

THE

Greatest Show

ON CAMPUS:

Building Belonging

WITH THE

University Libraries

Welcome Carnival

CARL HESS

BRANNEN VARNER

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES'

WELCOME CARNIVAL



SEPT. 2, 2025
10:30 AM-1:30 PM

*Ned R. McWherter
Library Lobby*

*Discover all the services and
resources we offer to UofM Tigers*



**& GIVE
AWAYS**

Goals of Welcome Carnival 2025

1. Get 100 students through the carnival & 100 returned passports
2. Provide information about Libraries resources and services to all participants
3. Build students' sense of belonging in and support from the Libraries
4. Engage students beyond a tabling event/information fair

Timeline and Preparation

2nd week of the fall semester, September 2025
began preparing in May

Collaborative Roles

Organization of Event - tables, location, day/time, volunteers

Details - table activities, passport creation

Marketing and Outreach

- Inclusion in Tiger Welcome booklet
 - But they put the wrong date
- Primary focus at orientations
 - Resource Fair for International Students & Student Involvement Fair
- Emails sharing information to 11 student success office partners
- Social media, digital display, flyers, and sandwich board
- Also, we accidentally set off the fire alarm, bringing students by the carnival



Day-Of Details

- 15 library staff volunteering at any time
 - 2 per table, 3-4 at welcome/popcorn table
- 45 total hours of staff time
- 6 tables staffed by Libraries
 - Welcome
 - Research Help
 - Events
 - Collections
 - Study Spaces
 - Technology
- Writing Center table
 - Staffed by writing center staff



Activities

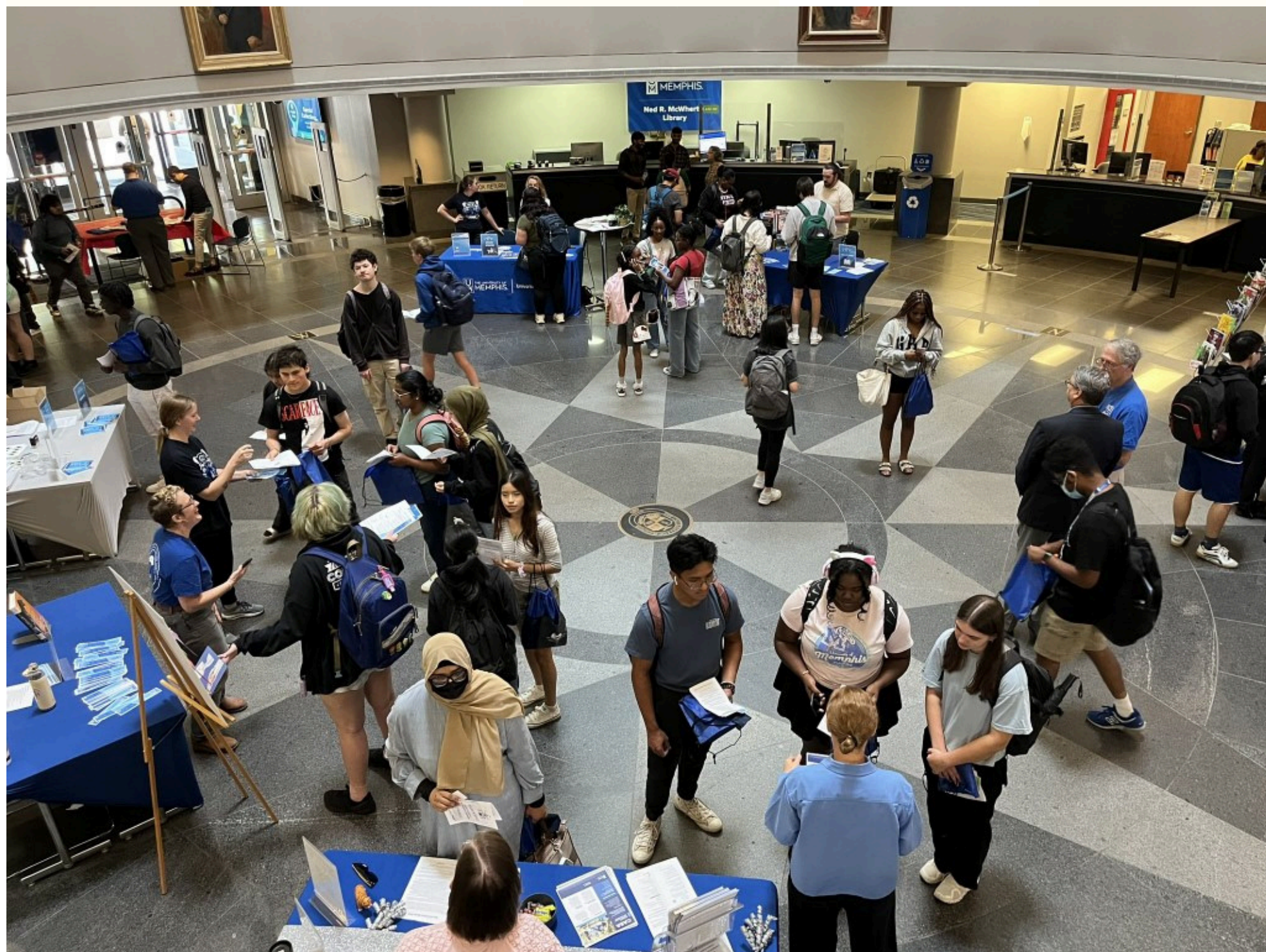
Highly collaborative across library departments!

