



Current State Key Findings Report

Faculty of Health Sciences | Western University.

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Executive Summary

The Faculty of Health Sciences (“FHS”) is moving from a period of rapid growth to one of strategic integration and impact. The Faculty has strengthened its academic programs, research activity, and partnerships, positioning itself as a leading connector across Western and the broader health ecosystem.

FHS benefits from being part of one of Canada’s strongest regional health systems, anchored by London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph’s Health Care London, the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, and Fanshawe College. This network provides a strong foundation for interprofessional learning, applied research, and workforce development.

Across Ontario, demographic change, workforce shortages, and system reform are reshaping both health care and postsecondary education. These shifts highlight the relevance of FHS’s applied, interdisciplinary programs and the importance of flexibility, collaboration, and accountability.

Engagement with more than 400 students, faculty, staff, and partners confirmed FHS’s strengths in teaching quality, collegial culture, and community connection. Interest holders also identified the need for stronger integration across Schools, improved communication and supports, and sustained leadership in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization and Accessibility (“EDIDA”).

Moving forward, FHS has the opportunity to:

- Strengthen a unified One-FHS culture that connects teaching, research, and partnerships
- Advance interprofessional and flexible learning aligned with workforce needs
- Expand research visibility and impact through collaboration and knowledge mobilization
- Invest in people, belonging, and leadership to sustain excellence
- Position FHS as a cornerstone of Western’s One Health identity

FHS is well positioned to lead with purpose by uniting people, programs, and partnerships to advance health, education, and community well-being.

Introduction: Setting the Stage

Purpose of the Report

This document is intended to support the Faculty of Health Sciences (“FHS”) Strategic Planning Steering Committee in preparing for the Strategic Planning Workshop #2: Developing the Strategic Framework on November 18, 2025.

- The Current State Key Findings Report presents findings on FHS’s current state strategic and operating environments to inform and guide the Faculty’s strategic planning.
- Steering Committee members will shape the next evolution of FHS’s Strategic Plan at the November 18, 2025, workshop.
- The session will gather input from the Steering Committee on FHS’s value proposition and build alignment on:
 - Key priorities to consider, given the current and emerging strategic environment;
 - Areas of focus that will ensure continued value for students, staff, faculty, partners, Western University, and the broader local and regional communities served by Western; and,
 - How FHS' Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Directions may need to change to ensure alignment with the Western @ 150 Plan and create alignment for the individual schools that comprise FHS.
- The Current State Key Findings Report provides a shared fact base from which FHS’s next strategic plan can be developed. The analysis in it has been informed by interviews, surveys, focus groups, and documentation from FHS.
- Workshop participants are encouraged to review the report in advance to prepare their participation in the workshop.

Objectives for the Strategic Planning Process:

✓	Enable Broad and Meaningful Engagement	✓	Ground Strategy in Evidence and Context	✓	Ensure Strategic Alignment	✓	Develop a Forward-Looking Strategic Plan	✓	Foster Ownership and Implementation Readiness
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Methodology

To enable a detailed analysis of FHS' operating environment, several tactics were employed:



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Data & Document Review & Desktop Research

Identify and review relevant internal data and documents to assess gaps and key issues. Conduct desktop research to understand current trends and best practices.



Engagement Sessions

Conduct virtual focus groups and interviews and surveys with key FHS interest holders to understand their perspective on the current operating environment.



Workshop(s)

Facilitate two workshops with the Steering Committee to deep-dive into FHS' current state and ascertain directions for the future.

Engagement Summary

Several engagement activities have been used to solicit feedback and perspectives from FHS faculty, staff, and students, as well as members of the broader Western community and external partner organizations. Listed below are the types of engagement activities and the number of participants. Additional engagement activities will be deployed in later phases of the project.



Leadership Workshop: SCl conducted **one initial workshop** with members of the FHS Steering Committee to introduce the strategic planning process, discuss how best to sequence and plan the engagement activities, and review major considerations that the SCl project team should take into account during the planning process.



Research Interviews: SCl held one-on-one interviews with **24 internal and external interest holders**. These individuals were identified by the FHS Steering Committee for their valuable perspective on the strategic planning process, and included healthcare organizations that placed FHS students, internal Western leadership, and key members of the FHS community.



Focus Groups: To solicit specific feedback and perspectives from internal groups and committees, SCl held **three focus groups** with the Research Advisory Council & Centre Leaders, the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization, and Accessibility Committee, and the FHS Student Council and other student leaders. Written feedback by these groups was also reviewed.



Internal and External Surveys: Four digital surveys for external and internal interest holders were created, with versions for partners, staff, students, and faculty members. These solicited qualitative and quantitative feedback about the participants' experiences with FHS. Responses received: **240 student responses, 14 external partner responses (including one separate written response), 70 staff responses, and 65 faculty responses.**

FHS Today: A Snapshot of the Current Environment

Key Takeaways

- **Continuing Evolution:** The FHS has evolved from a period of growth to a phase of strategic integration, advancing interdisciplinary programs, applied research, and experiential learning that align with health system priorities.
- **Enhanced Capacity:** Investments in facilities, simulation labs, and the planned Health Sciences Building are strengthening teaching, research, and collaboration capacity, positioning FHS well for long-term academic and operational sustainability.
- **Program Innovation:** Program renewal is progressing, including the professional doctorate launch, modernization of existing degrees, and expansion of interdisciplinary and flexible learning options across undergraduate and graduate levels.

- **Strong Ecosystem for Innovation:** FHS benefits from being embedded in one of Canada's most robust regional health ecosystems, anchored by London Health Sciences Centre ("LHSC"), St. Joseph's Health Care, and Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, offering a powerful platform for interprofessional education and innovation.
- **Growing Demand for FHS:** London's population growth, aging demographics, and expanding health and education sectors are increasing demand for health professionals, applied researchers, and community-focused graduates.
 - Ontario's labour market is expected to add over 148,000 new health-related positions by 2030, creating significant opportunities for FHS to scale workforce-aligned education, training, and partnerships.

- **Shifting Market Demands:** Post-secondary trends point to greater demand for flexible, digitally enabled, and work-integrated learning, alongside new models such as micro-credentials and stackable programs.
- **Government Focus on Jobs and System Sustainability:** Government policy continues to emphasize health workforce development, applied research, and system sustainability, reinforcing the strategic relevance of FHS' programs and research strengths.
- **Values-Led Growth:** Continued attention to equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation remains essential to sustaining FHS' values-driven culture, enhancing access for diverse learners, and aligning with Western's institutional commitments.

Current Strategic Plan Progress

The Faculty of Health Sciences is advancing from planning to implementation, with meaningful progress across programs, research, and partnerships. Program renewal, core research investments, and new collaborations within and beyond Western are strengthening FHS' role as a connector and innovator across the health sciences.

Curriculum modernization is under way across schools, with redesigned graduate and undergraduate offerings that reflect emerging priorities in health, technology, and workforce readiness. Major research initiatives and infrastructure projects are building interdisciplinary capacity and visibility, while international partnerships are positioning FHS within a global research ecosystem.

Equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and accessibility remain embedded across faculty priorities through the EDIDA strategy, Indigenous curriculum initiatives, and enhanced student supports. Together, these advances demonstrate an institution growing with purpose, integration, and impact.

Strategic Priority Scorecard – Current State

- **Program Development:** The Professional Doctorate in Health Sciences is on track for a 2026 launch, with the program brief complete. Curriculum renewal includes restructuring of the AHCP MCIsc fields, a redesigned MScFN with a new course-based option, and streamlined professional pathways to better align with workforce needs.

- **Graduate and Undergraduate Integration:** Cross-faculty programming continues to expand through initiatives such as the Certificate in Critical Public Health and a proposed BSc in Public Health with Schulich. Updates to Kinesiology, Health Studies, and Nutrition modules are improving flexibility and alignment across programs.
- **International Recruitment:** New direct-application portals for PT, OT, and Communication Sciences and Disorders were launched in Fall 2024, supported by refreshed marketing and recruitment campaigns through 2025.
- **Experiential Learning:** Expanded senior projects, practicum placements, and themed modules across Kinesiology, Health Studies, and Food and Nutritional Sciences are strengthening applied and community-based learning.
- **Research Infrastructure and Culture:** The CARE Hub Oversight Committee is defining the renovation scope for the South Wing Core Research Facility. The Healthy Hearing Core Facility has received institutional core status, while FHS leads two NFRF Transformation grant applications and participates in Horizon Europe collaborations.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** FHS is advancing mentorship, grant facilitation, and joint initiatives with Schulich and community health partners, deepening alignment with Western's research strategy.

Overall Progress: Strategic priorities have transitioned from planning to action, with clear momentum in program renewal, research investment, and partnership development.

London & Ontario | Demographics

London Census Metropolitan Area

543,551
population,
2021

↑ **10%**
change in population
2016 to 2021

↑ **14% in Strathroy-Caradoc**
↑ **10% in St. Thomas**
↑ **10% in London**
change in key populations from
2023 to 2046

40
median age of the
population, 2021

↑ **13%**
change in median after-tax
income of households
between 2015 and 2020
(\$65,400 to \$71,000)

- **Population Growth:** Ontario's population is projected to rise by over 40% between 2023 and 2046, reaching 21.7 million. Growth is driven largely by international migration, especially to the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding regions.
- **Aging Population:** All regions are aging, with slower growth among those aged 15–64, though total numbers in this group will still increase across the province.
- **London's Expansion:** The London region is among the fastest-growing in Ontario, with a 10% increase from 2016–2021 and strong international and inter-provincial migration.
 - International migration is driving London's population growth and contributing to a more diverse and highly educated workforce.
- **Urban Shift:** London serves as Southwestern Ontario's regional center for health, education, and research, anchored by Western University, LHSC, and Fanshawe College.

- **London's Key Sectors:** London's fastest growing sectors include, agri-food, manufacturing, digital media and technology, and health.
 - London's labour force totals about 217,000 people, with health care, education, and manufacturing as its largest employment sectors.

Implications for FHS

- Population growth and aging will increase demand for health, community, and education professionals across the region.
- London's position as a regional hub for health, education, and research creates strong opportunities for FHS to expand its partnerships and impact.
- Rising diversity and international migration call for programs that prepare graduates to deliver culturally responsive and inclusive care.
- Continued urban and economic growth supports expansion of experiential learning and applied research tied to workforce and community needs.

Ontario's Labour Market Needs

Ontario is actively engaged in global competition, driving economic advancement and enhancing the standard of living for its residents. The province requires a highly skilled workforce and innovative solutions to effectively address the demands of the job market, stimulate economic expansion, and stay competitive on the global stage.

According to occupation demand projections for university educated workers, between the period of 2021 to 2030, a total of 928,700 university-educated workers will be needed to fill job openings over the decade:

- + **Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)** occupations will generate **233,000+** positions.
- + **Education, law, and social community and government services**, are anticipated to create **178,000+** positions.
- + **Health occupation** are estimate to create **148,000+** new positions.
- + **Business, financial, and administration** will generate approximately **128,000** new positions.

Drivers of Ontario's Labour Market Needs:

Economic Growth | GDP growth is affecting the demand for labor across sectors. Global demand for Ontario's exports, shifts in supply chains, and competition for international markets is further driving the need for trained and skilled labour. Ontario's government has an ambitious infrastructure plan which calls for highly-skilled university talent to meet the province's economic needs.

Aging Ontario population | Ageing population needs will drive growth in operational health spending, triggering an increased demand for health workers including physicians, nurses, personal support workers, coordinators, and supervisors.

Increasing population | Increasing international and inter-provincial migration of young immigrants and young families will drive the need for more primary and secondary school teachers.

Implications for FHS

- Anticipated demand for 148,000+ new health occupations reinforces the need for FHS to expand program capacity in nursing, rehabilitation, and community health.
- Growth in education and social services supports opportunities to strengthen interdisciplinary training that bridges health, education, and community care.
- Population aging and in-migration will increase demand for workforce-ready graduates equipped for interprofessional, culturally competent, and community-based practice.
- FHS can enhance its impact by aligning research, experiential learning, and partnerships with Ontario's health workforce and system capacity priorities.

Post-Secondary Trends in Ontario

Ontario's post-secondary system is undergoing significant change as demographic, policy, and learner trends reshape how institutions deliver education and develop the future workforce.

Domestic Enrolment

- University enrolment has remained steady or grown modestly, while some college programs have contracted, especially in non-degree credentials.
- HEQCO projects Ontario will require about 225,000 additional post-secondary seats by 2046 to accommodate population and participation growth.
- Growth is strongest in health, STEM, and business-related programs.

International Students

- International enrolment accounts for over 20% of total post-secondary students in Ontario.
- Both the federal and provincial governments are tightening oversight and introducing enrolment caps to improve quality, integrity, and housing capacity.
- Institutions are adapting recruitment strategies, diversifying markets, and managing financial exposure to international tuition volatility.

Technology and Delivery Innovation

- Learners increasingly expect flexible and hybrid models, with online and experiential components built into programs.
- Growth in micro-credentials, continuing education, and stackable programs reflects demand for ongoing reskilling and shorter learning cycles.
- Health, technology, and education fields are leading adopters of simulation, virtual training, and digital pedagogy.

Changing Student Demographics

- Ontario's student body is becoming more diverse, older, and more career-focused, with many learners now balancing study and work.
- There is a rise in non-traditional and pathway students entering degree programs through college or professional routes.
- Expectations for inclusive, accessible, and outcomes-driven education continue to grow.

Political and Policy Environment

- The province continues its domestic tuition freeze and maintains the lowest per-student funding level across Canadian provinces.
- Policy direction emphasizes differentiation and accountability, encouraging institutions to focus on distinctive strengths and measurable impact.
- Government priorities are shifting toward healthcare workforce training, applied research, and system sustainability, aligning directly with FHS disciplines.
- New scrutiny of international enrolment models and institutional governance is reshaping post-secondary planning.

Implications for FHS

- Strengthen programs that align with Ontario's health and workforce priorities.
- Expand flexible, digitally enabled, and applied learning options.
- Build pathways and partnerships with colleges, health systems, and industry to support growth and sustainability.
- Position FHS as a leader in workforce-ready and interprofessional health education.

