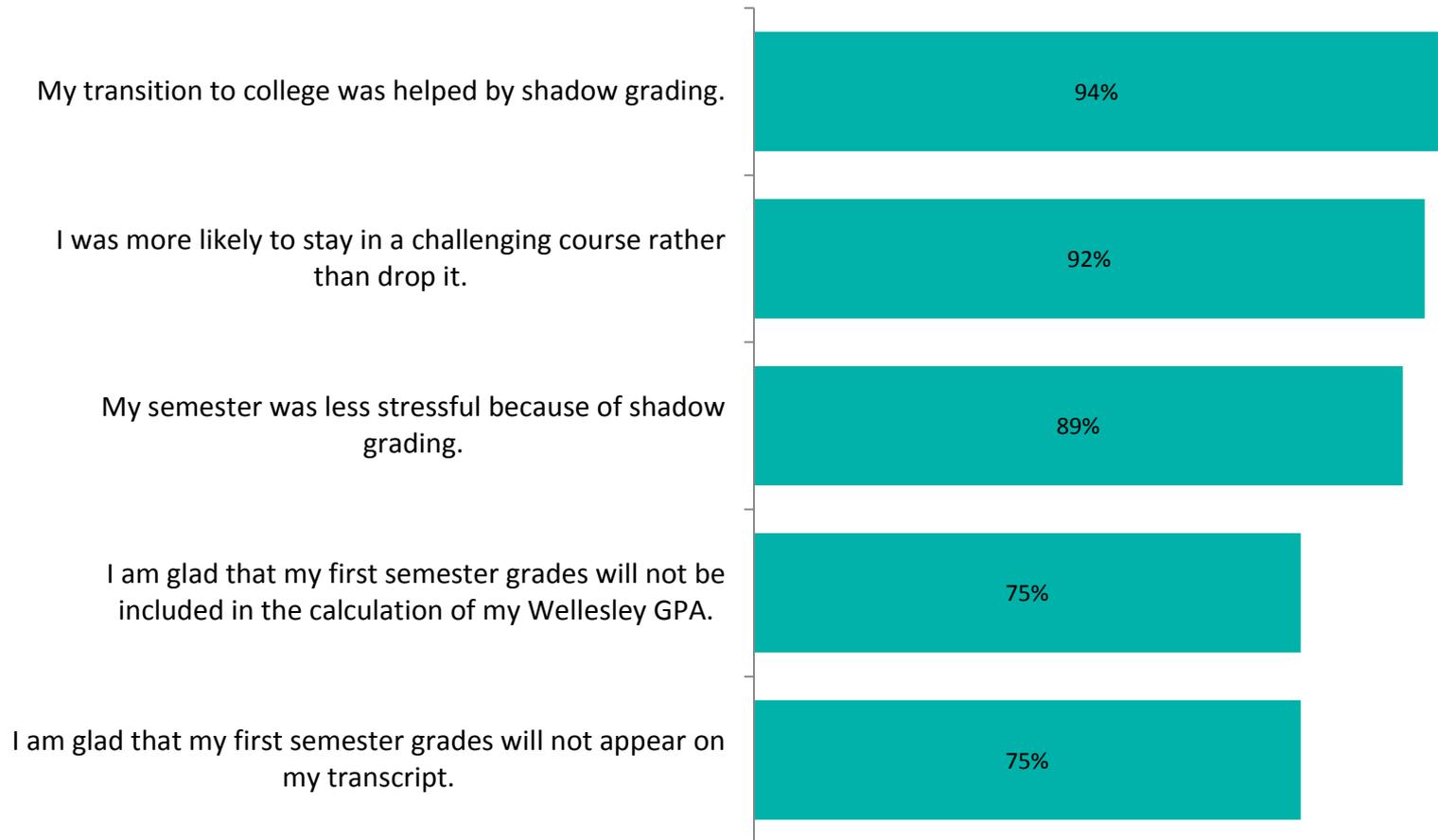


# Shadow Grading: Student Reactions

First Semester Advising and Mentoring Survey  
Fall 2014, 2015, & 2016

Office of Institutional Research  
Wellesley College