- Cataloging stamps used in passports
- Creatorspace 3D printed raffle prizes

Low/no-cost activities

- Book award books used as book toss
- Selfie station signs
- Button maker found on Facebook Marketplace
- 3D pens demonstrated by the creatorspace team
- Reused research activity from another library
- Popcorn, 150 totes purchased, snacks from other events





Overview



Technology table



Welcome Table bags and passports

Survey: 5-point Likert scale

Q1: I learned something from this event.

Q2: I believe the Libraries will help me succeed academically because of events like this.

Q3: I feel more confident as a student because of events like this in the Libraries.

Q4: I have a stronger sense of belonging on campus because of events like this in the Libraries.

Q5: I feel I belong in the library because of events like this.

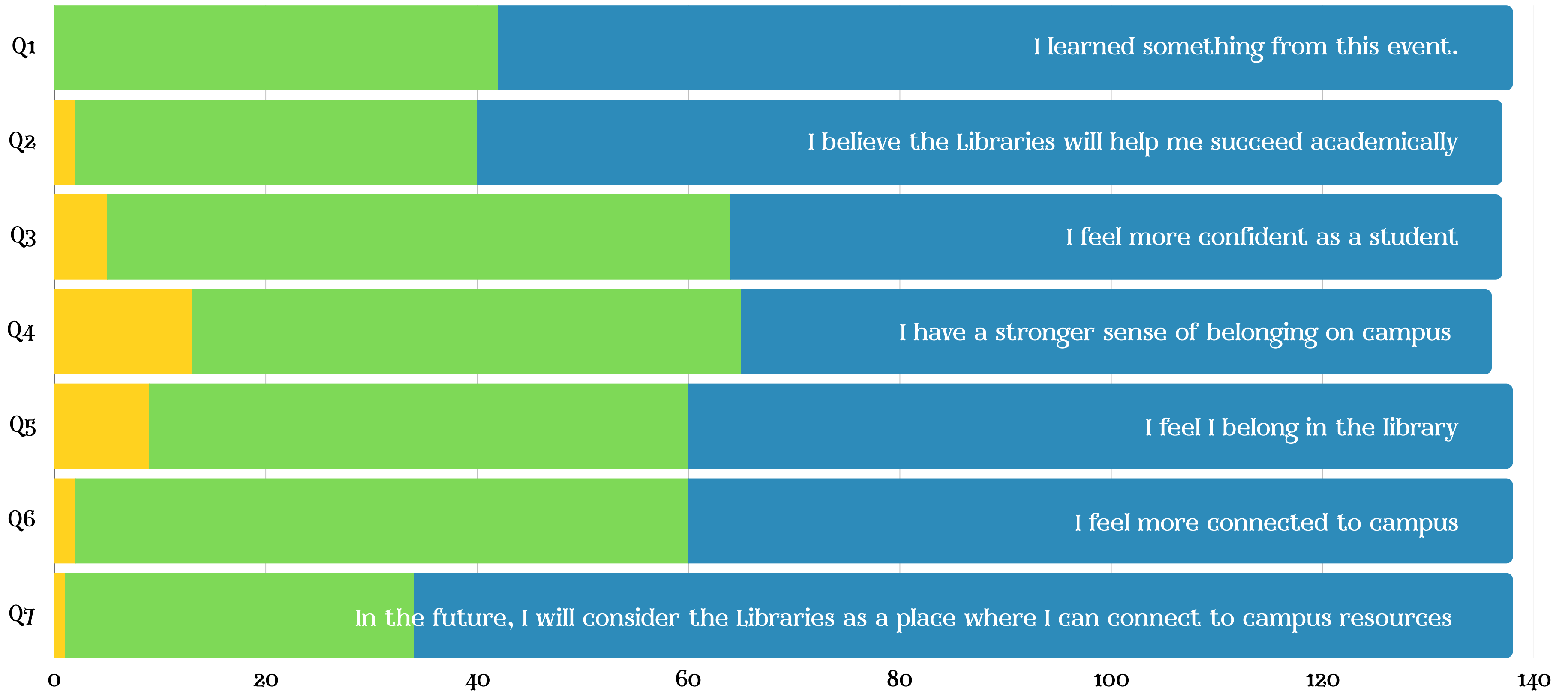
Q6: I feel more connected to campus because of events like this in the Libraries.

Q7: In the future, I will consider the Libraries as a place where I can connect to campus resources because of events like this.

Open-ended: “What did you like most about this event?”

n=138; 69% response rate

● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Neither ● Agree ● Strongly Agree





Goal 1:

