolutely essential, 10=not essential at all)*

3. Develop Increased Funding to Stabilize Faculty and Staff and Create Greater Opportunities to Impact Public Health

The Vision

- The school adapts to a changing funding climate, reducing dependency on research grants through new sources of funding, including major philanthropic dollars.
- Funding is available to support students, fund innovative projects, enhance alumni support/career services, undertake large projects, seed innovation.
- Faculty and staff are less stressed about soft money, and feel valued and fairly compensated for their work.

3. Develop Increased Funding to Stabilize Faculty and Staff and Create Greater Opportunities to Impact Public Health

The Issues

- School is not aligned around its funding priorities.
- Upper campus is not a consistent, sustainable source of funding for the school.
- Development efforts and marketing/communications are not as strong as they could be.
- Under current model grad students are expensive, needing tuition waivers or grants to engage/fund them.
- Local cost of living increases costs/funding needs.

4. Become a Place Where Students, Faculty and Staff Thrive, Feel Fulfilled and Make Meaningful Impact
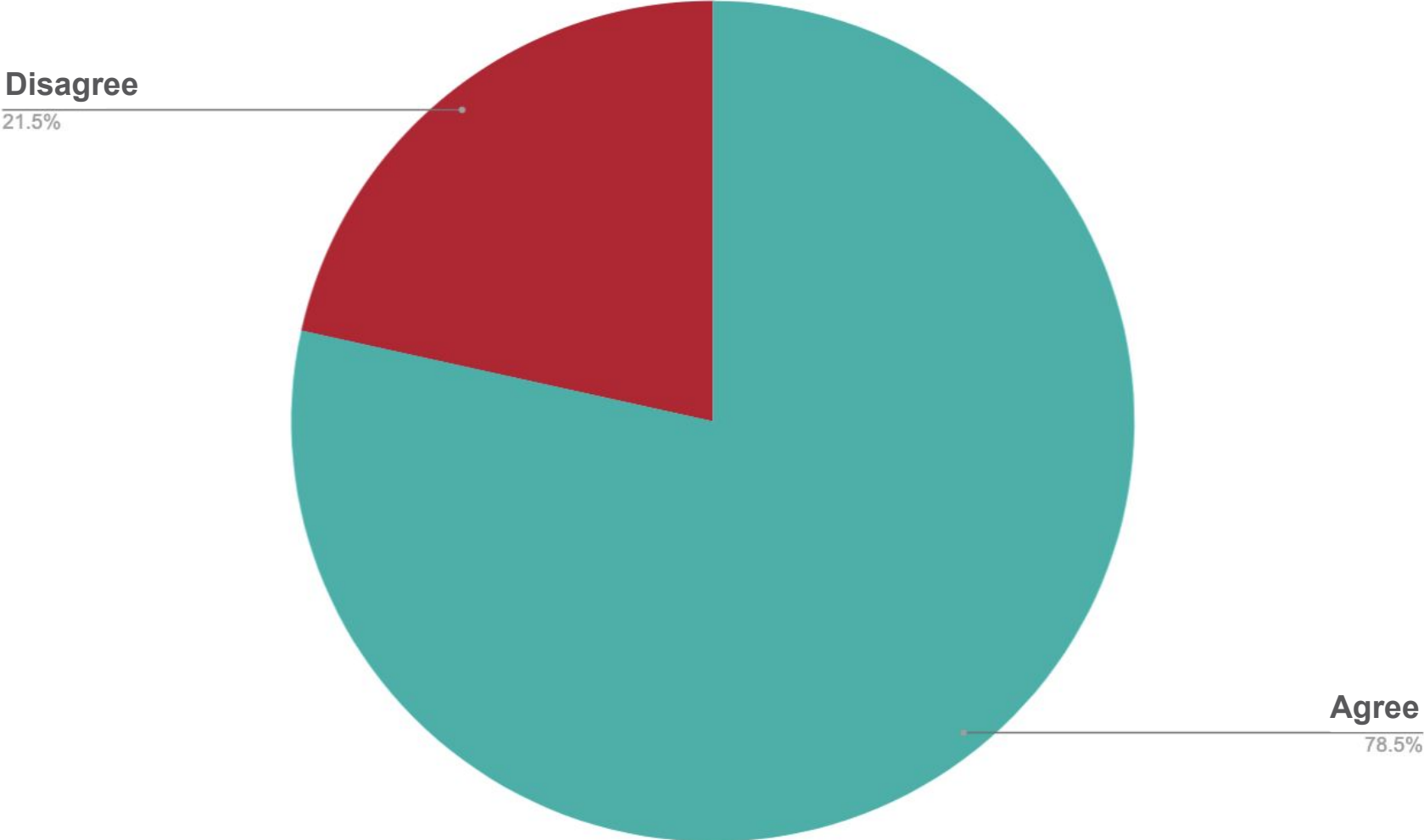
Part One Vision: Center on the Students