Sources:

Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. (2025). Ontario's domestic postsecondary enrolment: Examining recent trends to inform policy and planning.
eCampusOntario. (2023). The 2022 Ontario report: Post-secondary digital learning.
Fraser Institute. (2023). Ontario government's tuition freeze doubles down on failed policies

Government of Ontario. (2023). Ontario taking action to improve integrity of postsecondary education and promote employment in critical sectors
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2022). Whoever wins the election, Ontario must reinvest in postsecondary education.
Conference Board of Canada. (2024). Higher education trend report: Enrolment outlook 2023–2030

Healthcare Context & Trends

Canada's health care and social assistance sector is one of the country's largest and fastest-growing industries, shaped by demographic change, workforce shortages, and sustained public investment. London sits at the center of this growth, anchored by leading hospitals, research institutions, and training programs that align directly with the Faculty of Health Sciences' mission and strengths.

Sector Overview

- In Canada, the health care and social assistance industries employed about 2.5 million people in 2023, accounting for roughly 12% of total employment.
- In Ontario, the sector employed 928,500 people in 2022, or 12.1% of the provincial workforce, and contributed \$53.9 billion to provincial GDP.
- In London, the sector employed 34,089 people in 2023, representing 15.7% of the total workforce and 10% of the city's economy.

Workforce and Occupations

- The most common occupations in Ontario's healthcare sector are registered nurses and psychiatric nurses (12.6% of workforce) and nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates (11.3%).
- In London, employment for registered nurses and psychiatric nurses rose 2% between 2022 and 2023, while the number of nurse aides and patient service associates grew 3%.

Sector Performance and Capacity

- Between 2022 and 2023, London's healthcare sector grew 3.3%, outpacing the national average.
- London's hospital subsector employs about 14,000 workers, 73% above the national average, while the ambulatory care subsector employs about 8,800 and the nursing and residential care subsector employs about 5,500.

Demographics and Service Demand

- The population aged 65 and older in Middlesex County is projected to rise by 25% by 2031, reaching nearly 20% of total residents.
- Local demand for long-term care continues to grow, with 558 residents on the London LTC waiting list as of April 2024.

SPOTLIGHT | London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care employ a combined over 12,000 staff and attract more than \$140 million in research funding annually. Western University and Fanshawe College are major education partners of both facilities.

Implications | FHS operates within one of Canada's strongest regional health ecosystems, supported by world-class research, hospitals, and education infrastructure. These conditions create a powerful platform for:

- Expanding interprofessional education and clinical training pathways.
- Strengthening research collaborations with London's health system partners.
- Preparing graduates to meet the province's critical workforce and care delivery needs.

Sources:

City of London. (2025). Health Care and Social Assistance – Full Sector Report (2025). Economic Development Office. Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). (2023). The State of the Health Workforce in Canada. Government of Canada. (2023). Job Bank: Sectoral Profile – Health Care and Social Assistance in Ontario. Statistics Canada. (2023). Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0023-01: Employment by industry, annual. Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care. (2021). Long-Term Care Staffing Plan 2021–2025.

Integrated Insights: What We Know, What We Heard and What it Means.

Key Takeaways

What We Know

- FHS has evolved from growth to strategic integration, modernizing programs, expanding research, and deepening community and health system partnerships.
- The Faculty operates in one of Canada's strongest regional health ecosystems, with exceptional institutional partners and strong experiential learning infrastructure.
- Ontario's health and postsecondary systems are undergoing structural change driven by workforce shortages, demographic pressures, and shifting government priorities.
- Applied, interdisciplinary, and work-integrated education continues to be in high demand, alongside flexible learning formats and pathways that connect study to practice.
- Western's institutional direction under *Western at 150* emphasizes collaboration, innovation, sustainability, and social impact, aligning with FHS's values and opportunities.

What We Heard

- Students value FHS's teaching quality, hands-on learning, and community feel but want better advising, mental health supports, and facilities.
- Faculty and staff are proud of collegiality and research excellence but cite workload pressures, uneven supports, and administrative fragmentation across Schools.
- External partners see FHS students as prepared and professional and want deeper, more consistent collaboration in placements, applied research, and community engagement.
- There is a strong desire for FHS to build a clearer One-Faculty identity and to strengthen integration across programs, research, and operations.
- Interest holders consistently emphasized the importance of equity, inclusion, and Reconciliation as essential to credibility, culture, and impact.

What It Means

- FHS is positioned to lead in workforce-aligned health education and applied research that respond to provincial priorities in care, community, and system transformation.
- To sustain growth, FHS must build operational and structural capacity that supports collaboration, agility, and interdisciplinary integration.
- Strengthening student experience, faculty and staff wellbeing, and leadership development will be key to long-term success and retention.
- Greater visibility and strategic alignment across Western will reinforce FHS's identity as a connector and leader within the university and the wider health system.
- Embedding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization, and Reconciliation (EDIDA) principles across teaching, research, and partnerships will be essential for relevance and social accountability.

Academic Demand and Program Mix (1/5)

Academic demand at the Faculty of Health Sciences remains strong, anchored by professional and applied programs that align closely with workforce needs. Growing enrolment and evolving learner expectations are reshaping how programs are delivered and distinguished.

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Interest in and demand for FHS programs, driven by the diversity of programs available at FHS, is strong.	Students and faculty identified the breadth and range of programs available at FHS as a strength and point of attraction. 80% of faculty participants to the internal survey stated that student interest and demand for FHS programs was something FHS performed strongly or very strongly in.	With increasingly uncertain economic conditions and a post-secondary education context that is expected to be more competitive over the coming years, students are thinking more and earlier about the career options made available through their education.	Maintaining the breadth, variety, and interdisciplinarity of programs available at FHS and demonstrating the various career opportunities following graduation will be key to continued student attraction.
Applied and professional programs continue to drive enrolment and reputation.	Interest holders described strong and sustained demand for programs such as Nursing, Rehabilitation Sciences, and Kinesiology, which attract high-quality applicants and lead to strong employment outcomes. Faculty and partners see these programs as Western's most visible connection to the health care workforce.	Demand for applied and practice-oriented education continues to grow across Ontario, supported by provincial investments like the Learn and Stay Grant in health human resources and allied health programs.	Continued investment in professional and applied pathways as well as identifying opportunities for renewal and differentiation within these flagship programs will remain important.

Sources:

Academic Demand and Program Mix (2/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Interprofessional and interdisciplinary learning are widely valued but inconsistently embedded.	Interest holders and students agreed that interdisciplinary learning enhances understanding of complex health issues, but current opportunities depend heavily on individual champions rather than structured integration across programs. Administrative barriers such as revenue sharing and siloed governance also limit flexibility. In the StrategyCorp survey, 23% of students identified “interdisciplinary learning opportunities” as the second most important future priority for FHS.	Accreditation and best-practice frameworks increasingly require interprofessional competencies, while health systems are moving toward integrated, team-based models of care.	FHS should formalize interprofessional education as a distinctive feature of its curriculum and ensure consistency across all schools and programs.
Teaching and clinical education capacity are under increasing pressure.	Interest holders from both within and outside the university noted that the scale of student demand is outpacing available placements, supervisors, and simulation facilities. Partners emphasized the need for earlier and more collaborative planning to manage placement and student quality.	Health system capacity constraints, staff burnout, and competition for clinical placements are affecting universities across Ontario, with many institutions exploring shared placement models and expanded simulation training.	FHS will need to strengthen partnerships, balance simulation-based learning with real-world experience, and explore new delivery models to maintain program quality and meet placement expectations.

Academic Demand and Program Mix (3/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Graduate and professional education offer room for interdisciplinary expansion.	Graduate leadership and faculty voices emphasized that while FHS has strong research and professional master's programs, there is potential to connect more closely with other faculties through joint supervision, interdisciplinary degrees, and applied research themes. Interest holders identified an opportunity to strengthen institutional systems and communication that make interdisciplinary collaboration easier to initiate and sustain.	Growth in interdisciplinary research and applied graduate programs is a national trend, supported by funding agencies that value collaboration and real-world impact.	FHS could explore new interdisciplinary graduate pathways and research-based credentials that build on existing strengths and partnerships.
Distinctive academic strengths position the faculty for targeted innovation.	Interest holders identified strong foundations in rehabilitation, aging, mobility, audiology, and community health as areas of excellence. These strengths are supported by strong partner relationships and high-impact research.	National health priorities are focusing on aging populations, mobility, mental health, and equitable access to care, areas where FHS already has credibility and expertise.	FHS can use these strengths to anchor program renewal, innovation and entrepreneurship, aligning future academic growth with health system and industry priorities.
Innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology integration are becoming essential competencies.	Interest holders from across the university and external partners expressed the need for graduates to understand innovation, entrepreneurship, and the role of digital health and technology in modern care. While FHS is one of few faculties with an entrepreneurship course, these course offerings are still limited, extracurricular, and somewhat reliant on individual students reaching out.	Health and education sectors are increasingly emphasizing digital literacy, innovation capacity, and applied problem-solving skills for graduates entering diverse career paths.	Embedding entrepreneurial mindset, innovative thinking and digital competencies within curricula will enhance graduate readiness and strengthen FHS' reputation for forward-looking education.

Academic Demand and Program Mix (4/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Learners and employers are seeking more flexible, stackable, and career-oriented options.	Interest holders highlighted growing interest in shorter, modular learning opportunities that allow students and professionals to build credentials over time and praised FHS' collaborations with the Continuing Studies office to offer high quality, credit-bearing and consumer facing short course programs. They also pointed to revenue generating opportunities that could be further developed by offering micro-credentials and professional diplomas for current workers looking to upskill.	Provincial and national policy directions are emphasizing lifelong learning and micro-credential/continuing education frameworks, supported by digital and hybrid delivery platforms.	FHS should continue its collaborations with Western Continuing Studies, while also developing a strategy for flexible learning pathways that responds to workforce needs and support continued professional education.
Students report a strong and positive learning experience at FHS, valuing the quality of instruction and support, but they seek more in-person, collaborative, and flexible learning opportunities across programs.	More than half (57%) of student survey participants rated FHS as "strong" or "very strong" on teaching quality, highlighting the expertise, responsiveness, and support of instructors. Overall, 72.5% of students reported a positive or very positive experience at FHS. Some students noted that complex courses such as anatomy and pathophysiology would benefit from more in-person collaboration and instructor interaction to enhance learning.	Driven by post-pandemic conditions and financial pressures on post-secondary institutions, the student experience is evolving to be more holistic beyond just academic, including digitally-assisted hybrid learning, mental health and wellbeing supports, among others.	FHS should continue to strengthen its reputation for teaching quality by expanding opportunities for applied, collaborative, and flexible learning experiences that align with student expectations and sector trends.

Sources:

Academic Demand and Program Mix (5/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Global engagement and international student pathways present emerging opportunities.	Academic leaders observed rising interest in international partnerships and professional master's programs that attract global learners and provide revenue. Immigration and credentialing policy changes are viewed as both risks and opportunities.	<p>Post-pandemic shifts in international education are emphasizing professional graduate pathways, joint credentials, and global public health partnerships.</p> <p>Despite federally imposed international student caps, immigration policy changes still allow public research universities like Western, attract international graduate students and researchers.</p>	FHS can strengthen its international visibility by developing globally relevant programs and partnerships that enhance its reputation and revenue diversity.

Research Impact and Partnerships (1/3)

Research impact and partnerships are central to FHS' reputation and growth. The Faculty's research enterprise is strong and well-connected, but there are opportunities to deepen interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthen external partnerships, and enhance visibility and impact across Western and beyond.

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
FHS' has key research areas where they are recognized for excellence and has potential for national and global leadership standing.	Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation and School of Communication Sciences & Disorders (audiology) are areas in which FHS is already leading and well reputed for its research, with Centre for Audiology winning a Governor General's Innovation Award for developing the world's first paediatric hearing aid software (DSL).	There is strong desire from government, funders, health practitioners and industry for health research with real life application and utility for patients and industry alike, and where possible, profitability.	FHS stands to benefit from staking a claim to specific research areas, especially when linked to innovation, attracting funding, and big picture community impact.
The real-world utility and community impact of FHS research position the Faculty to strengthen and expand its external funding base.	FHS' research on health equity and community impact is already well recognized, with work on homelessness in London and audiology programs serving as notable examples. Senior interest holders emphasized that FHS could strengthen its research funding base by applying for more large-scale Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grants, which are typically larger and longer-term. They noted that the Faculty's existing institutes and schools are already conducting the kinds of applied, interdisciplinary research that aligns closely with the priorities of CIHR and other tri-council funding bodies.	Federal funding agencies are prioritizing interdisciplinary and community-engaged research with clear social and system impact. Competition for these funds is increasing, but successful institutions are those that align their research portfolios with funding priorities and demonstrate measurable outcomes.	FHS is well positioned in this area and should continue to strengthen its focus on large-scale, interdisciplinary research aligned with tri-council priorities to increase competitiveness for long-term federal funding.

Research Impact and Partnerships (2/3)

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
FHS' Research Support and Knowledge Mobilization efforts are highly valued by faculty and staff.	The internal Research Support & Knowledge Mobilization Team has been critical to easing the administrative burden on researchers and helping them write grant applications. 62% of faculty survey participants think FHS' support for research and support is strong or very strong. However, job insecurity limits the team's full effectiveness, as turnover and uncertainty of contracts and job tenure make it difficult to provide consistency.	Increasing CIHR emphasis on advancing public health through knowledge mobilization. This increased emphasis presents an opportunity and justification to fund and build on the Research Support team's work.	By strategically investing in and stabilizing its Research Support and Knowledge Mobilization capacity, FHS can position itself as a leader in translating research into public health impact, advancing funding competitiveness, and strengthening institutional reputation.
To better respond to pressing regional & provincial healthcare sector needs, FHS' hospital partnerships and communication, though currently collegial and functional, could be more consistent, intentional and expansive beyond just nursing program.	External hospital partners noted that recent changes to FHS's nursing program limit students' access to specialty nursing programs and have impacted the training and job readiness of FHS nursing graduates, compared to previous years. This reduced job-readiness in turn, threatens the quality-of-care hospitals can provide their patients. They also added that communications on non-nursing matters between them and FHS, could be improved.	Underfunding and increased hiring and service delivery expectations for both post-secondary and healthcare sectors is squeezing FHS and its hospital partners. As of 2022, Ontario had the lowest per capita health spending of Canadian provinces and was well below the national average.	FHS needs to enhance its relationship with local hospitals to better equip students – especially in nursing – with the necessary hard and soft skills to enter and stay in the workforce, including in the more rural areas near London.