Get 100
students
through the
carnival & 100
returned
passports

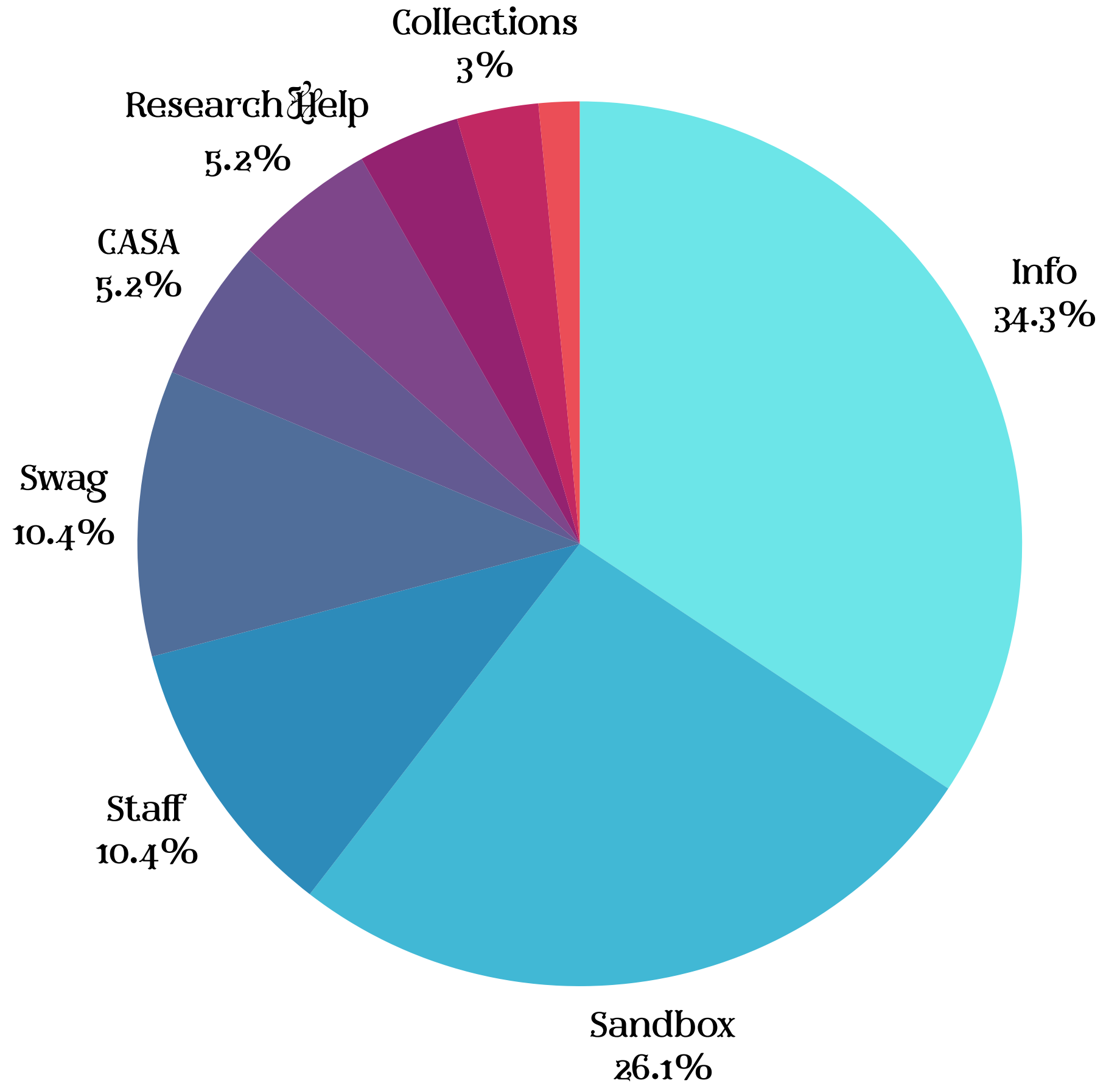
Results:

About 200
students
attending in 3
hours, 140
returned
passports!

Goal 2:

Provide information about Libraries resources and services to all participants

“What did you like most from this event?”



Written comments about Staff

"I loved that the staff was so nice"

"free books, information gathered, and the hospitality from the staff"

"meeting people enthusiastic about helping students"

"I like how everyone is cheerful and wanting to inform"

"I loved how informative, confident, and willing every speaker was"

"friendly faces and people that love what they do"