- SPH is student-centered with a dynamic, supportive learning community where funding is not the dominant focus and faculty-student engagement is high.
- Students have clear pathways for navigating their degrees, with more research and practice-based opportunities and all the support they need.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I feel like I'm part of a supportive learning community"?

Disagree
21.5%

Agree
78.5%

4. Become a Place Where Students, Faculty and Staff Thrive, Feel Fulfilled and Make Meaningful Impact

Part One Issues: Center on the Students

- Most common comments from students indicated need for more interface time with faculty, greater mentorship and more guidance through their programs.

"I'd feel more supported if there were a more cohesive, collective environment where students have the opportunity to consistently engage with one another and interface with faculty."

"We are supposed to find our own research funding and mentors but I can't even tell you how many times I've emailed faculty and administrators who just never, ever respond. It's so degrading to just be ignored."

"I need the administrators and faculty to actually care about what we're getting taught in classes that are required and core to the program but aren't taught in our department-and care about the quality of the teaching and the content we are taught in our department."

4. Become a Place Where Students, Faculty and Staff Thrive, Feel Fulfilled and Make Meaningful Impact

Part Two Vision: Become a Great Place to Work

- Compensation is more equitable and faculty and staff have increased promotional opportunities due to clearer, more expansive career pathways.
- Staff are treated as professionals and respected experts in their roles.
- Faculty focus on teaching, and on the research and practice areas around which they're most passionate and expert.
- Faculty and staff morale is high with a robust retention rate.

4. Become a Place Where Students, Faculty and Staff Thrive, Feel Fulfilled and Make Meaningful Impact

Part Two Issues: Become a Great Place to Work

- A lack of stable funding requires faculty to juggle commitments to make ends meet, and to focus more explicitly on research over teaching/students.
- Competing demands result in a sense of overwhelm and lack of work-life balance.
- Inconsistency in faculty time and effort and the corresponding compensation exists across departments.
- Promotion and compensation criteria don't reflect school priorities/values.
- Pay is perceived as low relative to other schools of public health.

5. Develop and Be Known for a Highly Collaborative, Innovative Culture

The Vision

- SPH pushes the envelope in public health, becoming a thought leader.
  - Looking at public health holistically, as a set of interconnected issues.
  - In exploring intersection of public health and the healthcare system, with understanding that prevention is the higher-order goal.
  - In anticipating future public health issues and preparing leaders to address them.
- School culture is more innovative, with incentives and resources in place to take risks and have the time for R&D.
- A more cohesive community fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and sharing of resources, giving rise to more innovative approaches and impacts.
- Cross-departmental working groups and events are planned regularly to facilitate interdisciplinary sharing and innovation.

5. Develop and Be Known for a Highly Collaborative, Innovative Culture

The Issues

- Corners of the school are "stodgy" and entrenched in traditional ways of doing things.
- Geographic challenges serve as a barrier to greater community cohesion and collaboration.
- Despite the collegial, collaborative atmosphere, the school experiences significant siloes across and even within departments.
- Community building across the school isn't prioritized.

