

An Analysis of Support Services for Female Students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

By: Natalie Hahn

Abstract

This study evaluates strategies for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to support and retain its increasing proportion of female students on its residential campuses. At 20% of the Daytona/Prescott student body, females are still a distinct minority. This research identifies ways in which the university can address the needs of these students in the areas of academics, housing, support services, and other resources in order to benefit the overall student population, but more specifically help female students successfully complete their degree programs

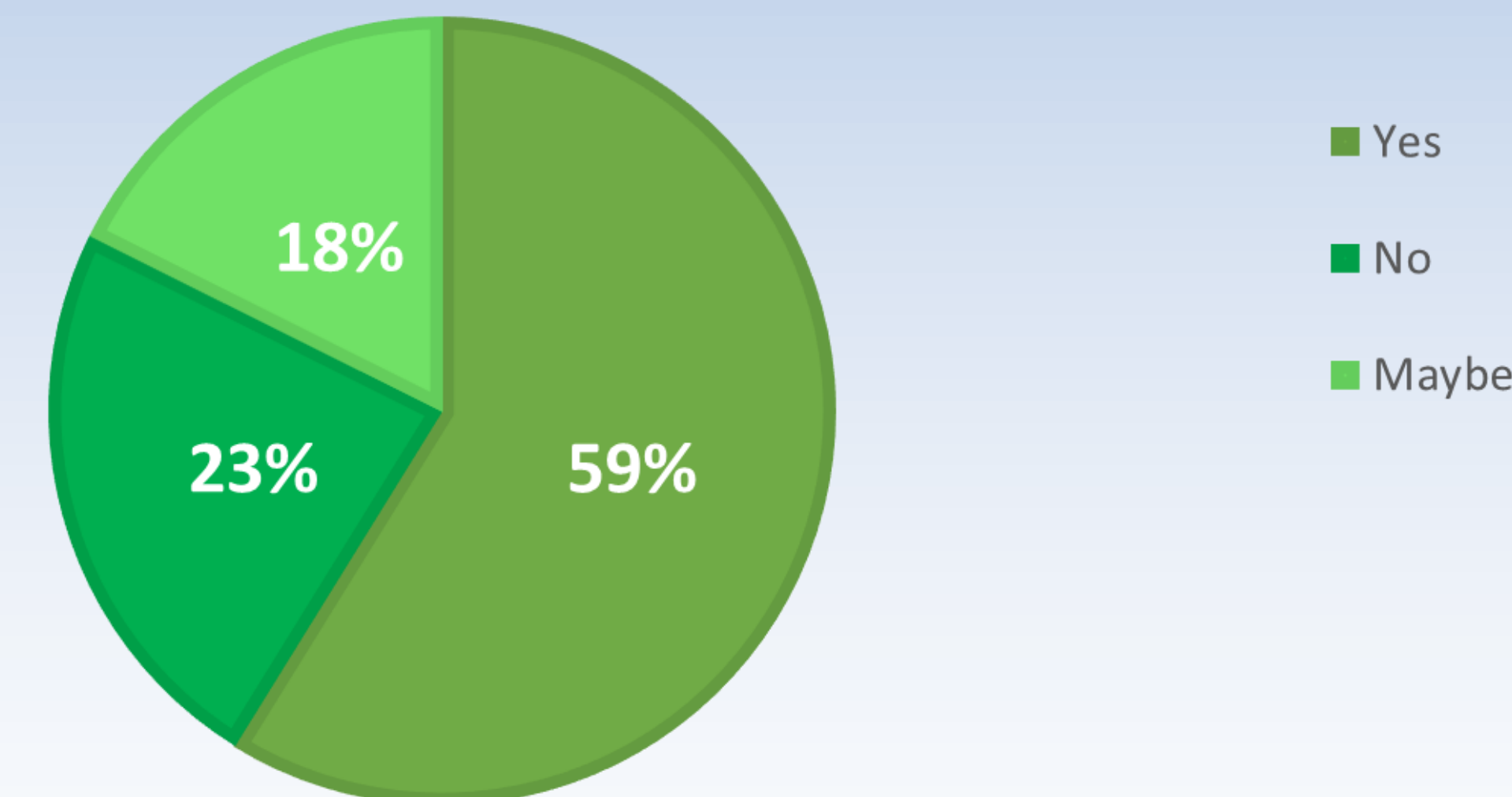
Method

The research includes literature related to women in STEM, personal interviews, as well as an online survey created with Survey Monkey, which was distributed online through Facebook. The survey consisted of ten questions— nine multiple choice responses and a single short answer. After the period for completing the surveys concluded, 43 Embry-Riddle females had taken part, accounting for just under 5% of the total amount of females students on campus. These females ranged from 18 to 22 years of age.

