

INTRODUCTION

- In the 2014/15 academic year over two million Canadians were enrolled at a postsecondary institution (PSI; Frank, Frenette & Morissette (2015), and these numbers continue to grow.
- Students have various motives or explanations as to why they have selected to pursue postsecondary education.
- Therefore, the purpose of our study was twofold:
 - To examine the reasons students provide for attending (or not attending) postsecondary.
 - To make recommendations for supports and services available to students.

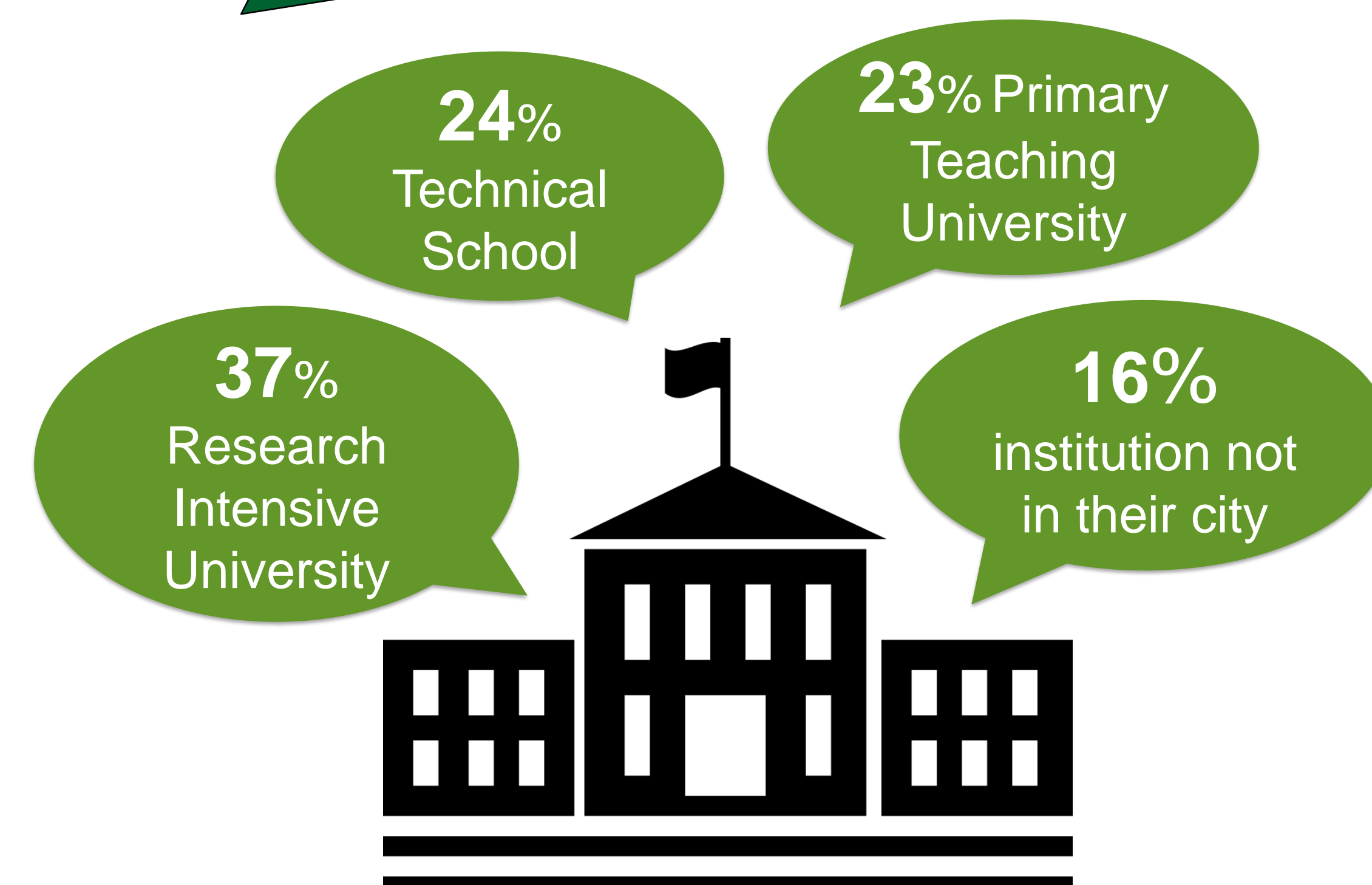
METHOD

- We surveyed 291 grade 12 students from various high schools in a mid-sized Canadian city about their plans for after high school.
- Students mean age was 17.36, years (16 to 19).
- 51% identified as male, 46% identified as female and 3% identified as non-binary.
- Students were asked:
 - What are your plans for after high school?
 - How did you decide on your plans for after high school? Please include any factors you considered in your decision.

