

# Supporting Community Engaged Research Among Faculty at the University of California, Merced

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1-UC Merced, Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship; 2-Community Initiatives for Collective Impact

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## INTRODUCTION

- The Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES) at UC Merced aims to support faculty currently doing Community Engaged Research (CEnR) and finding methods to encourage and expand community research among faculty of all disciplines.
- In the literature, much is still unknown about what kind of barriers hinder progress toward conducting CEnR and what resources or training faculty would benefit from.
- This internship project sought to create a survey which identifies what kind of barriers are present among faculty engaging in CEnR or attempting to. Additionally, this survey aims to identify which resources would best be useful to further support CES at UC Merced among faculty.
- The results from this study can be used to guide UC Merced's approach to CEnR—an approach that can enhance the university's overall reputation by supporting meaningful work that has important and relevant implications for surrounding communities and academia.

## METHODOLOGY

- A cross-sectional survey was conducted with UC Merced tenure-track faculty in Spring 2022.
- Tenure-track faculty were identified and reached through the three Schools: School of Engineering, School of Natural Sciences, and School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
- 10-item web survey had two aims:
  - Identify faculty who use CEnR (using two different approaches to defining CEnR)
  - Identify ways to best support faculty use of CEnR
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses examined CEnR across Schools and tenure status

## DISCUSSION

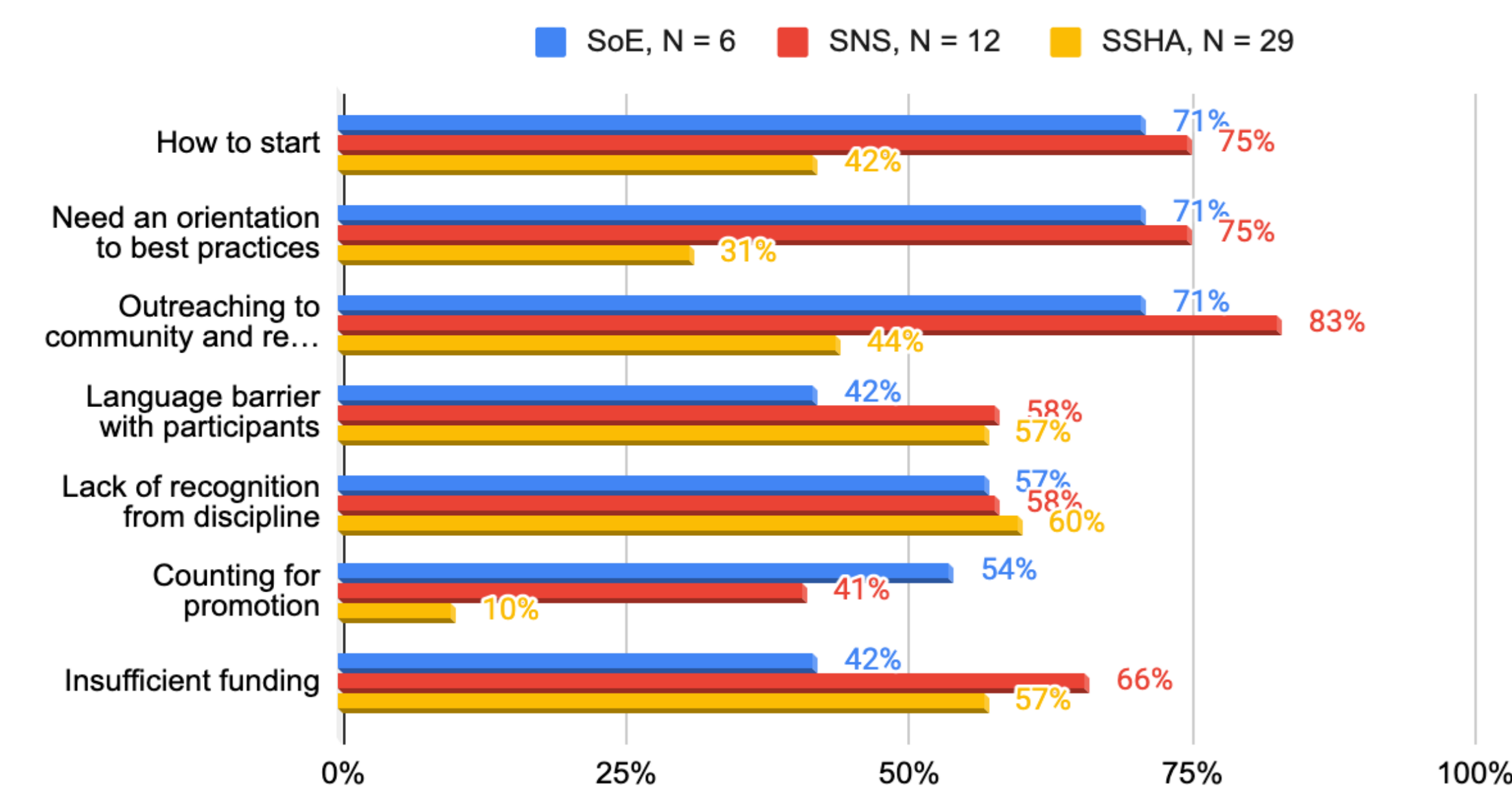
- Lack of recognition from their discipline was a barrier for conducting CEnR for the majority of faculty across all three Schools.
- For all but one barrier, more non-tenured faculty reported experiencing barriers to conducting CEnR than tenured faculty.
- For support and training to conduct CEnR, most faculty across tenure status and across Schools requested help with dissemination of research results with non-academic audiences.
- Across tenure status and Schools, most faculty reported that having support staff for CEnR would help them conduct CEnR.