## Effects of shadow grading: % in agreement, 2014-16

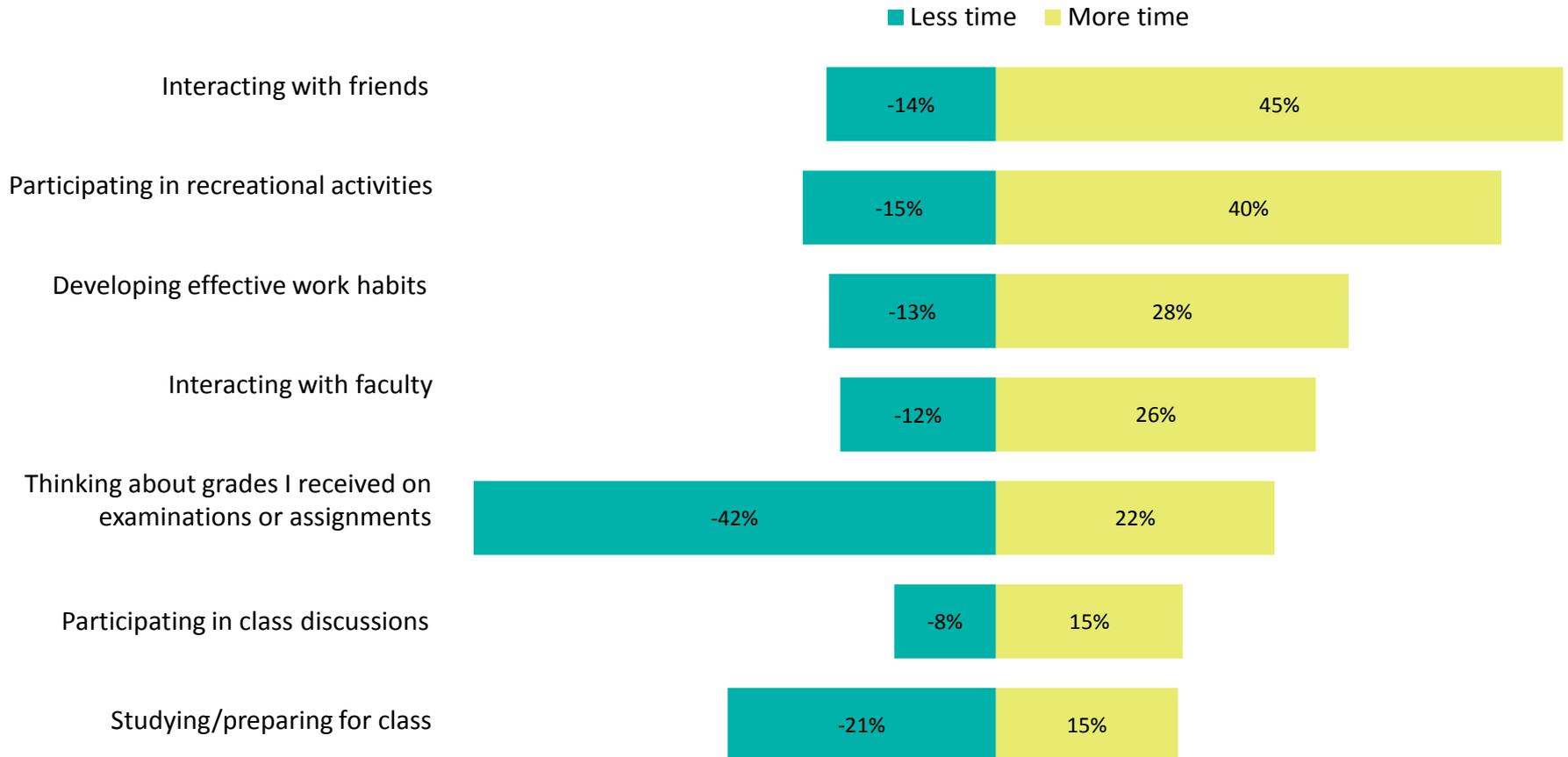


**% in agreement: "I was more likely to stay in a challenging course rather than drop it." 2014-16\***

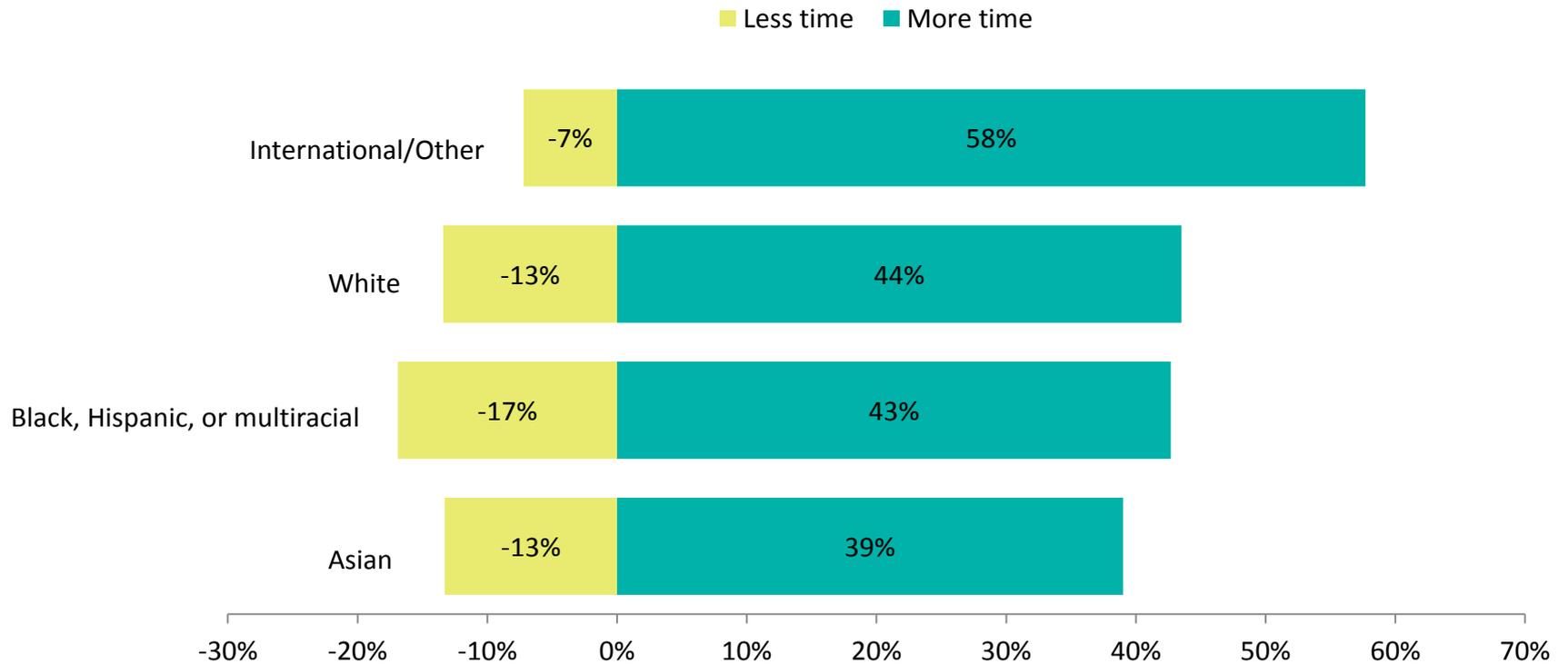


\* Significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ )

**“Imagine what your experience might have been like had there been no shadow grading. With shadow grading, I spent...”  
2014-16**