6. Develop a Vision for Impact and a Cohesive, Clear Identity that Is Successfully Conveyed to External Audiences

The Vision

- Faculty, staff and students have a shared sense of the school's vision, purpose, and identity and see themselves as a part of it.
- UW values the school and makes every effort to raise its visibility and promote its accomplishments.
- Strategic communications efforts increase the school's visibility and stature in the public health community, with audiences well aware of the school's distinctive departments and contributions to the field.

6. Develop a Vision for Impact and a Cohesive, Clear Identity that Is Successfully Conveyed to External Audiences

The Issues

- Siloes create a lack of school cohesion and identity, with faculty, staff and students primarily identifying with their departments or programs.
- The school has not promoted itself well, nor has UW, resulting in relatively low visibility and a lack of awareness about the school's impact and being home to world-renown departments.

7. Increase and Deepen Our Partnerships

The Vision

- Formal partnerships are made with global public health organizations (e.g., WHO, UNICEF)
- New partnerships are formed with non-traditional public health organizations and organizations in other sectors (e.g., Microsoft, Amazon, housing, transportation)
- Resources and infrastructure exist to support increased community engagement, partnership cultivation.
- Partnerships are successfully forged with other UW schools.

7. Increase and Deepen Our Partnerships

The Issues

- A substantial number of partnerships are with individual faculty and not the school, and there is no infrastructure to ensure relationships are maintained with the school after a faculty-member's departure.
- Faculty often lack the time to nurture relationships with partners.
- Other UW schools aren't clear on the best way to partner with SPH, with some feeling it isn't easy to collaborate.

What We Heard:
Priorities and Impact

# If the following were key strategic priorities of the plan, which 3 would you consider the most important?
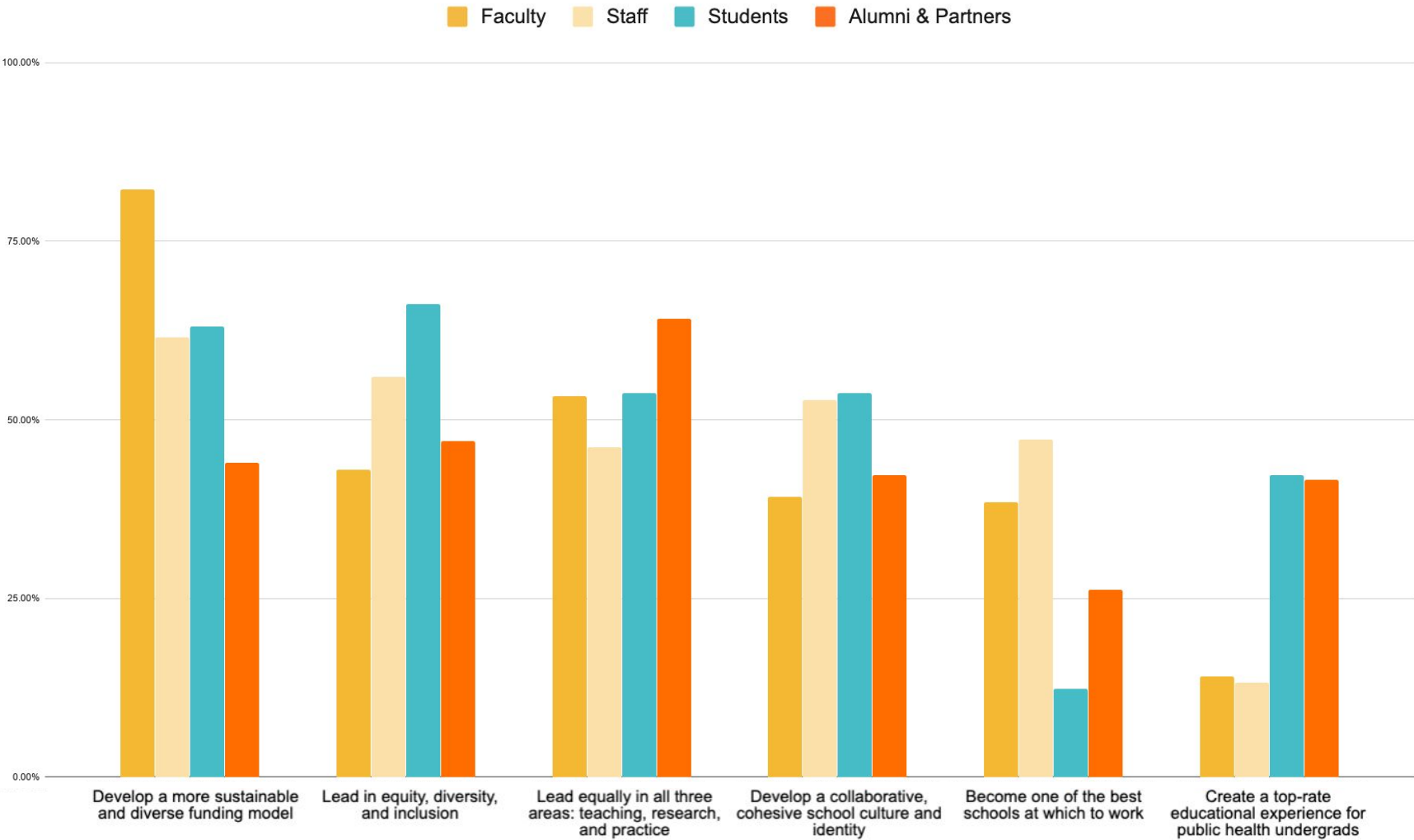
Other Strategic Priorities Commonly Raised for Consideration

