

# ALTACS AT UNC

[HTTP://ALTAC.WEB.UNC.EDU/](http://ALTAC.WEB.UNC.EDU/)

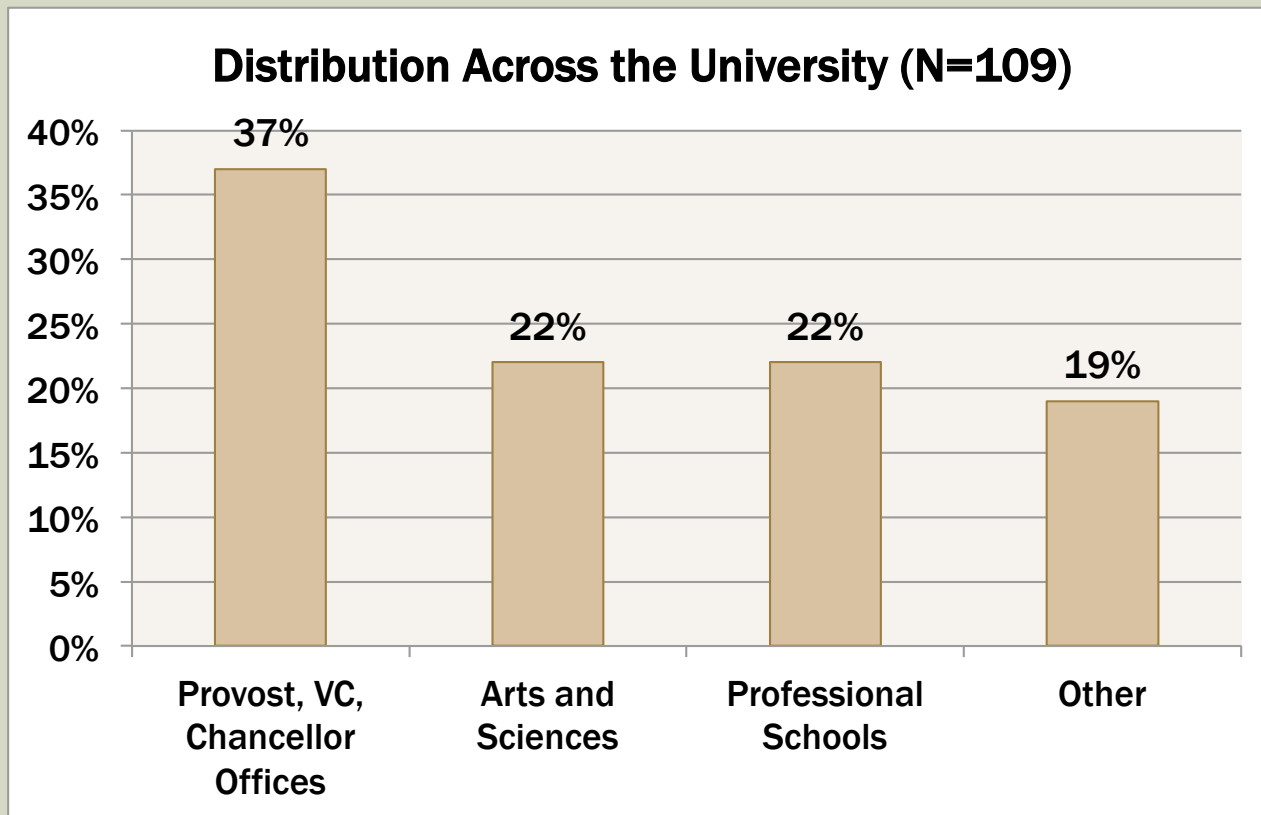
Survey Report  
10 June 2014

# DEMOGRAPHICS

Altacs at a  
Glance

# SURVEY POPULATION

- 139 EPA Non-Faculty with PhDs/EdDs surveyed (excluding Research Associates and TT administrators)
  - 109 responded (78.4%)