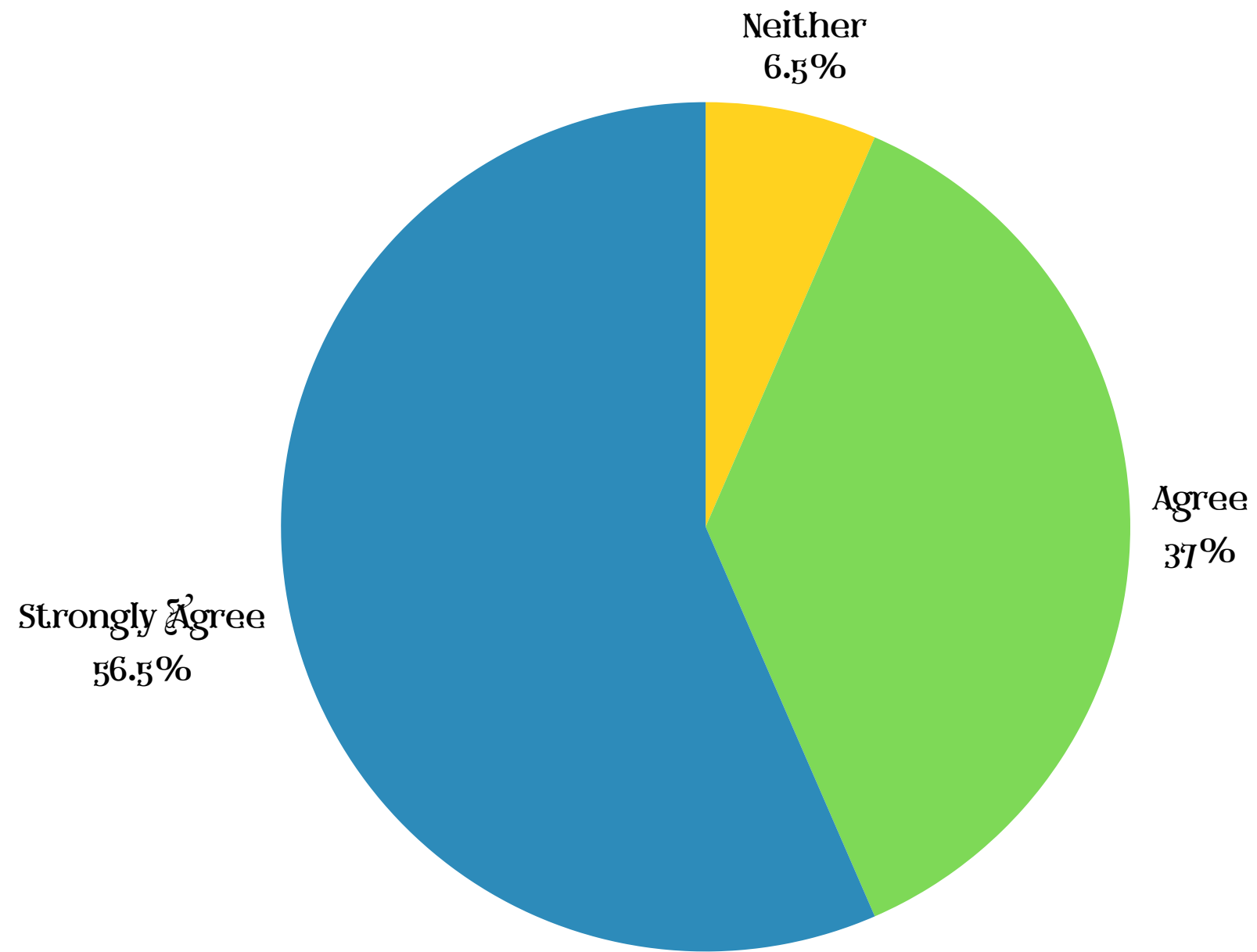
"how organized and welcoming it was"

"everything and everyone was nice!!!"

