

2019 Graduating Students Survey Report

Dallas Theological Seminary

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

Billy Todd, Associate Director

August 2019

Executive Summary

Overall, findings of the GSS continue to be positive. Of the 406 graduates invited to participate in the survey, 211 responded for a **response rate of 52%**. Upon reflection of their overall experience during their graduate program by respondents, **95% were satisfied with their academic experience** and **87% agreed that if they could do it all over again, they would still come to DTS**.

Three recommendations for improvement based on the data are:

- 1) *Continue efforts to improve satisfaction of the Housing Office and Relocation Services.* While Relocation Services continues to improve over the historical averages, at 59% its satisfaction is only 1% higher than last year. Relocation services dissatisfaction improved from 12% to 6%. Housing Office dissatisfaction, however, increased from 12% to 16% from the previous year. The Seminary should investigate the reasons for continued low satisfaction rates and seek to make improvements.
- 2) *Improve the perception of the Seminary Wives in Ministry (SWIM) program.* Since SWIM provides ministry to wives of students, the primary constituency is not surveyed directly. However, the reported numbers are based on graduates expressing their satisfaction based on experience. The overall satisfaction rate of 63% is the same as the 63% satisfaction rate among married male students. The overall dissatisfaction rate of 17% is also echoed by a 21% dissatisfaction rate among married males. Because the Seminary cares about how students perceive its programs, it should look into the reasons for the higher dissatisfaction among those surveyed and seek out areas that might be improved.
- 3) *Improve awareness of DTS departments and Services.* Twenty-five percent of respondents were unaware of seven departments and services, 20% respondents were unaware of 15 departments and services, and 10% respondents were unaware of 25 departments and services. The Seminary should look for ways to improve the overall awareness of departments.

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2019 Graduating Student Survey Report

Introduction

The Graduating Student Survey (GSS) continues to be one of the largest assessments conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Dallas Theological Seminary. Since DTS graduates help to fulfill our mission as a professional graduate-level school of building godly servant leaders for the proclamation of the word and the building up of the body of Christ worldwide, we cherish their input, seeking to learn from it. Every graduating student is asked to complete this survey. Both student learning outcomes as well as satisfaction with programs, departments, and services are surveyed.

The GSS serves as an indirect measure of DTS's performance in a wide variety of areas. By its very nature, data under-determines and must be interpreted. Furthermore, the GSS data may help reveal an area *where* improvements can be made, but it does not always help shed light on *what* the improvements should be. As such, the GSS is a tool that should be utilized with other data, such as direct measures, focus groups, and other surveys to aid departments and services, improving our fulfillment of the Seminary's mission.

Procedure of Survey

The survey was administered online at the end of the summer 2018, fall 2018, and spring 2019 semesters. Graduates were invited to participate through e-mails with links to the survey. The survey asks the graduating student to evaluate over thirty Seminary departments and services (from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied," and includes the options "unaware of" and "aware of but had no experience with"), to assess the accomplishment of the Seminary's goals in their life ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"), and to indicate achievement of both Student Learning Outcomes specific to their degrees. Several open-ended questions ask the student to pinpoint particular high points and areas needing improvement. Other questions gathered general demographic data and the respondents' near and long-term career and education plans.

Of the 406 graduates invited to participate in the survey, 211 responded for a **response rate of 52%**. In this report, survey results focus on agreement or satisfaction percentages rather than offering a full reporting of all data. Additional breakdowns or specific cross referent information

is available through the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. A specimen of the survey instrument is also available through the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

Demographics

The survey sample (211) reflected the population (406). Differences of 5% or more were as follows: There were 5% more respondents classified as “white” (70%) than the population (65%). In the age category, 7% fewer respondents were 26-30 (20%) than in the population (27%) and 7% more respondents were 41 and over (48%) than in the population (41%). The percentage of married students in the sample (78%) was 5% higher than the population (73%) while the percentage of single students in the sample (22%) was 5% lower than the population (27%). The number of respondents with no children (53%) was 7% lower than the population (60%). The full comparison is found on pages 29 and 30.

Survey Results and Analysis

Overall Experience

Graduates were asked to express their level of agreement with statements relating to their overall experience at DTS on a five point Likert scale from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.”

Results are shown in the below chart in descending order of percent agreement (“Strongly agree” and “Agree” responses).



Respondents reported their overall experiences while at DTS as positive. Results were in line with the previous 8-year average with one exception.

For the statement “Seminary was a good experience for my spouse/family” the previous 8-year average agreement percentage was 75%. This year’s result of 80% is an increase of 5 percentage points.

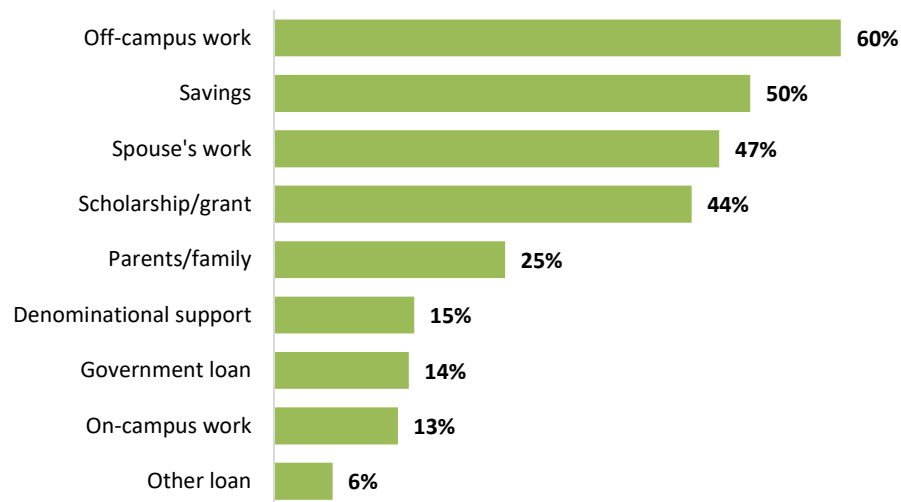
Financial Items

Graduates were asked to respond from “Very important” to “Of no importance” for various sources of income that supported their graduate studies.

Results are shown in the below chart in descending order of importance percent agreement (“Very important” and “Important” responses).

How important were the following sources of income in supporting your graduate studies?

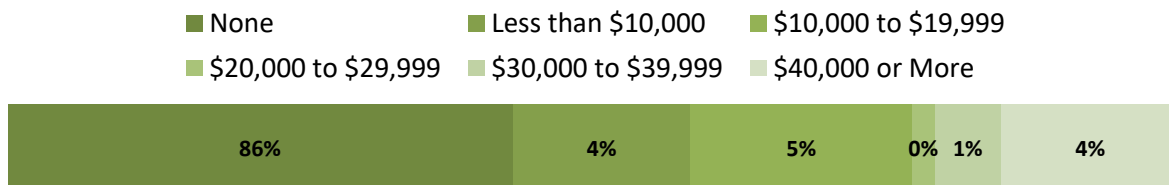
N=203



The GSS asked graduates concerning their educational debt. Graduates are asked the amount brought with them to DTS, the amount incurred at DTS, and what their monthly educational debt payments will be.

How much educational debt did you bring with you when you started at DTS?

N=211



How much educational debt did you incur at DTS?

N=210

- None
- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$19,999
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 or More



How much will your monthly educational debt payments be after graduation?

N=209

- None
- Less than \$200
- \$200 to \$349
- \$350 to \$499
- \$500 to \$1,000
- More than \$1,000

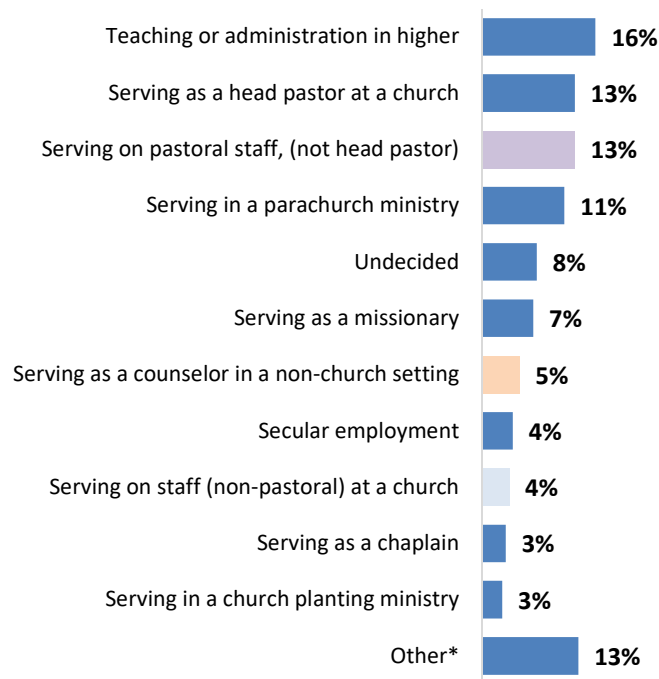


Post-Graduation Plans

Graduates were asked concerning both their 2-year and 10-year post-graduation plans. Follow-up questions asked for specifics concerning plans to serve on pastoral staff as a non-head pastor, plans to serve on church staff (non-pastoral), settings in which they planned to serve as a counselor, as well as specifics concerning further educational plans. The following graphs show their responses by percentages. *Note that variance in color corresponds to the additional graphs which follow showing the responses to follow up questions to their response.* Following the graphs is a table with the breakdown by degrees.

What do you hope you will be doing 10 years from now?

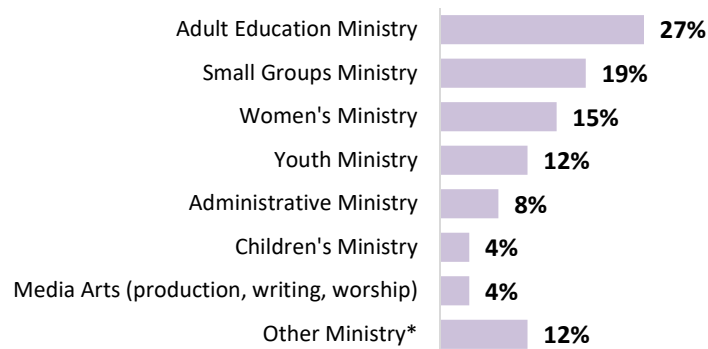
N=211



*See page 31 for "Other" write-in responses.