Research Impact and Partnerships (3/3)

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
FHS needs to better balance faculty research and teaching requirements to ensure faculty have the capacity to advance high-quality scholarship and outstanding learning experiences.	Interest holders consistently highlighted the challenges of balancing research excellence and application targets with teaching expectations under the 40/40/20 model. This tension is reflected in FHS' research grant application participation rate (51%), which is low relative to peers like the Faculty of Sciences (94%) and Schulich Medicine (77%).	Post-secondary institutions training students in health sectors are increasingly expected to focus on teaching and prioritizing workforce preparation, which can limit the time and resources available for research activity.	FHS should strengthen supports and workload models that allow faculty to sustain research activity while meeting teaching expectations, ensuring excellence in both areas and that FHS' research reputation remains strong.
When it comes to research application, FHS is well positioned and strongly connected across its Research Centres, Institutes, and hospital networks, but there is room to strengthen faculty-wide collaboration with external industry partners.	The Research Centres and Institutes are well positioned and integrated within FHS and, in some cases, with other faculties. Externally, however, there is room to strengthen and better coordinate partnerships. Nearly half of faculty participants (44%) said FHS performed only moderately well in building external collaborations. Faculty and graduate leaders noted that while internal collaboration is strong, external engagement often depends on individual initiative. Interest holders identified opportunities to deepen partnerships with hospitals, community organizations, and funders, and to enhance FHS' visibility and impact through more strategic engagement with industry and government.	There is a strong desire from universities, government funders, allied health professionals, and industry members for interdisciplinary health research that includes real-world application. Ideally this research aims to address big-picture issues related to local, regional, and (inter)national needs.	FHS should adopt a more coordinated, faculty-wide approach to partnership development to strengthen its external research profile, expand collaboration with industry and community partners, and align research impact with regional and national priorities.

People and Culture (1/5)

FHS' people and culture reflect a deep commitment to student success, professional excellence, and collegial collaboration, yet evolving workforce expectations, workload pressures, and inclusion priorities highlight the need for renewed focus on supporting and empowering its community.

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
Ongoing Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, Decolonization and Accessibility (EDIDA) efforts and follow through could be more consistently applied.	<p>FHS has focused on the accessibility dimension of Western's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization, and Accessibility (EDIDA) Plan, which is a distinctive and positive emphasis across the university.</p> <p>Interest holders noted that while this focus has enhanced both staff and student experiences, its implementation has primarily concentrated on physical accessibility, such as mobility supports and ramps, with less attention to other dimensions like communication accessibility, including lecture room audio and sound systems. They acknowledged this progress and expressed a desire to see a more comprehensive approach to the full EDIDA Plan reflected in the next strategic plan.</p>	<p>In addition to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action reporting requirements from Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence & Security (MCURES) and tri-council research funders, universities must also be ready to accommodate more diverse student, staff, faculty, and partner demographics.</p>	<p>In collaboration with the EDIDA Committee and other key interest holders, FHS should explore more intentional ways of embedding EDIDA principles into its actions to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for its students, staff, faculty, and partners.</p>

People and Culture (2/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
FHS has become more diverse, but there is a need to strengthen Indigenous scholarship and embed Indigenous ways of knowing across programs and research.	<p>Interest holders emphasized that while progress has been made under Western's EDIDA Plan, more intentional inclusion of Indigenous voices, scholars, and perspectives is needed across teaching, research, and governance.</p> <p>They also noted that Indigenous faculty and committee members often carry an uneven workload advancing reconciliation efforts and mentoring others. Increasing Indigenous representation, community partnerships, and curriculum content would better reflect FHS' commitment to reconciliation.</p>	<p>Post-secondary institutions across Canada are working to advance reconciliation through curriculum reform, faculty recruitment, and community engagement in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. There is growing recognition that health education must include Indigenous perspectives, address systemic inequities in care, and strengthen institutional accountability to Indigenous communities.</p>	<p>Stronger collaboration and liaising with Western's Centre for Teaching and Learning and Office of Indigenous initiatives, as well as building stronger relationships with local Indigenous organizations will help FHS better incorporate and improve Indigenous scholarship, representation and inclusion in both teaching and research across the faculty.</p>

Sources:

The Public Health Agency of Canada. (2024). Evidence Synthesis – Indigenous people's experiences of primary health care in Canada. Yellowhead Institute. (2021). The Failure of Federal Indigenous Healthcare Policy in Canada. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada : Calls to Action. Government of Canada.

Government of Canada. (2019). Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. (2025). Ontario's Domestic Postsecondary Enrolment

People and Culture (3/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
FHS's collegial and supportive culture is a defining strength, with faculty and staff united around prioritizing the student experience.	<p>A large majority of faculty (67%) and staff (78%) reported satisfaction with FHS' work environment, describing it as collegial, caring, and student-focused.</p> <p>Students were consistently identified as the top priority for both groups, reflecting a shared commitment to creating a strong learning environment. Faculty and staff also credited supportive teams and informal collaboration networks as key contributors to morale and engagement.</p>	<p>Across the post-secondary sector, institutions are placing increased emphasis on wellbeing, inclusion, and student-centeredness as essential elements of performance and reputation. As workloads and expectations grow with limited funding or resources, sustaining positive workplace culture and student engagement is becoming more difficult.</p>	<p>FHS should build on its culture of collegiality and care by reinforcing wellbeing, recognition, and collaborative practices that sustain staff and student engagement as the institution grows and evolves.</p>
FHS's leadership is highly regarded for its collegial and collaborative approach, but stronger communication and trust across all levels are needed to sustain alignment and follow-through.	<p>Interest holders across the university described FHS' senior leadership as collegial, collaborative, and trusted partners. However, faculty and staff noted that these strengths are harder to sustain at the operational level, citing structural complexity, heavy workloads, and limited mechanisms for cross-unit communication. These gaps make it challenging to maintain consistent coordination and follow-through.</p>	<p>The post-secondary sector is increasingly focused on distributed leadership models that prioritize clear communication, transparency, and engagement at all levels. Institutions that enable two-way communication between leadership and frontline teams are more agile and resilient in addressing challenges.</p>	<p>FHS should strengthen internal communication systems, promote shared accountability, and create more opportunities for dialogue across levels, ensuring alignment between strategic direction and day-to-day implementation.</p>

People and Culture (4/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
Strengthening workplace stability, morale, and professional growth remains a key priority for FHS staff and faculty.	<p>Faculty and staff emphasized the importance of professional development, wellbeing, and job security as foundations for engagement and performance. Data from the StrategyCorp survey of FHS students, faculty and staff show that over a quarter of both faculty (27%) and staff (27%) identified development and wellbeing as top future priorities.</p> <p>In the engagements, many also expressed fatigue related to workload pressures and uncertainty, and that the teaching assistant support is insufficient. More faculty survey participants (42%) were neutral or disagreed that FHS supports them in delivering high quality teaching, than agreed (33%), but expressed optimism that new leadership could help rebuild stability and confidence.</p>	<p>Financial pressures and enrolment constraints across Ontario's post-secondary sector are heightening workforce uncertainty and limiting institutional capacity for retention and professional development. At the same time, universities are emphasizing staff wellbeing, leadership renewal, and capacity-building as essential to institutional resilience.</p>	<p>FHS should embed faculty and staff wellbeing, professional development, and retention supports into its long-term organizational strategy, positioning people and culture as core enablers of academic excellence and institutional resilience.</p>

People and Culture (5/5)

Key Takeaway	What We Heard & Know	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication
A unified “One Western” approach to health could strengthen collaboration, visibility, and partnership impact.	Interest holders across FHS, Schulich, and other faculties noted that external partners and prospective students often engage with Western as a single institution rather than as separate faculties. Many described the need for a cohesive, “one Western” health identity to simplify collaboration, reduce duplication, and strengthen Western’s collective reputation.	Universities are increasingly coordinating interdisciplinary research, education, and partnership efforts under unified institutional brands to enhance visibility, efficiency, and impact.	FHS should advance collaboration and external engagement under a “One Western” health identity, working with partner faculties to present a cohesive institutional presence across education, research, and community impact.
Students feel a strong sense of belonging within their individual schools but less connection to the Faculty as a whole.	Students consistently described supportive experiences within their programs, emphasizing close relationships with instructors and peers. However, many noted limited awareness of faculty-level initiatives and a weaker sense of connection beyond their school community.	Post-secondary institutions are increasingly focusing on creating unified student experiences that connect program identity with broader institutional belonging and engagement.	FHS should strengthen faculty-wide engagement and visibility by promoting cross-school collaboration, shared events, and communication that help students see themselves as part of a broader health sciences community.

Collaboration and Integration (1/3)

This theme explores how collaboration and integration within FHS, across Western, and with external partners shape the Faculty’s ability to deliver interdisciplinary education, impactful research, and coordinated contributions to the health system.

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What’s Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Internal collaboration across FHS schools remains limited by structure and culture.	<p>Interest holders described strong collaboration within individual schools but limited coordination across the Faculty.</p> <p>Shared initiatives are often driven by individual relationships rather than formal mechanisms. Many expressed a desire for clearer shared priorities and a more unified Faculty identity.</p>	<p>Faculties of health sciences across Canada are integrating schools and programs to support interprofessional education, streamline administration, and strengthen collective identity.</p>	<p>FHS should foster a stronger culture of internal collaboration, supported by structures that encourage cross-school planning, shared initiatives, and a common academic identity.</p>
Relationships with Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry are collegial but not yet systematized.	<p>Leaders in both Faculties emphasized mutual respect and productive working relationships at the senior level, including regular meetings between Deans and administrators. However, collaboration often depends on personal initiative rather than institutional frameworks.</p>	<p>Other universities are moving toward joint health strategies, shared research infrastructure, and co-branded “One Health” or “Health Futures” models that span medicine, nursing, and allied health.</p>	<p>FHS and Schulich should strengthen formal mechanisms for shared planning, interprofessional programming, and external positioning under a unified health umbrella.</p>

Collaboration and Integration (2/3)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
External partnerships are a core strength but vary in depth and coordination.	<p>Interest holders highlighted long-standing relationships with hospitals, research institutes, and community organizations. These partnerships are valued for placements, research, and service learning. However, the Faculty's approach to partnership management is decentralized, and relationships often reside with individual faculty members.</p> <p>In the StrategyCorp administered survey, students also expressed a strong desire in to have this strengthened, with more than one third of participants (38%) wanting experiential or work-integrated learning opportunities to be FHS' top future priority.</p>	Health systems increasingly expect integrated academic partnerships that offer joint innovation, workforce planning, and evidence-based practice models.	FHS should establish a coordinated partnership strategy that maps, prioritizes, and manages key relationships to ensure alignment with academic and research goals.
Collaboration with other Western faculties is expanding but remains underdeveloped as a strategic priority.	<p>Academic partners noted positive examples of collaboration between FHS and faculties such as Engineering, Science, and Information and Media Studies but described limited visibility of FHS' strengths across campus.</p> <p>Several Deans expressed interest in broader collaboration if mutual benefits were better articulated. In the StrategyCorp survey, 23% of students identified more interdisciplinary opportunities across Western as a top future priority, while 25% rated FHS' current performance in this area as weak.</p>	Interdisciplinary health and technology collaborations are accelerating nationally, particularly at the intersection of engineering, computing, and health sciences.	FHS can enhance interdisciplinary visibility by identifying flagship cross-faculty initiatives and co-developing programs and research aligned with Western's strategic priorities.

Collaboration and Integration (3/3)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Communication and visibility within Western and the wider community are uneven.	Interest holders inside and outside the Faculty noted that FHS has strong programs and outcomes but does not effectively tell its story. Many perceive the Faculty as quiet compared to other faculties, with limited external profile beyond specific schools or programs.	In the post-secondary and health sectors, reputation and visibility are increasingly tied to storytelling, public engagement, and demonstrated impact.	FHS should invest in coordinated communication that elevates shared achievements, reinforces its distinct identity, and builds awareness of its contributions to Western and the health system.
The absence of a unified health identity limits external impact and internal alignment.	Several leaders and partners observed that the broader community often sees Western's health programs as separate entities rather than a cohesive system. They noted missed opportunities to align under a single, outward-facing health narrative.	Universities across Canada are creating integrated "health clusters" or "academic health systems" to better coordinate education, research, and clinical innovation.	FHS should work with university leadership and partners to define a shared Western Health identity that supports collaboration, fundraising, and system impact.
Limited formal mechanisms to support partnership innovation and interdisciplinary research.	Interest holders pointed out that there are few structural supports for seed funding, matchmaking, or co-supervision across disciplines.	Funding agencies increasingly prioritize interdisciplinary projects, requiring integrated administrative and research support systems.	FHS should explore dedicated structures/funds for interdisciplinary project development, faculty networking, and joint grant activity.
Collaborative opportunities are often constrained by administrative and financial models.	Leaders noted that current budgeting and revenue-sharing frameworks can inadvertently discourage collaboration between Faculties or schools. Examples from Schulich and FHS suggest that successful collaboration sometimes happens despite systemic barriers.	Universities are modernizing internal financial and governance models to reward interdisciplinary and inter-Faculty collaboration.	FHS should advocate for institutional changes that remove administrative barriers and provide incentives for shared academic and research initiatives.

Financial & Structural Pressures and Sustainability (1/3)

This theme examines how financial constraints, infrastructure needs, and structural systems are shaping FHS' ability to sustain growth, maintain quality, and invest strategically in its academic and research priorities.

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Provincial funding constraints are creating ongoing budget pressures.	Interest holders noted that static provincial operating grants and tuition caps are limiting flexibility for program growth and renewal. Deans and administrators described a cautious financial environment where new initiatives must demonstrate clear revenue potential.	Across Ontario, post-secondary institutions are navigating declining per-student funding and increased competition for tuition and research revenue. Faculties are being asked to become more financially self-sustaining.	FHS must continue to align program planning and operations with sustainable financial models that balance academic priorities with revenue generation.
Infrastructure and space limitations are constraining growth.	Several interest holders identified a shortage of teaching, lab, and research space, especially for large first-year classes and interprofessional programming. Space challenges were linked to student experience and to the Faculty's ability to expand new programs.	Many health science faculties are investing in shared learning hubs and simulation environments to modernize pedagogy and support collaboration.	FHS should prioritize capital planning and space renewal to support growth in enrolment, research, and experiential learning capacity.