- **Strengthen career development support.** Help students see the pathways and connect them to post-graduate employment opportunities.

- **Hire diverse faculty and recruit diverse students.**

- **Increase and strengthen partnerships.** With government entities, communities, industry, other UW schools/departments/programs.

- **Increase opportunities for experience in the field.** In communities, in public health agencies, in organizations.

- **Create a top-rate educational experience for graduate students.**

Most Important Accomplishments for Next 5 Years
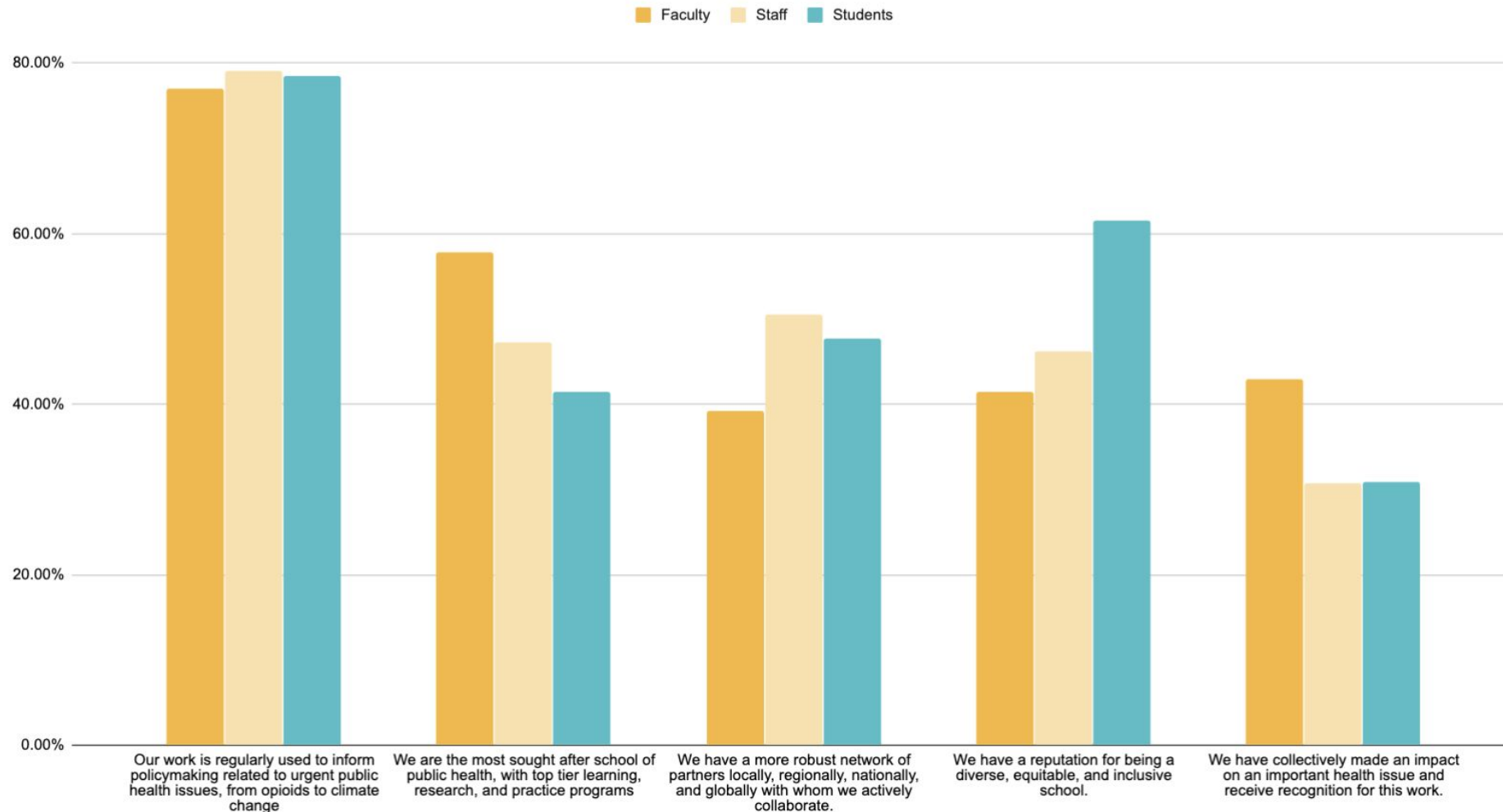
Internal Stakeholders:
Most Common Aspirations for Making an Impact