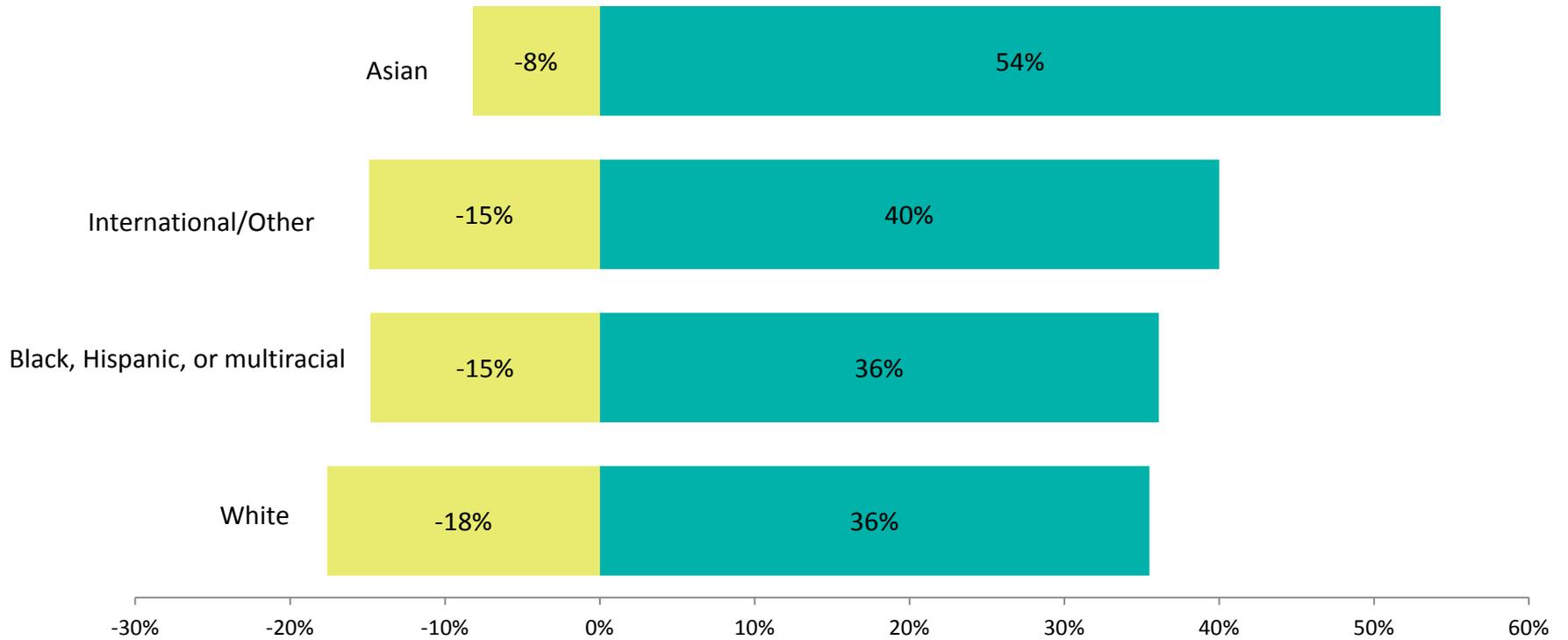
## “With shadow grading, I spent... interacting with friends” 2014-2016\*\*



\*\*Significantly different ( $p < 0.01$ )