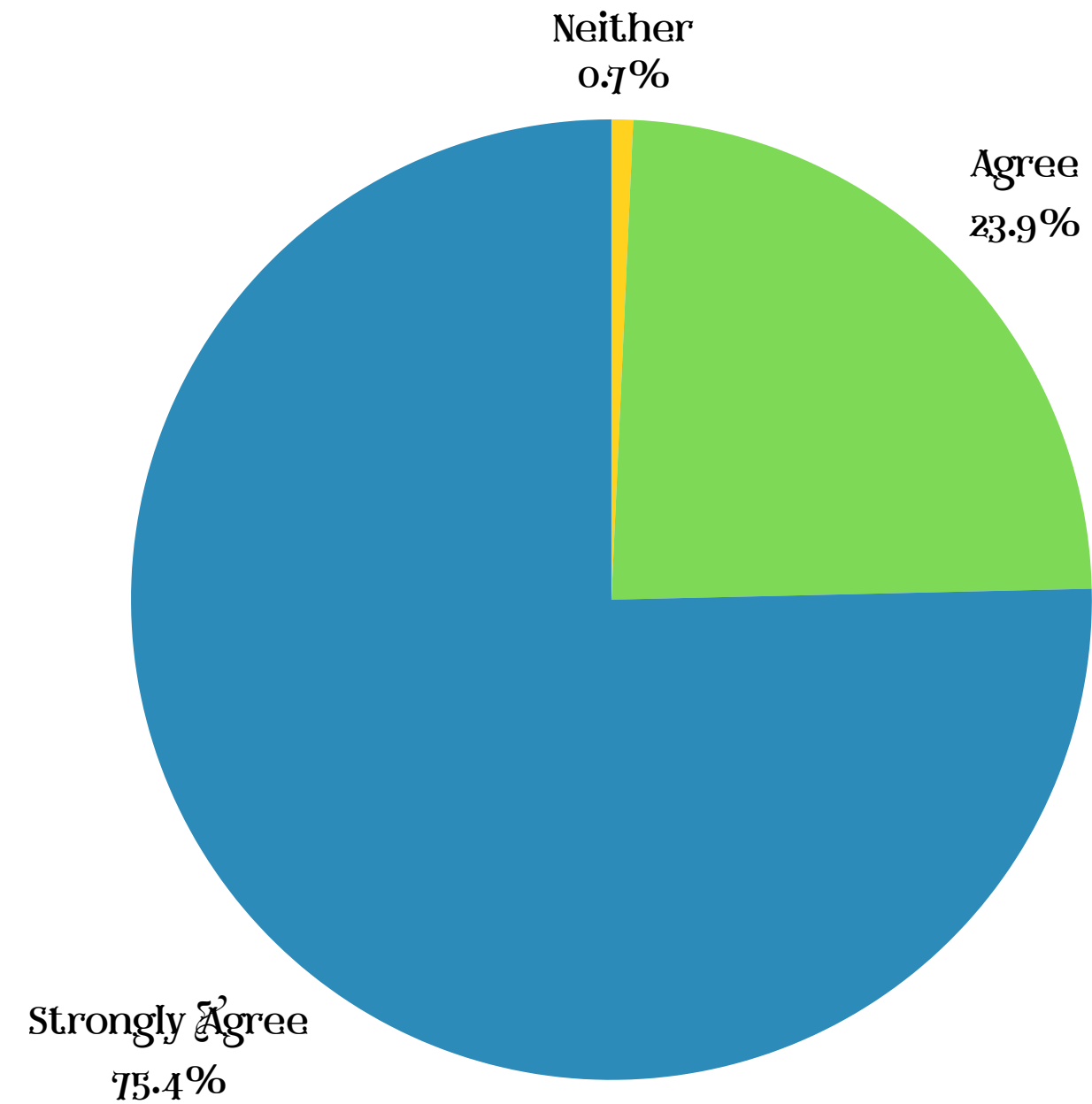
"I learned a lot from this event. I didn't realize how many events or resources are offered here!"

Goal 3: Build students' sense of belonging in and support from the Libraries

Q5: I feel I belong in the library because of events like this.



Q7: In the future, I will consider the Libraries as a place where I can connect to campus resources because of events like this.



 **Goal 4:** Engage students beyond a tabling event/information fair

“The station that offered workshops & meeting graphic novel author in the sandbox”

“Writing services”; “CASA/essay help”

“I liked the study space”

“research assistance for masters thesis”

“Information about upcoming events + 3D printing”

“the sandbox arena looks fun also CASA seems helpful”

“learning about events this upcoming semester”

Next Time

- Adjust passport survey to include questions:
 - How'd you hear about this event? (source of awareness)
 - I'm a(n)... *undergraduate, graduate, staff, faculty* (demographic)
- Order more totes/swag
 - Budget in Welcome Carnival, or include in a marketing discretionary fund, or seek internal/external grant funding
- Better way to track attendance

But First...

Spring 2026 Welcome Trivia

- Desire for lower-effort spring welcome
 - Same goals
 - Less planning & fewer volunteers
 - Reuse handouts from the fall
- Welcome trivia
 - 2 volunteers at a time
 - Spin the wheel with categories from carnival
 - Answer a question from that category for a snack
 - All answers on the handouts
- January 20, 10:30AM to 2:30PM



Survey:

2 Likert-scale Questions, 1 open-ended

Q1: I believe the University Libraries will help me succeed academically because of activities like this.