Serving on pastoral staff (not head pastor) at a church in:

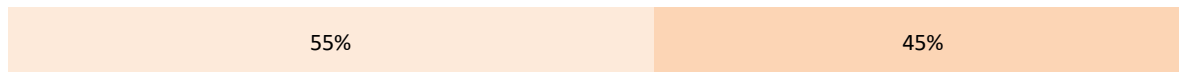
n=26



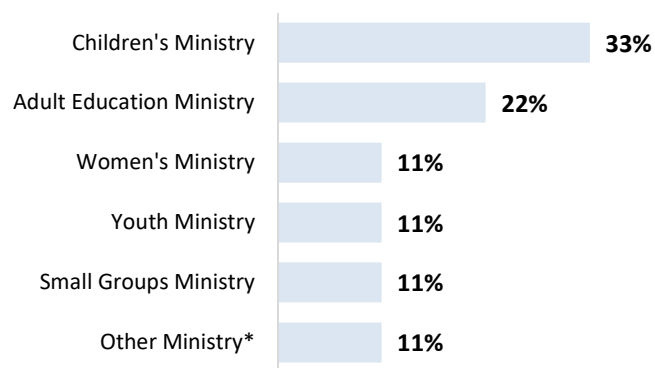
Serve as a counselor (non-church setting) in:

n=11

■ Counseling in a secular setting ■ Counseling in a Christian setting

**Serving on staff (non-pastoral) at a church in:**

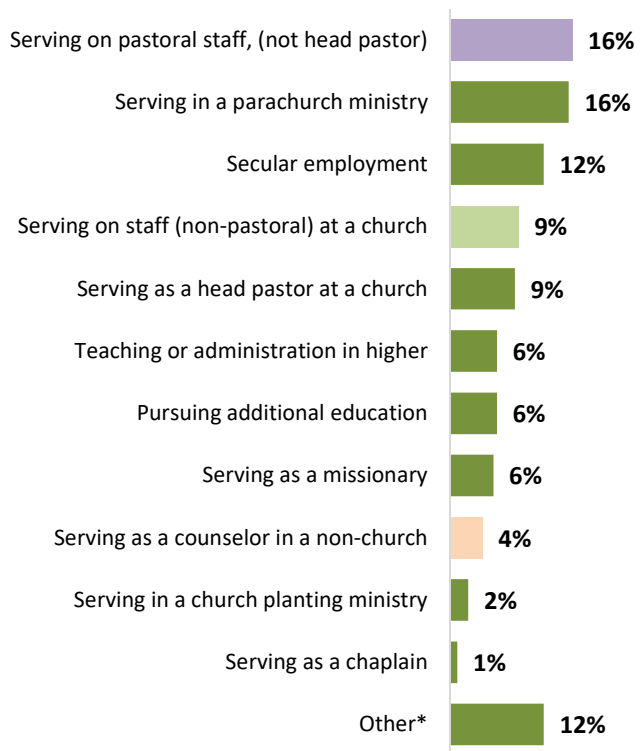
n=9



*See page 31 and 32 for "Other Ministry" write-in responses.

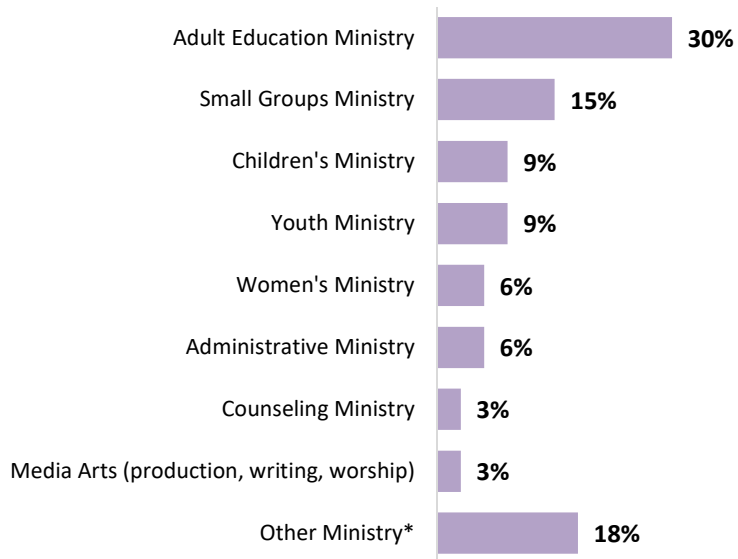
What are you most likely to be doing in the next two years?

N=210



Serving on pastoral staff (not head pastor) at a church in:

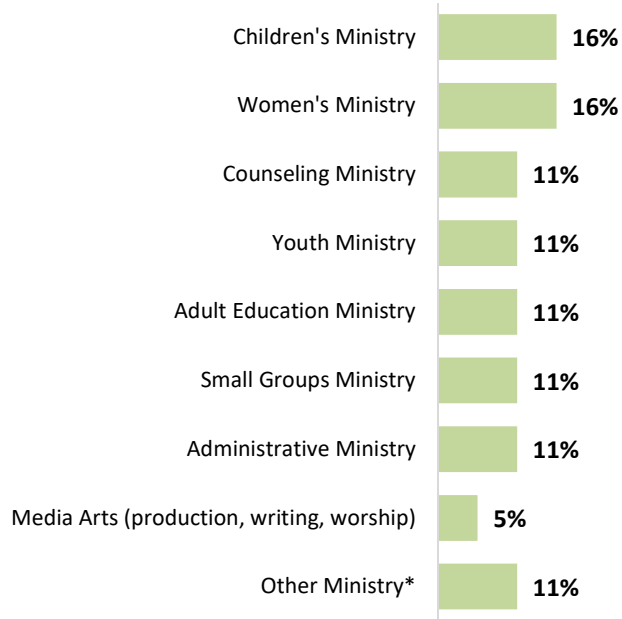
n=33



*See page 32 for "Other" and "Other Ministry" write-in responses.

Serving on staff (non-pastoral) at a church in:

n=19

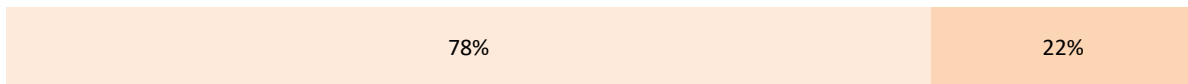


*See page 33 for "Other Ministry" write-in responses.

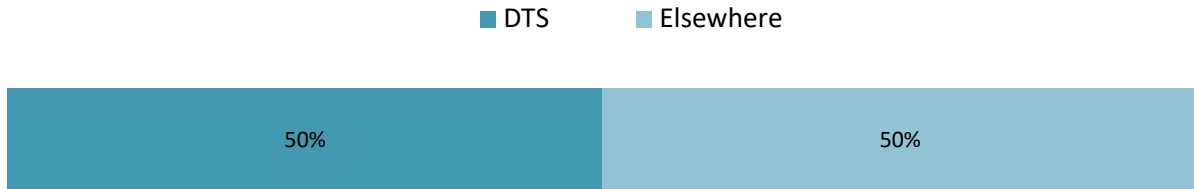
Serve as a counselor (non-church setting) in:

n=26

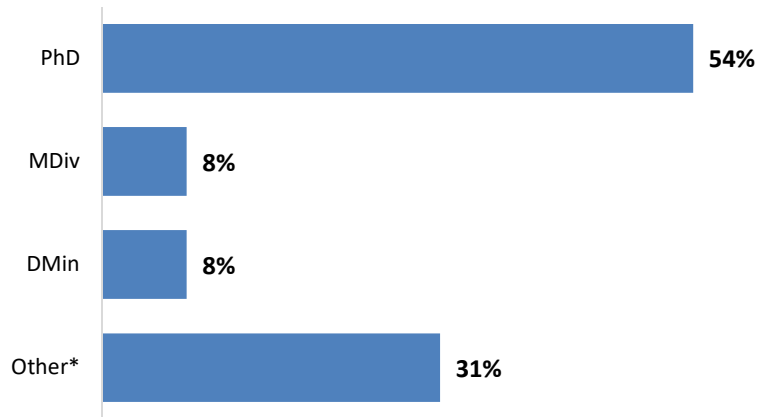
■ Counseling in a secular setting
 ■ Counseling in a Christian setting



In pursuing additional education, where do you plan to enroll?
n=12



What degree do you plan to pursue?
n=13



* See page 33 for "Other Degree" write-in responses.

Ten-year plans

	ThM	STM	MABC	MA	MABEL	MACE	MACL	MACM	MACS	MAMW	MBTS	CGS	PhD	DMin	DEdMin	All
Serving as a head pastor at a church	12	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	6	0	1	0	1	3	0	27
Serving on pastoral staff, (not head pastor)	6	0	0	0	0	6	11	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	27
Serving on staff (non-pastoral) at a church	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	8
Serving as a counselor in a non-church	0	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Serving as a chaplain	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	7
Serving in a church planting ministry	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
Serving as a missionary	4	0	0	0	3	0	1	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	15
Serving in a parachurch ministry	3	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	10	0	0	0	0	24
Teaching or administration in higher	16	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	2	33
Secular employment	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	9
Undecided	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	3	2	1	1	0	16
Other	5	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	4	0	8	0	0	1	4	28
Total	55	2	13	1	4	20	26	4	19	3	42	4	5	7	6	211

Two-year plans

	ThM	STM	MABC	MA	MABEL	MACE	MACL	MACM	MACS	MAMW	MBTS	CGS	PhD	DMin	DEdMin	All
Serving as a head pastor at a church	7	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	18
Serving on pastoral staff, (not head pastor)	14	1	1	0	1	5	7	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	34
Serving on staff (non-pastoral) at a church	1	0	2	0	0	2	3	0	4	1	6	0	0	0	0	19
Serving as a counselor in a non-church	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	9
Serving as a chaplain	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Serving in a church planting ministry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	5
Serving as a missionary	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	12
Serving in a parachurch ministry	7	0	1	0	0	1	7	1	7	0	9	0	0	0	0	33
Teaching or administration in higher	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	13
Pursuing additional education	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	13
Secular employment	7	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	0	11	1	0	0	0	26
Other	5	0	2	0	1	3	1	0	2	1	5	2	0	1	3	26
Total	55	2	13	1	4	20	26	4	19	3	41	4	5	7	6	210

Departments and Services

Graduates were asked to express the level of satisfaction with seminary departments and services on a five point Likert scale from “Very dissatisfied” to “Very satisfied.” Additionally, they could indicate that they were “Aware of but had no experience with” or “Unaware of.” In calculating Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction percentages respondents that indicated they were unaware of or had no experience with the department or service were omitted.