# “With shadow grading, I spent... interacting in extracurricular ” 2014-2016\*\*\*

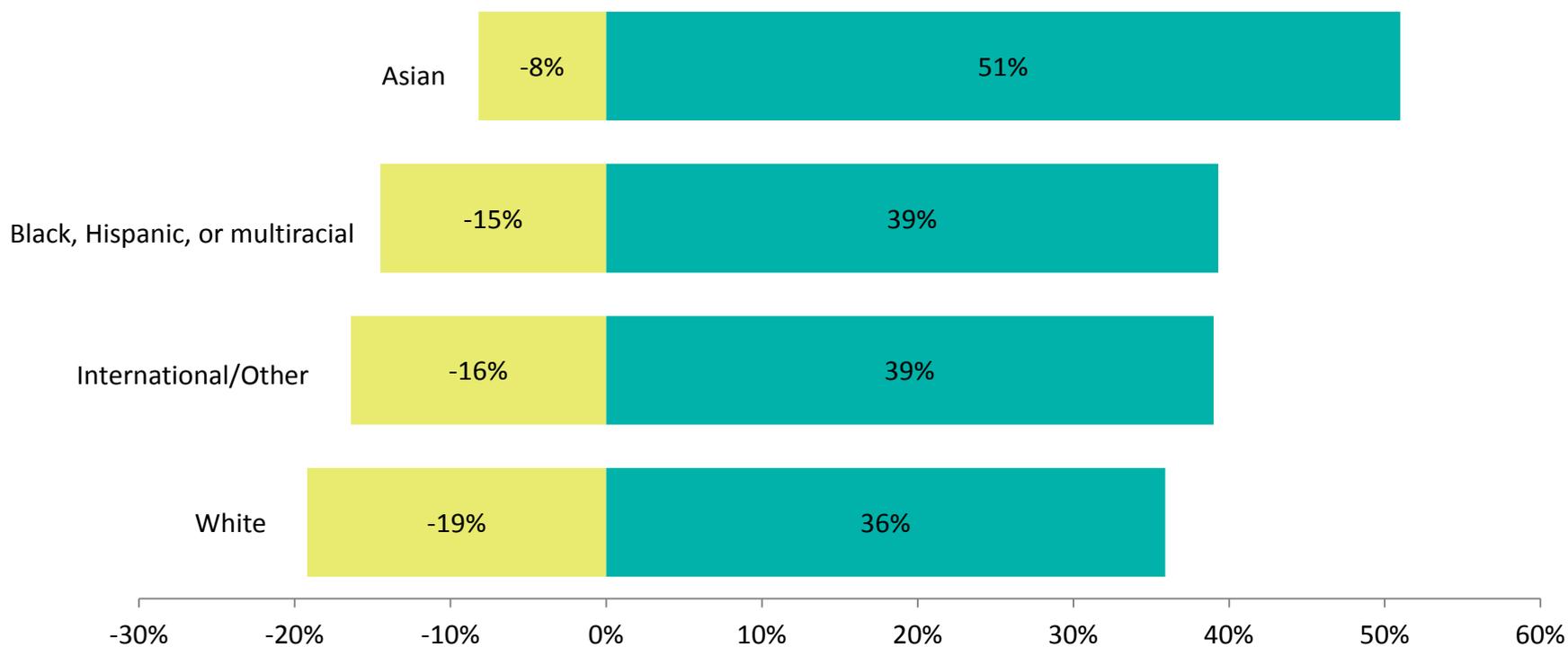
Less time More time



