

# LEISURE READING AT GUSTAVUS

2008-2009 Patricia Lindell Research  
Project

# The Goals of the Project

- ❖ To understand the nature of leisure reading on our campus and other campuses
- ❖ To investigate barriers that prevent undergraduates from leisure reading
- ❖ To understand ways that the Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library can address those barriers

# Method: Two Surveys

- ❖ Survey of students at Gustavus
- ❖ Survey of librarians at Oberlin schools

# Literature Review: The Basics

- ❖ *Reading at Risk* (NEA 2004)
- ❖ *To Read or Not to Read* (NEA 2007)
- ❖ *Do they read for pleasure? Recreational reading habits of college students* (Gallik 1999)
  
- ❖ *Undergraduate Student Leisure Interests Over Three Decades* (Hendel 2004)
  
- ❖ *Academic Libraries and Extracurricular Reading Promotion* (Elliott 2008)

# *Reading at Risk:* *A Survey of Literary Reading in America*

- ▣ Found that Americans in almost every demographic group were reading fiction, poetry, and drama – and books in general – at significantly lower rates than 10 or 20 years earlier.
  - Nearly half of all Americans ages 18 to 24 read no books for pleasure at all
  - The percentage of young Americans who read a book not required for work or school fell from 59% in 1992 to 52% in 2002

# *To Read or Not to Read*

- ▣ Compiled leisure reading studies from across the United States, including the results of *Reading at Risk*
  - College attendance no longer guarantees active reading habits: 65% of college freshman read for pleasure for less than an hour per week or not at all
- ▣ Found a correlation between leisure reading and civic engagement

# *Do they read for pleasure?*

- ▣ Found a positive relationship between recreational reading and academic performance
  - Knowledge about students' recreational reading habits is helpful in making predictions about their future academic success
  - Relationship could indicate that students who spend more time reading have, in general, superior academic skills

# *Undergraduate Student Leisure Reading Interests Over Three Decades*

- ▣ Measured the frequency of undergraduates reading
  - books
  - newspapers
  - news magazines
  - reading literary magazines
- ▣ Decline in leisure activities related to current events



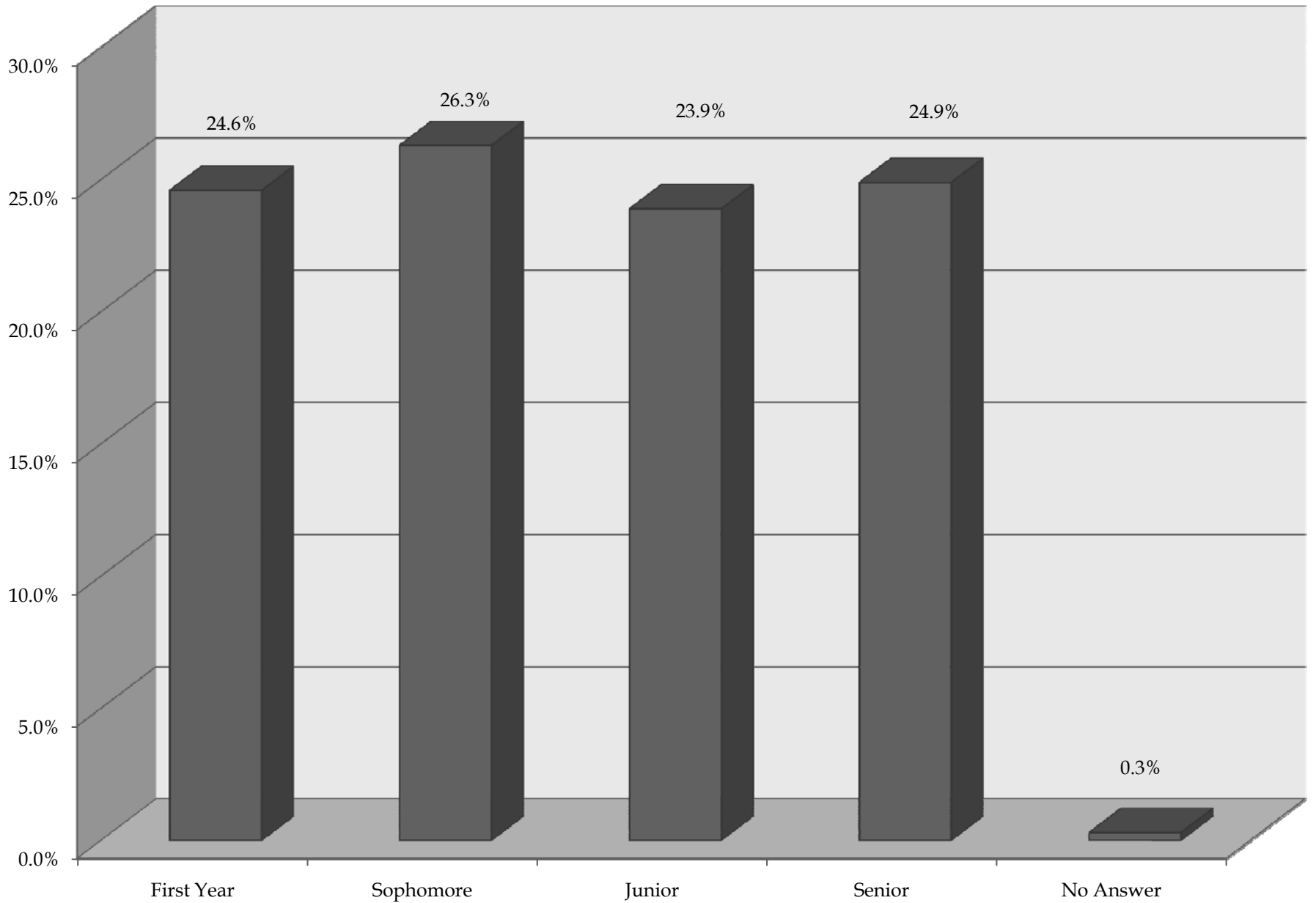
## *Academic Libraries and Extracurricular Reading Promotion*