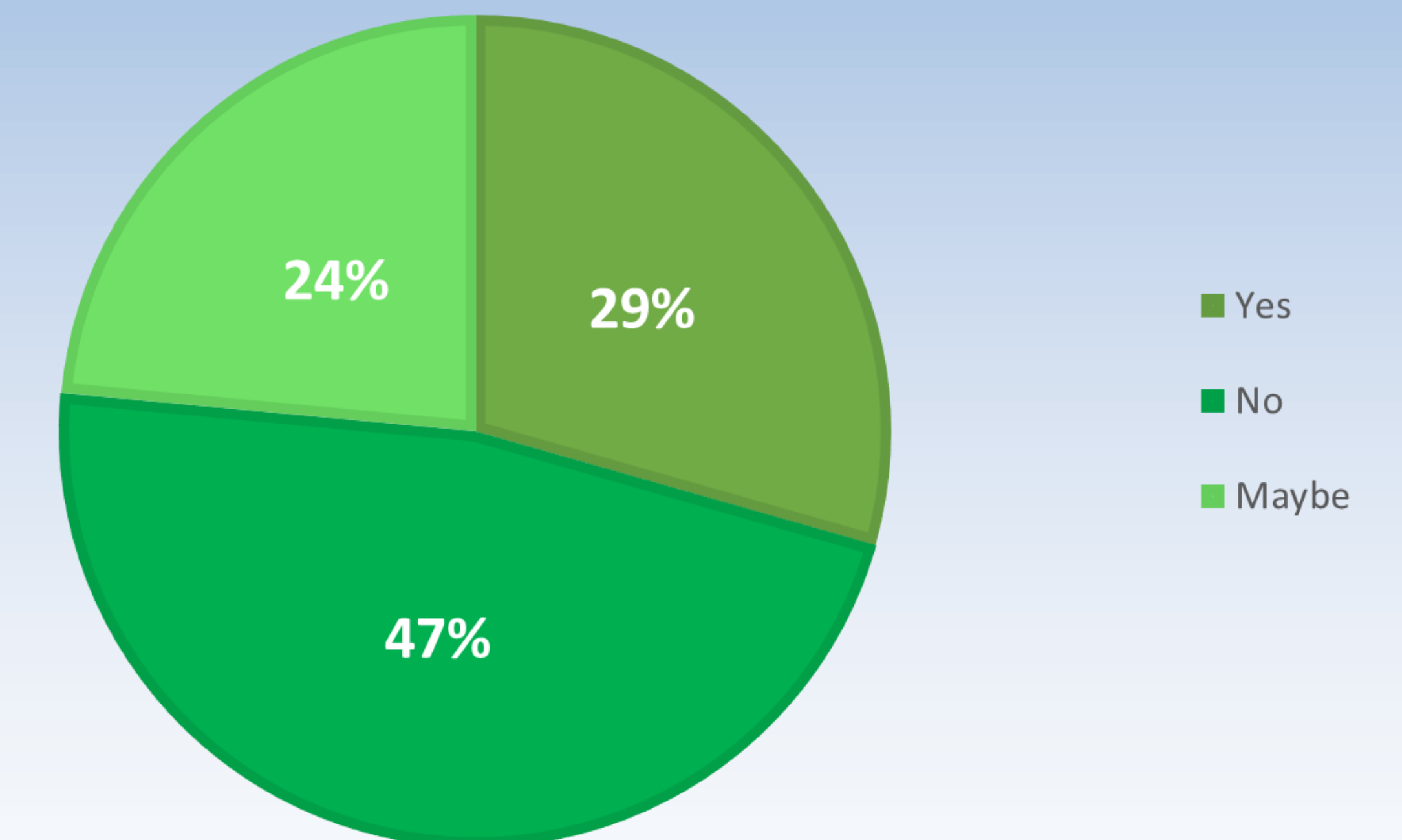
Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the survey questions, three main conclusions have been reached. First, housing (in terms of negatively impacting the female population at Embry-Riddle) was less of an issue to the females when compared to the other subjects. 58.82% of respondents felt that there is an issue regarding Embry-Riddle's females in general, and this was seconded by the participants answering that the university lacks support services for it's females. However, over 50% of the students surveyed responded that they were comfortable speaking with male professors on campus, despite many feeling uncomfortable with the majority of upper classes being primarily all male students.