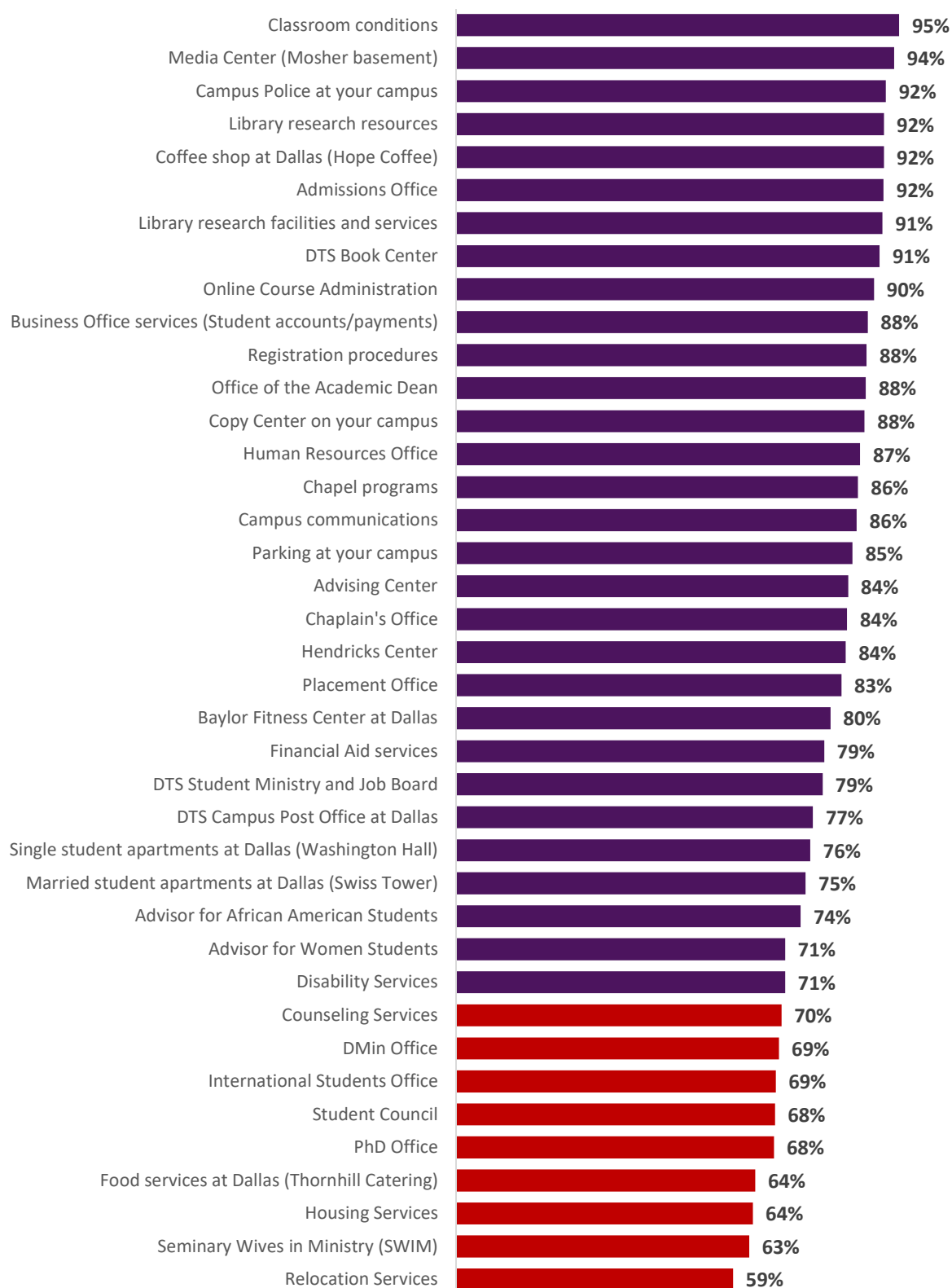
Several changes were made to departmental evaluations this year. In consultation with the Director of Library Services, Turpin Library Services was divided into the separate categories of Library research resources and Library facilities. The Student Computer Lab, the Mosher Media Center, and the selection for Your Extension Library were removed from the survey to better reflect the broader reach of the library. Since different vendors represent food services, Hope Coffee and Thornhill Catering were addressed independently. Disability Services was added to the GSS this year to differentiate that function from the International Students function in the same office. Finally, the Internship Department, Spiritual Formation, and Student Services were removed from the listing of departments and services on the survey.

Overall respondents’ satisfaction ratings remain positive with 77% (30 of 39) departments and services rated over 70% satisfaction, and 54% (21 of 39) rated over 80%. Nine departments received a satisfaction rating of 90% or more: **Classroom conditions** (95%), **Media Center (Mosher basement)** (94%), **Campus Police at your campus** (92%), **Library research resources (databases, books, electronic resources, etc.)** (92%), **Coffee shop at Dallas (Hope Coffee)** (92%), **Admissions Office** (92%), **Library research facilities and services** (91%), **DTS Book Center** (91%), and **Online Course Administration** (90%).

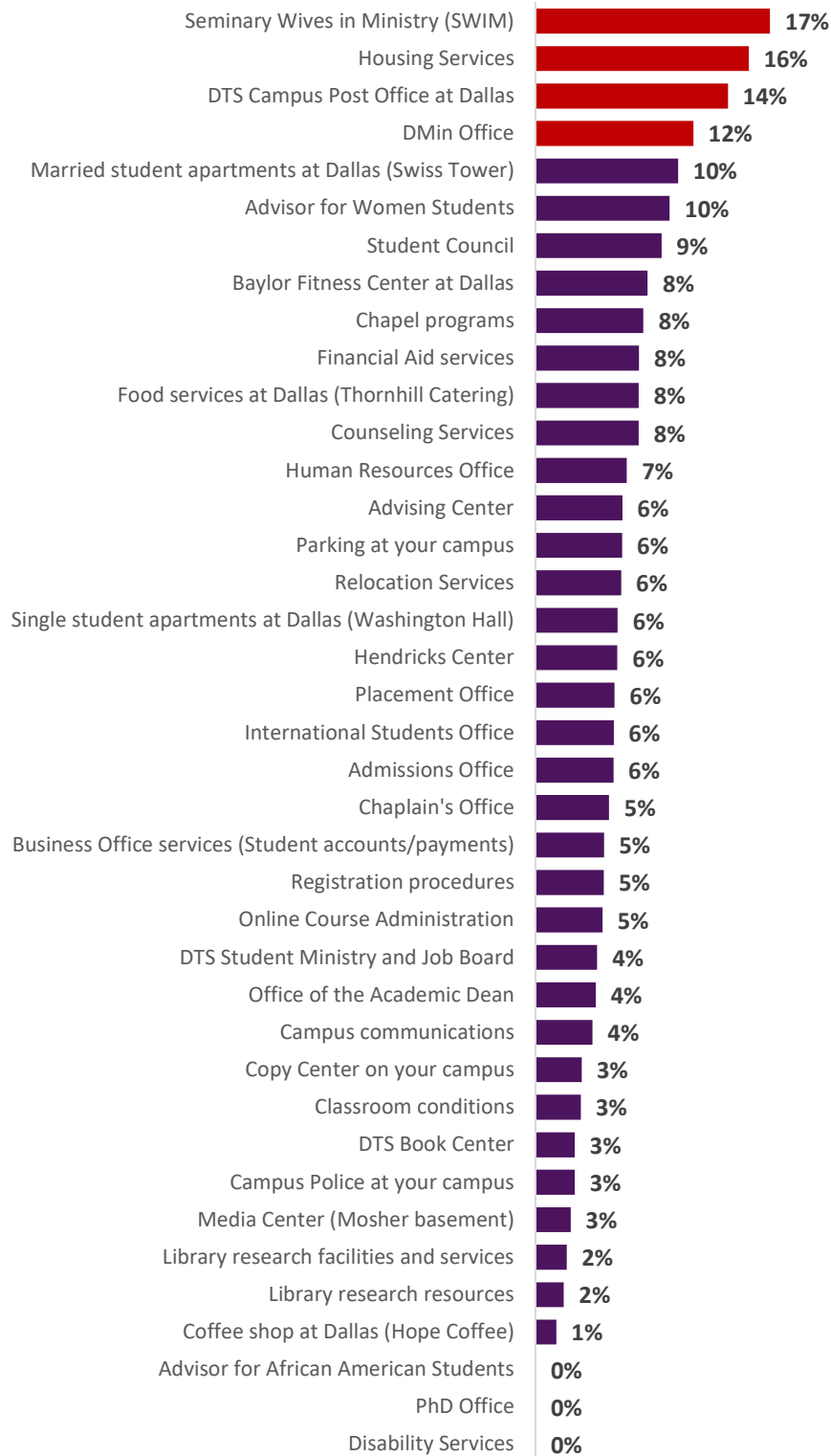
Conversely, 9 received satisfaction ratings of 70% or below: **Counseling Services** (70%), **DMin Office** (69%), **International Students Office** (69%), **Student Council** (68%), **PhD Office** (68%), **Housing Services** (64%), **Seminary Wives in Ministry** (63%), **Food Services at Dallas (Thornhill Catering)** (61%), and **Relocation Services** (59%).

Likewise, dissatisfaction ratings were generally positive with only 10% (4 of 39) departments and services rated over 10% dissatisfaction: **Seminary Wives in Ministry** (17%), **Housing Services** (16%), **DTS Post Office at Dallas** (14%), and the **DMin Office** (12%).