## CONCLUSION

- At least two types of support may help increase the number of UC Merced faculty who use or do CEnR and increase CEnR among faculty who already do CEnR:
  - Support from their School and discipline to recognize CEnR as scholarly work and accomplishments, and
  - Support from staff trained to make CEnR easier to do among faculty across UC Merced.
- CEnR support staff may help provide the necessary training on how to begin doing CEnR, how to identify and develop partnerships, how to find and apply for funding, and how to disseminate the findings with academic and non-academic audiences.
- Faculty from the School of Engineering and the School of Natural Sciences may face more barriers to conducting CEnR than faculty from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts. CEnR support staff may need to tailor their approach to specific needs within Schools and disciplines.

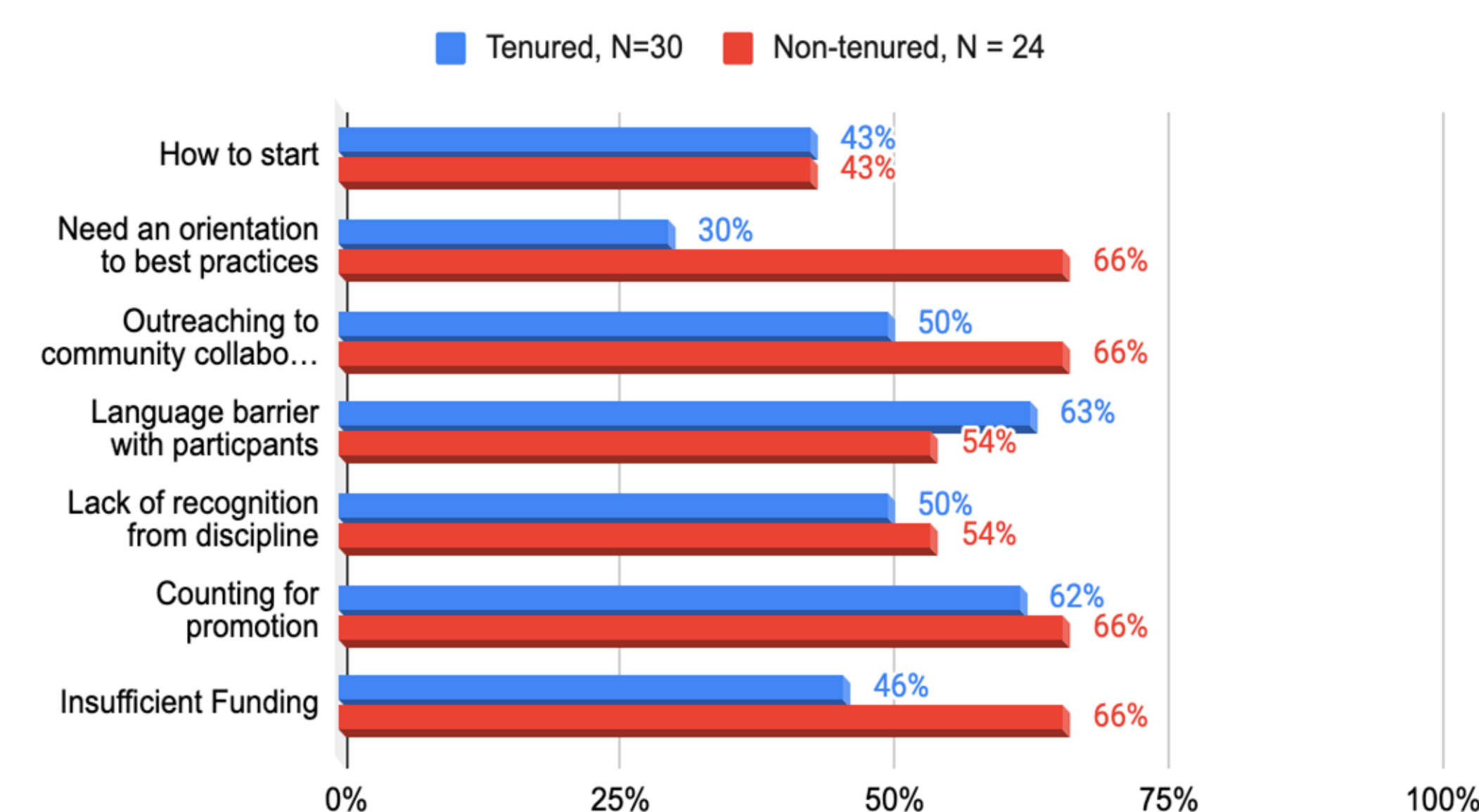
## RESULTS

Common Barriers to Conducting Community Engaged Research: Schools

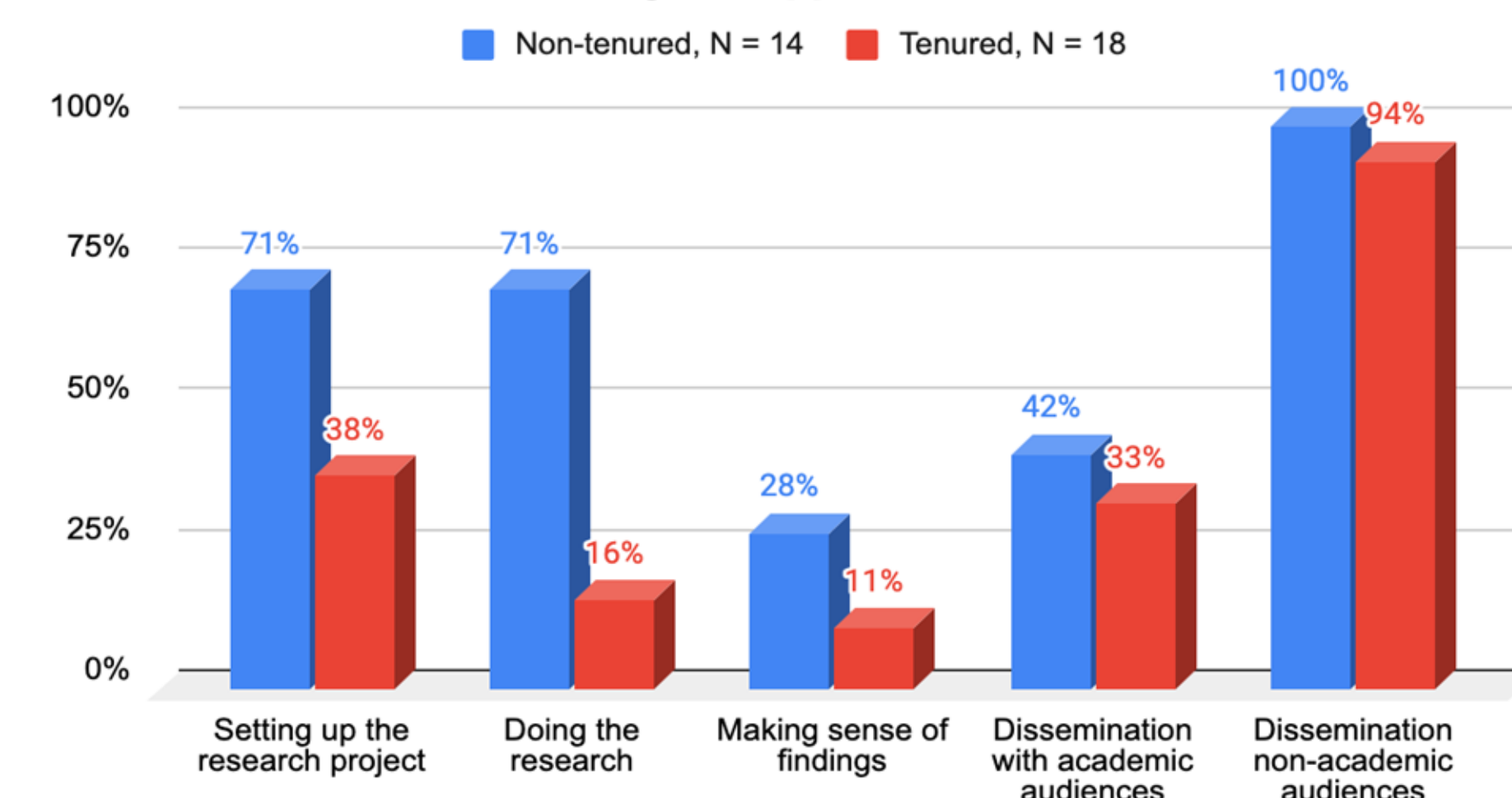


- There was agreement across all three schools that recognition from their discipline was low. Faculty from both SNS and SOE believe that not knowing an orientation for best practices is a barrier.
- Both tenured and non-tenured faculty believe that counting for promotion is a large barrier to conducting CEnR