- Have our cutting-edge research be used for policymaking.

- Have research translated into practice successfully in communities.

- Improve faculty influence metrics across the school (e.g., pubs, citations, grants, etc.).

- Increase leadership and influence at national and global levels.

- Have a statewide impact on public health issues, and show tangible health benefits of our work in every county in Washington state.

- Genuinely tackle serious economic, political, and social threats to health.

External Stakeholders:
Most Consistent Themes Around What Would Help the School Make a Greater Impact in Public Health

- **Greater collaboration** with partners in all sectors, interprofessionally, and across UW.

- **Educate and engage the public,** about what public health is, as well as about prevention and health-specific issues.

- **Address student costs.** Tuition and expenses are very high, leaving students with burdensome debt after graduation.

- **Focus on translating research to practice.**

- **Increase opportunities for "practice."** Give students practical experience and "increase the emphasis" on practice.

What We Heard: Unifying Initiatives

POTENTIAL UNIFYING INITIATIVES

- **Lead the charge on addressing public health impacts of climate change.**
- **Lead a regional initiative to improve the health of communities across WWAMI.**
  - Emphasis on rural communities, social determinants, health disparities, healthy aging.
- **Look beyond biological threats** to invest in tackling serious economic, political, and social threats to health.
- **Invest in becoming a leader in social justice.**
  - Invest in EDI to actualize socially just, equitable relationships espoused in research, ed, practice
- **Work collectively around a single public health issue** to make a transformational impact.
  - Opioids, maternal mortality, vaccinations, gun violence, mental health, etc.

Unifying Initiatives Ranked in Order of <u>Urgency</u> by Faculty, Staff and Students

1. **Lead the charge on addressing public health impacts of climate change.**

2. **Lead a regional initiative to improve the health of communities across WWAMI.**

3. **Invest in becoming a leader in social justice.**

4. **Look beyond biological threats** to invest in tackling serious economic, political, and social threats to health.

5. **Work collectively around a single public health issue** to make a transformational impact.