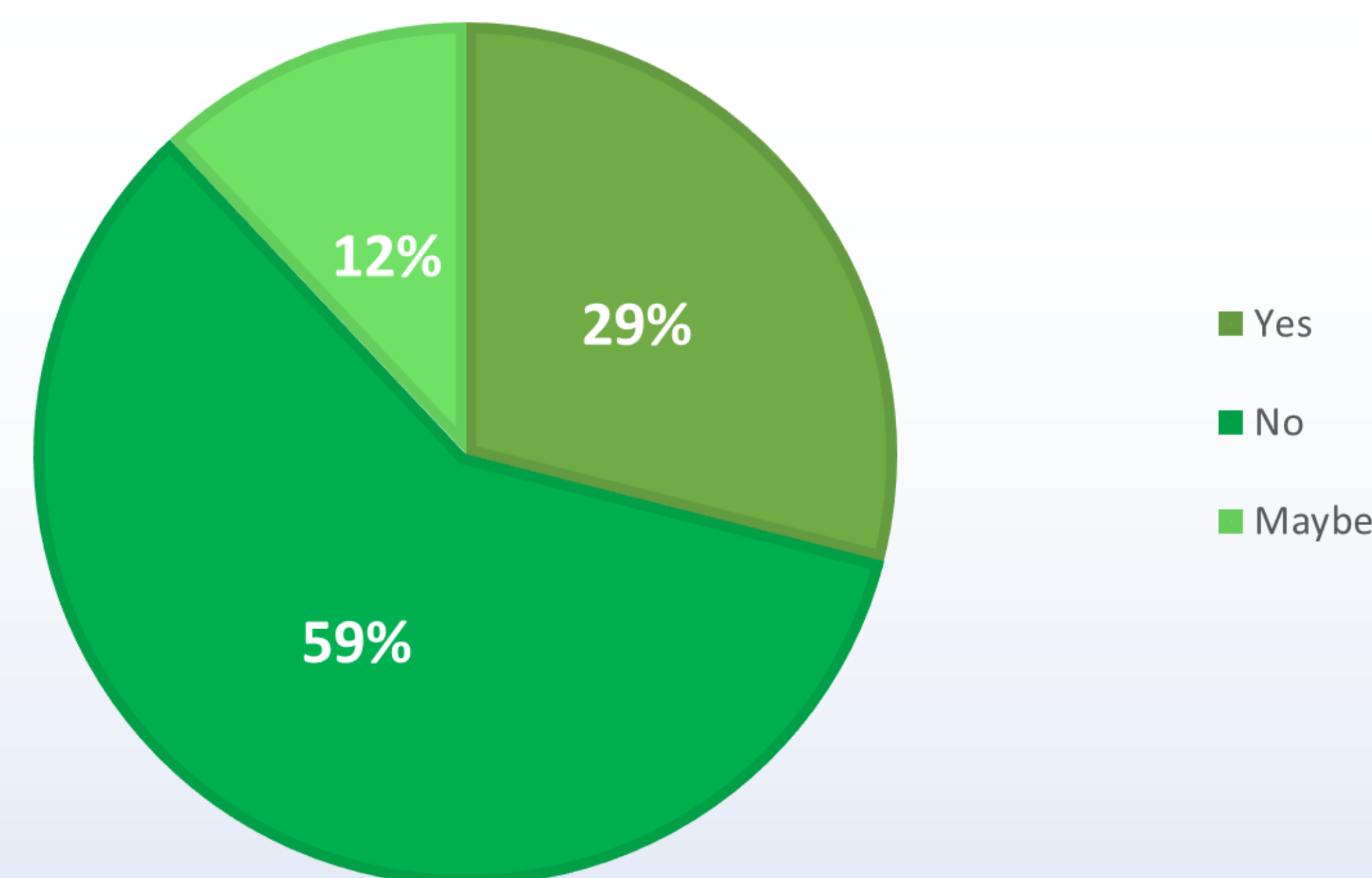
PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO BELIEVE EMBRY-RIDDLE HAS AN ISSUE REGARDING FEMALE STUDENTS; INCLUDING RETAINING FEMALES, TO MAKING THEM HAPPY, TO EVEN GETTING FEMALES INTERESTED IN THE UNIVERSITY DESPITE LOW MALE-TO-FEMALE RATIO



