

# The impact of scholarships and co-curriculum activities on the academic success and career prospects of cybersecurity students

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## Cybersecurity programs

- B.S. and Area of Emphasis (AoE) in Cybersecurity at WVU
- Started enrolling students in fall 2018
- ABET accredited and CAE-CD

## ACCESS project background

- NSF S-STEM grant (DUE-1930282)
- \$1,000,000; Duration 2020-2025
- Motivation: Huge unmet need for cybersecurity experts
- Focus: B.S. or AoE in Cybersecurity at WVU
- Competitive: Academic excellence & financial need
- Scholarship amount per semester: \$2,500 (renewable)

## Co-curricular activities

- Social events
- Mentoring by cybersecurity faculty
- Outreach activities for recruiting new scholars
- Development of hands-on skills and participation in competitions
- Technical & career development seminars
- Undergraduate research
- Internships



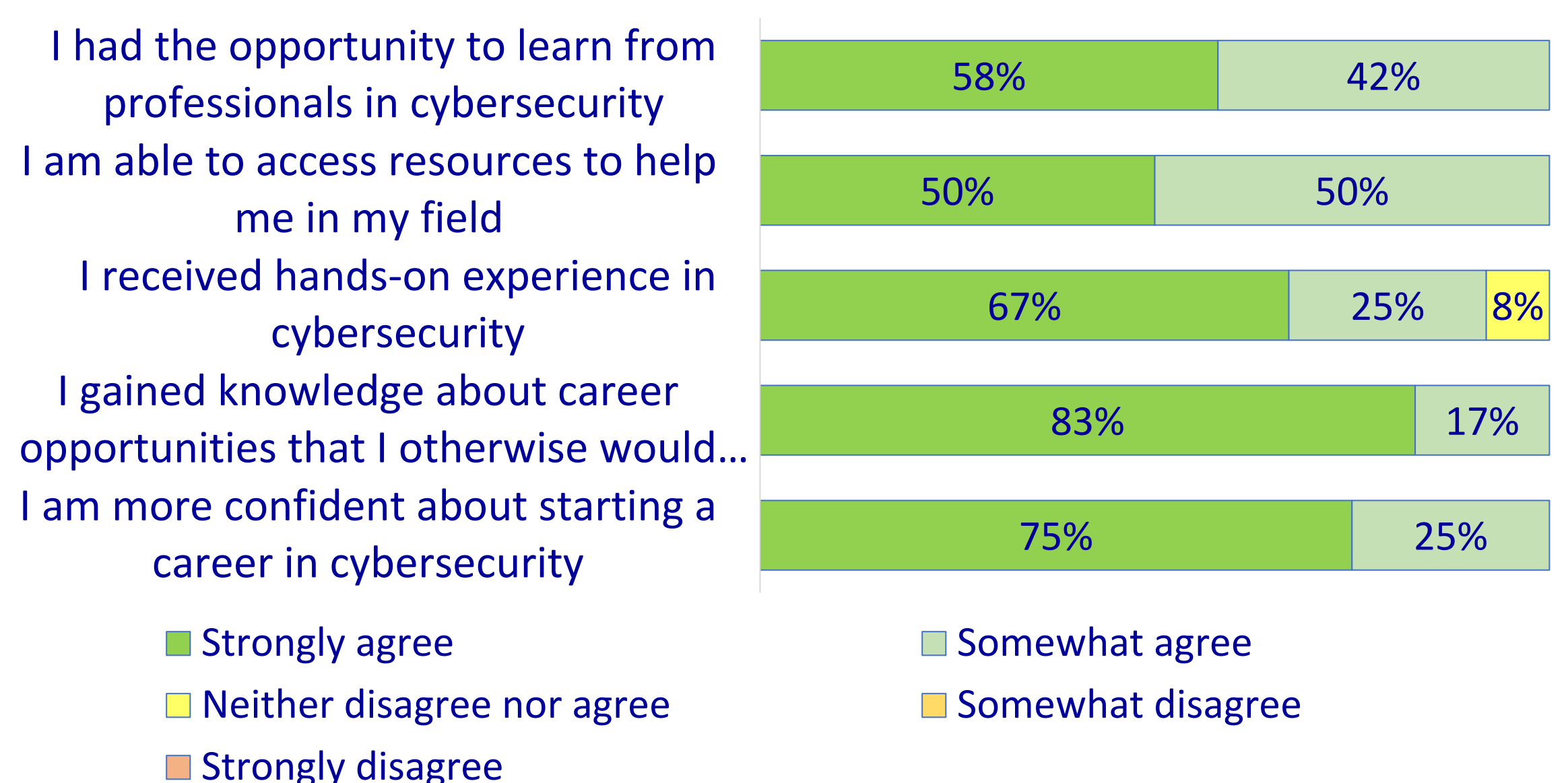
“It’s cool to see people that I know and know that if I need help on anything, I have their information to reach out to them.”

## ACCESS accomplishments

- **Awarded 227 semester scholarships to 63 unique students**
  - 35% were recruited while in high school
- **Helped increase the enrollment in B.S. and AoE in Cybersecurity** from 50 students in spring 2020 to 201 students in spring 2025
- **Enhanced co-curricular activities and student support services**
  - Organized 26 seminars given by renowned cybersecurity experts
- **Strengthened partnerships with private & public sector employers**
- **Boosted scholars’ self-motivation and interest in cybersecurity**
- **Increased the cybersecurity talent pipeline**
  - 31 scholars graduated, 25 still pursuing their degrees

## Impact

Level of agreement with the completions to the statement: Because of ACCESS ...



“After that seminar I ended up applying for a cybersecurity internship and now I’m rolling that into a full-time job, so it definitely helped pave that career path.”