Unifying Initiatives Ranked in Order of <u>Potential for Impact</u> by Faculty, Staff and Students

1. **Lead the charge on addressing public health impacts of climate change.**

2. **Lead a regional initiative to improve the health of communities across WWAMI.**

3. **Invest in becoming a leader in social justice.**

4. **Look beyond biological threats** to invest in tackling serious economic, political, and social threats to health.

5. **Work collectively around a single public health issue** to make a transformational impact.

External Stakeholders on the Unifying Initiatives

Nearly all stakeholder interviewees independently raised the opportunity SPH has to improve the health of Washington state/Pacific Northwest region. Many indicated a desire for SPH focus on its "own backyard," as they see huge and diverse opportunities—from addressing social determinants of health to public health impacts of climate change.

In an open-ended survey question, external stakeholders indicated **support for a regional initiative, especially with a rural element.** The most common ideas shared for a unifying initiative included **climate change, a focus on social determinants of health and health disparities, and schoolwide efforts around equity, diversity and inclusion**.

Most Urgent Public Health Issues
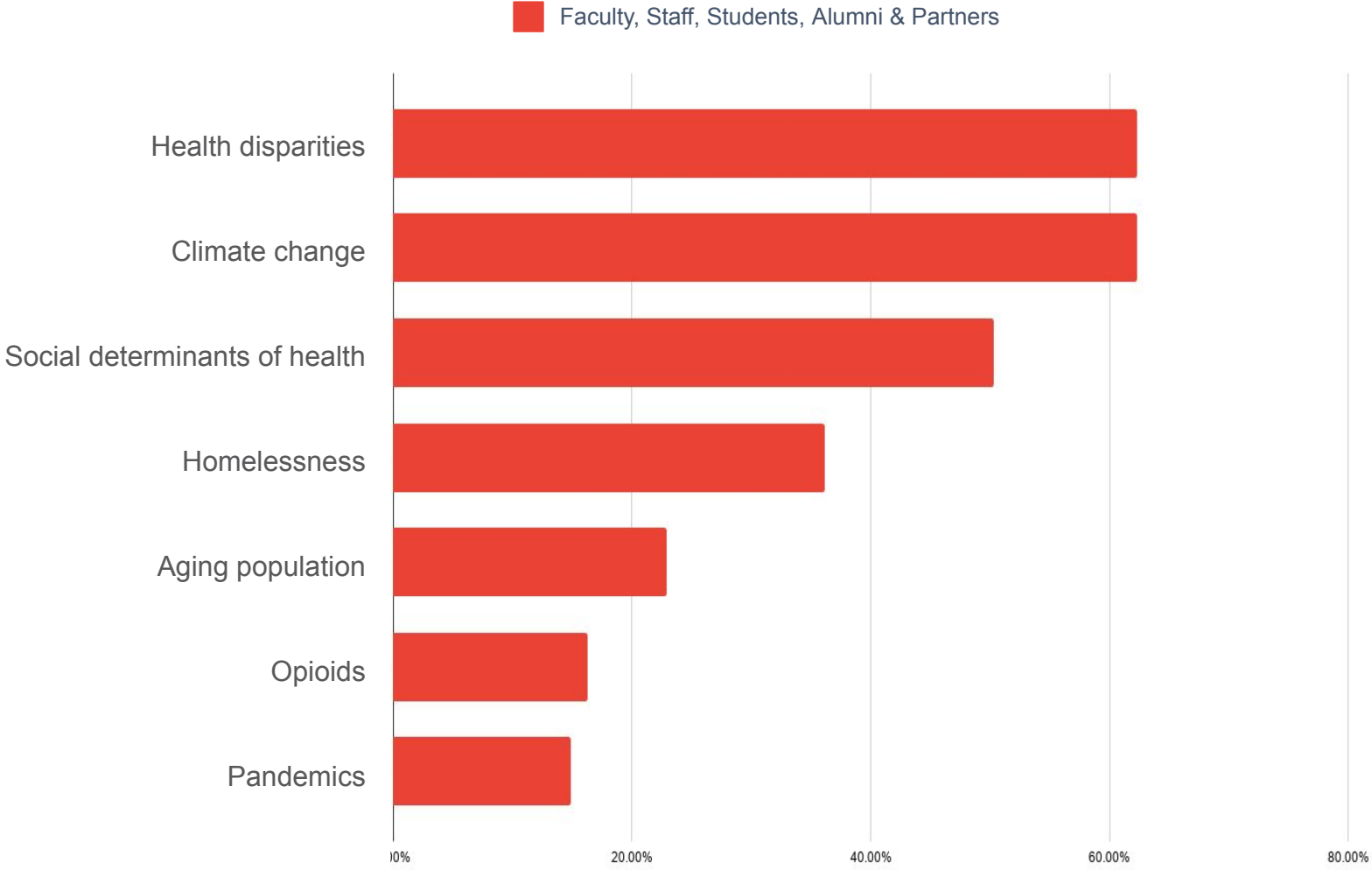
What We Heard During the Student Session