\*\*\*Significantly different ( $p < 0.001$ )

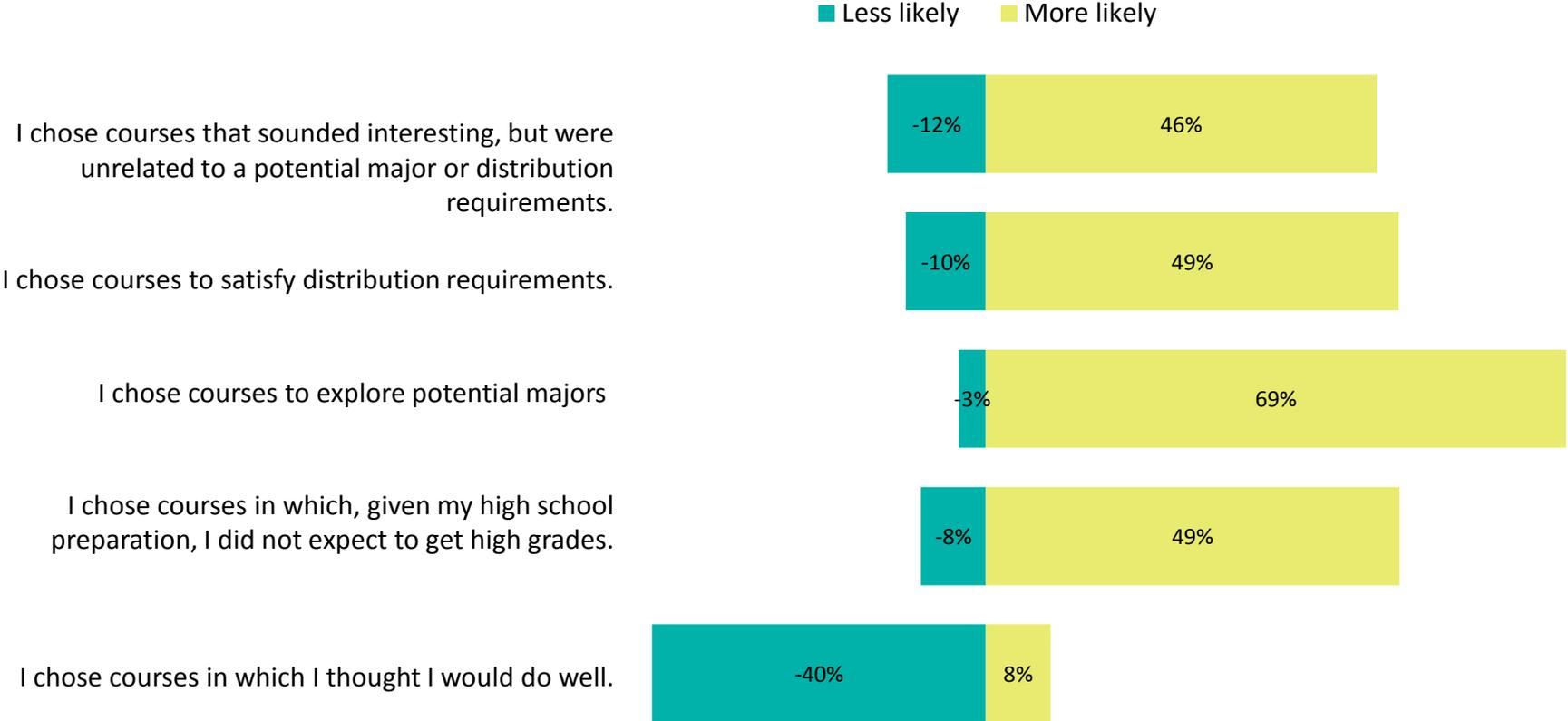
## “With shadow grading, I spent... participating in recreational activities” 2014-2016\*

