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STUDENT'S PERCEPTION ON PROSPECTIVE EQUINE PROGRAM AT ISU

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Objectives and Methods

According to the American Horse Council, the equine industry contributes approximately \$50 billion annually to the United States economy and provides over 988,000 jobs across the country. In the Department of Agriculture at Illinois State University, the majority of students graduate with a full-time job in place. However, adding equine-related programming to the Department of Agriculture's curriculum would likely increase the percentage of students able to secure a full-time job prior to graduation. Student perspective is an important aspect when evaluating the possibility of adding another sequence to the university catalog. Potential classes within this sequence may include equine nutrition, equine business management or a beginner level riding course.

The objectives of this study were:

- Determine what current students with an equine interest at Illinois State University would like to see in an equine program.
- Develop and implement surveys investigating potential interest in equine programming at ISU
- Summarize data and prepare a proposed equine program based on student feedback

Data was collected from students enrolled in several Department of Agriculture courses, as well as members of the ISU Equestrian Club. Areas of investigation included previous equine experience, career goals, and desired coursework and facilities for an equine program.

Conclusion

Incorporating an equine program at Illinois State University would create a more diverse educational experience for students within the department. This diversity would facilitate the development of well-rounded students, as well as provide experiences students can utilize in careers post-graduation. Students have clearly expressed interest in five core classes. Only 23% of students had considered a career in the equine industry, which shows that through more exposure to this part of the agriculture industry, more student may consider it for a career choice. By offering equine courses, ISU may also attract more students to attend this university. The ranking of these courses, paired with positive comments on the surveys, indicate there is a clear interest in adding equine specific courses to the Department of Agriculture at Illinois State University.

Results

Table 1: Student demographics and equine experience

Variable Definition	Frequency
Female (n= 225)	53%
Year in School (n = 223)	
Freshman	11.2%
Sophomore	12.6%
Junior	43.5%
Senior	32.7%
Current Equine Experience (n = 226)	16.8%
Previous Equine Experience (n = 215)	28.8%
Equine Career (n = 226)	23%