- ▣ Surveyed academic librarians about what they were doing to promote extra curricular reading
- ▣ If they weren't promoting it, why not
  - Budget, staff time, space
  
- ▣ Enumerates and describes reading programs at college libraries (Barbara Fister is quoted)

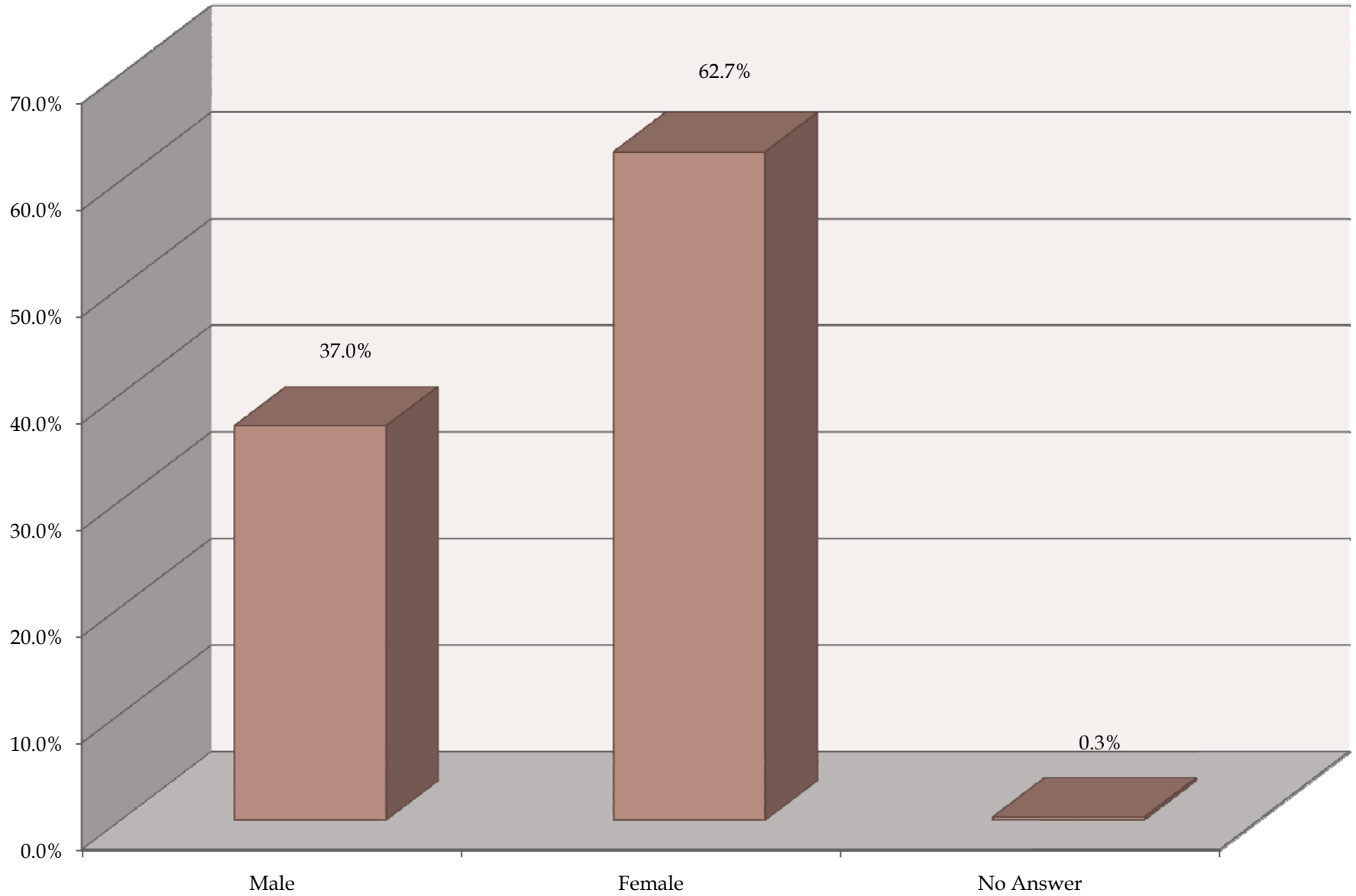
# Results from Gustavus Survey

- ▣ 717 participants
- ▣ Leisure reading- any reading that you choose to do on your own time (e.g. reading not assigned for class)