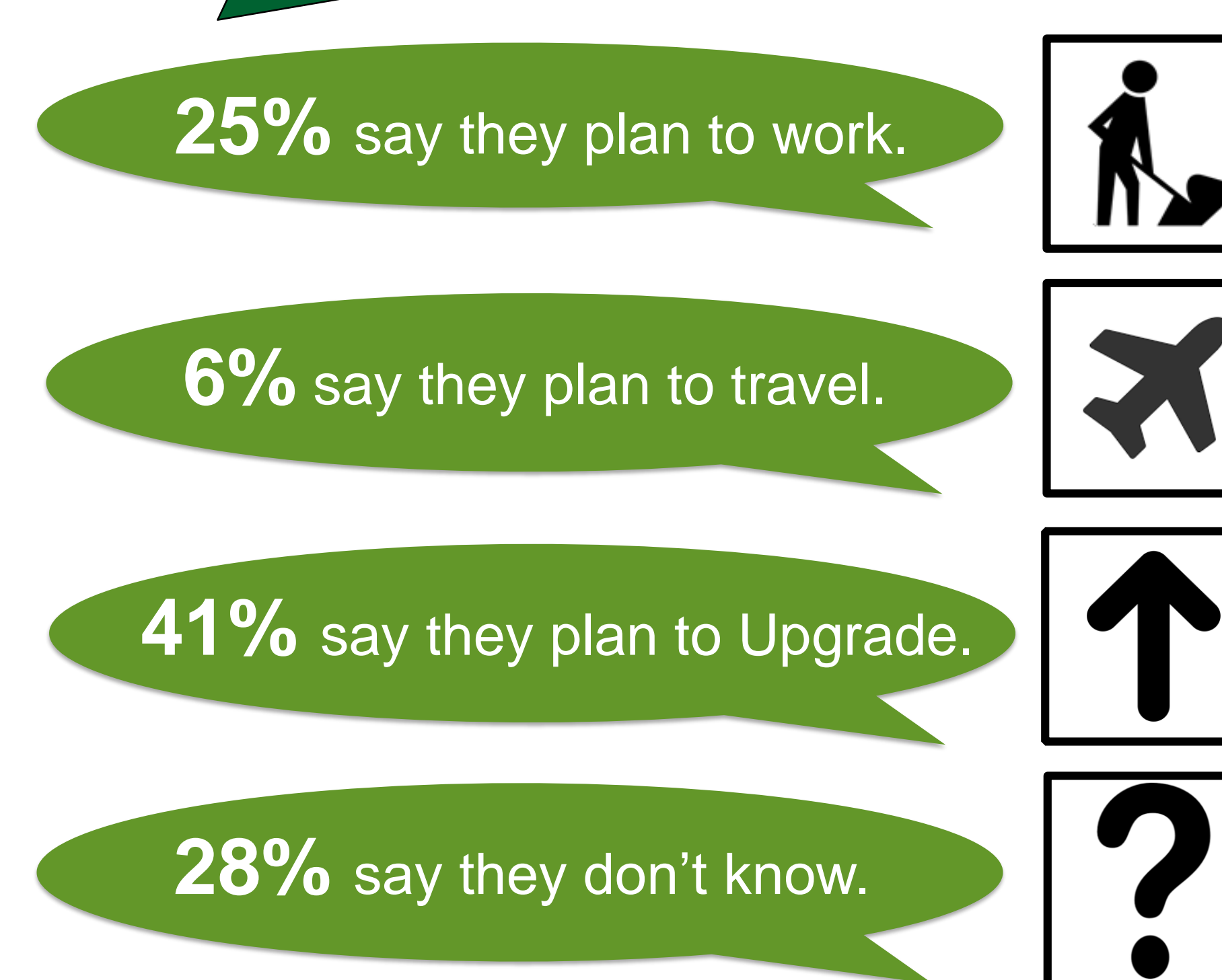
RESULTS

- 23%** of students did not plan to attend a PSI.
- 77%** of student said they planned to attend a PSI after finishing high school.
 - We identified three main themes in their reasons to attend postsecondary education:
 - Influential individuals**
 - Motivational factors**
 - Personal attributes**
- 31%** of students who said yes, mentioned being unsure of their decision.