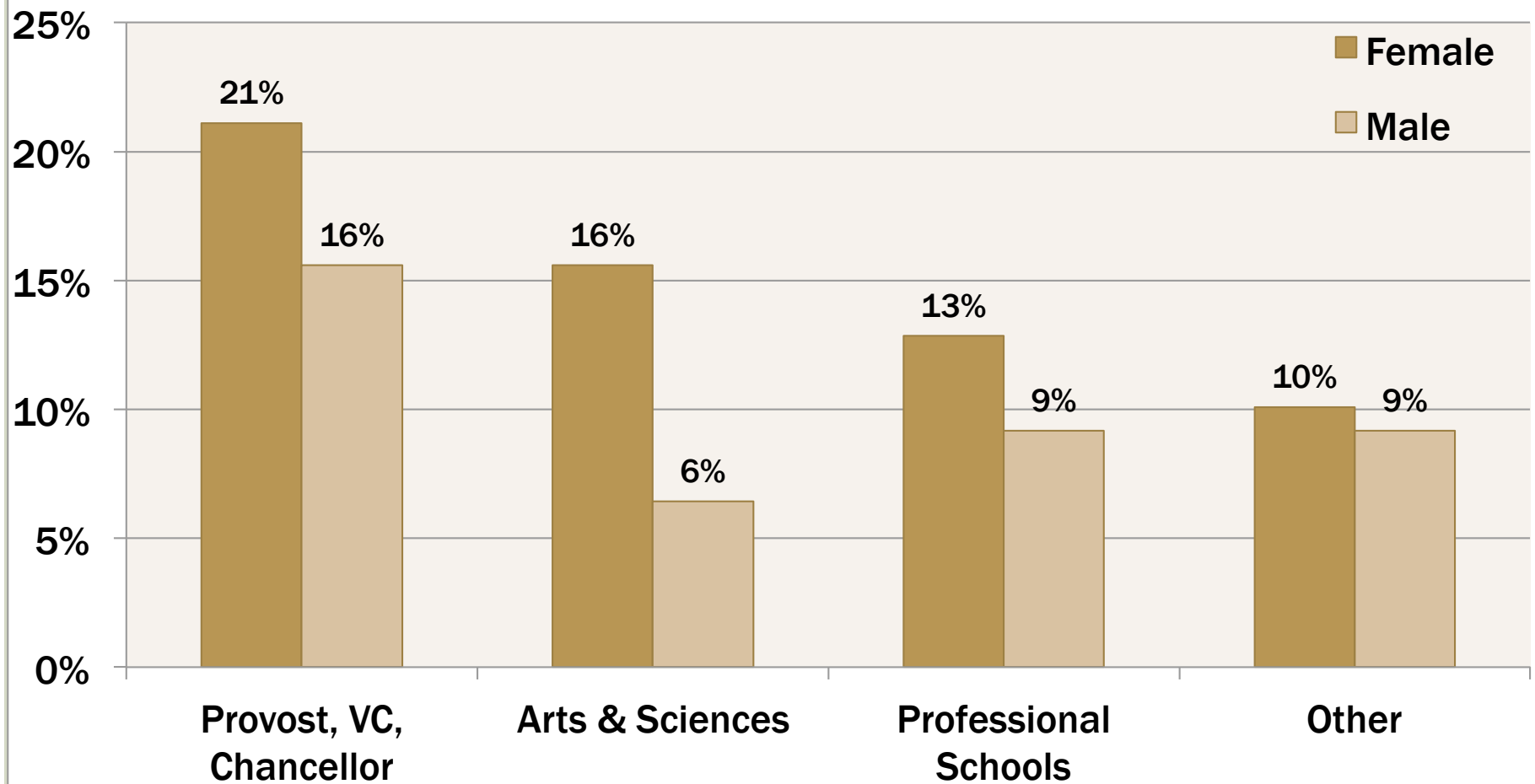


# MANY CHOSE TO BE ALTACS

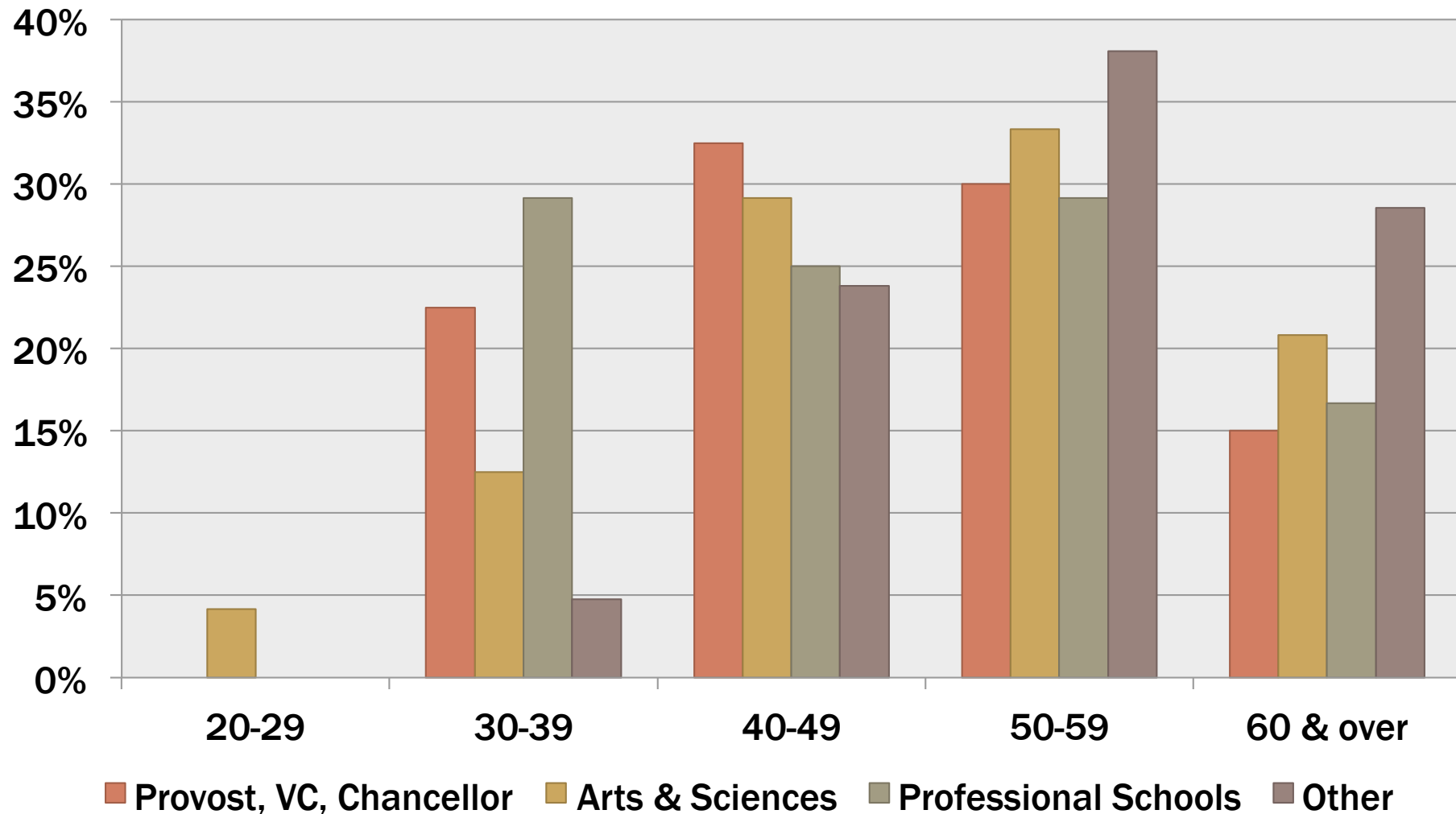
- “My intent all along has been college administration rather than teaching or research. I earned my Ph.D. in order to be qualified for senior administrative positions. I did not land in administration because I could not find a job or get tenure as a faculty member.”
- “I never wanted to be a professor. Always wanted to do research and knew that there were some research-only jobs ..., but didn't know much about them (or about how many were actually out there) until late in my grad student years when I started looking for what I was going to do next.”
- “Altac status has been a good career path for me, not always clear or secure, but I have had the freedom to make choices about my work that I would not have been able to make if I had been on a tenure track.”