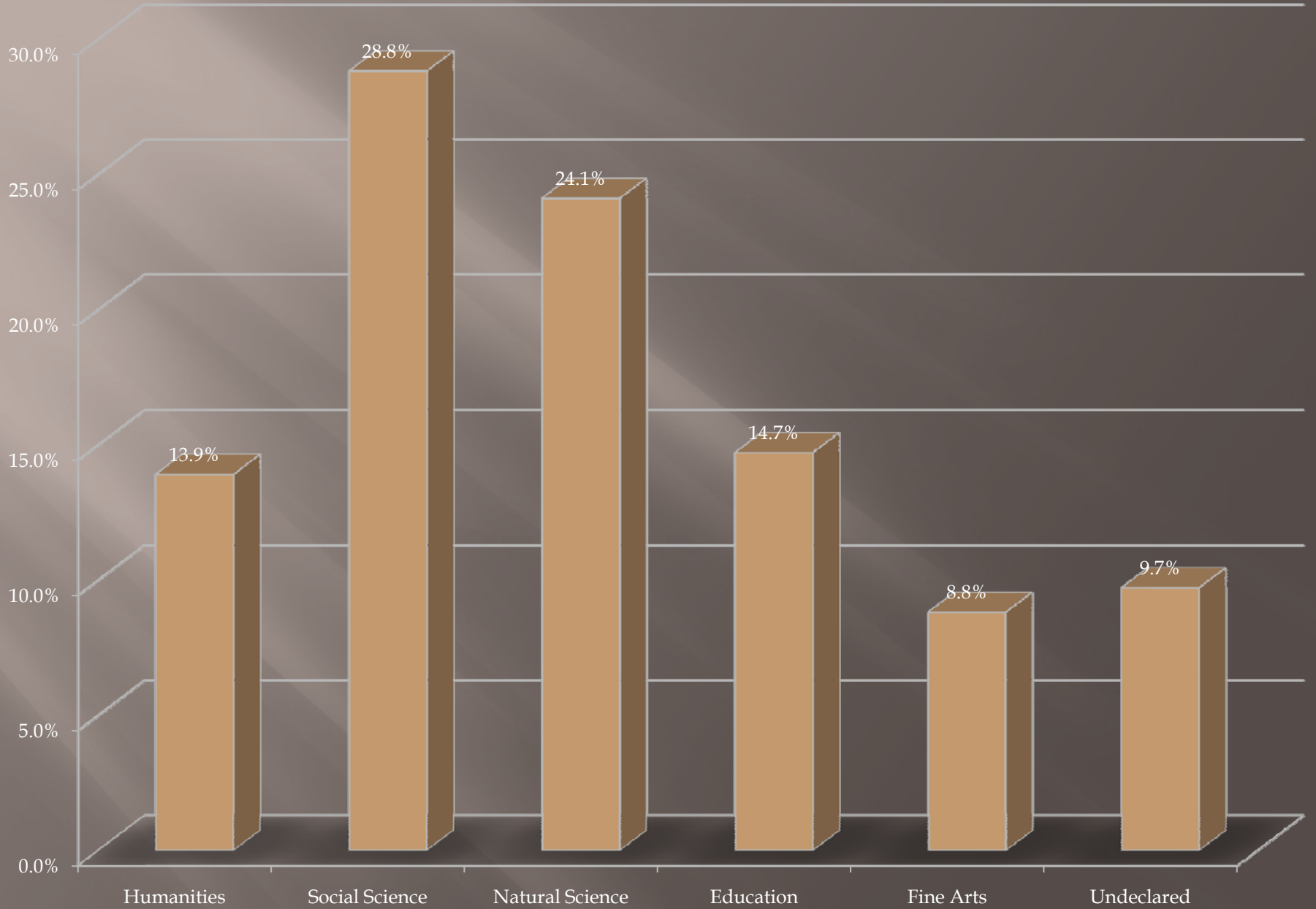
# Year in School



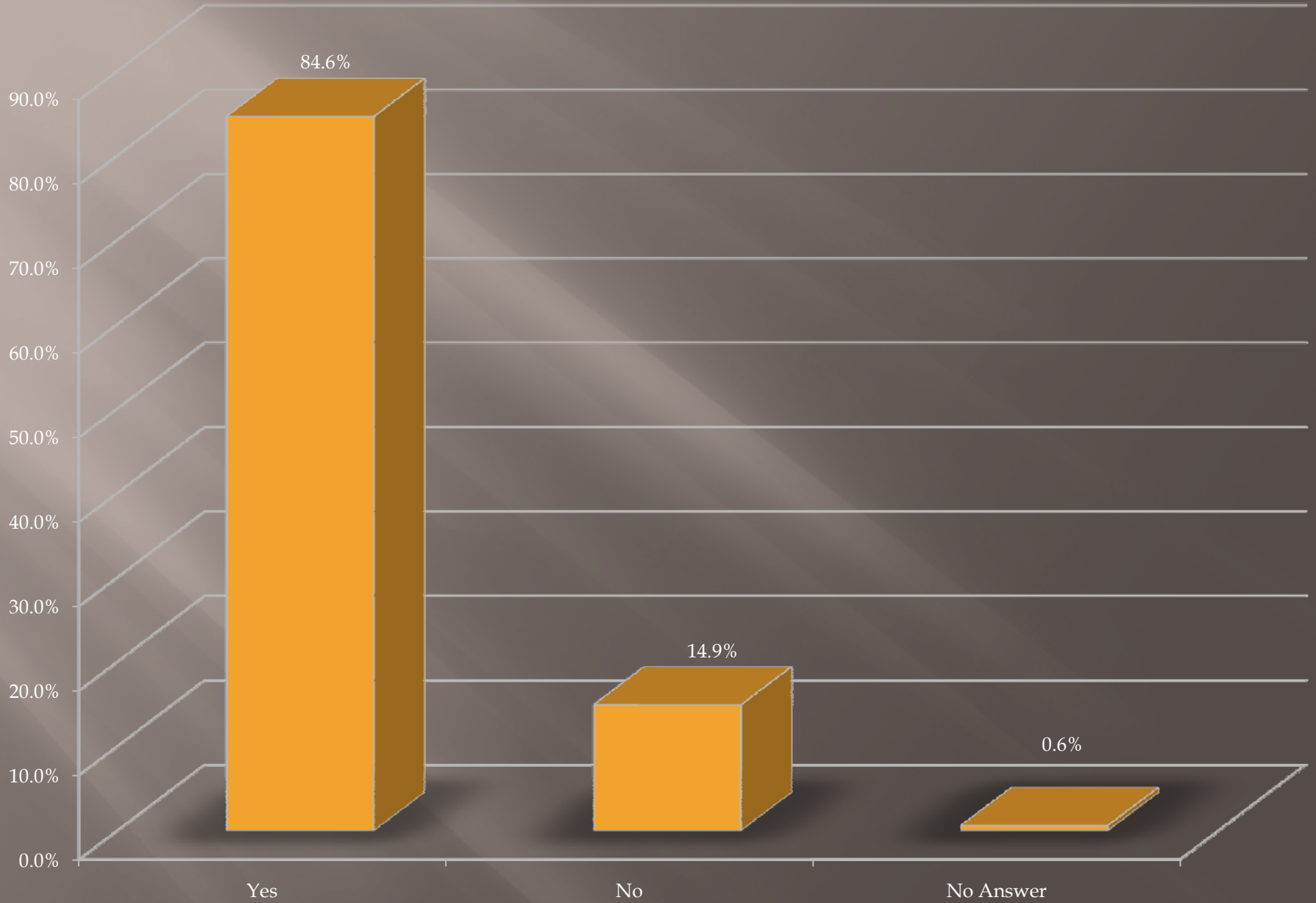
# Sex



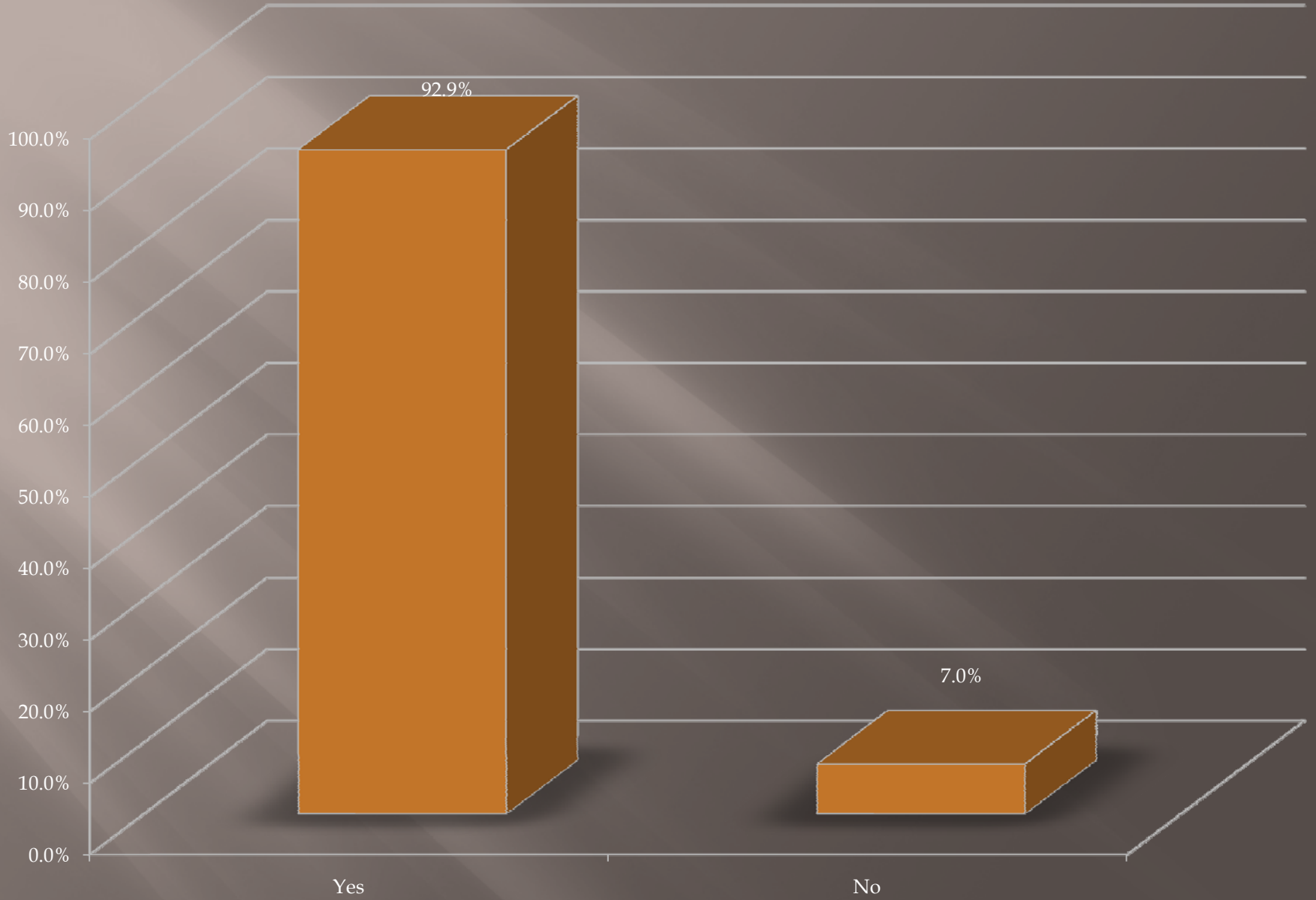
# Majors



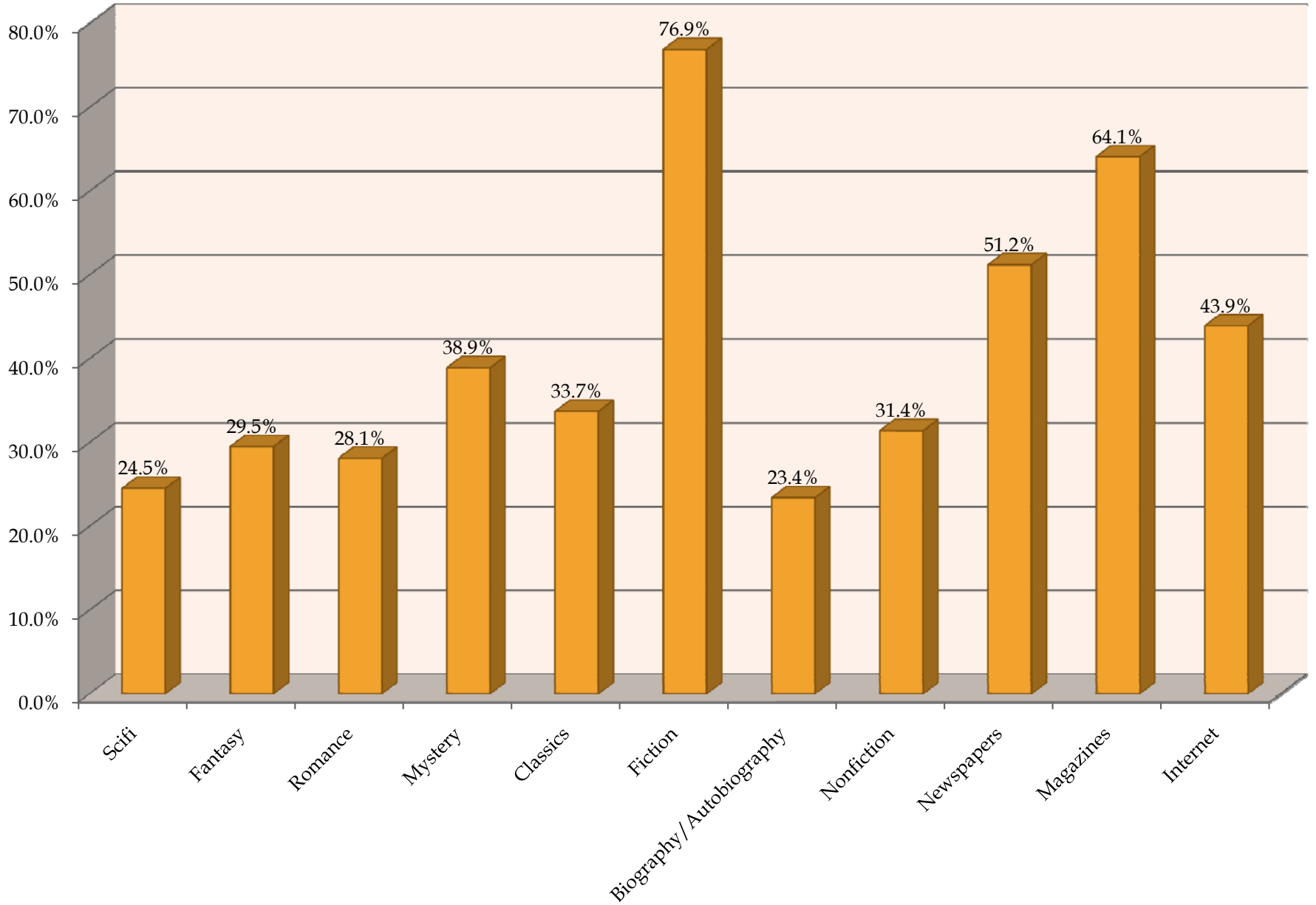
# Enjoy Reading in General



# Enjoy Leisure Reading

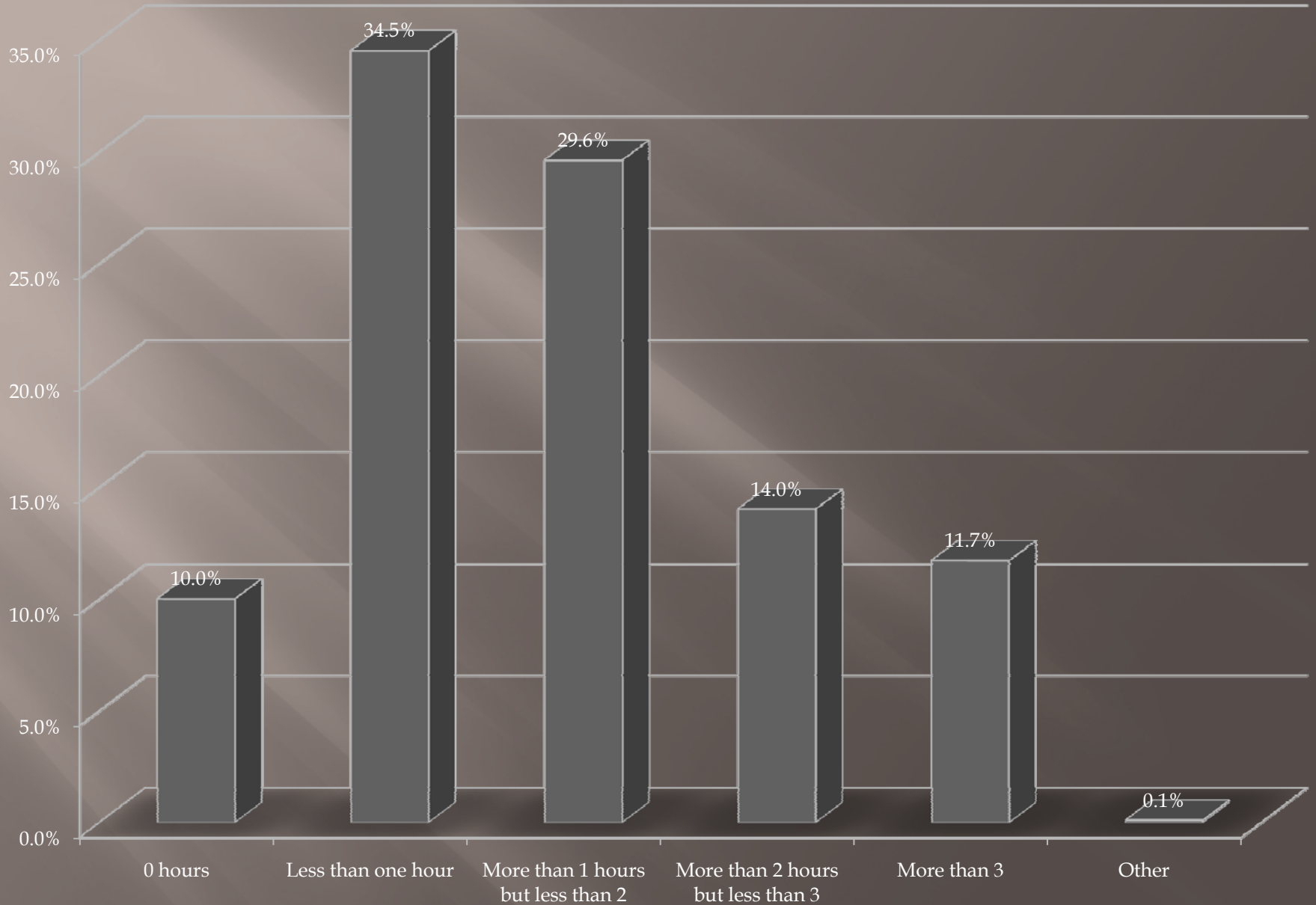


# Genres

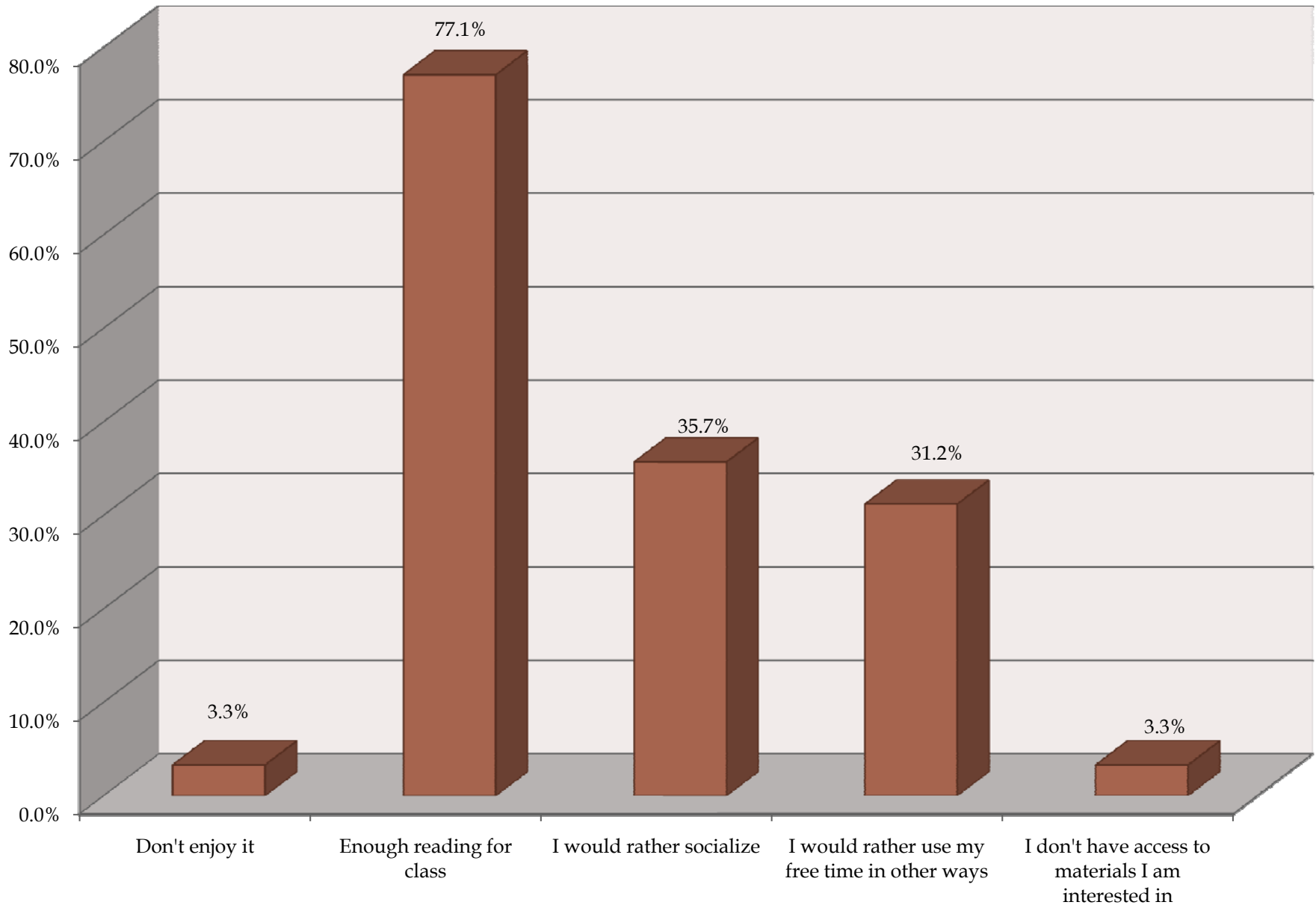




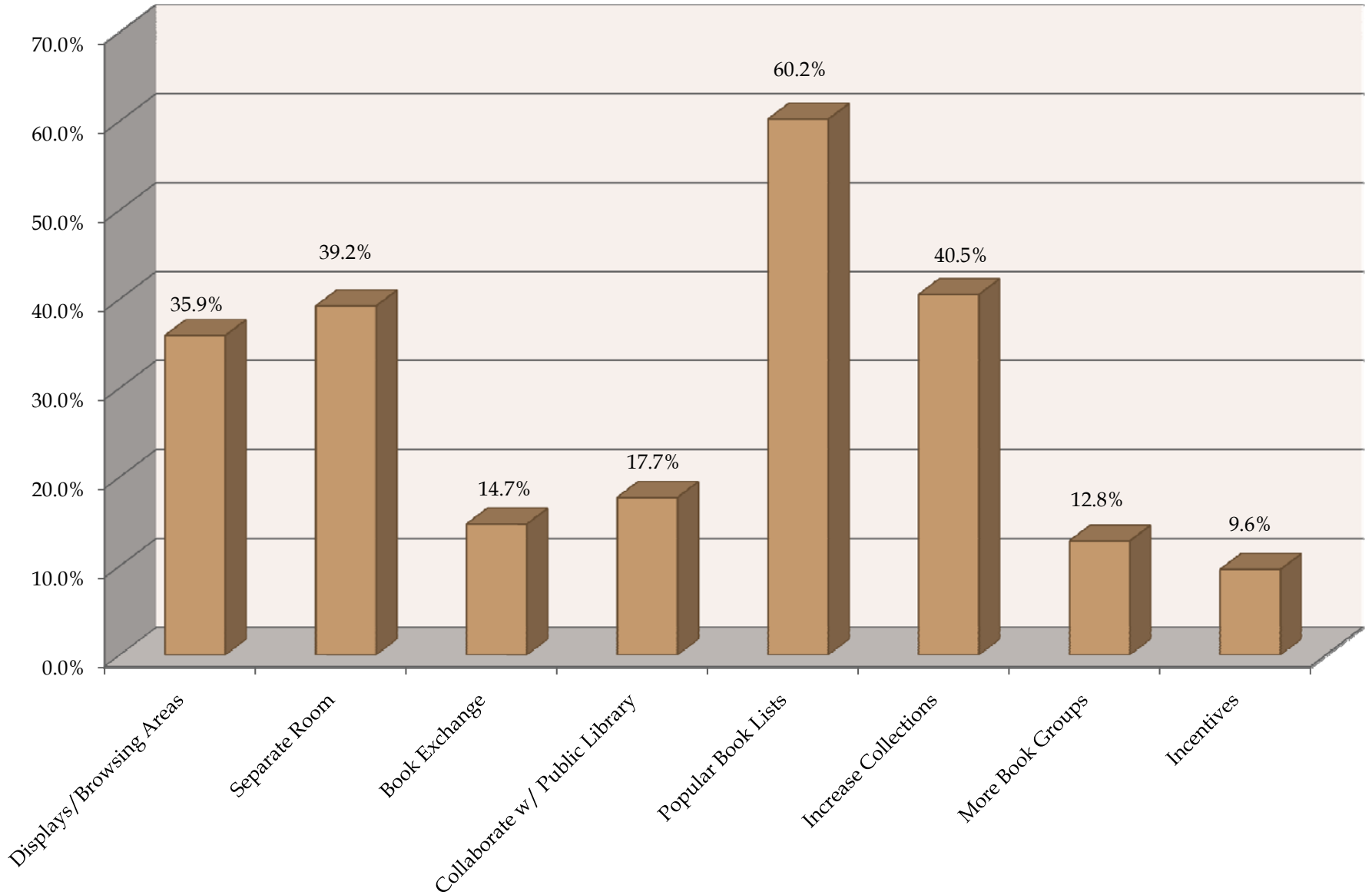
# Hours Spent Leisure Reading per Week



# Why I Don't Leisure Read (at all or as much as I would like)





# How the Library Could Better Encourage Leisure Reading at Gustavus



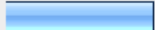


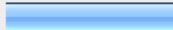
# Oberlin Survey

1. Are you a librarian at an academic institution?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	96.2%	329