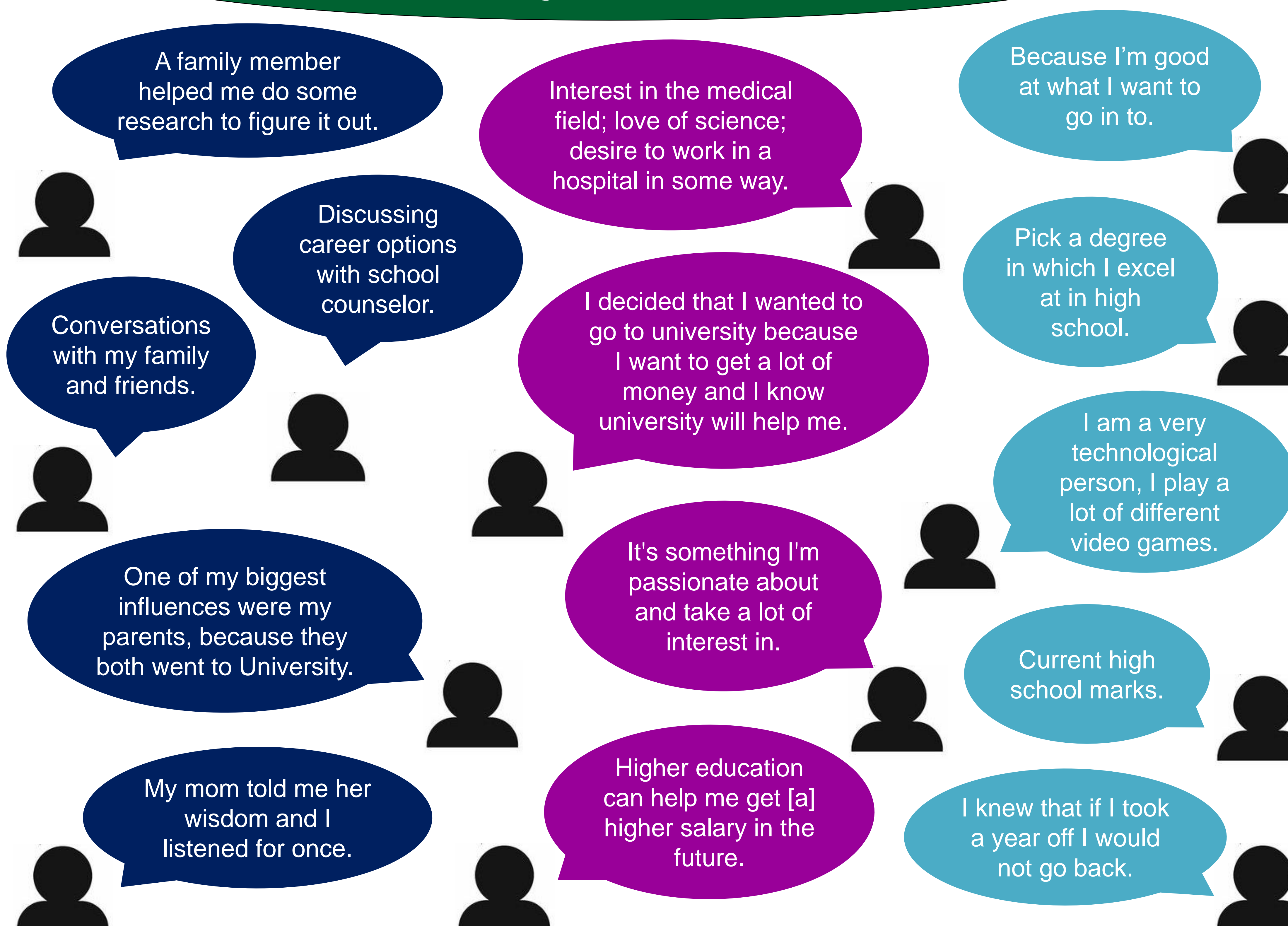
Which institutions do students say they will attend?



What are their plans if not school?



How did you decide on your plans for after high school?



DISCUSSION

- Our results are consistent with previous research, suggesting there are numerous reasons that students identify for going on to complete a postsecondary education (e.g., Fermin & Pope, 2003; MacAllum, et al., 2007).
- Furthermore, we found that 3 in 4 students plan to attend a PSI, and the largest portion of students who said they were not attending PSI, planned to upgrade to attend a PSI later on.
 - This demonstrates the importance placed on attending postsecondary which is found in research (e.g., Carnevale, et al., 2012) and online (e.g., www.collegeforjobs.com).

FUTURE DIRECTION

- Interestingly, roughly one in three students in each group said "*I don't know*," suggesting even in their last semester of high school students are still uncertain of their decisions.
- Supports and services must be provided to students as they make this important decision.
- One avenue might be for PSIs to connect with high schools and offer programs where students come to campus and are student there for a day.
 - They could sit in lectures they are interested in, and see postsecondary education firsthand to aid them in their decisions.

REFERENCES

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