# WOMEN ARE THE MAJORITY (60%)

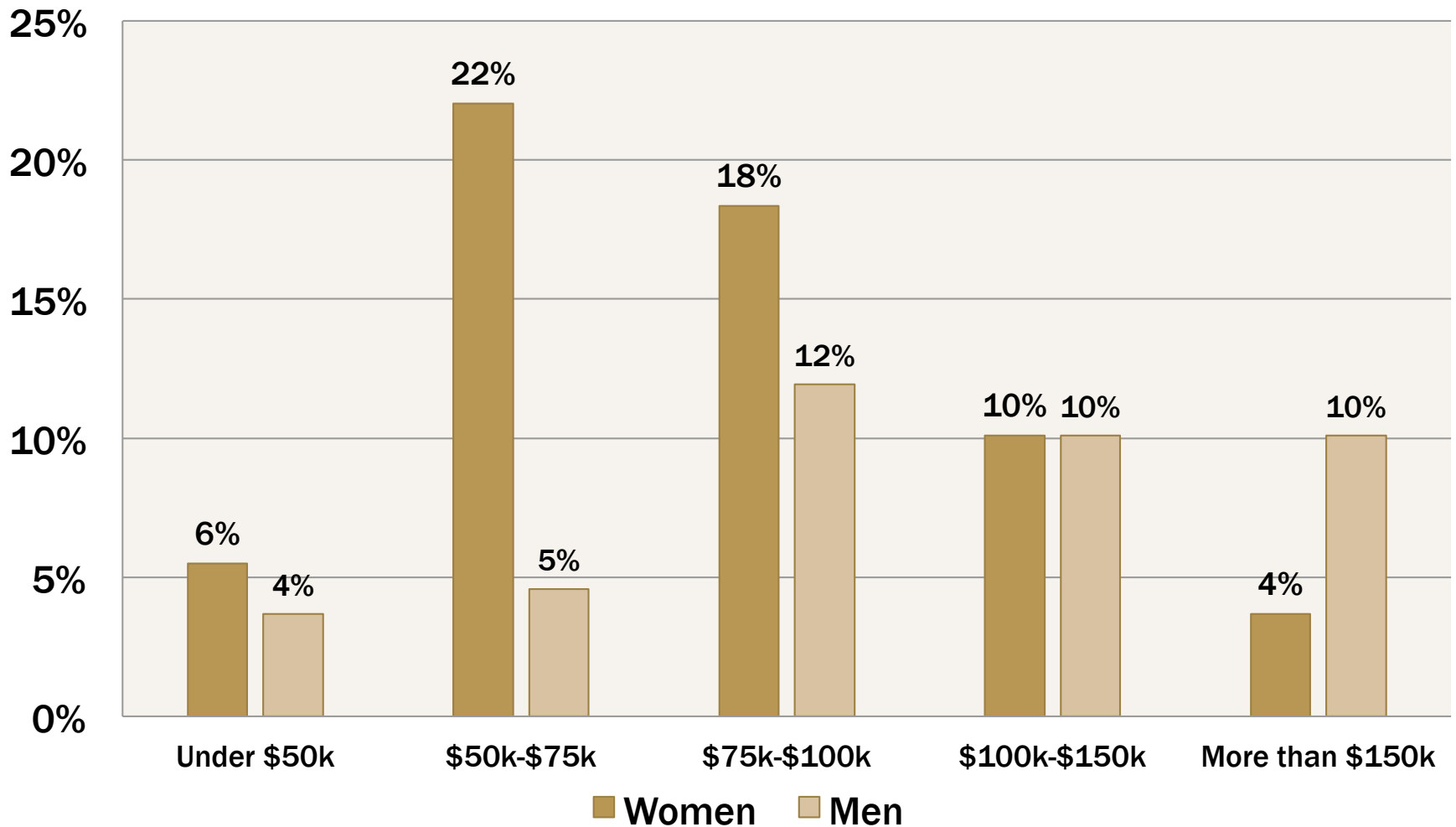
**Gender Distribution Across the University**