Departments and Services Satisfaction %



Departments and Services Dissatisfaction %

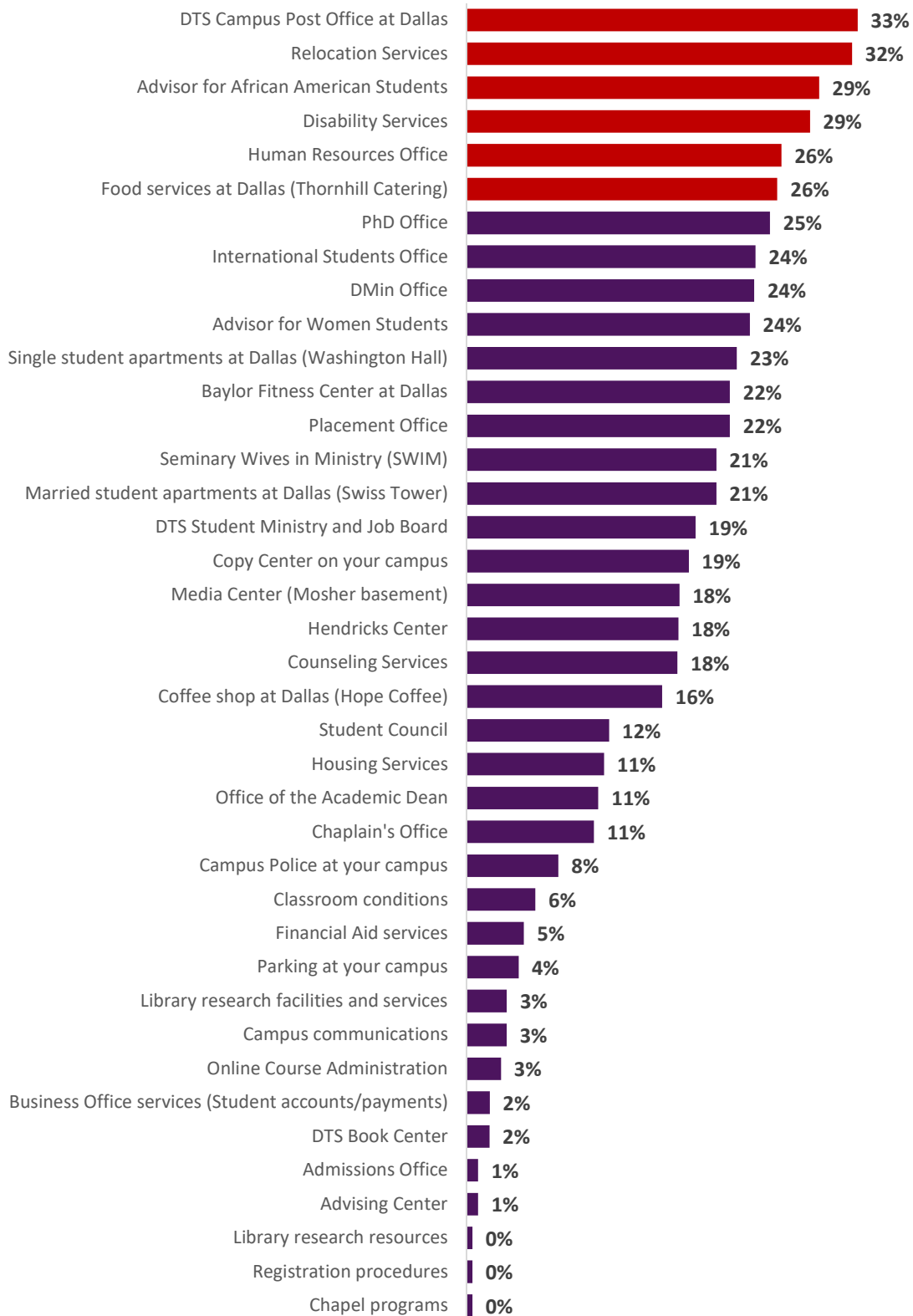


Respondents that had Experience with Departments or Services

	Very Diss.	Diss.	Neither sat. nor diss.	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total	Sat. %	Diss. %
Classroom conditions	3	3	3	64	109	182	95%	3%
Media Center (Mosher basement)	2	1	4	43	67	117	94%	3%
Campus Police at your campus	2	2	7	51	79	141	92%	3%
Library research resources (databases, books, electronic resources, etc.)	3	1	12	58	121	195	92%	2%
Coffee shop at Dallas (Hope Coffee)	1	1	9	47	76	134	92%	1%
Admissions Office	6	5	5	84	93	193	92%	6%
Library research facilities and services	3	1	11	57	104	176	91%	2%
DTS Book Center	3	2	11	62	97	175	91%	3%
Online Course Administration	7	2	10	80	85	184	90%	5%
Business Office services (Student accounts/payments)	4	5	12	83	76	180	88%	5%
Registration procedures	5	5	14	94	83	201	88%	5%
Office of the Academic Dean	3	1	7	37	43	91	88%	4%
Copy Center on your campus	2	1	8	40	38	89	88%	3%
Human Resources Office	1	2	3	16	23	45	87%	7%
Chapel programs	9	7	12	66	109	203	86%	8%
Campus communications (e.g. Kerygma and Student Journal, websites, email)	2	6	19	79	86	192	86%	4%
Parking at your campus	4	7	15	59	89	174	85%	6%
Advising Center	5	7	18	79	80	189	84%	6%
Chaplain's Office	3	2	10	38	40	93	84%	5%
Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership and Cultural Engagement	2	2	7	25	31	67	84%	6%
Placement Office	1	2	6	22	21	52	83%	6%
Baylor Fitness Center at Dallas	1	4	7	17	32	61	80%	8%
Financial Aid services	5	4	16	50	44	119	79%	8%
DTS Student Ministry and Job Board	3	1	15	32	38	89	79%	4%
DTS Campus Post Office at Dallas	3	6	6	21	28	64	77%	14%
On-Campus single student apartments at Dallas (Washington Hall)	0	3	9	20	18	50	76%	6%
On-Campus married student apartments at Dallas (Swiss Tower)	2	3	7	20	16	48	75%	10%
Advisor for African American Students	0	0	6	8	9	23	74%	0%
Advisor for Women Students	1	4	10	17	19	51	71%	10%
Disability Services	0	0	5	4	8	17	71%	0%
Counseling Services	0	4	12	19	18	53	70%	8%
DMin Office	2	1	5	2	16	26	69%	12%
International Students Office	2	0	9	9	15	35	69%	6%
Student Council	5	2	17	25	27	76	68%	9%
PhD Office	0	0	7	3	12	22	68%	0%
Food services at Dallas (Thornhill Catering)	0	4	15	23	11	53	64%	8%
Housing Services	6	6	16	23	26	77	64%	16%
Seminary Wives in Ministry (SWIM)	3	3	7	8	14	35	63%	17%
Relocation Services	1	1	11	15	4	32	59%	6%

Unawareness % of Departments and Services

N=227



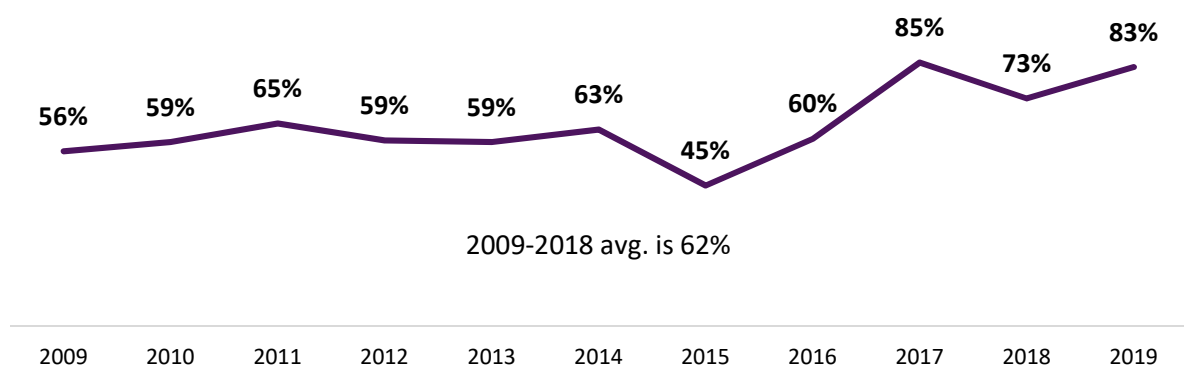
While DTS remains concerned with all student experiences for every department, some departments are designed to serve a particular segment of the overall population. Examining the satisfaction results of the specific portion of the overall population may be seen below.¹

	Total	total w/ Experience	Unaware %	Sat. %	Diss. %
Advisor to African American Students	20	9	20%	100%	0%
Advisor to Women Students	76	43	14%	77%	12%
DMin Office	13	12	0%	83%	17%
Campus Post Office at Dallas	133	47	32%	81%	11%
International Student Office	20	17	10%	76%	6%
PhD Office	5	5	0%	80%	0%

Commendable areas

Placement Office

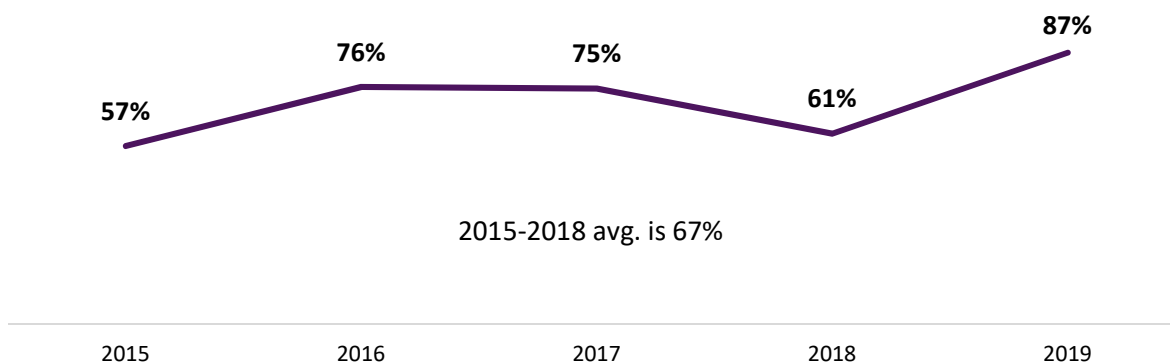
After a low in 2015, the Placement Office has continued to receive improved results compared to the 10-year average. This year's 83% satisfaction is 10% higher than last year and is 21 percentage points higher than the previous 10-year average.