No 	3.8%	13
	<i>answered question</i>	342
	<i>skipped question</i>	0


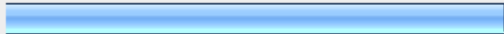
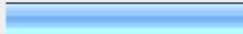


# Type of Institution

14. Please select the classification that best describes your institution:

	Response Percent	Response Count
2-year college 	17.6%	51
4-year college 	38.3%	111
Master's degree granting 	23.8%	69
Ph.D. granting 	20.3%	59
	<i>answered question</i>	290
	<i>skipped question</i>	52


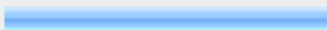
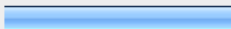



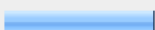
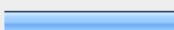
# Do Students Look for Recreational Reading

2. In your experience, do students come to your library looking for recreational reading? (As a reminder, recreational reading refers to any reading not assigned for class.)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very frequently 	9.1%	27
Occasionally 	60.1%	178
Rarely 	28.7%	85
Never 	0.7%	2
Don't know 	1.4%	4
	<i>answered question</i>	296
	<i>skipped question</i>	46


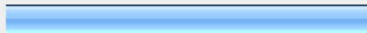
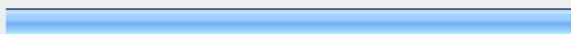

# Types of Reading Materials

3. In your experience, what kind of recreational reading materials are students looking for? (Check all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Science fiction 	44.4%	124
Fantasy 	44.4%	124
Romance 	31.5%	88
Mystery 	36.6%	102
Classics 	19.4%	54
General Fiction 	83.2%	232
Autobiography/Biography 	20.1%	56