Financial & Structural Pressures and Sustainability (2/3)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Reliance on individual faculty effort is straining capacity and sustainability.	Interest holders described a pattern where new initiatives often depend on individual champions rather than systemic supports. Faculty and staff reported high workloads and competing demands across teaching, research, and clinical service.	Sector-wide, workload pressures and burnout among academic and clinical faculty are prompting institutions to consider investing in support staff, workload models, and culture change initiatives.	FHS should strengthen structural supports, staffing models, and workload frameworks that sustain innovation and faculty well-being.
Revenue diversification is becoming increasingly important.	Advancement leaders and academic partners emphasized the need for FHS to pursue new revenue streams through professional programs, micro-credentials, philanthropy, and external partnerships. There is growing recognition that traditional sources of funding alone will not sustain future ambitions.	Faculties across Canada are expanding continuing education, industry partnerships, and donor-funded initiatives to supplement core budgets.	FHS can enhance financial resilience by developing targeted continuing education offerings and cultivating philanthropic and partnership-based revenue streams.
Administrative and financial systems are not fully aligned with collaborative goals.	Interest holders observed that current revenue-sharing and budgeting processes can discourage cross-faculty collaboration. Successful joint programs often rely on informal arrangements rather than transparent institutional frameworks.	Universities are reforming internal budgeting systems to incentivize shared initiatives and interdisciplinary programming.	FHS should work with university leadership to advocate for budgeting models that reward collaboration and support shared academic outcomes.

Sources:

Taylor, P. & Catalano, F. (2024). What is the right budget model for your university to achieve its mission? Nous Group.
 Edgerton, J., Biegun, J., Kouritzin, S., & Nakagawa, S. (2023). Burnout among Canadian university faculty: applying a job demands – resources model. *Mental Health & Well-Being*, 1(3).

Financial & Structural Pressures and Sustainability (3/3)

Key Takeaway	What We Know & Heard	What's Changing in the Sector	Strategic Implication for FHS
Strategic use of philanthropic and research funding can strengthen sustainability.	Advancement and research leaders highlighted the potential for endowed chairs, donor-funded research, and targeted campaigns to relieve budget pressures. Philanthropy can also fund key priorities such as student support, space renewal, and innovation.	Donors increasingly seek evidence of social and community impact rather than institutional benefit, prompting faculties to align campaigns with public good outcomes.	FHS should focus its fundraising narrative on how investments in its programs and research directly benefit communities, while building long-term endowment-based support.
Affordability pressures are influencing student access and program choice.	<p>Interest holders acknowledged that students are increasingly sensitive to London cost of living, tuition costs and placement-related expenses such as kits, third party reviews, and vulnerability checks. In our engagements with students, they noted that the associated costs with applied programs should be disclosed earlier so that students can better prepare.</p> <p>These pressures may influence enrolment patterns and limit participation in some professional programs.</p>	Across Ontario, student affordability is a growing concern as while tuition remains capped, so are tuition subsidies, and at the same time the cost-of-living has risen significantly. Universities are expanding scholarships, paid experiential learning, and financial aid to sustain access and equity.	FHS should monitor affordability barriers and integrate financial accessibility into program planning, experiential learning models, and advancement priorities for student support.

Shaping the Path Forward: Insights and Strategic Considerations

Key Takeaways

Insights

- FHS has built strong momentum through program renewal, applied research growth, and expanding partnerships across Western and the health ecosystem.
- The Faculty's next phase will depend on strengthening its research visibility, impact, and interdisciplinary collaboration to address health, equity, and system challenges.
- FHS' collaborative culture and broad disciplinary base position it well to lead integrated education and research models that align with Western's institutional priorities.
- Workforce, policy, and funding shifts in Ontario heighten the need for relevance, agility, and clear demonstration of social and system impact.
- Embedding equity, inclusion, and Decolonization across teaching, research, and leadership will sustain culture, credibility, and community trust.
- FHS must continue balancing academic excellence, applied relevance, and operational sustainability to sustain its leadership and distinct value.

Strategic Considerations

- Strengthen integration across FHS to build a unified One-FHS culture that enables collaboration, shared systems, and academic alignment.
- Expand flexible, interprofessional, and digitally enabled learning models to prepare graduates for evolving health and social systems.
- Enhance research impact through interdisciplinary clusters, shared infrastructure, and external partnerships that translate discovery into practice.
- Invest in people and culture, supporting leadership development, workload balance, and belonging to sustain excellence and morale.
- Align with Western's "One Health" identity, positioning FHS as a visible leader in education, research, and community impact.
- Strengthen operational and financial resilience through modernized governance, data-informed planning, and diversified funding.

Cross-Cutting Foundational Imperatives

The following cross-cutting are the foundational conditions that will enable the Faculty of Health Sciences to achieve its future strategic priorities. They apply across all areas of the Faculty's work, including teaching, research, operations, and culture, and describe how the Faculty must organize, collaborate, and lead to sustain impact and excellence.

Strengthen a One-FHS Culture of Collaboration and Integration:

FHS' strength lies in its collegial, community-minded culture, but integration across schools and programs remains uneven. Strengthening internal cohesion will position FHS to collaborate more effectively across Western and beyond, building shared systems, incentives, and communication practices that reinforce a common identity and enable interdisciplinary teaching, research, and partnerships.

Embed Equity, Inclusion, and Reconciliation as Core Drivers of Strategy:

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization, and Accessibility (EDIDA) principles are central to FHS' evolving identity. To move from commitment to practice, these values must be embedded into decision-making, leadership development, curriculum, and research priorities. Doing so will strengthen belonging, relevance, and credibility within the University and broader community.

Build Organizational Capacity and Agility for Strategic Change:

Sustaining momentum will require operational and structural supports that enable adaptability, such as data-driven planning, flexible resource models, and clear accountability structures. Strengthening administrative coordination, decision processes, and performance measurement will help FHS respond to emerging opportunities with speed and confidence.

Invest in People and Leadership Development:

FHS' ability to achieve its goals depends on attracting, supporting, and retaining exceptional faculty, staff, and students. Leadership continuity, mentorship, and workload management are essential to maintain morale and capacity. Strategic investment in leadership pipelines and professional development will ensure the Faculty can lead change effectively.

Deepen Partnerships and External

Connectivity: FHS' ecosystem advantage is its strong ties with hospitals, community organizations, and Western's other faculties. Strengthening mechanisms for joint planning, partnership management, and shared initiatives will enhance visibility, attract resources, and position FHS as a connector across the health, education, and research systems.

Advance Digital and Operational Enablement:

Technology-enabled teaching, research, and operations are increasingly essential for excellence and sustainability. Continued investment in digital learning platforms, data systems, and research infrastructure will improve efficiency, expand reach, and enable evidence-based decision-making across the Faculty.

Distinctive Positioning (1/2)

Distinctive positioning describes how the Faculty of Health Sciences can define and communicate its unique value within Western University and across the wider health sciences ecosystem. It focuses on what differentiates FHS from peers and how it can amplify its reputation, partnerships, and contributions to health, research, and education.

Dimension of Distinctive Positioning	Description	Linked Insight Theme(s) and Key Source Points
Applied and Professional Strength	FHS is known for its leadership in applied and practice-oriented programs that combine academic excellence, experiential learning, and strong employment outcomes. This positions the Faculty as a national leader in preparing adaptable, workforce-ready graduates.	Academic Demand and Program Mix: Sustained growth in professional and clinical programs; strong interest in advanced practice and applied degrees; demand for flexible and work-integrated learning.
Collaborative Health Ecosystem Leadership	The Faculty acts as a bridge across Western and the London health system, fostering collaboration with Schulich Medicine, hospitals, and community partners. This connected identity strengthens Western's position as a health sciences hub.	Collaboration and Integration: Shared commitment with Schulich and partner hospitals to system-level collaboration; opportunity for joint research, education, and outreach; interest in reducing duplication and clarifying shared priorities.
Focus on Real-World Impact	FHS research and teaching address real-world health challenges such as aging, rehabilitation, and health equity. This applied impact enhances the Faculty's visibility and relevance across the health sector.	Research and Impact: Strength in rehabilitation and mobility sciences; emerging leadership in community-based research on equity and homelessness; emphasis on translating research into tangible social and system outcomes.

Distinctive Positioning (2/2)

Dimension of Distinctive Positioning	Description	Linked Insight Theme(s) and Key Source Points
Commitment to Inclusive and Human-Centered Education	The Faculty integrates inclusion, reconciliation, and equity into its culture and curriculum, emphasizing health as a holistic and relational practice. This human-centered approach differentiates FHS among peers.	People and Culture: Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; focus on Indigenous health and intercultural competency; attention to student well-being and belonging.
Amplifying the Western Brand and Alumni Network	Leveraging Western's strong reputation and alumni base can expand FHS' reach and philanthropic potential. Aligning with the broader institutional brand strengthens its influence and recognition.	Financial and Structural Sustainability: Opportunity to benefit from Western's "All In" campaign; alumni identify more with Western than with the Faculty; need to align advancement storytelling with institutional brand.
Advancing Digital and Lifelong Learning	FHS can extend its leadership in professional health education through online, hybrid, and micro-credential programming that meets the growing demand for continuous learning and skill development.	Academic Demand and Program Mix and Financial Sustainability: Interest in flexible, technology-enabled delivery models; opportunities in continuing and professional education; alignment with labour market needs for upskilling.

SPOTLIGHT - Institutional Alignment | Western At 150 Themes

This strategic plan must also align with the broader Western University community and must recognize Western’s own current strategic plan, Western At 150. Included below are the major themes and strategic initiatives of the plan.

Greater Impact: Western is ready to do more and be more.	People, Community, and Culture: We will build a more inclusive Western where everyone thrives through belonging.	Western’s Place in the World: We will renew our campus, strengthen our partnership with London, create a more sustainable future, and engage the world.
Grow Strategically	Advance Reconciliation with Indigenous communities	Concentrate on place, and...
Stimulate our research, scholarship, and creative activity	Create a more equitable and inclusive Western	...Engage the world
Promote teaching and learning for the future	Thrive through belonging	Sustainability, and imperative
Enrich the student experience		

Emerging Strategic Themes | Context

The emerging themes and thought starters translate the findings from the **Current State: Integrated Insights** into early framing for the next phase of strategic planning. They are not final directions but a starting point for dialogue and co-creation with the Faculty community and partners.

These themes:

- Reflect the evidence, perspectives, and sector trends identified throughout this report.
- Highlight the areas of greatest opportunity and importance for FHS' future.
- Serve as anchors for discussion, reflection, and refinement in the upcoming engagement sessions.
- Invite faculty, staff, students, and partners to test, expand, and shape the vision, mission, values, and strategic directions together.

The goal at this stage is to spark thinking and collective ownership so that the next FHS strategic plan is grounded in shared insight, lived experience, and forward-looking aspiration.



Emerging Strategic Themes | Vision

What is a vision statement?

- The **vision statement** is an organization's long-term promise to its interest holders.

Current FHS' Vision: To be a world leader in research and education in health.

Strategic Considerations from the Integrated Insights

- **Leadership through collaboration:** FHS' collaborative culture within Western and with external partners is a defining strength that positions it as a connector across the health ecosystem.
- **Applied research and impact:** FHS' excellence in rehabilitation, audiology, and health equity demonstrates its ability to translate research into measurable societal benefit.
- **A “One Western Health” identity:** There is strong interest in a unified health identity that links Western's faculties and schools under a shared purpose for public good.
- **People and culture:** FHS values inclusion, respect, and mentorship. Sustaining this environment is key to engagement and long-term success.
- **Future-ready education:** FHS must prepare graduates for an evolving health system shaped by technology, integration, and workforce change.

VISION THOUGHT STARTERS

- A faculty that leads through collaboration and partnership, connecting disciplines, communities, and systems to advance health and wellbeing.
- A hub for innovation in education and research that translates knowledge into real-world impact across Canada and beyond.
- A community where people feel valued, included, and supported to excel in teaching, learning, research, and service.
- A cornerstone of Western's “One Health” identity, uniting the university's health-related strengths under a shared purpose for public good.
- A global model for integrating academic excellence, social responsibility, and community-engaged health leadership.
- A catalyst for the next generation of health professionals and scholars equipped to respond to emerging societal and system challenges.
- A trusted partner to governments, industry, and communities in advancing equitable access to health, wellness, and care.
- A place where education, research, and service are seamlessly connected to create lasting change for individuals and populations.

Emerging Strategic Themes | Mission

What is a mission statement?

- The **mission statement** communicates how an organization works day-to-day to deliver on its promise (vision) to interest holders.

Current FHS' Mission: Through transformative research and education, we will unleash innovative ideas and opportunities that enable living in health throughout the lifespan.

Strategic Considerations from the Integrated Insights

- **Educate with purpose:** Deliver student-centered, experiential learning that develops adaptable, ethical, and community-minded health professionals prepared for the future workforce.
- **Advance knowledge and discovery:** Pursue applied and interdisciplinary research that addresses health, equity, and system challenges through real-world solutions.
- **Collaborate for impact:** Work across Western and with external partners to connect education, research, and practice for measurable outcomes in health and wellbeing.
- **Empower people and culture:** Foster an inclusive and supportive environment that values collaboration, professional growth, and wellbeing for all members of the FHS community.
- **Lead through innovation and integration:** Embrace new technologies, partnerships, and models of education and research that strengthen FHS' relevance and impact within a changing world.

MISSION THOUGHT STARTERS

- FHS delivers high-quality, student-centered education that prepares adaptable and compassionate health professionals.
- FHS advances applied and interdisciplinary research that creates practical solutions to health, equity, and system challenges.
- FHS collaborates across Western and with external partners to translate knowledge into real-world impact.
- FHS cultivates an inclusive and supportive culture that empowers students, faculty, and staff to thrive.
- FHS embraces innovation and integration to strengthen its relevance and leadership in a changing health landscape.
- FHS strengthens the link between evidence, education, and action to advance equitable health outcomes.
- FHS embeds equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and accessibility across its teaching, research, and partnerships to shape a more just health system.
- FHS equips graduates and researchers to lead change across professions, disciplines, and systems of care.
- FHS learns from and with communities, honoring diverse perspectives and lived experiences in the pursuit of health and social equity.

Emerging Strategic Themes | Values

What are values?

- **Values** are what shape an organization's culture, decision-making, and accountability.

Current FHS Values

- Leadership
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Sustainability

Strategic Considerations for Values Development

- The values should express the Faculty's role as a connector between research, education, and community impact.
- They should affirm a commitment to health equity, inclusion, and social accountability.
- They should reflect both the academic and human dimensions of the FHS community.
- They should emphasize collaboration, purpose, and continuous learning as defining aspects of the culture.