¹ Specific populations are as follows: Advisor to African American Students: Only respondents whose IPEDS race is Black. Advisor to Women Students: Only female respondents. DMin Office: Only DMin and DEdMin respondents. Campus Post Office at Dallas: Only Dallas Campus students. International Student Office: Only respondents with citizenship status of visa. PhD Office: Only PhD respondents.

Human Resources

Historical numbers for Human resources are only available for the previous four years that the department has been part of the GSS. This year's satisfaction rating of 87% is 11 points higher than the previous high in 2016 and is 20 percentage points higher than the previous four-year average.



Two other seminary departments and services had 2019 satisfaction performance indicators that increased over 10 percentage points when compared to the previous 10-year average: **Student Council** (+12) and **Academic Dean's Office** (+11). **Relocation Services** showed an increase of 14 percentage points when compared to the previous 4-year average.

Areas to Improve

Four departments or services received over 10% dissatisfaction. They are **Seminary Wives in Ministry (SWIM)** (17%), **Housing Services** (16%), the **DTS Campus Post Office at Dallas** (14%), and the **DMin Office** (12%).

Over 25% of respondents reported being unaware of 6 departments or services. They are **Food Services at Dallas (Thornhill Catering)** (49%), the **DTS Campus Post Office at Dallas** (33%), **Relocation Services** (32%), **Advisor for African American Students** (29%), **Disability Services** (29%), and the **Human Resources Office** (26%).

Recommendations

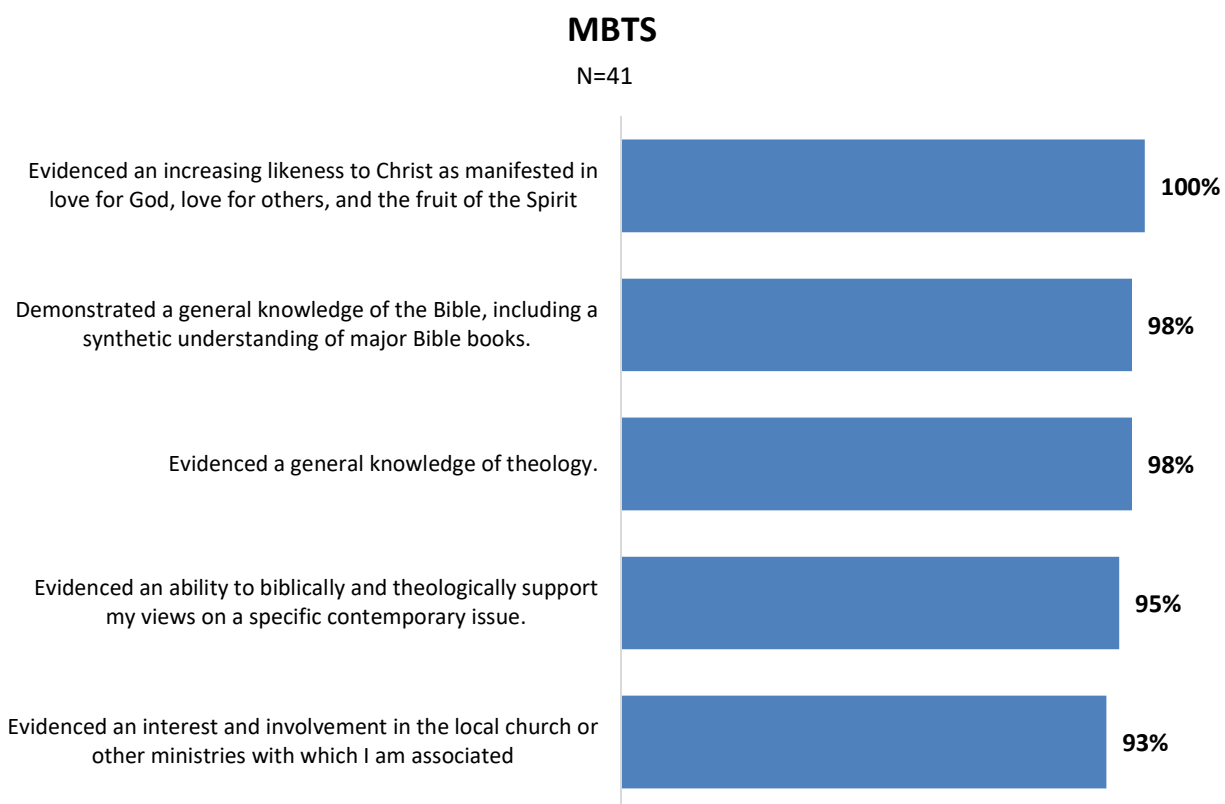
- 1) *Continue efforts to improve satisfaction of the Housing Office and Relocation Services.* While Relocation Services continues to improve over the historical averages, at 59% its satisfaction is only 1% higher than last year. Relocation services dissatisfaction improved from 12% to 6%. Housing Office dissatisfaction, however, increased from 12% to 16% from the previous year. The Seminary should investigate the reasons for continued low satisfaction rates and seek to make improvements.
- 2) *Improve the perception of the Seminary Wives in Ministry (SWIM) program.* Since SWIM provides ministry to wives of students, the primary constituency is not surveyed directly. However, the reported numbers are based on graduates expressing their satisfaction based on experience. The overall satisfaction rate of 63% is the same as the 63% satisfaction rate among married male students. The overall dissatisfaction rate of 17% is also echoed by a 21% dissatisfaction rate among married males. Because the Seminary cares about how students perceive its programs, it should look into the reasons for the higher dissatisfaction among those surveyed and seek out areas that might be improved.
- 3) *Improve awareness of DTS departments and Services.* Twenty-five percent of respondents were unaware of seven departments and services, 20% respondents were unaware of 15 departments and services, and 10% respondents were unaware of 25 departments and services. The Seminary should look for ways to improve the overall awareness of departments.

Academic Programs

Graduating students were asked to assess their attainment of student learning outcomes (SLO) specific to their stated degree program on a five point Likert scale from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.” Graduates were then given a chance to give suggestions for improving their specific degrees which can be found on pages 38-41.

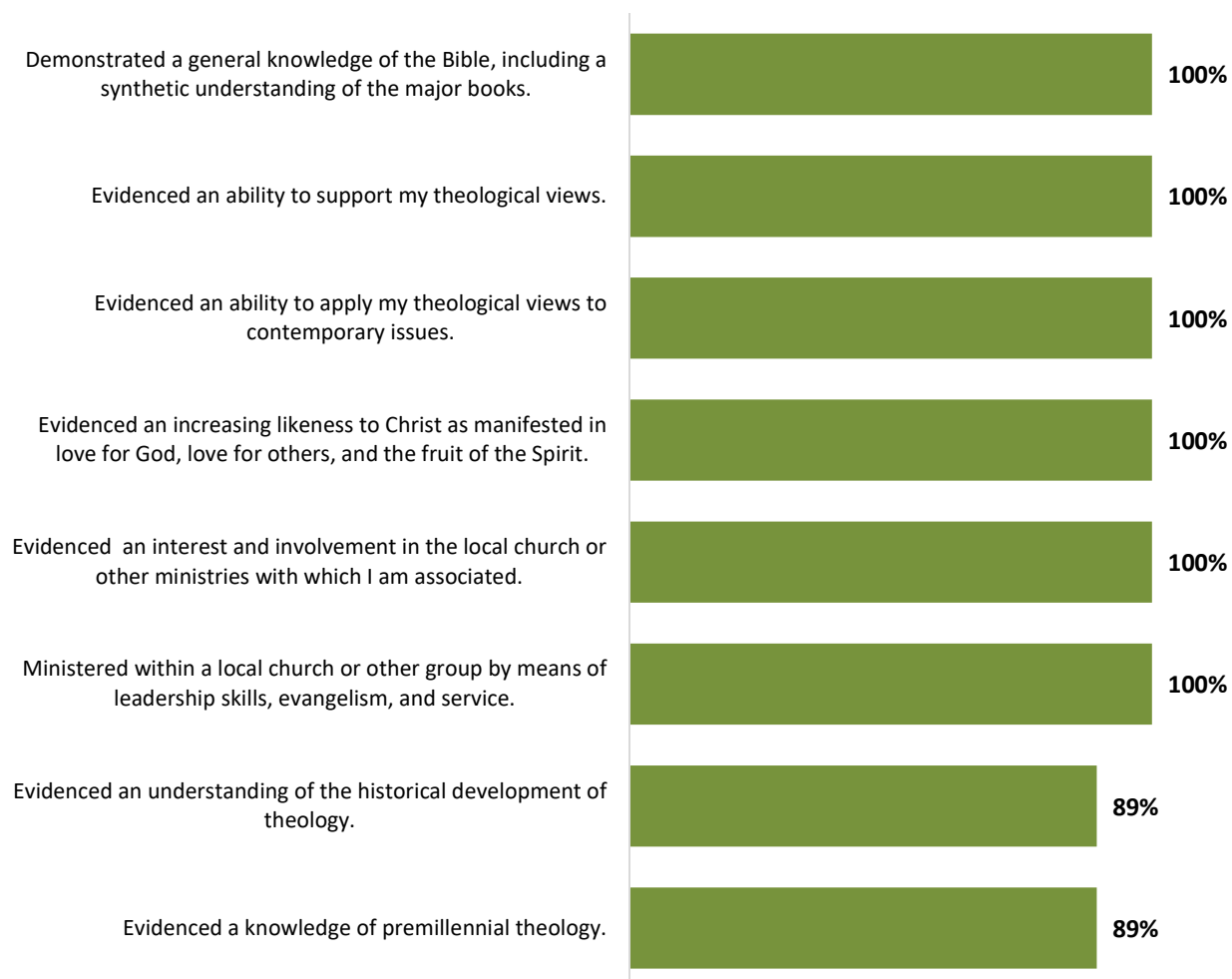
Results are again shown in descending order of percent agreement (“Strongly agree” and “Agree” responses).