Other Nonfiction 	23.7%	66
Other (please specify)		78
<b>answered question</b>		<b>279</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>63</b>

# Barriers


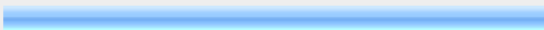
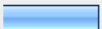

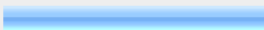
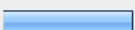

4. In your experience, what are some of the barriers students encounter to recreational reading? (Check all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
They feel they have too much reading to do for classes already. 	81.5%	238
They aren't interested in reading. 	43.8%	128
They would rather spend their time in other ways (socializing, etc.). 	68.5%	200
They don't have access to recreational reading materials. 	24.0%	70
Other (please specify)		27
<b>answered question</b>		<b>292</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>50</b>



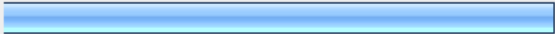
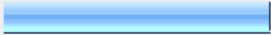

# Types of Reading Promotion

5. In which of the following recreation reading promotional activities does your library participate? (Check all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Book clubs (coordinating or hosting) 	16.0%	46
Book displays 	74.2%	213
Book exchange program 	12.9%	37
Separate browsing/popular book collection 	63.4%	182
Signs (either promotional or directional) 	35.5%	102
Speaker series 	17.4%	50
None 	9.1%	26
Other (please specify)		48
<b>answered question</b>		<b>287</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>55</b>

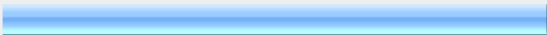
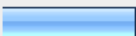

# Separate Area

9. Does your library have a separate area for recreational reading materials?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	66.8%	195
No 	32.2%	94
Not sure 	1.0%	3
	<i>answered question</i>	292
	<i>skipped question</i>	50

# Funding

## 10. How is this recreational reading collection funded?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Funded fully by library acquisitions budget 	65.9%	120
Funded in part by library acquisitions budget 	15.9%	29
Funded primarily through donations 	23.6%	43
Other (please specify)		34
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>182</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>160</b>