Student Session Themes

UW SPH students were invited to participate in a two-hour session inviting their input particularly around the student experience. Among the 25 students who attended there were a number of themes that were consistent across all questions we posed:

- Students want the school to feel more cohesive and be more collaborative across departments, with more interdisciplinary work.
- They would like a place to gather and engage cross-departmentally, both socially and for collaborative work.
- They perceive a strong "department first" mentality and would like to see a shift toward a "school first" mindset.
- Students would be helped by a comprehensive class-to-career roadmap and greater career development support to make a smooth transition after graduation.

Student Session: Equity

Students had a rich discussion about what a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion would look like at the school. The overall theme: It requires a true investment of time and financial resources, and a heavier lift by those with privilege and power. It also requires critical conversations about race, ethnicity and nationality.

Additional descriptions of how this commitment would manifest:
- Intentional hiring of diverse leaders, staff, faculty and teaching professionals.
- Reduced extra work for faculty and students of color, or payment for that work.
- Increased admission and funding of minority students.
- Equity integrated into teaching and research.
- Places for people of color to congregate within the new building.
- A pipeline recruiting minority students and supporting their success through graduate education and beyond.

What We Heard During Interviews with External Stakeholders

Unique Issues Raised by Interviewees

Throughout our conversations, interviewees raised many of the same issues and opportunities as faculty, staff and students, which were incorporated into the prior section. Here are the issues and ideas raised that stood out:

- Half of interviewees brought up the UW Population Health Initiative. There is a perception that SPH should be leading, but may be too late to the table.

- There is a perception that graduates produced by SPH and the needs of the market are not fully aligned.
  - Need for more MA-level students rather than PhDs.
  - Need for students able to lead in public health departments and agencies.
  - Need more graduates who represent the communities served.

Unique Issues Raised by Interviewees (cont.)

- There is a desire for the school to reflect on what the public health practitioners of the future look like and what skills they need, and to lead efforts to create them.

- Interviewees acknowledged that the school is deservedly known for its extraordinary research, and several want to see a greater focus on practice.

- Most interviewees mentioned the importance of partnering, especially with other sectors, and that Seattle has a rich pool of potential collaborators from the tech, healthcare, and business sectors.

- Effective collaboration with communities will require genuine work on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Interviewee Voices

"**I think they're positioned to be one of the most cutting-edge schools in the country because of their location, the resources in the community.** We're in the forefront in public health policy in the Northwest. And they could be thought leaders for public health and the healthcare system, its design, health services research."

"**Public health has changed dramatically over the last 100 years and we're still kind of in the flux of change, with a focus on social determinants. And it would be great if they were writing those papers, talking about where the field could go.** It would take better engagement with the community, and public health community. Seems like they've been focused and siloed in topics rather than looking at the system wholistically."

"**If we are going to change health, and that's why most people are there in first place, we have to create practitioners who understand how to do that in today's terms, which are different than yesterday's.**"

"**I don't think the school has been as adaptive as they need to be with regards to the future.** In the school of business, they are doing an MBA with a healthcare focus. Think about where the future is. Partner with the tech community, the business community. Law and public health, business and public health. Is there a certificate program across schools?"