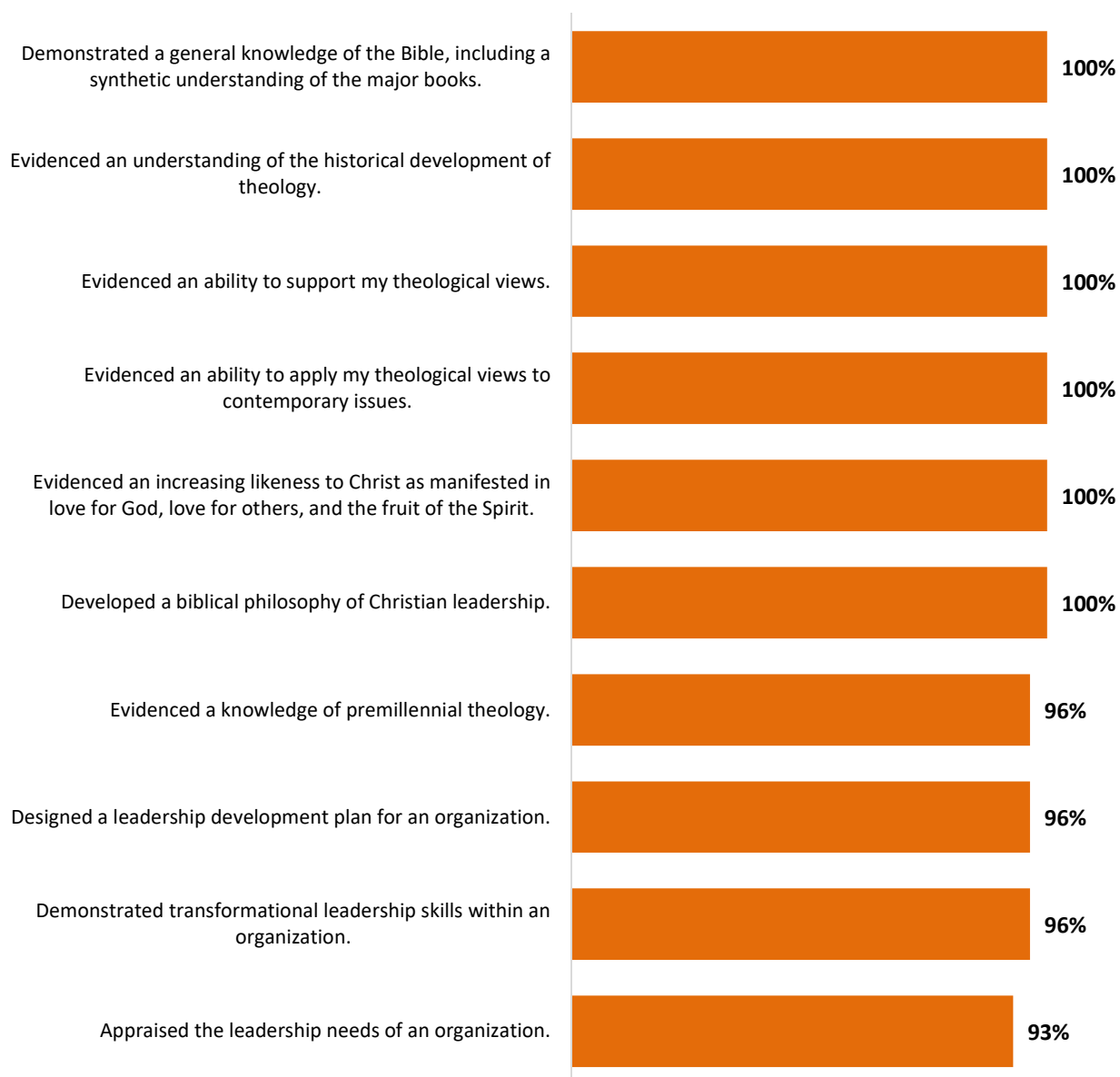
The CGS (N=4), MABEL (N=4), MACM (N=4), MA (N=1), and STM (N=2) are not included in this report due to low numbers of respondents.