REFINED VALUES THOUGHT STARTERS

- **Collaboration:** We work across disciplines and sectors to strengthen connections that advance health and wellbeing.
- **Inclusion:** We value diversity and equity, and we are committed to Reconciliation and the inclusion of Indigenous Ways of Knowing across our learning, research, and community contexts.
- **Curiosity:** We pursue discovery and innovation that lead to better health, stronger communities, and lifelong learning.
- **Integrity:** We uphold fairness, transparency, and responsibility in our teaching, research, and partnerships.
- **Compassion:** We care deeply for people and communities and approach our work with empathy and understanding.
- **Impact:** We translate knowledge into action that creates measurable benefits for individuals, communities, and society.
- **Sustainability:** We commit to approaches that sustain people, programs, and systems for the future.
- **Discovery:** We are driven by curiosity and a commitment to advancing knowledge that improves health and society.
- **Applied Knowledge:** We translate research into practice, shaping how science informs care, policy, and education.

Emerging Strategic Themes | Strategic Direction & Priorities

STRATEGIC DIRECTION & PRIORITIES THOUGHT STARTERS

Strategic Considerations from the Integrated Insights

- Strength through collaboration
- Balancing academic excellence and system impact
- Investing in people and belonging
- Unifying health identity across Western
- Aligning for financial and structural resilience
- Demonstrating public and social value

Advance Integrated Health Education and Learning: Foster flexible, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning models that prepare graduates for a changing health system.

- *Potential Priorities:* Expand interprofessional programming, strengthen applied and continuing education pathways, and embed equity and technology in teaching.

Amplify Research Impact and Partnerships: Enhance research capacity, collaboration, and visibility to address real-world health challenges and strengthen funding competitiveness.

- *Potential Priorities:* Support interdisciplinary research clusters, align research themes with national priorities, and build external partnerships that translate knowledge into impact.

Strengthen People, Belonging, and Well-being: Cultivate an inclusive, supportive, and sustainable culture that values faculty, staff, and students.

- *Potential Priorities:* Embed EDIDA in all areas, improve workload balance, support mentorship and leadership development, and enhance mental health supports.

Strengthen FHS' Position and Partnerships Across Western and Beyond: Position FHS as a collaborative leader within Western's health ecosystem and as a visible contributor to health, wellbeing, and equity in the wider community.

- *Potential Priorities:* Expand shared initiatives with Schulich and other faculties under a cohesive "One Western Health" identity, strengthen community, hospital, and industry partnerships, and amplify FHS' public voice through shared success stories and community engagement.

Ensure Financial and Structural Sustainability: Build systems and structures that enable adaptability, accountability, and long-term success.

- *Potential Priorities:* Diversify revenue streams through partnerships and philanthropy, modernize governance processes, and align resources with strategic priorities.

Forward Path

- Initiate development of the draft Strategic Framework.
- Initiate the coordination of validation sessions end of November.
- Defines the process, timeline, and key milestones leading to plan completion and implementation readiness.

Appendix A: Survey Results

- Internal (staff, faculty, students)
- External (partner organizations)

Survey Methodologies and Metrics

Context

- As part of this strategic planning process, two surveys were created to solicit feedback and insight from internal and external interest holders for the Faculty of Health Sciences at The University of Western Ontario.
- The internal survey was open from October 6th until October 20th, and the external survey was open from October 16th to October 29th.
- These surveys engaged students, faculty, staff, and partners on a range of questions including FHS' current performance in several key strategic areas, specific challenges and strengths of FHS, the lived experience of people studying and working on campus, and what should be the top priorities for FHS over the next five years.

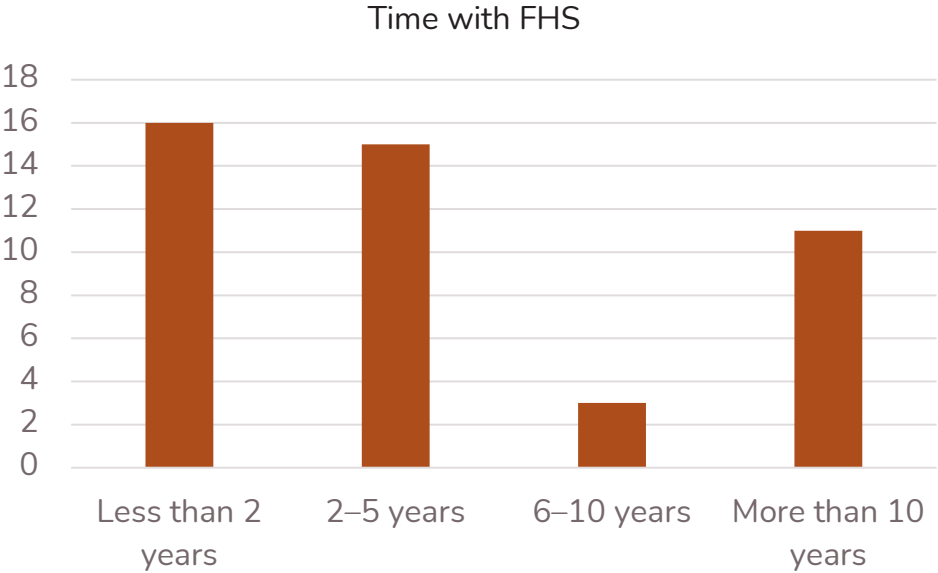
Response Metrics

Survey	Participants
Internal	375
Students	240
Staff	65
Faculty	70
External	13

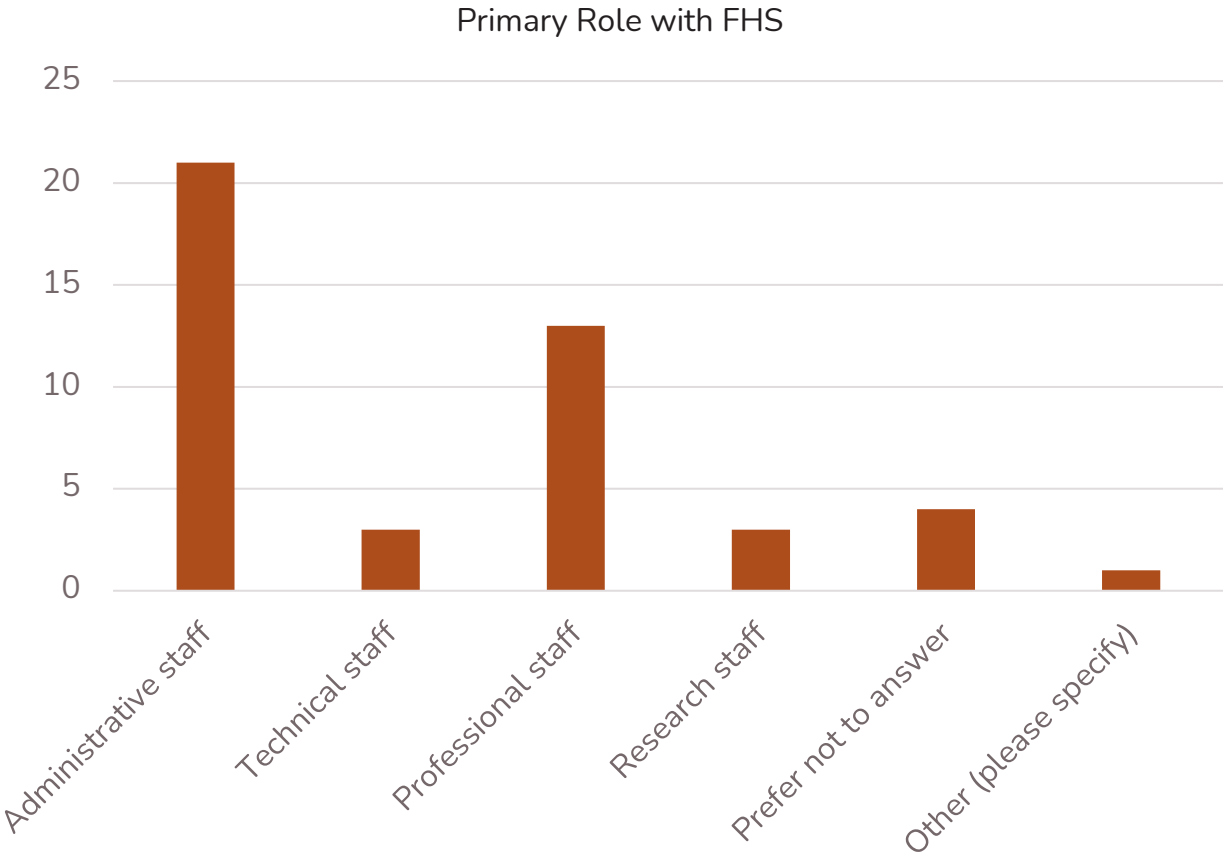
Key Assumptions & Limitations

- This is not a statistically valid survey. This survey captures insights and perspectives from a narrow subset of staff, faculty, students, and external partners.

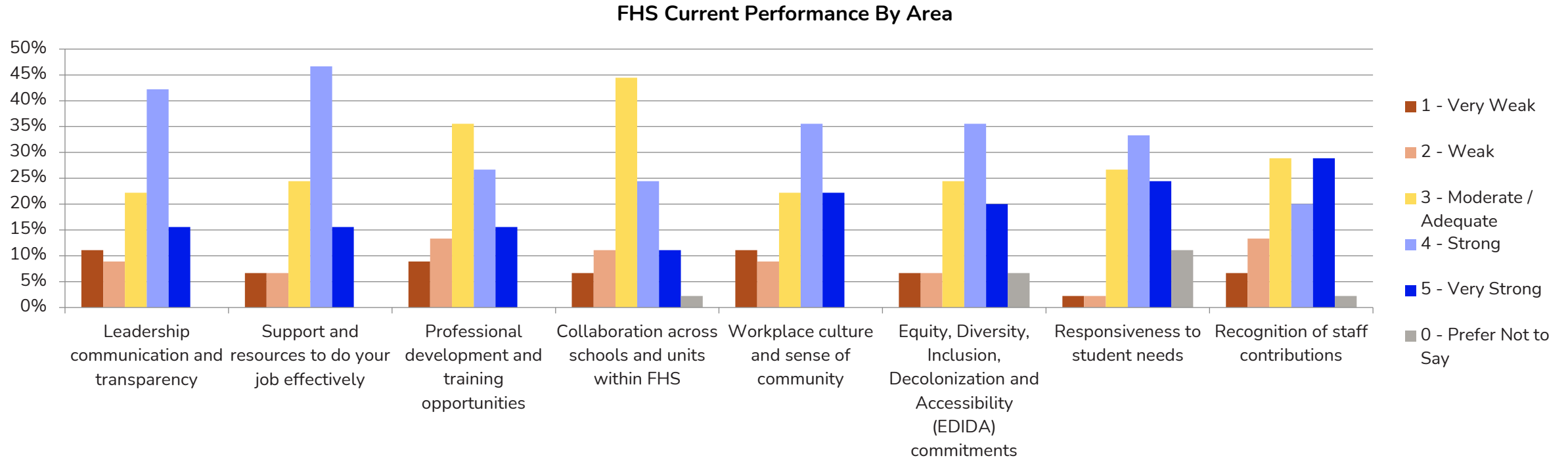
Internal (Staff) 1/4: Demographics



- The most common participant role was within administrative staff with **47%** or professional staff with **29%**.
- **35%** of participants have been with FHS for less than 2 years, with **33%** of participants having been there for 2-5 years, and just under **25%** having been there for over 10 years.

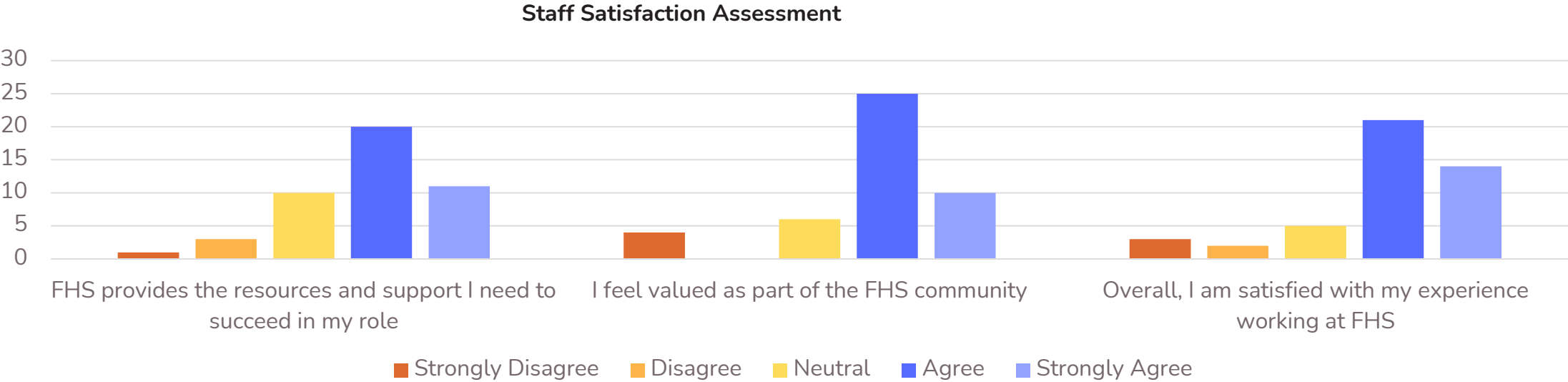


Internal (Staff) 2/4: Current Performance



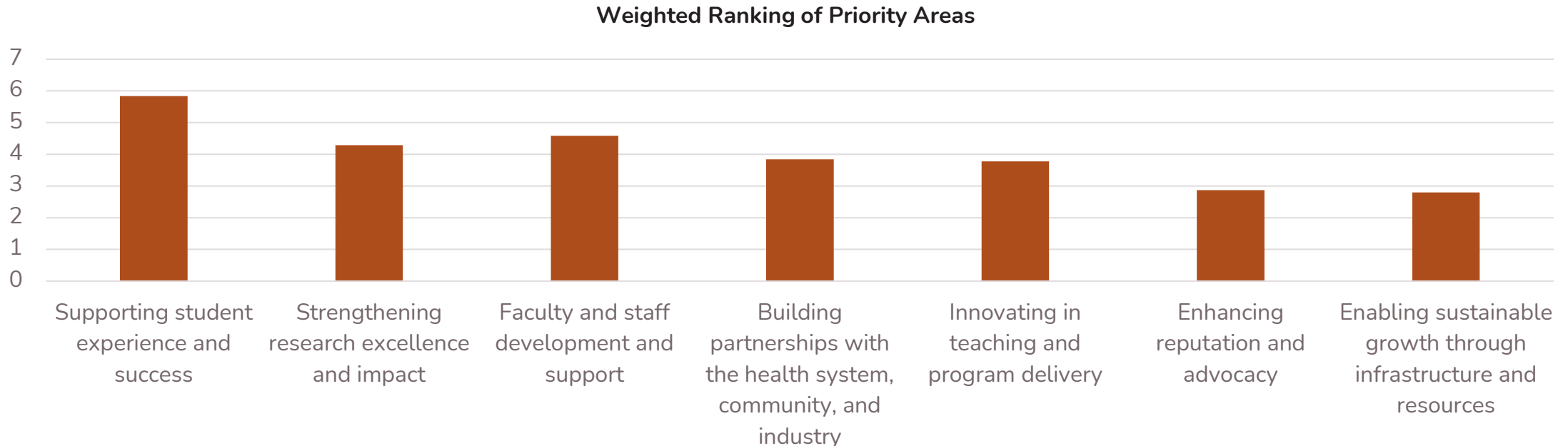
- Overall, 62% of staff participants strongly or very strongly agreed that **support and resources to do your job effectively** was the area that FHS performed the strongest in and only 35% of staff strongly or very strongly agreed that it was **collaboration across schools and units within FHS**.
- When asked about FHS' greatest strength, the most common responses were:**
 - The diversity of the disciplines and schools and curriculum and administrative flexibility.
 - The people and culture, how it provided a collaborative environment, and good leadership and direction.
- When asked about FHS' most significant challenge, the most common responses were:**
 - The workload and lack of capacity from the administration as well as being physically disconnected and a lack of office space
 - The split nature of the different schools leading to administrative fragmentation, a lack of leadership communication, and concerns about staff turnover and retention.