Interviewee Voices

"**How do we optimize the public health impact we're having through our training and research programs?** It's not enough to study it. There's an emphasis around implementation science. The school could further strengthen its footprint in this area."

"**To make an impact, you've gotta work with everybody.** Behavioral health, mental health, social work. You need to partner with all of those departments at the UW. They need to have relationships with all the different disciplines, and working on population health will call for that."

"**They could do a better job at building relationships with collaborators across the UW to work jointly to develop approaches and questions.** They come to collaborate [with our department], but they come with a plan and have defined the problem and what we know and can do."

"**They see themselves as a research institution, and we suffer here in the Northwest as a result.** We would benefit in the Northwest from a stronger leadership program. The Executive MPH program…. They train them to be clinical researchers rather than leaders in the field of public health."

"**They are an amazing research institution and if that's what they want to be, then we need to let go and figure out where we get our practice needs met.** They have to make some choices."

Interviewee Voices

EDUCATION

"**I have not yet seen the fruits of the MPH program, but I'm enthusiastic.** Everyone is taking common core, so they'll be doing projects with people across the departments. It's so important to train in a multi-disciplinary approach."

"**Keep the student experience at the core. Make sure you're not just credentialing people, you are contributing to their thinking about how they can use their learning to impact health.** Just another degree is not going to help you get another job. People are going to ask, 'where's your experience?' Have students, require that they get experience for two years before graduate school so that when they are able to more solidly contextualize their learning."

RACE AND DIVERSITY

"**We do not have racial diversity in our faculty and students, and that also drives our collective exposure to some of these issues that are driven by social determinants of health.** It's hard to recruit students of color when we don't have faculty of color. We've lost black students to UNC for that reason."

"**You need people of color who are teaching, who are deans/chairs of departments who are making decisions about curricula.** It is so important. That role of decision-making shapes the entire education and system of public health. It's important to maintain visibility around these elements being important, it has to be ongoing."

Interviewee Voices

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

"**One of the roles SPH could play, is listening to the community about what research is relevant, matters, and should be funded.** It could be a major conduit to NIH to make sure NIH understands what research is meaningful, and will be sustainable."

"**If you have ongoing presentations, academic discussions of new papers or reports, it's the community-based orgs, our public health staff that are starved for it.** We've never received invitations to that. And we should be presenting some of those and doing guest lectures."

"**We don't have enough data on most things for our population.** That's where partnerships with Tribal Epidemiology Centers and community organizations can play an important role."

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

"**I'm curious, I'm not super clear on what the UW SPH vision is around what areas and geography it wants to serve.** What is its vision? Global? U.S.? PNW/WAMMI? There are different ways to build your reputation with different groups, and there is an opportunity to build a better reputation in the NW/WAMMI and work with communities in a better, different way."

"**If it were me, I'd focus on the state.** There are huge opportunities: social determinants of health, homelessness, opioids, mental health."

Interviewee Voices

URGENT PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

"**Climate change is an urgent public health issue.** And we need graduates skilled at working in interface of research and practice, familiar with many ways climate change will affect society and the challenge that will maintain for public health and tools to address it."

"**Our top priority, what matters to us is the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women.** In addition to that, there are major health disparities, substance use and opioids, diabetes, mental health challenges.**"**

"**Racism, housing, income inequality, mass incarceration.** Creating health practitioners that understand and are educated in how to improve the health of the community, letting your ego go is part of that."

"**Domestically, the health consequences of inequity are serious.** And suicide, opioids, and hepatitis C are the only mortality issues growing. There's a secular trend toward overweight, obesity, and other preventive risk factors. We need good academic implementation science to inform them."

"**The broader issues of economic displacement and immigration.** Social determinants are driving migration, whether its refugees or economic migrants. It brings very complex health related issues."

THANK YOU

PYRAMID COMMUNICATIONS