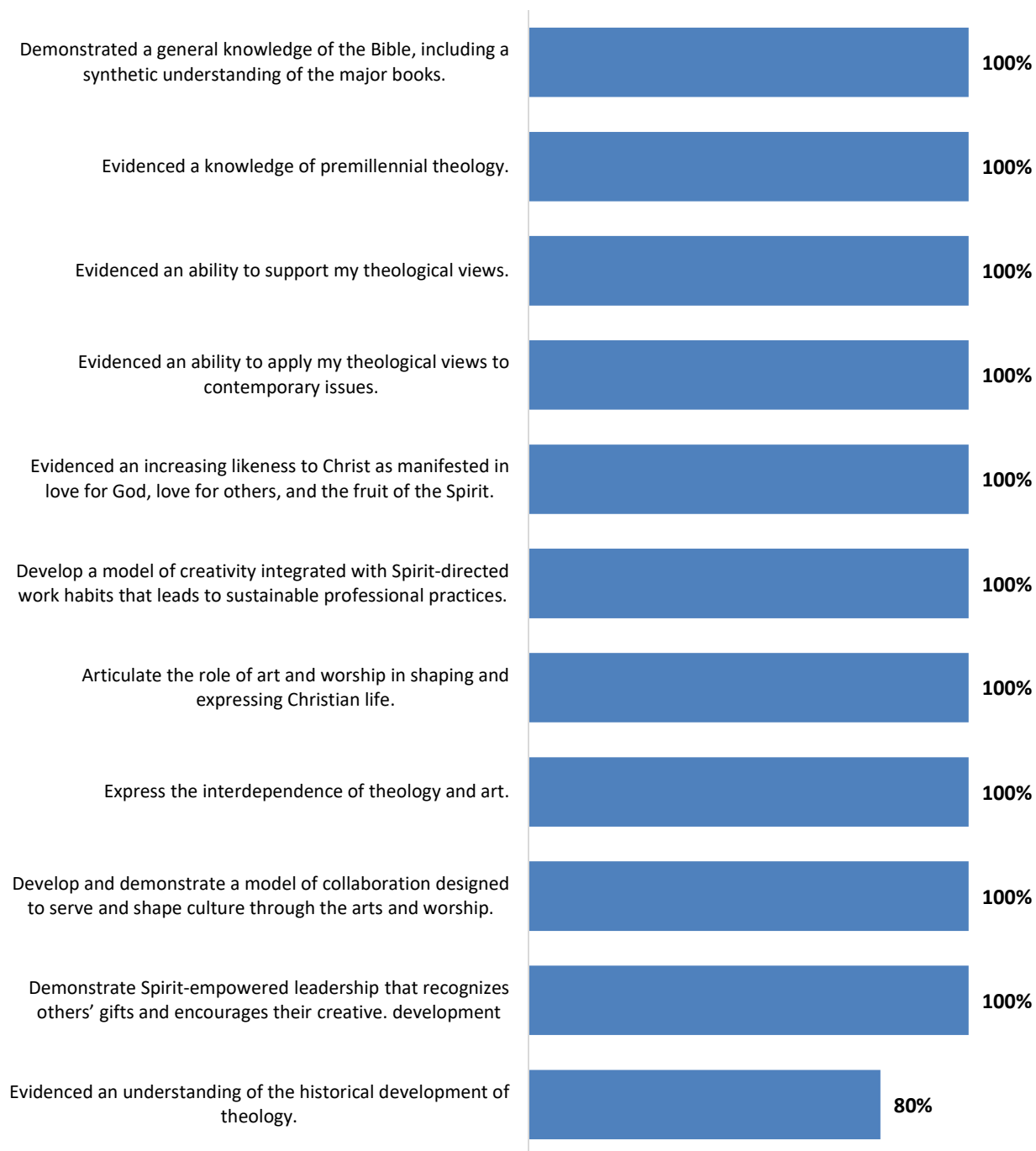


MABS/CS

N=19

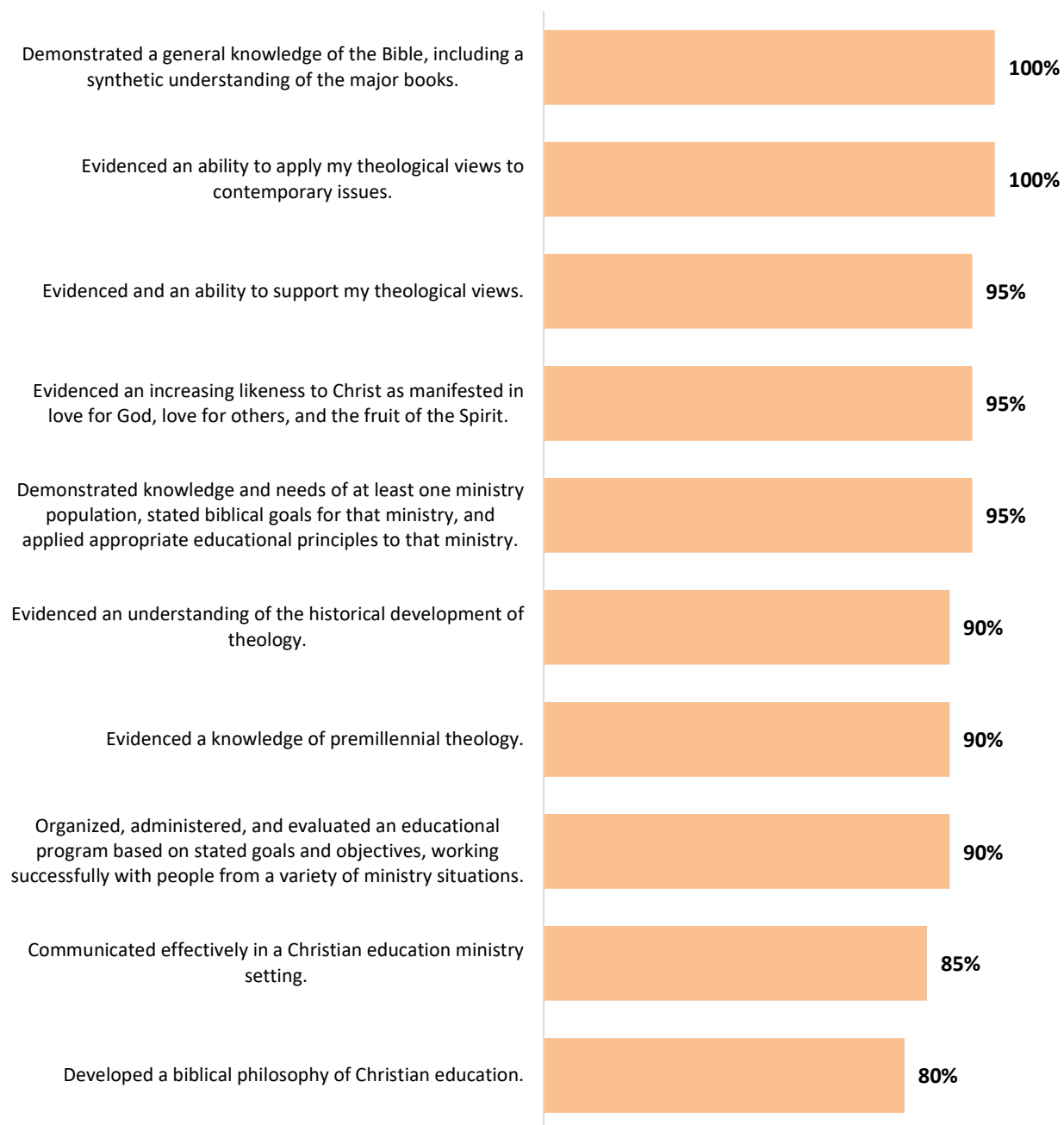


MACL
N=28

MAMW
N=5

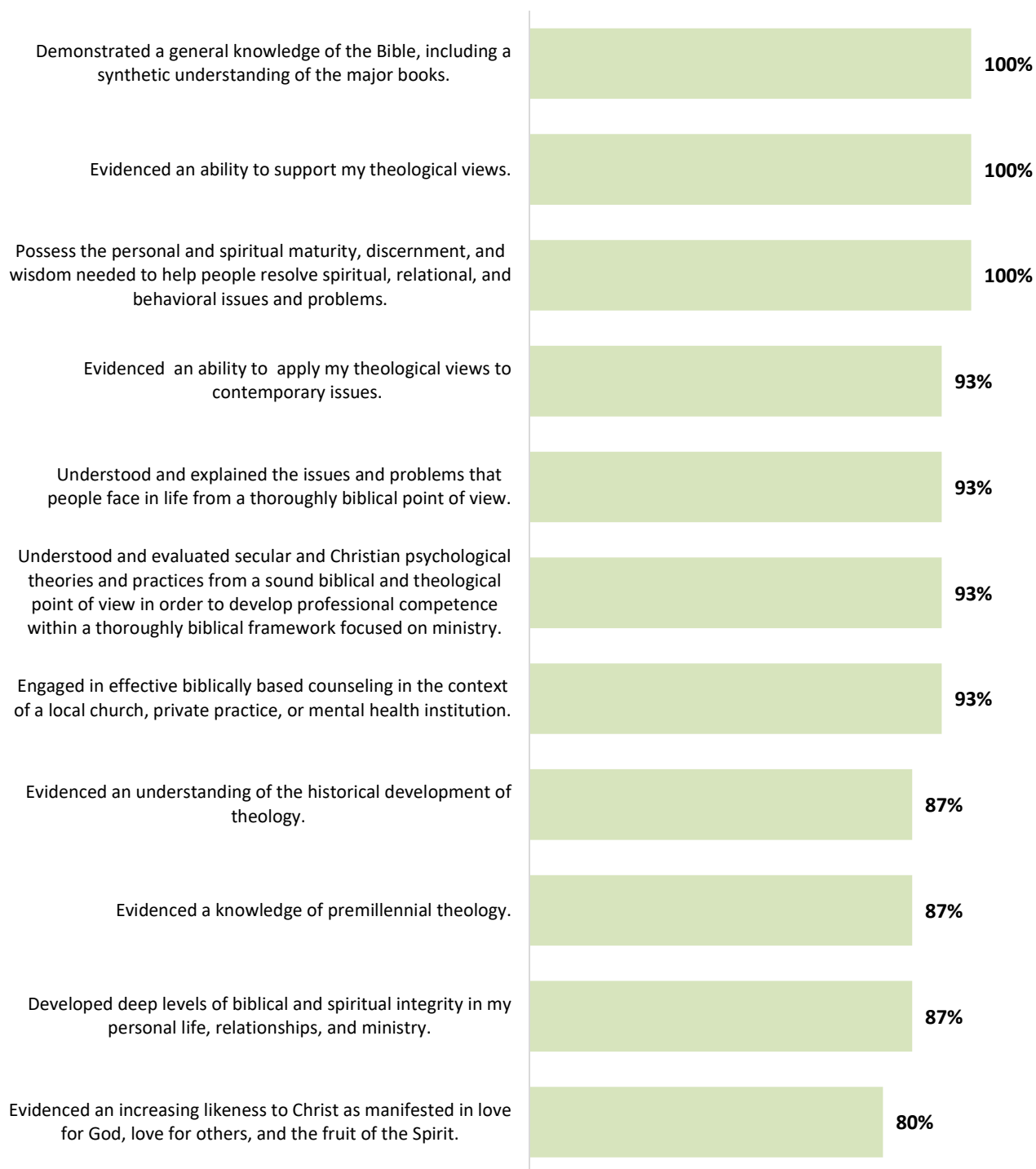
MACE

N=20



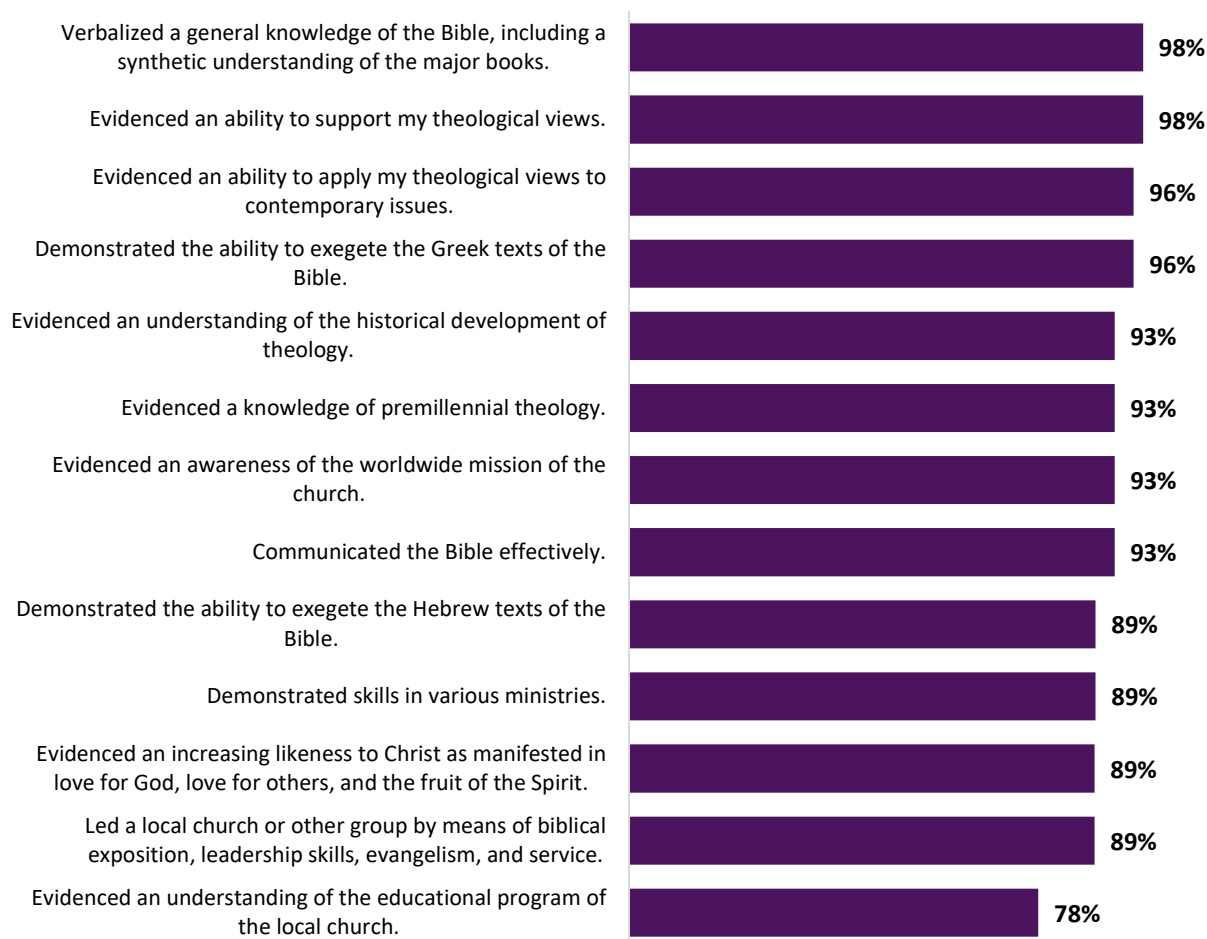
MABC

N=15



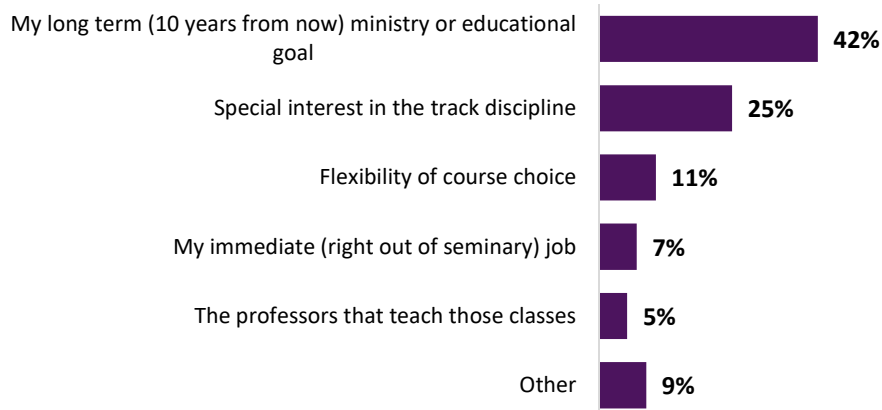
ThM

N=55



What is the main reason why you chose your ministry emphasis?