Internal (Staff) 3/4: Staff Value and Support



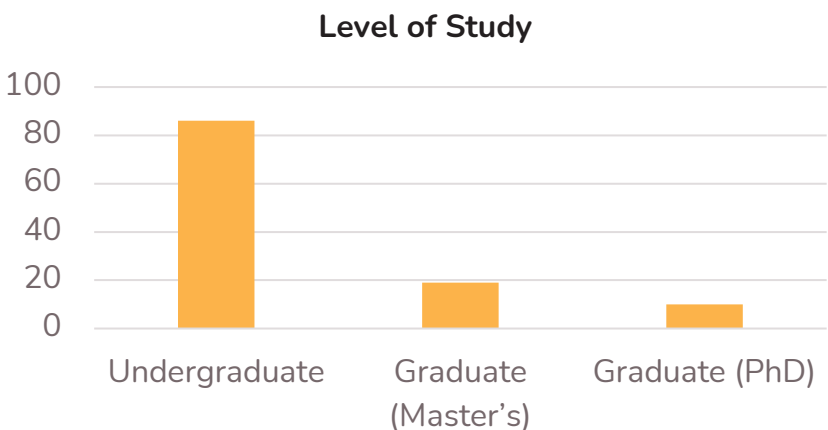
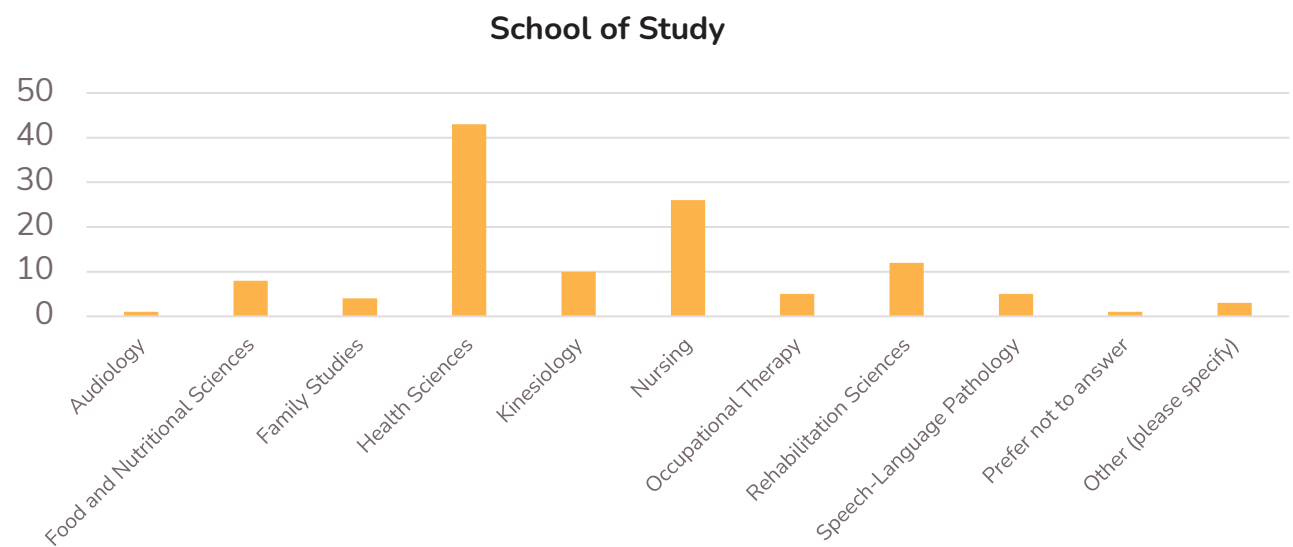
- When asked specifically how FHS supports and values staff’s role, the most common responses were: through staff awards, regular communication with management, the professional development opportunities, strong interactions with their peers.
- Participants also said that there could be a disconnect between the senior leadership team and the day-to-day work at FHS, that they often felt more connected to their school than the faculty, and there is a desire for greater feedback and appreciation from the faculty level for their work.

Internal (Staff) 4/4: Priorities and Strategic Areas

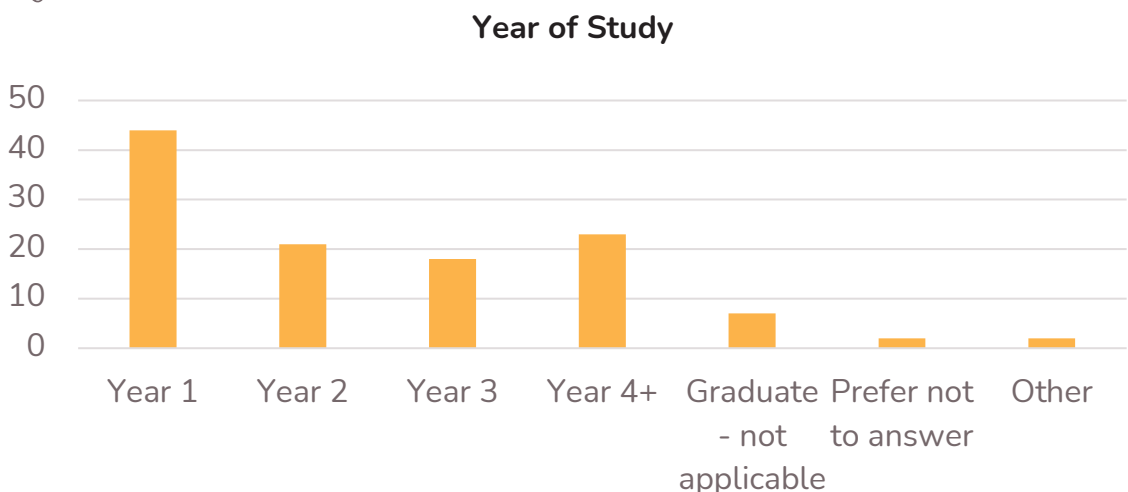


- **Supporting student experience and success** was most frequently ranked as the highest priority area, followed by **faculty and staff development and support**, and **strengthening research excellence and impact**.
- **When staff were asked what should be FHS' top priority over the next five years, the most common responses were:**
 - Investing in students, staff, and faculty while also ensuring financial growth and sustainability.
 - Building experiential learning and growing FHS' domestic and international recognition and reputation.
 - Expanding student services and building stronger partnerships in the local community and in the broader health and human services sector.

Internal (Students) 1/4: Response by School

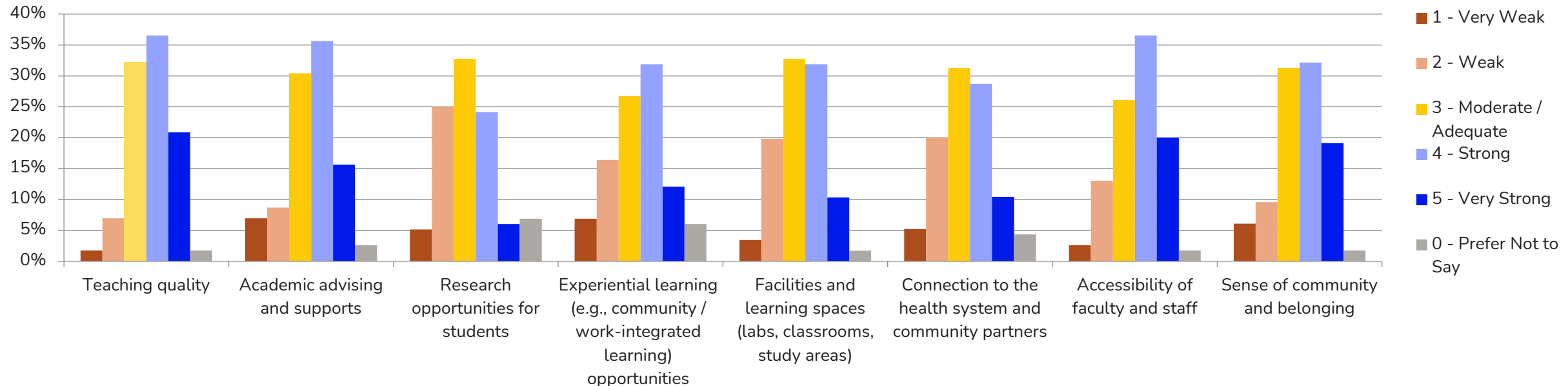


- Most student participants were from **Health Sciences** and **Nursing**.
- Most participants were undergraduate students, and of those, most of them were in their first year of study but there was a wide range in other years as well.



Internal (Students) 2/4: Current Performance

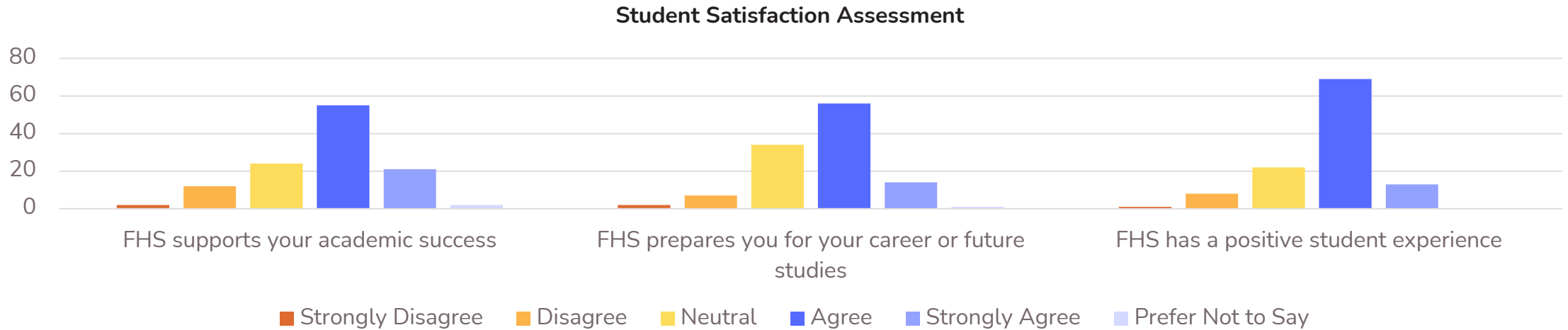
FHS Current Performance By Area



- 57% of students agreed strongly or very strongly that FHS' strongest performing area was **teaching quality** and **accessibility of faculty and staff**. 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed that FHS' strongest area was **research opportunities for students**.
- **When asked about FHS' greatest strength, the most common responses were:**
 - FHS' connections to the healthcare system and the prevalence of hands-on learning;
 - The quality of professors and teachers and the range and multidisciplinary nature of the programming;
 - The promotion of inclusion, FHS' strong reputation, and the welcoming nature of FHS' atmosphere and people.

- **When asked about FHS' most significant challenge, the most common responses were:**
 - Experiencing disconnect from online only classes, a lack of community on campus, negative experiences with academic counselling, and insufficient mental health supports.
 - The high student workload especially with lab or placement work coupled with insufficient lecturing and studying facilities.
 - The high and often undiscussed cost of studying, accreditation, and materials as well as a lack of opportunities for student funding

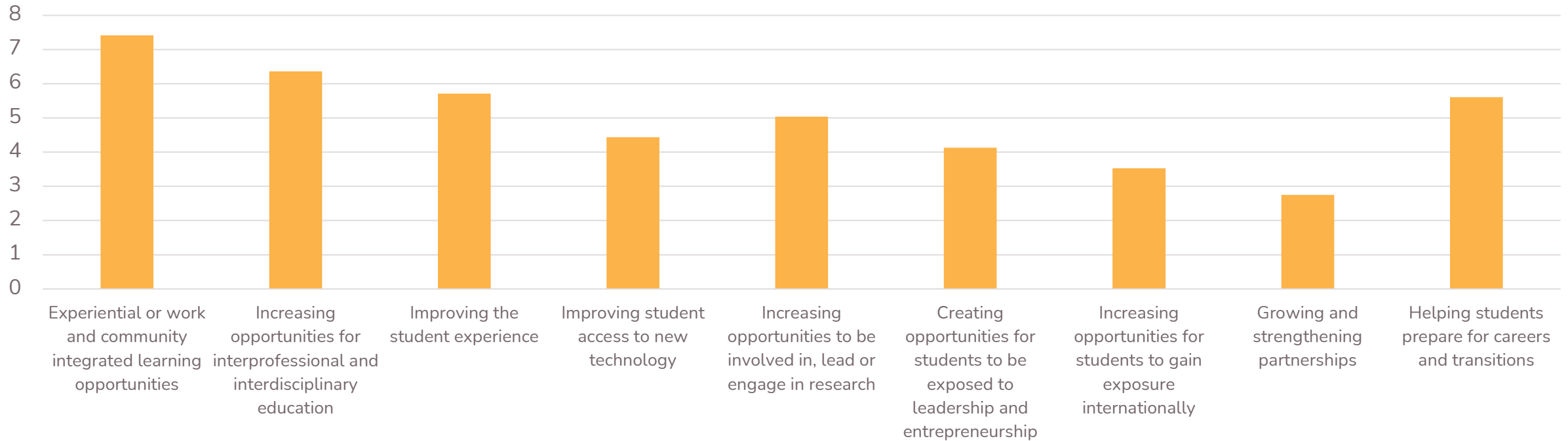
Internal (Students) 3/4: Value and Support



- **When asked how specifically FHS supports their learning experiences and prepares students for success, the most common responses were:**
 - They have excellent hands-on learning and have a wide range of classes for each program and schools;
 - The quality of professors is great, and the simulation lab and placement activities were excellent;
 - They liked how FHS connects learning to research, provides supportive resources to students, and encourages collaboration within and between programs.
- **Participants also said that:**
 - There are few resources for students in certain programs like nursing and that some professors are inconsistent with responses to student queries;
 - They stated that their individual schools have much more impact on their experience than the faculty and they often don't see the impact of the faculty;
 - That students should have a wider range of specialization options, and they experienced a discrepancy in supervisor quality;
 - There was a desire to integrate AI into programs and curriculum more, and there should be more opportunities for financial aid and housing supports.