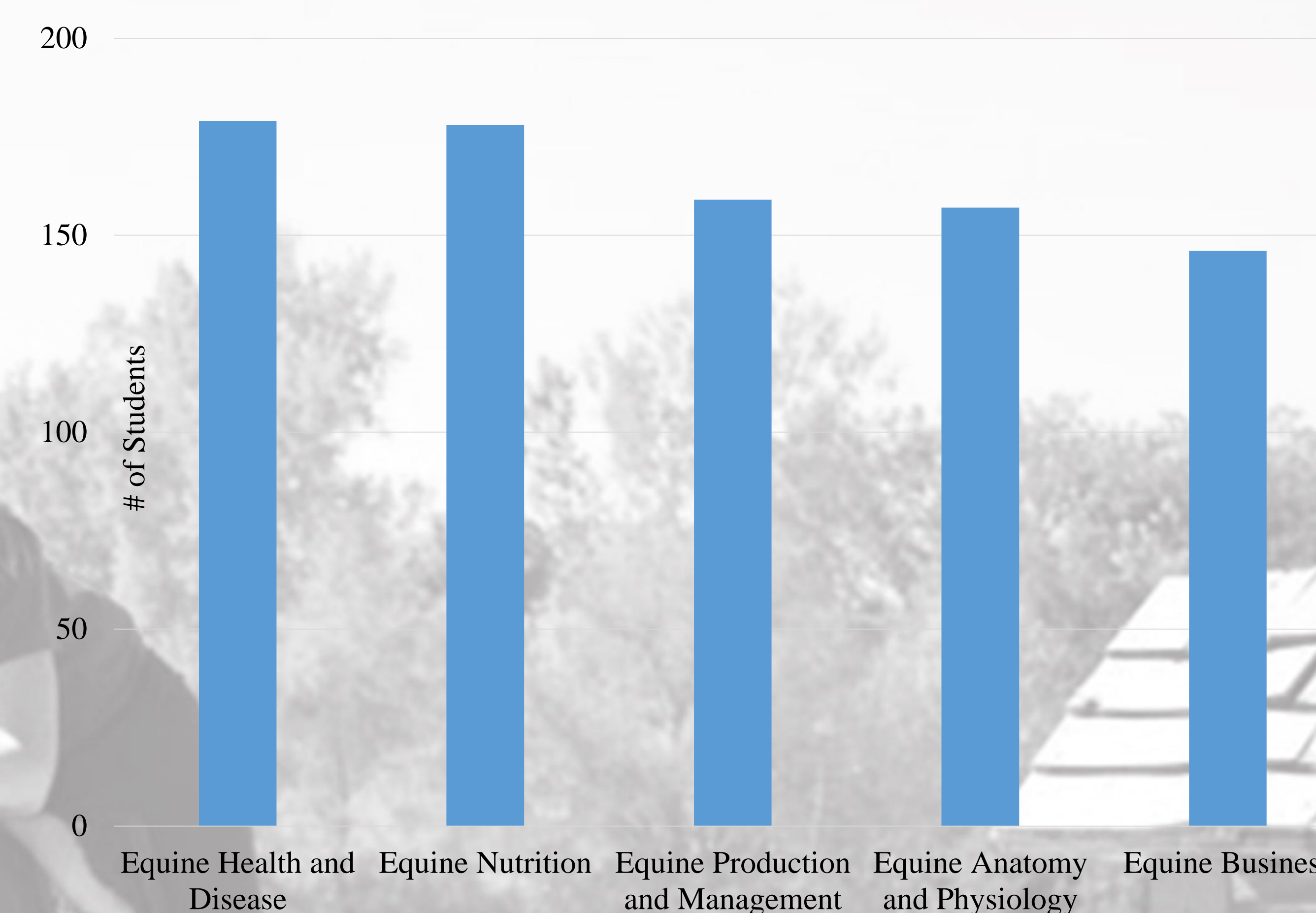


Figure 1: Top 5 Classes Identified by Students as being Important to an Equine Program