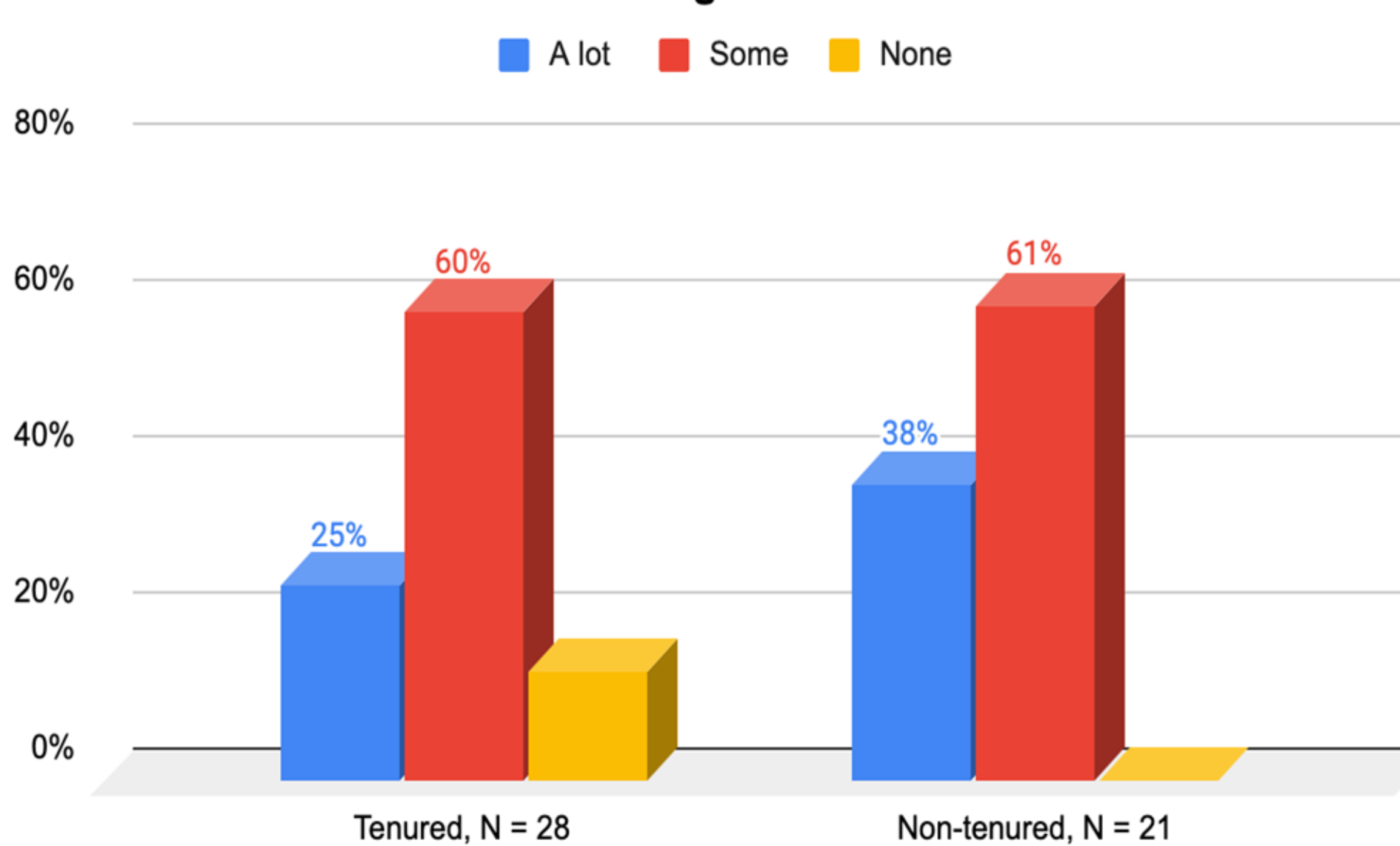
Common Barriers to Conducting Community Engaged Research: Tenured and Non-tenured



Areas of Needed Training or Support: Tenured and Non-tenured



Percent of Faculty Reporting that Staff Support would be Beneficial for doing CEnR



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For research:

- UC Merced faculty experience a variety of barriers and request various types of support to use CEnR. Future research is needed to identify more specific types of barriers and supports within the broad categories assessed in this survey study. For example, what types of recognition for CEnR may be more important for faculty at different stages of tenure and across the three Schools?
- Future researchers should take a closer look at barriers to and supports for CEnR through in-depth interviews and survey method across different UC schools. This will help identify how to best support specific needs among faculty depending on their discipline, tenure status, and other conditions.