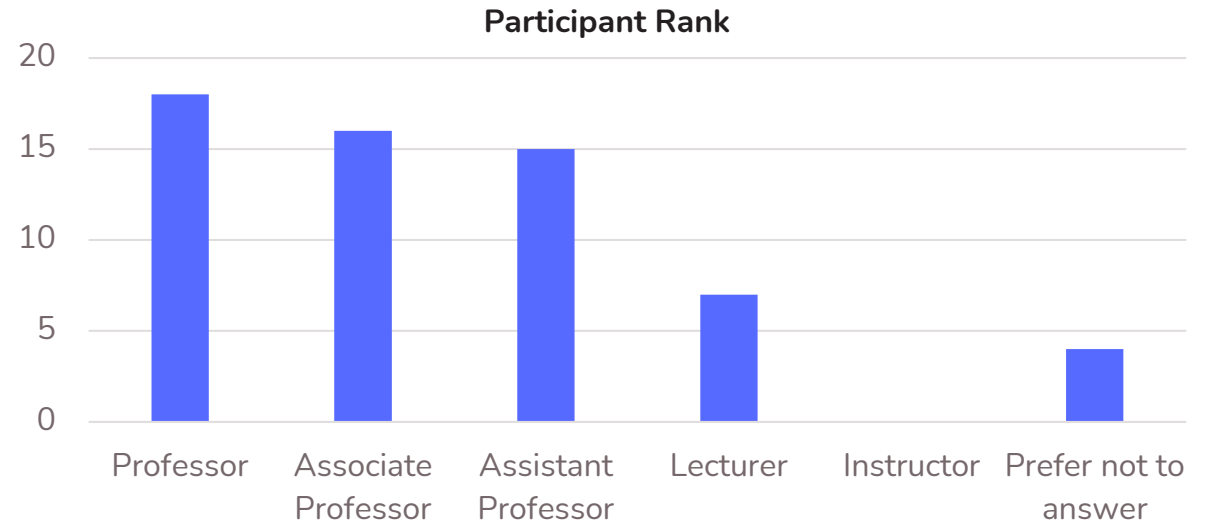
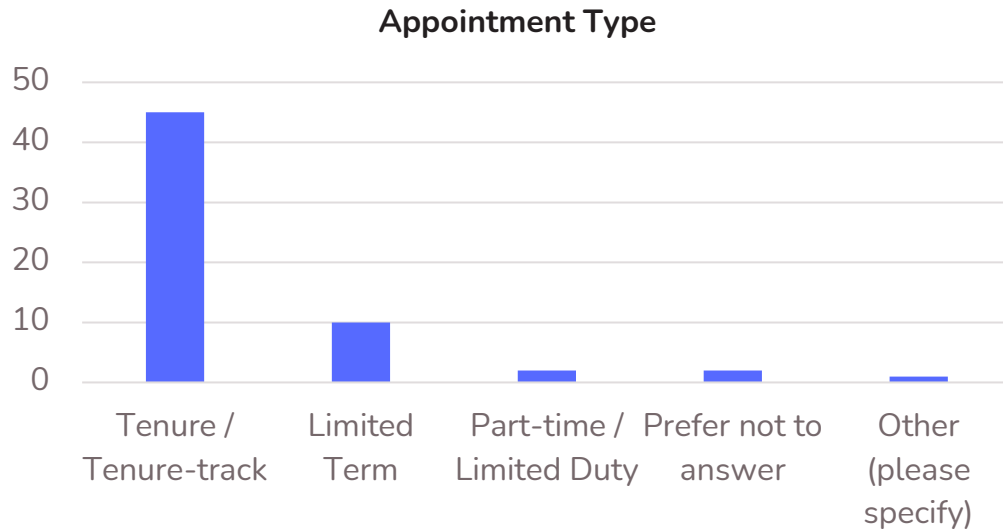
Internal (Students) 4/4: Priorities and Strategic Areas

Weighted Ranking of Priority Areas



- **Offering experiential or work and community integrated learning opportunities** was most frequently ranked by students as the highest priority area, followed by **increasing opportunities for interprofessional and interdisciplinary education** and **improving the student experience in the classroom and labs**.
- **When students were asked what should be FHS' top priority over the next five years, the most common responses were:**
 - Focusing on interdisciplinary research and programs and increasing co-op or work placement opportunities;
 - Improving academic counselling and communication to students and updating the physical facilities and infrastructure;
 - Teaching hands-on skills and experiences and preparing students for real-world experience and career transitions.

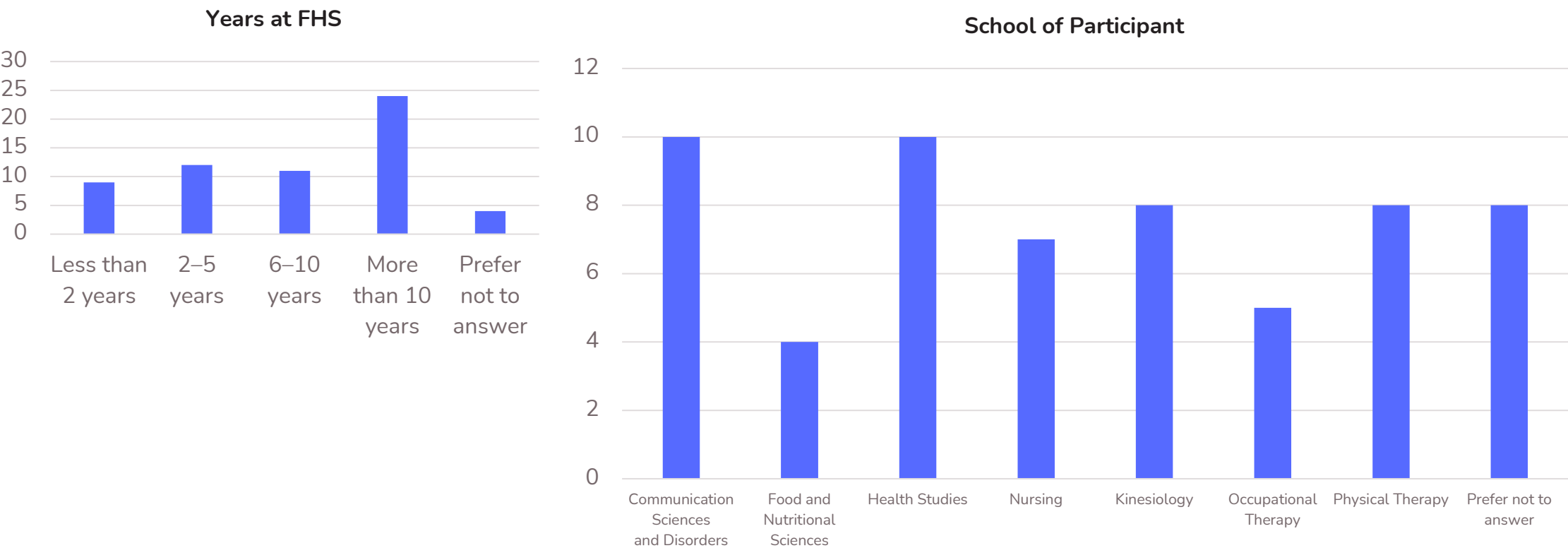
Internal (Faculty) 1/5: Demographics



- The most common type of appointment was tenure track faculty members, who submitted **75%** of all faculty responses.
- There was broad participation from various FHS faculty rankings. The most common rank was professors at **30%** and the lowest was lecturers at **12%**. There were no instructor responses to the survey.

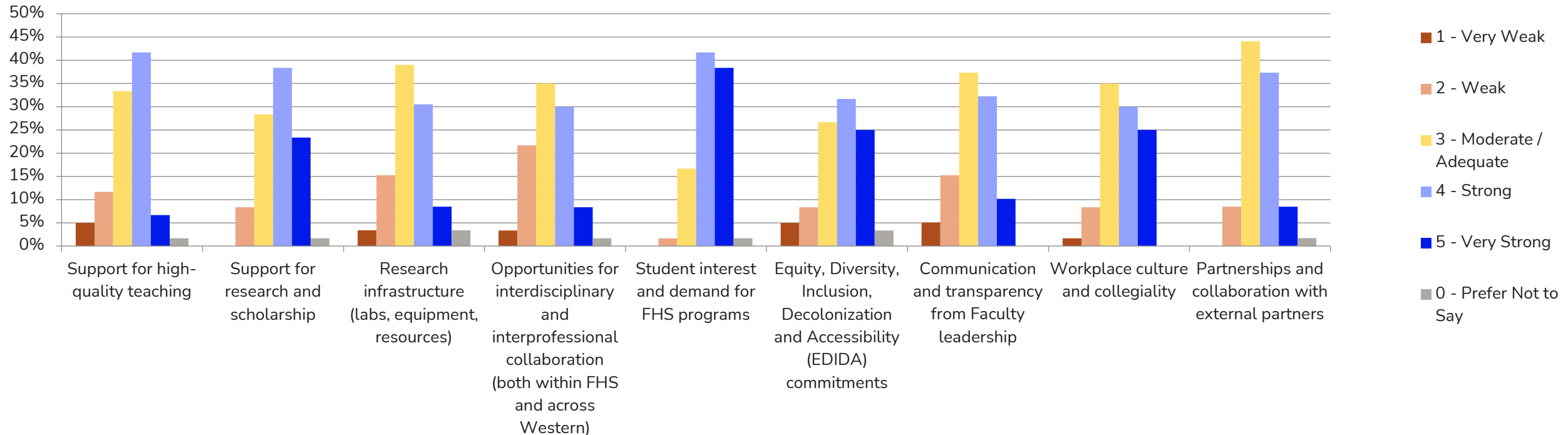
Internal (Faculty) 2/5: Demographics

- **40%** of participants had been at FHS for more than 10 years, with the remaining participants split between the other duration options.
- There was also a broad range of responses across the different schools, with the most responses per school split between Communication Sciences and Disorders and Health Studies at **17%** respectively. The school of Food and Nutritional studies had the fewest percentage of responses at **7%**.



Internal (Faculty) 3/5: Current Performance

Current FHS Performance by Area

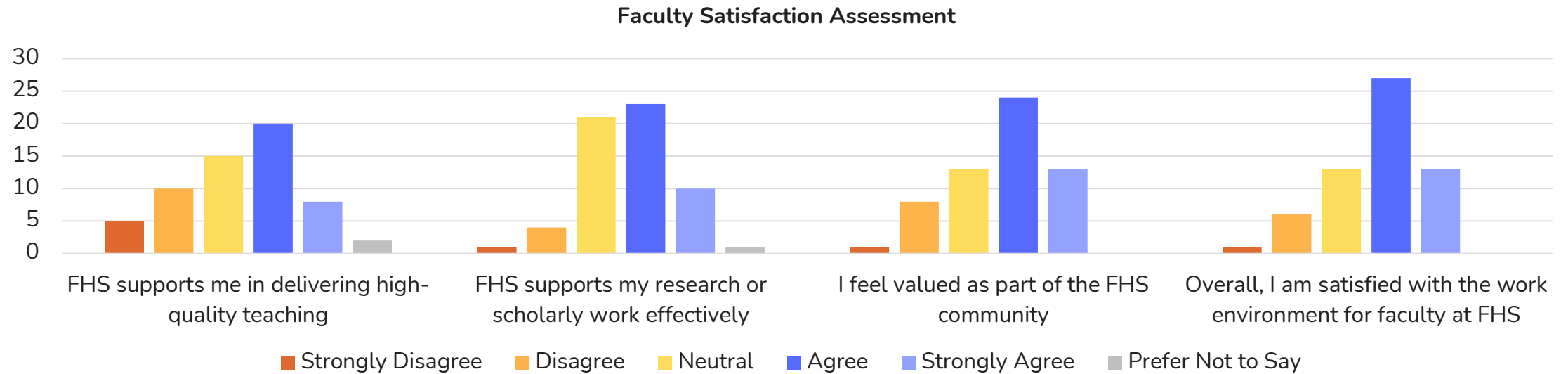


- Overall, participants identified FHS' strongest performing area to be **student interest and demand for FHS programs** and weakest in **research infrastructure** and **opportunities for interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration**.
- **When asked about FHS' greatest strength, the most common responses were:**
 - The diversity and breadth of disciplines and the strong culture of interdisciplinary work;
 - The strength of FHS' research staff, the collegial environment, and their willingness to support each other and students.