■ Less time ■ More time

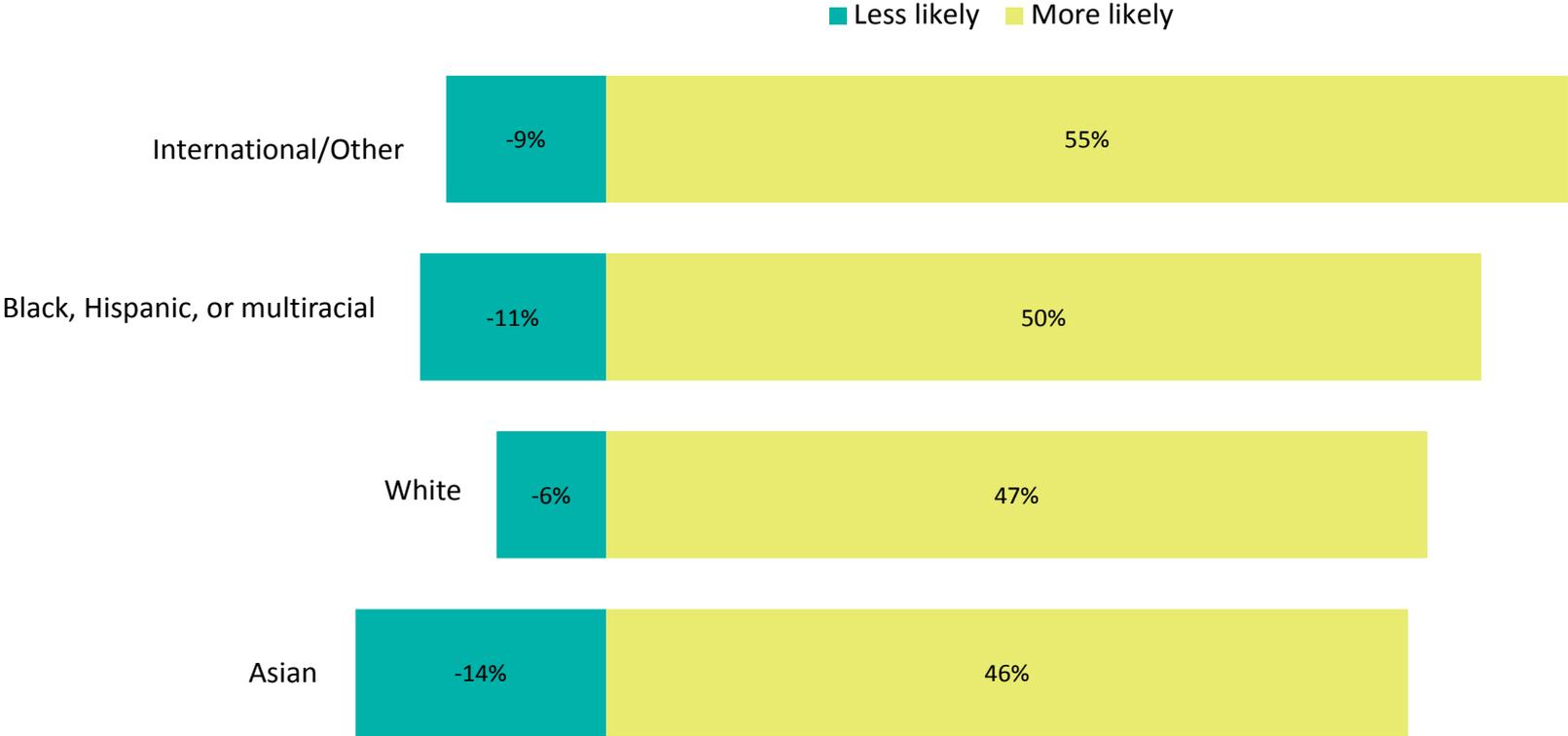


\* Significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ )

# Impact of shadow grading on first-semester course selection, 2014-15

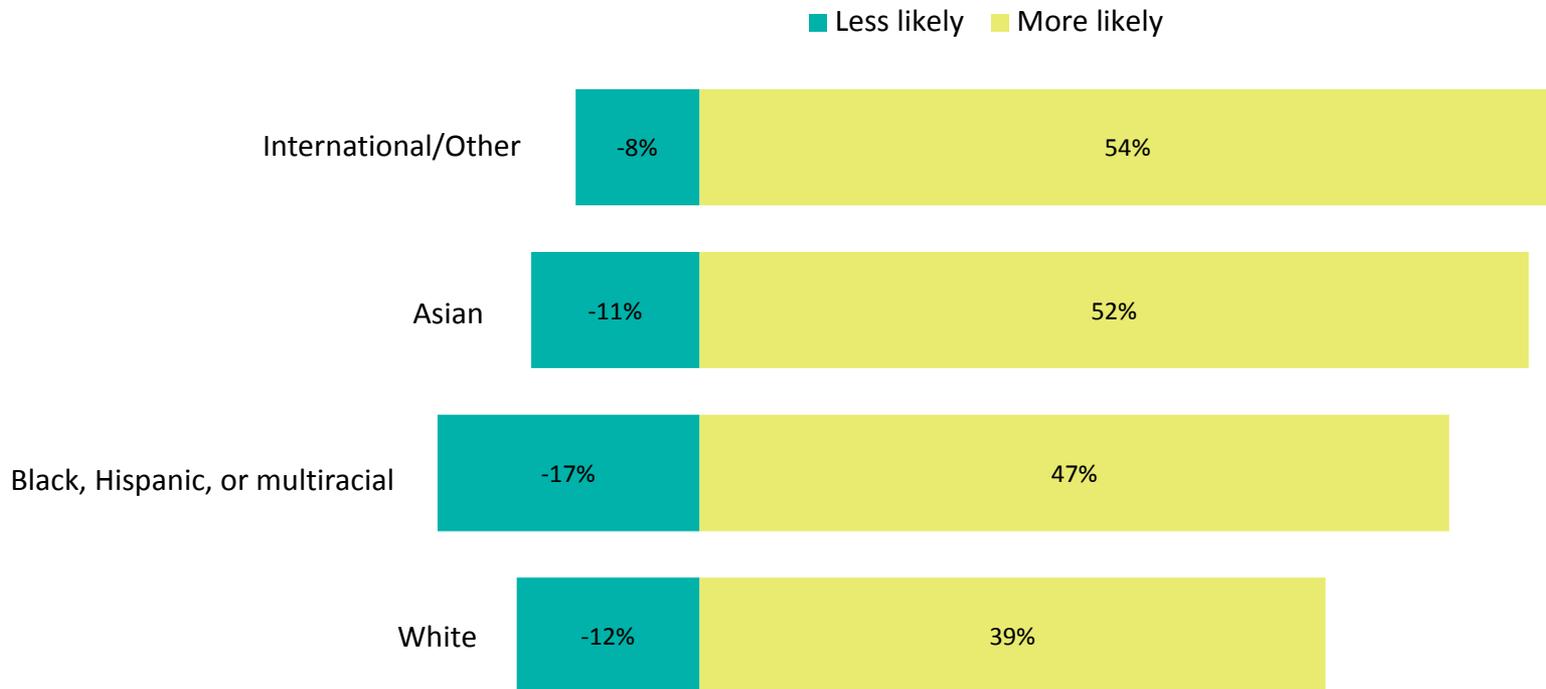


# Impact of shadow grading: "I chose courses to satisfy distribution requirements." 2014-15\*



\* Significantly different (p<0.05)

## Impact of shadow grading: "I chose courses that sounded interesting, but were unrelated to a potential major or distribution requirements." 2014-15\*\*



\*\*Significantly different ( $p < 0.01$ )

# Sample Comments

Although I appreciate shadow grades I feel like students should be given the option of choosing which semester of the first year to shadow grade at the end of the year. I think this would allow students to form a solid foundation for their GPA.

Although it was nice to know I had shadow grading for my first semester I don't think it necessarily affected my course selection or my attitude towards or effort into the classes I took. However I did spend less time thinking about grades which reduced my stress.

As a first generation student shadow grading was incredibly influential on my ability to experience first semester. Even though I ended up having to drop a class at the end in order to handle the workload I felt challenged to stay in it.

For me shadow grading was a significant factor - especially earlier in the semester - that relieved my (immature) mild panic at doing more poorly than I'd hoped while I adjusted. It also caused me to take a tougher math course than I would have otherwise. Even though I took the math class this semester partially to fulfill a distribution requirement I chose the tougher level that the placement test put me in because I felt it would be a productive learning experience that would not have a negative impact on me.

I actually think I'm going to end up with higher grades (or similar grades) this semester than next semester so it would be nice if they actually would count towards my GPA. Coming from a high school that actually didn't have final grades (and instead a written evaluation with pass/fail) I think I have a unique perspective on shadow grading. To me it seemed like instead of creating a less stressful environment where students focused a lot more on simply learning and improving shadow grading basically functioned as a "cop-out." What I mean by this is that when shadow grading is mentioned it usually goes like this: "UGH I have soooo much work. Well oh well I have shadow grading so I just won't study!" At my high school we actually got written evaluations that meant something so we still had a standard to strive for rather than "simply passing." Maybe for students that come from traditional high schools shadow grading allowed them to focus less on a score and more on the learning process but for me it seemed a bit irrelevant because that is already the way I approach schoolwork.

I am honestly somewhat disappointed that we have a shadow grading policy in place because I worked very hard this semester and did very well and shadow-grading makes me feel like my hard work will not be reflected on my transcript at all.

I definitely sometimes just didn't do homework assignments because I knew shadow grading would cover me.... although I appreciate the lack of stress and freedom I had to discover other non-academic club activities I feel like I already developed some bad habits in terms of work ethic.

I do not think that I studied less hard because of the shadow grading but I definitely felt less stressed when I didn't have as much time as I wanted to complete assignments. Because I have a tendency to work for too long on assignments shadow grading helped me to figure out how much time I really need to do a good job.

I found that this semester of classes has helped me anticipate the level of intensity and difficulty for future classes and therefore has helped my preparation for the rest of my college career.

While I think shadow grading is a very good initiative to help in the transition from high school to college I also strongly believe in breeds carelessness and lackadaisical attitudes in first year students. The slogan “do not worry about it, it’s shadow grading” is something I heard very often among first year students at Wellesley this past semester. Also, though it helps students stay in challenging classes I also think it encourages students not to put in their best effort as they know whatever they obtain does not count hence they strive for mediocrity instead of excellence . Lastly it makes it inconvenient for applying for internships over the summer as all these internships require GPAs from the first semester.

Without shadow grading I wouldn't have maintained a job and extracurricular interests during this transition semester.