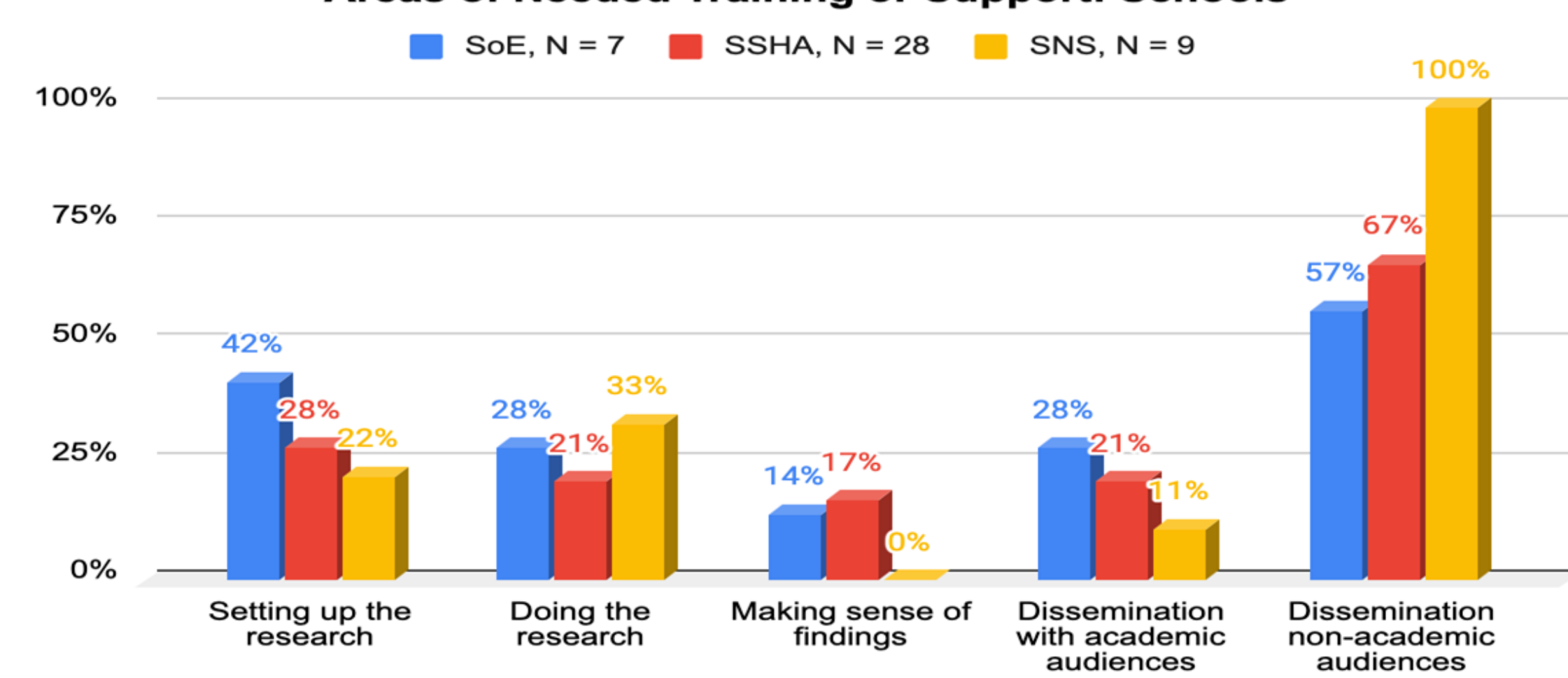
### For practice:

- UC Merced Schools and departments may increase faculty CEnR by creating formal methods of recognizing CEnR work and accomplishments.
- UC Merced faculty and their community partners in CEnR would benefit from staff at UC Merced with formal roles, responsibilities, and skills to assist faculty in developing, funding, implementing, and disseminating results to academic and non-academic audiences.
- Support staff for CEnR may need experience and training that is specific to the needs and conditions of each School and department.
- Continuing UC Merced's leadership for CEnR will advance the campus goals within its current Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, facilitate the upcoming renewal of this special elective classification, and strengthen campus research and community impact.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & CONTACT

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Areas of Needed Training or Support: Schools



Percent of Faculty Reporting that Staff Support would be Beneficial for doing CEnR: Schools