Q2: I feel I belong in the University Libraries because of activities like this.

Open-ended: “What did you find most valuable about this activity?”

n=22; 13% of students responded to survey

 Goal 1:

Get 100
students to
engage with
the welcome
trivia

Results:

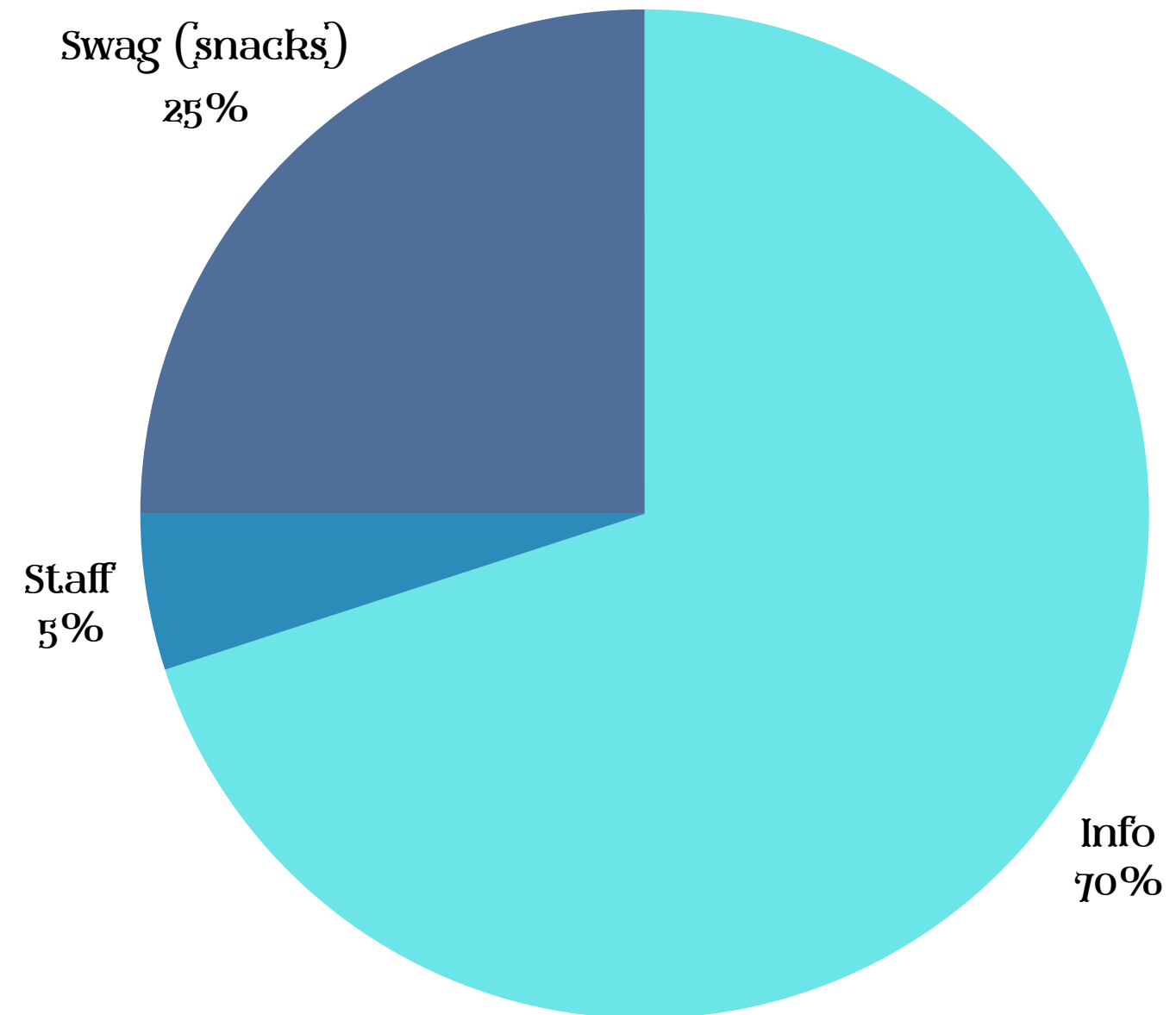
About 166
students
engaged with
us

Goal 2:

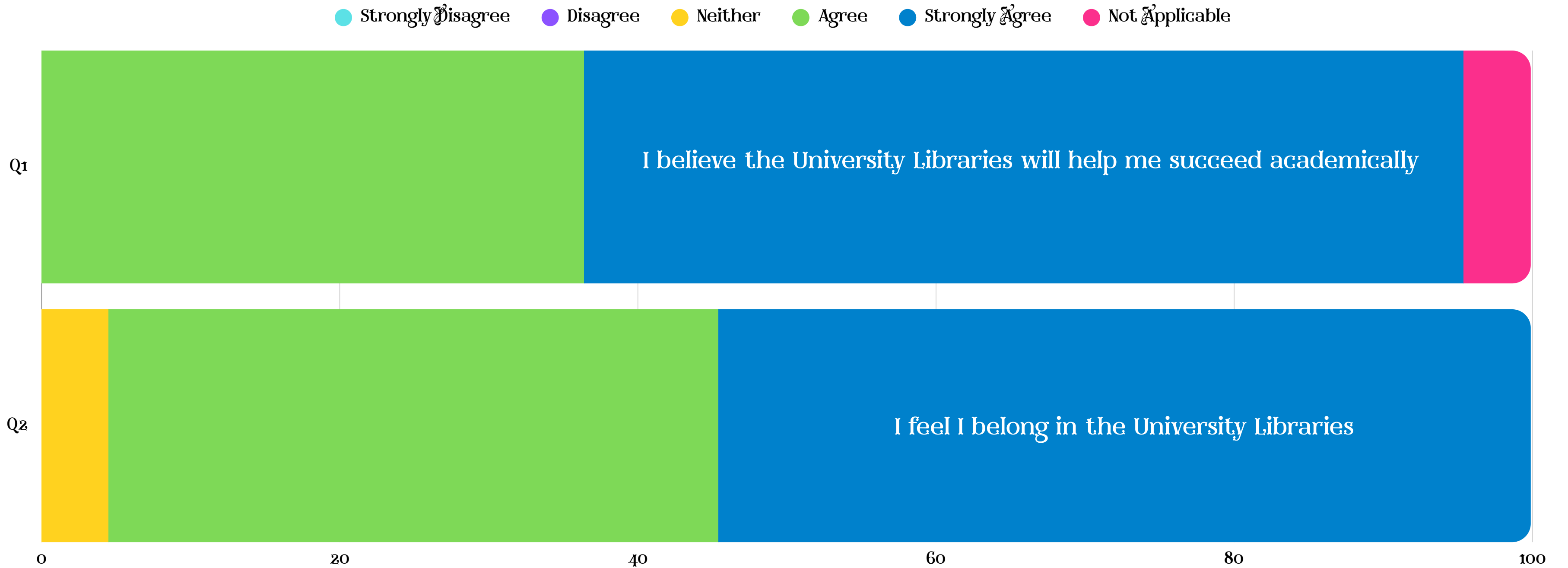
Provide
information
about Libraries
resources and
services to all
participants

Open-ended question:

“What did you find most
valuable about this activity?”



Goal 3: Build students' sense of belonging in and support from the Libraries





Goal 4: Engage students beyond a tabling event/information fair

“The sense of community and learning as a personal value. I'm also grateful for the snack!”

“I liked how interactive it was it brightened my day”

“It's a nice fun way to start the semester”

“I was able to learn about new resources in a fun way”

“The ability to be able to find the answer even if you don't know it”

“The workers were awesome”

Toolkit



bit.ly/42sK3Zi

Thanks!

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