When asked about FHS' most significant challenge, the most common responses were:

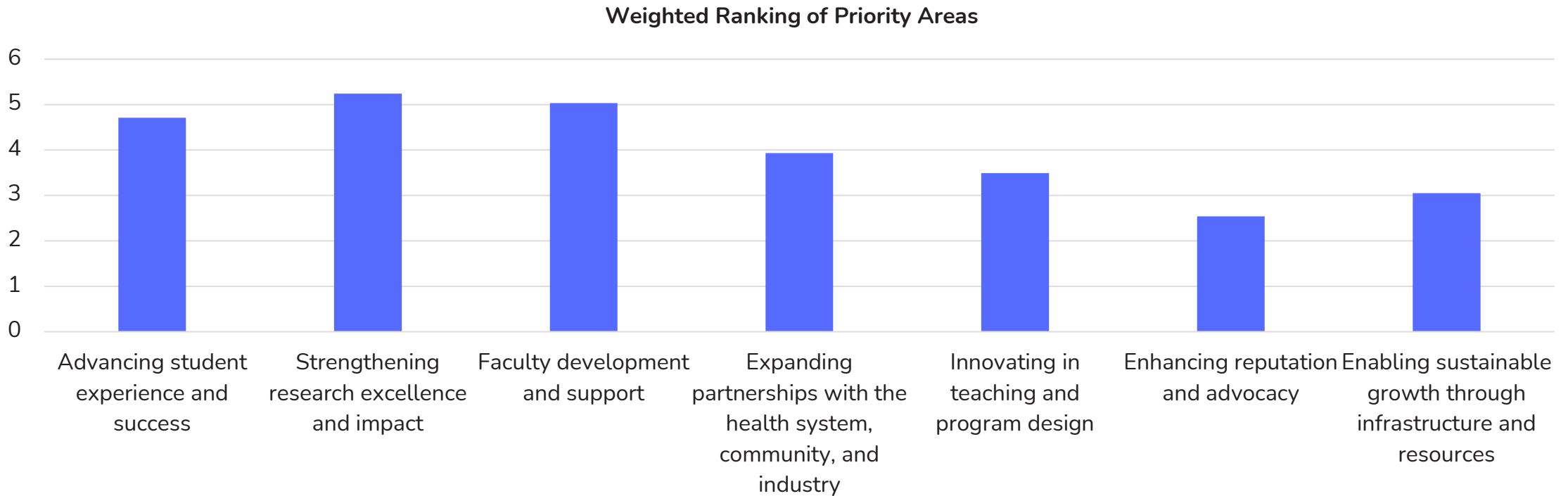
- Financial concerns and a lack of grant funding, concerns about AI, and a lack of interdisciplinary resources;
- Increased workloads and demands on faculty, a lack of central administrative support, and misalignment of expectations about teaching, admin, and research.

Internal (Faculty) 4/5: Faculty Support and Value



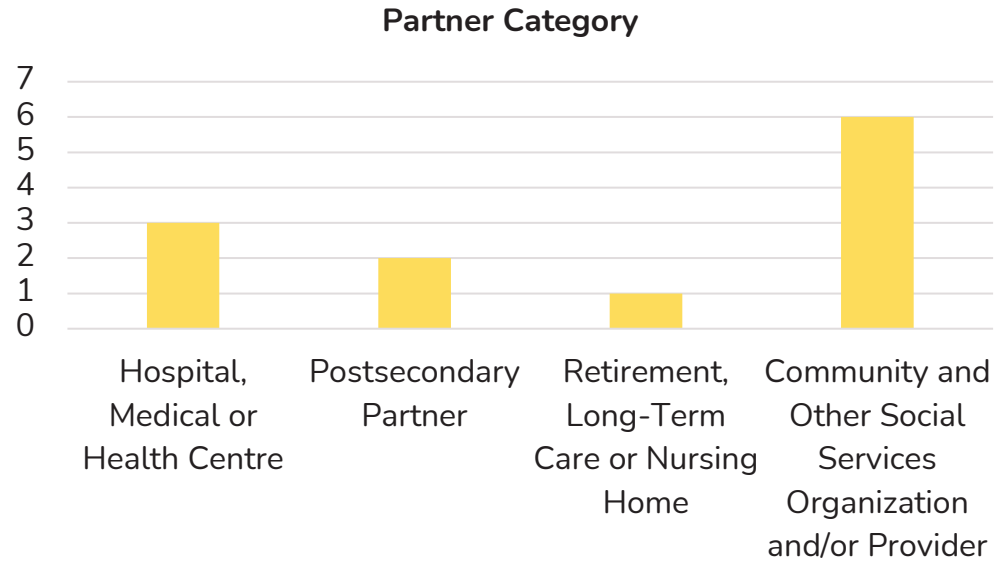
- **When asked how specifically FHS supports their teaching, research and academic career, the most common responses were:**
 - The FHS research team provides excellent support and the strength of FHS administration;
 - The many opportunities for professional development and the culture of collegiality and willingness to support each other;
 - The flexibility and autonomy provided for researchers.
- **Participants also said that:**
 - Teaching is less supported by the faculty than research;
 - That the workload expectations for teaching scholars, instructors, and lecturers were often too high and inconsistent across schools and programs;
 - That facilities and infrastructure can be insufficient for certain classes and labs.

Internal (Faculty) 5/5: Priorities and Strategic Areas

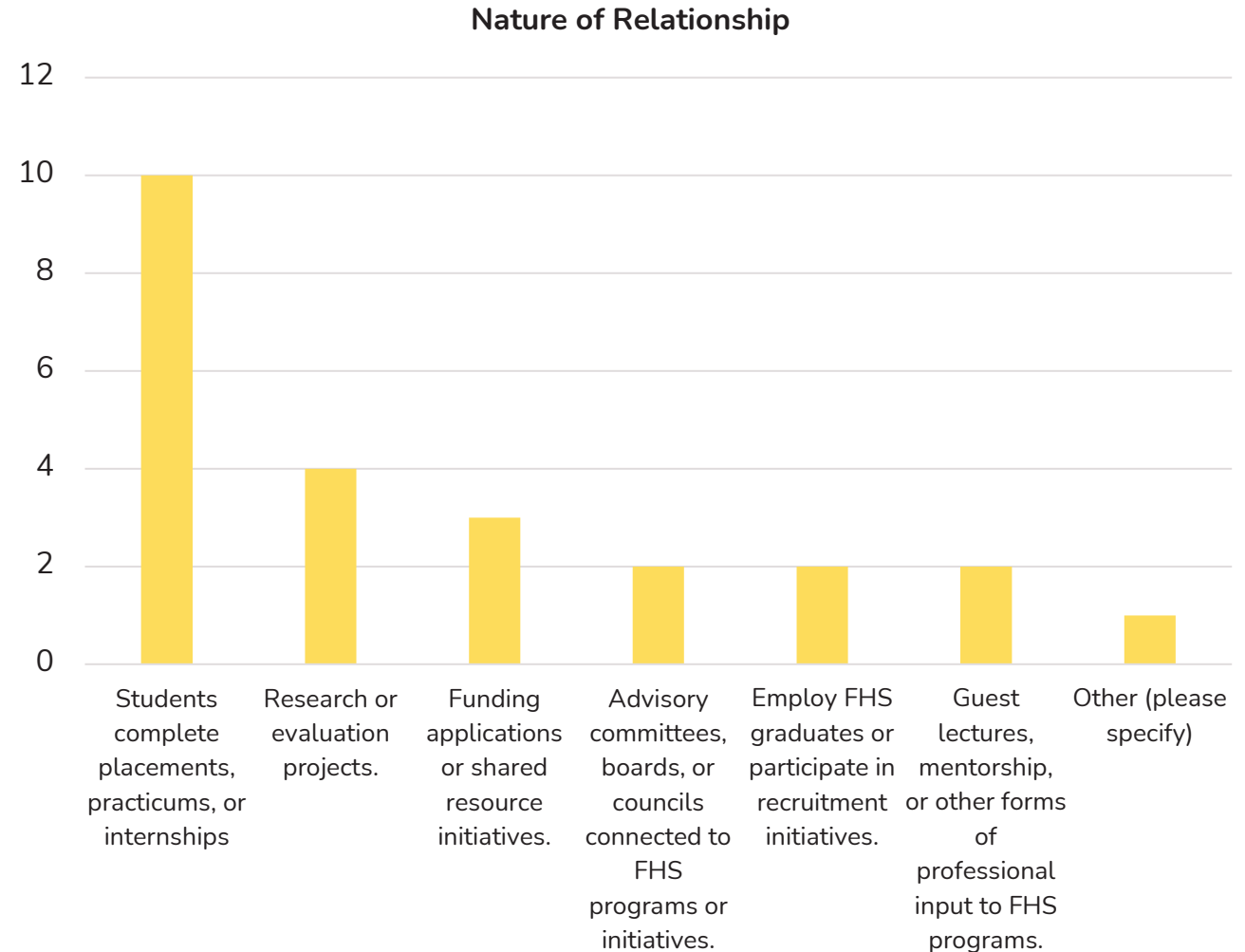


- **Strengthening research excellence** was most frequently ranked as the highest priority area, followed by **faculty development and support** and **advancing student experience and success**.
- **When faculty were asked what should be FHS' top priority over the next five years, the most common responses were:**
 - Ensuring sustainable growth in enrolment is reflected in sustainable investment in faculty and facilities and adding more mental health supports;
 - Recruiting new and more diverse faculty, increasing funding and pay transparency, and having more research chairs and support;
 - Increasing FHS' reputation both domestically and internationally and finding new areas for FHS to lead in research.

External 1/3: Demographics

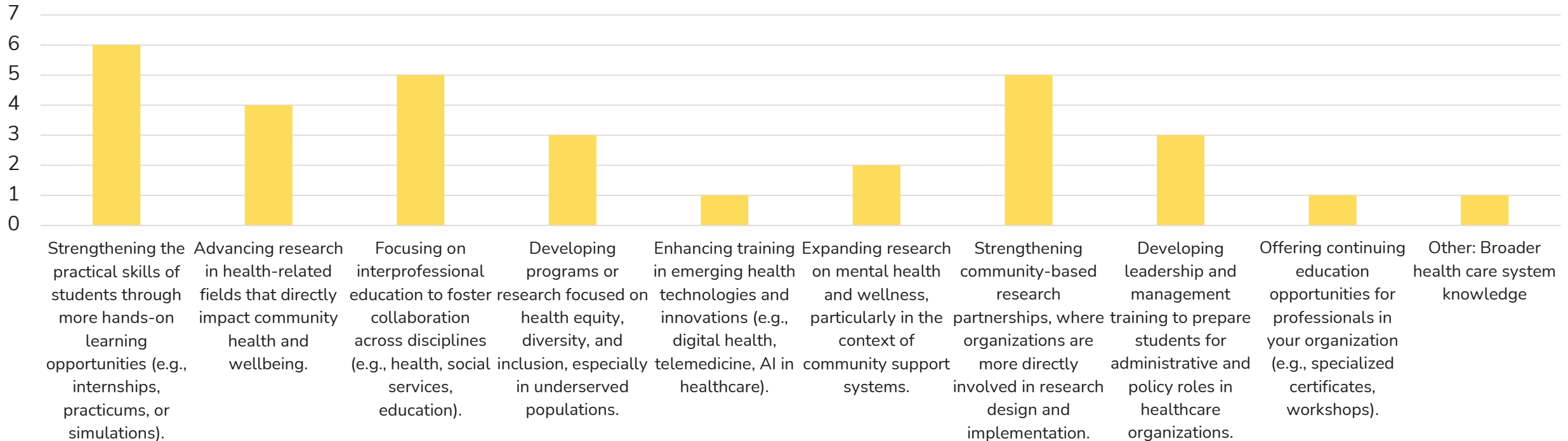


- Most participants were from **community and other social services organizations** and **hospitals, medical or health centres**.
- A majority of participants said their primary relationship with FHS was having **students' complete placements or work-integrated learning opportunities**.
- 88% of participants ranked FHS staff, students, and faculty members were very good or excellent in **their quality and preparedness to work**.



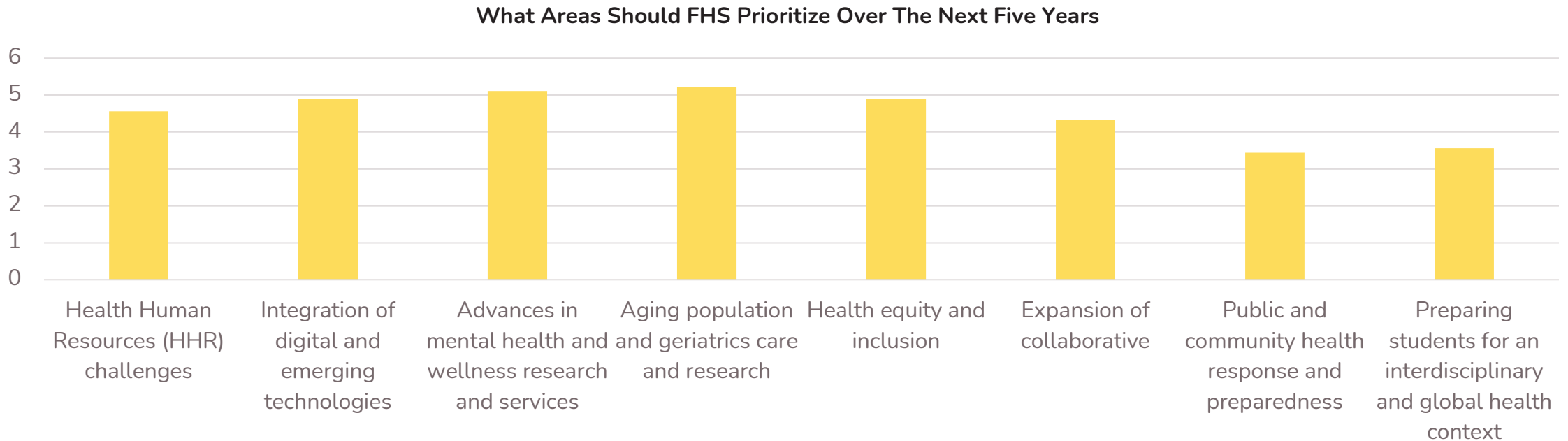
External 2/3 Partnership Areas of Focus

Recommended Areas of Priority for the Next Five Years



- **Strengthening practical skills of student through hands-on learning** was most frequently ranked as the highest priority area, followed by **strengthening community-based research partnerships** and **focusing on interprofessional education**.
- **78%** of partners said they would rate the quality of partnerships with FHS as very good or excellent.

External 3/3 Strategic Prioritization



- Given the sample size and the nature of the question, there was not a clear consensus as to what were the most important priorities for FHS over the next five years. The highest-ranking responses were **aging population and geriatrics care and research, advances in mental health and wellness research, and health equity and inclusion.**
- When partners were asked what the most successful aspects of partnering with FHS are, the most common responses were **ease of communication, excellence of students, and bi-directional support.**
- The most commonly selected challenges with partnering with FHS, the most common responses were **a lack of time to organize student partnerships, the amount of paperwork for the placement process, and a need to focus on healthcare basics.**



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