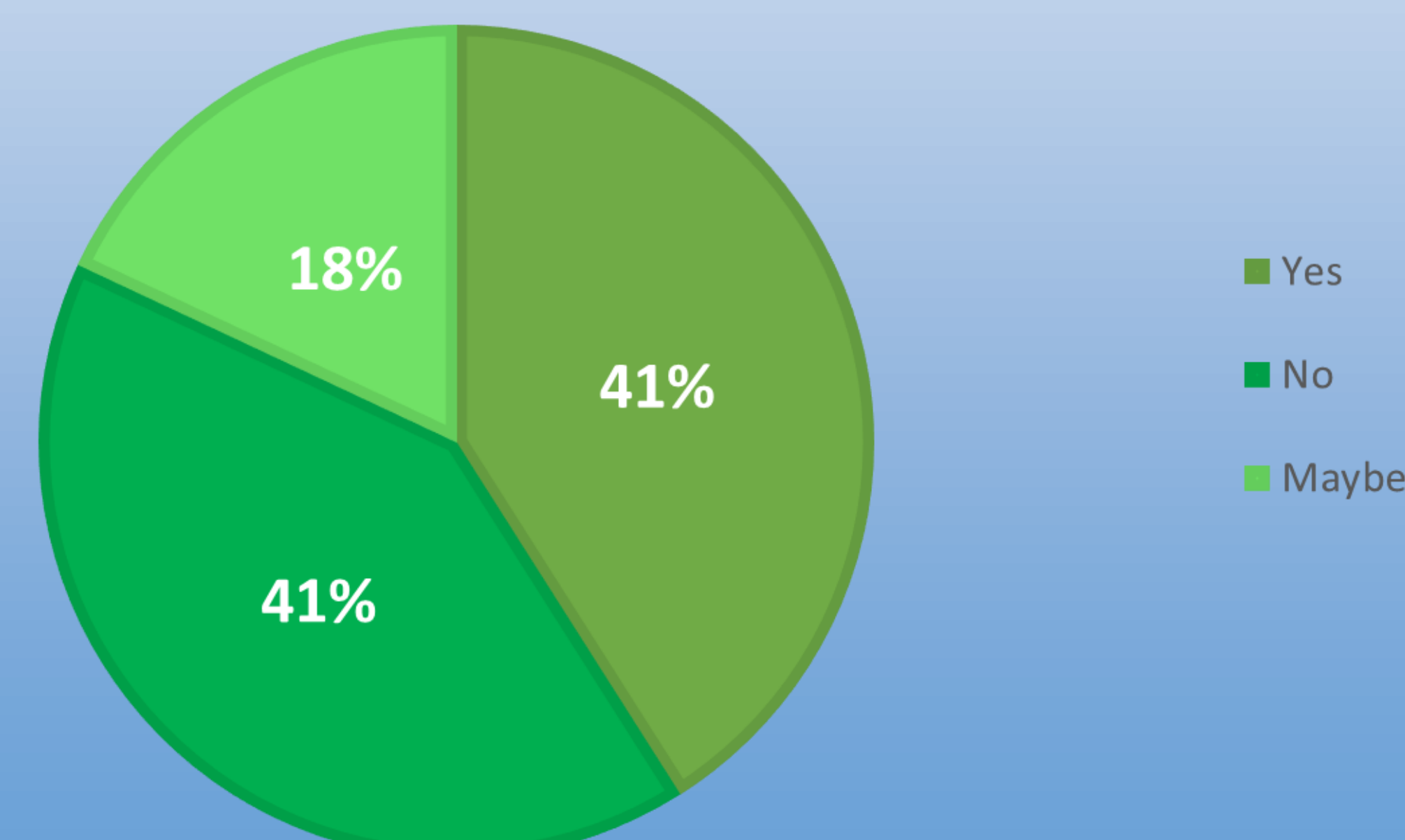
PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO FEEL THERE SHOULD BE MORE CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS SOLELY FOR WOMEN



PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO BELIEVE THERE IS AN ISSUE WITH HOUSING DUE TO MALE-TO-FEMALE RATIOS



PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO WORRY ABOUT UPPER LEVEL CLASSES BEING UNCOMFORTABLE DUE TO THE MALE-TO-FEMALE RATIO IN THOSE CLASSES



Recommendations

After considering the research and reviewing the related literature, it is my suggestion that the university take the following steps in order to increase the likelihood of female students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach campus, completing their degree programs.

1. Increase resources, such as offering workshops during orientation for females. These workshops can include female faculty, which will connect professors with students early on in their academic careers, giving the students a mentor. These workshops can focus on how to be successful in college, support services such as counseling and health services, and general tips of advice from the college on how to succeed.
2. Promote the all female organizations on campus, such as the Society of Women Engineers and the Women's Baja team. This can be done through sources such as Connections, The Avion, and by the University co-sponsoring events with the clubs.
3. Offer additional instruction in upper level classes, such as a special instruction session taught by teaching assistants either bi-weekly or weekly to clarify students' questions. This would allow students to seek out opportunities for additional help if they need to, therefore allowing more students to pass upper level classes and level the male to female ratio.
4. Continue to improve enrollment rates for females

Student Recommendations from the survey results:

"Create a meet and greet with professors to make it less scary for females to approach male professors so they feel more comfortable in office hours."

"Hold more activities regarding how important respect for the opposite sex is."

"Have the Women's Ambassador's program hold more events on campus throughout the year to encourage female friendships."