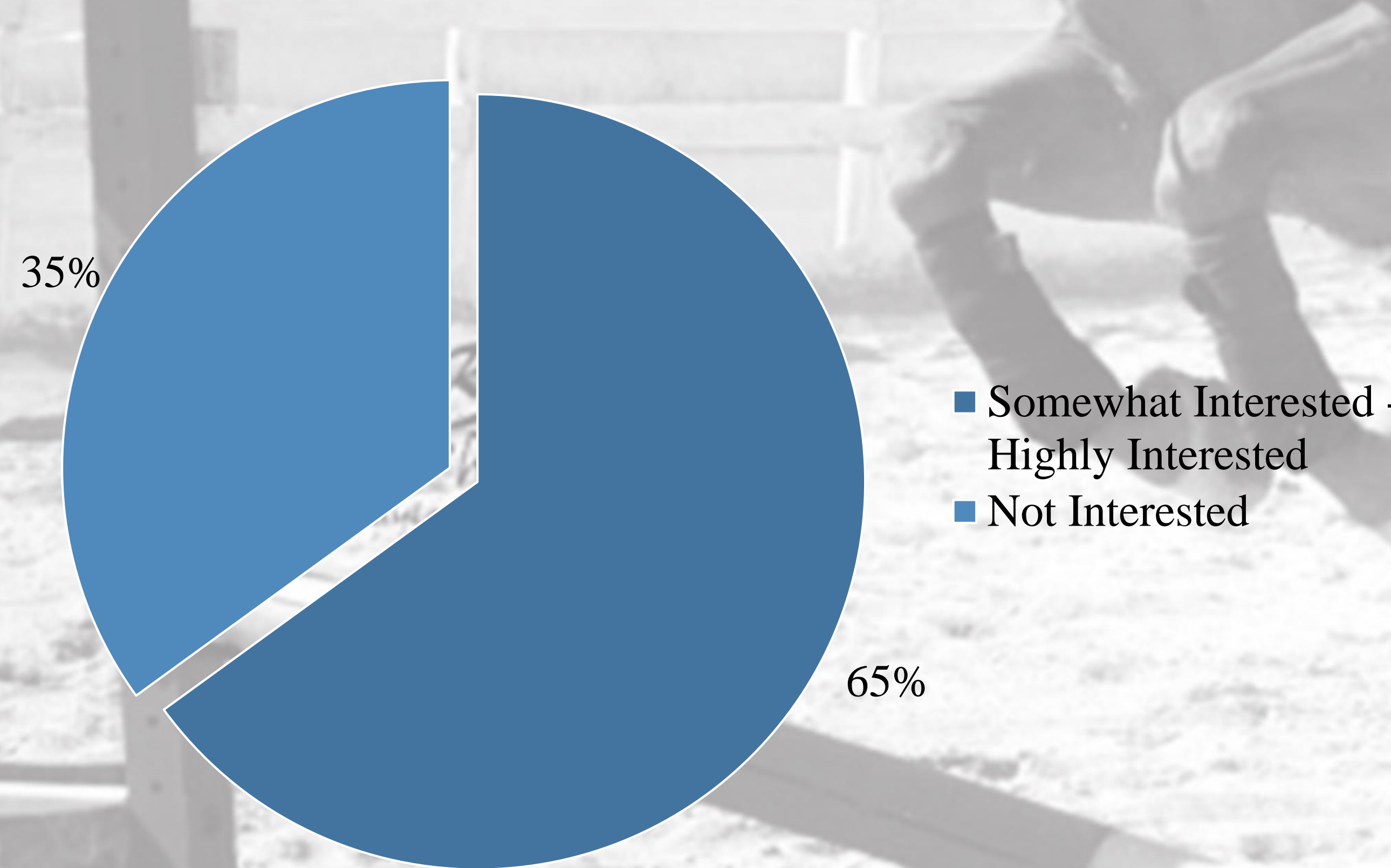


Figure 2: Students interested in taking an Equine Anatomy and Physiology course

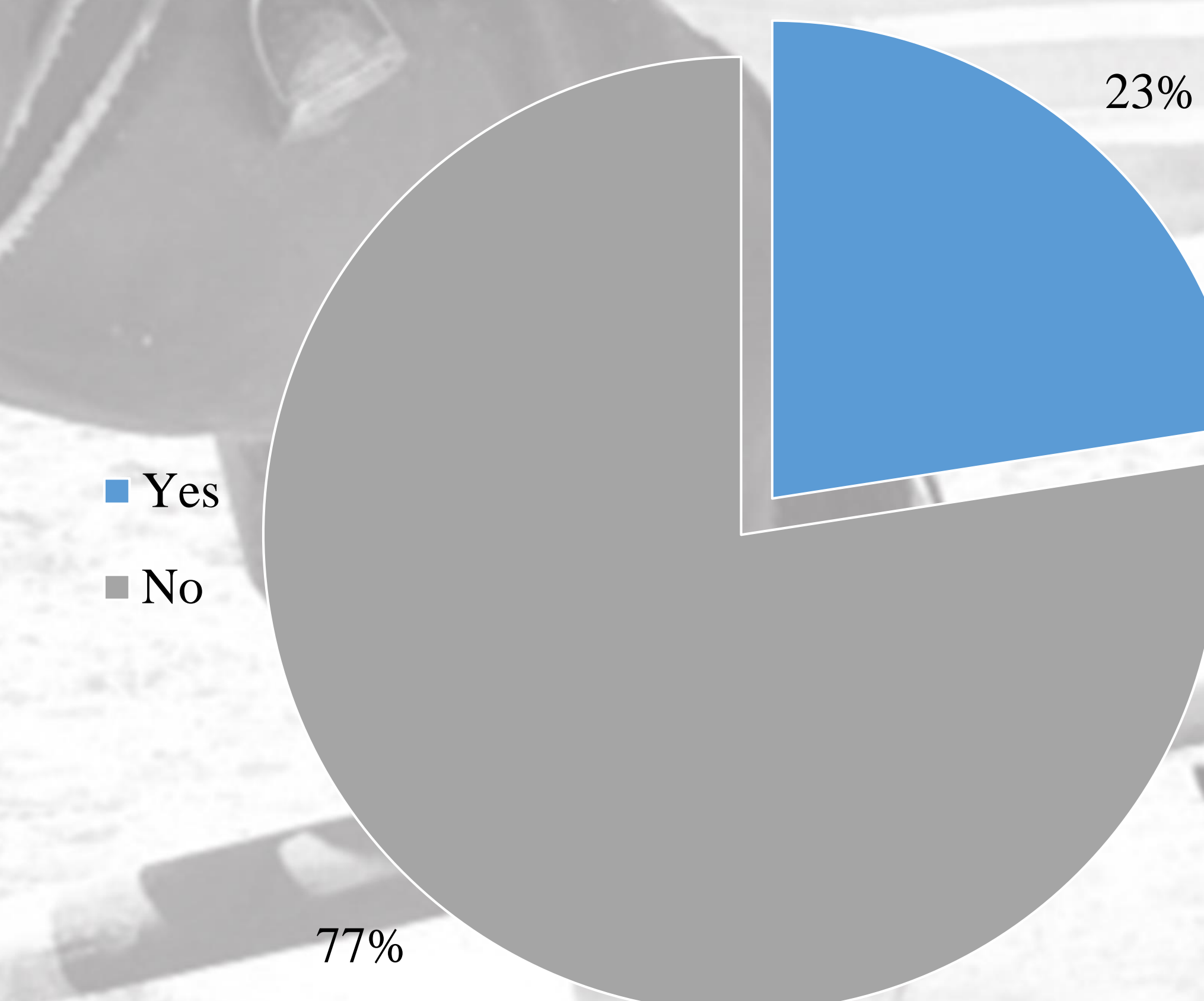


Figure 3: Student considering a career in the equine industry

References

American Horse Council Foundation. Economic Impact of the U.S. Horse Industry. 2018