N=45

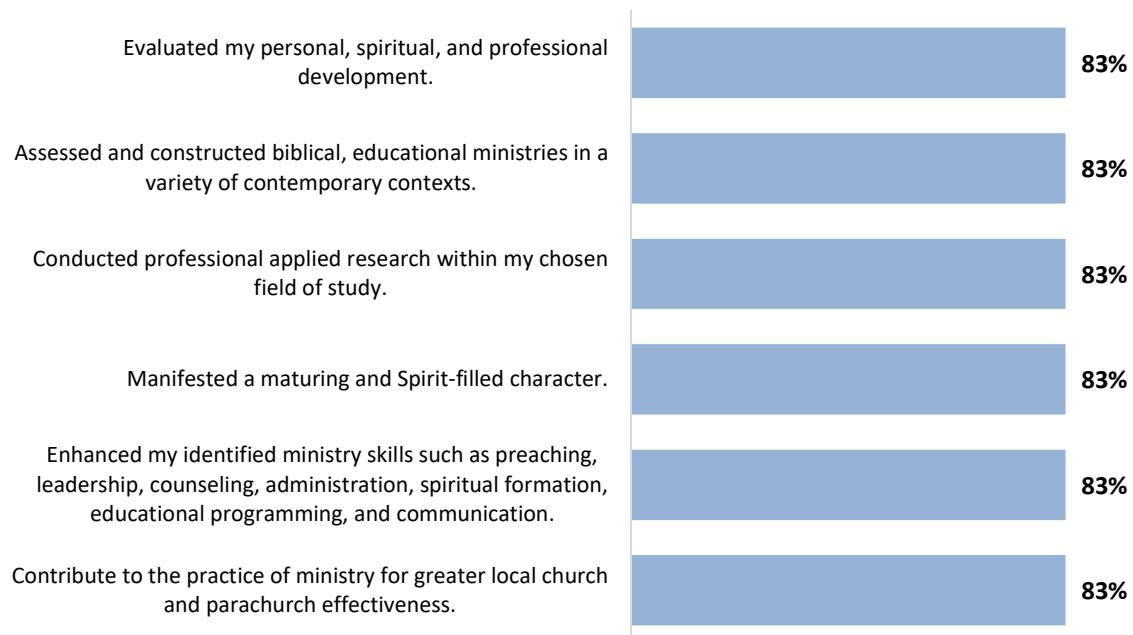


DMin

N=7

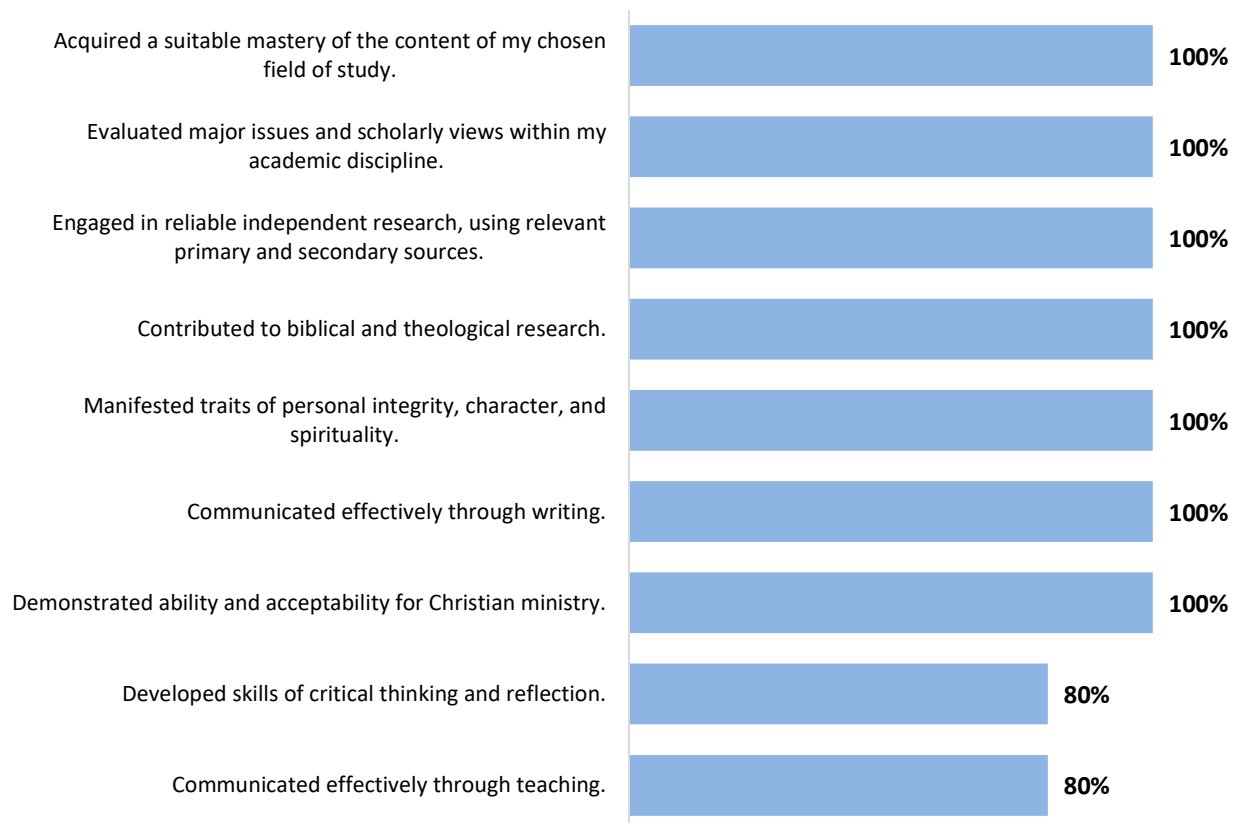
**DEdMin**

N=6



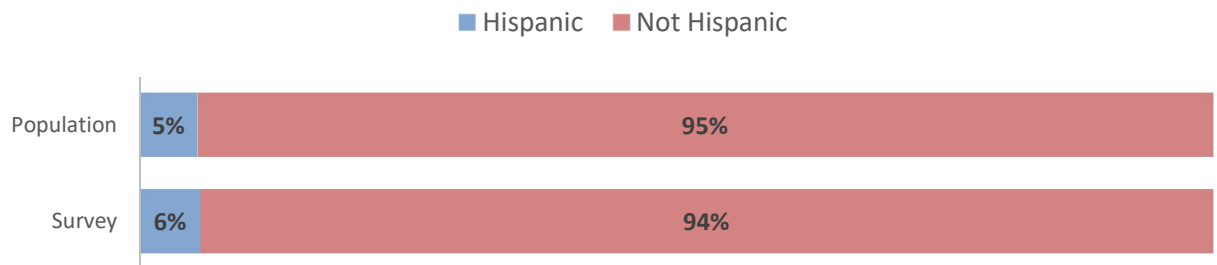
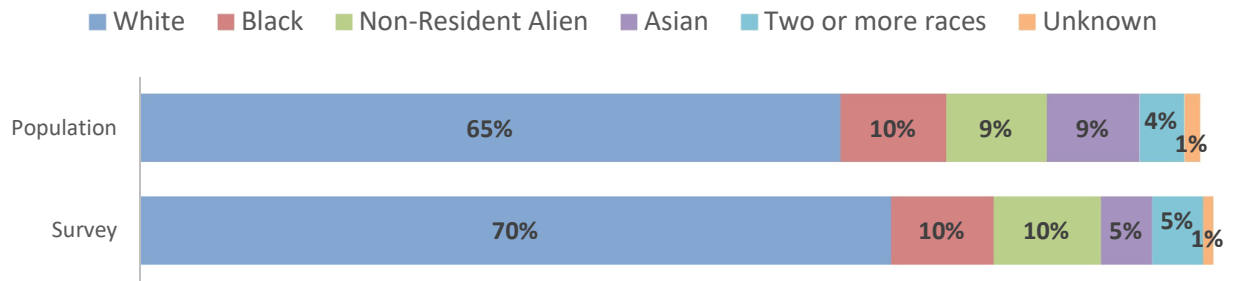
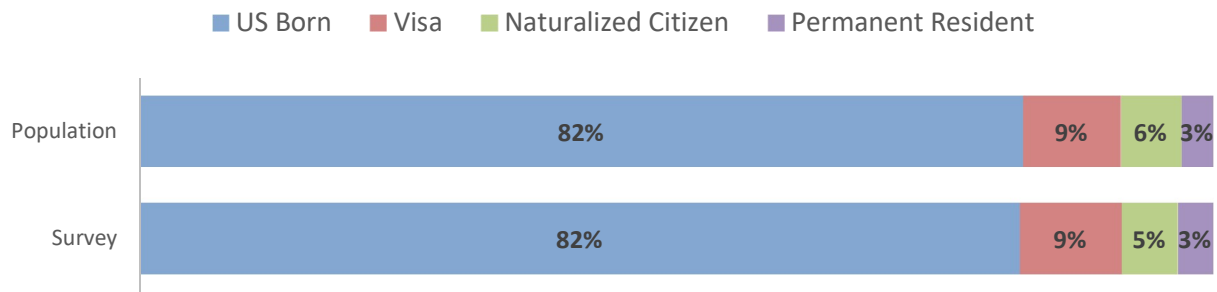
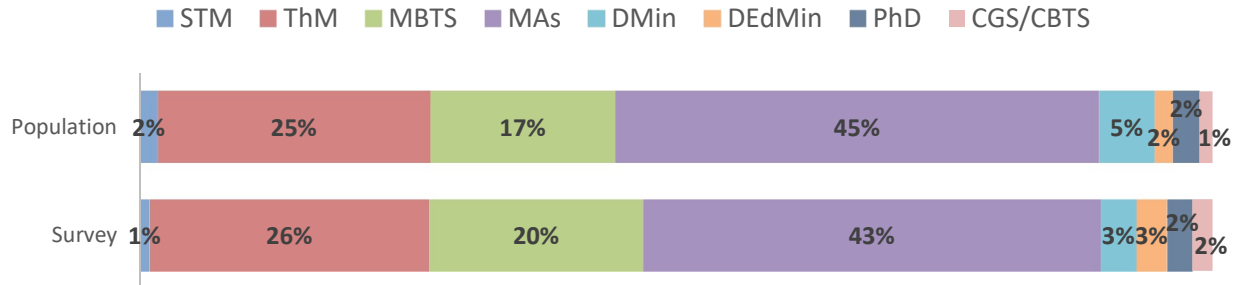
PhD

N=5



Survey Sample Resembles Population

Sample N=211
Population N=406



Please note that above reporting of “race” and “ethnicity” follows current US government classifications. These classifications may undergo yet another change with the upcoming US census in 2020.