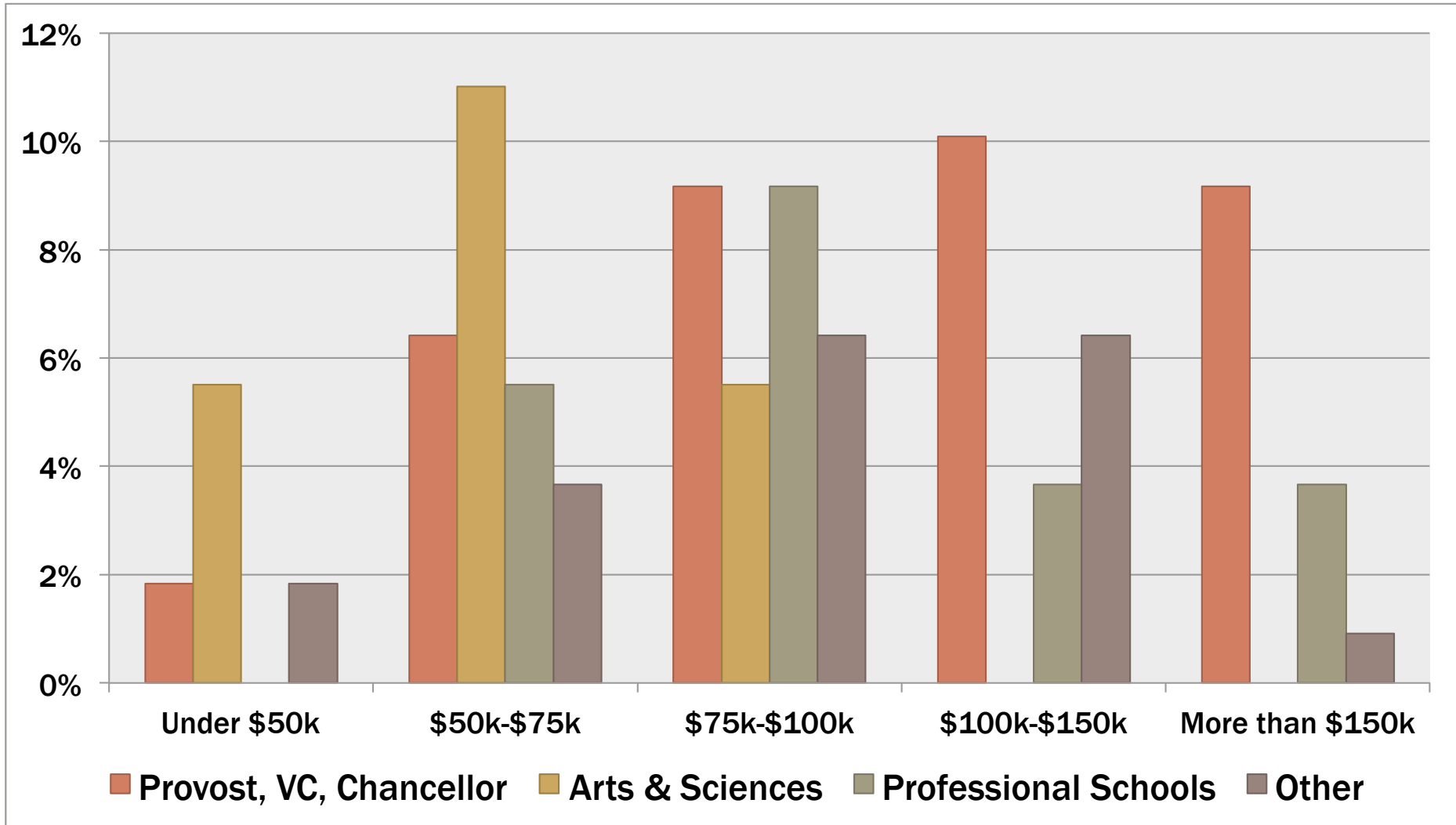
# AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALTACS



# SALARY DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER



# SALARY BY DIVISION

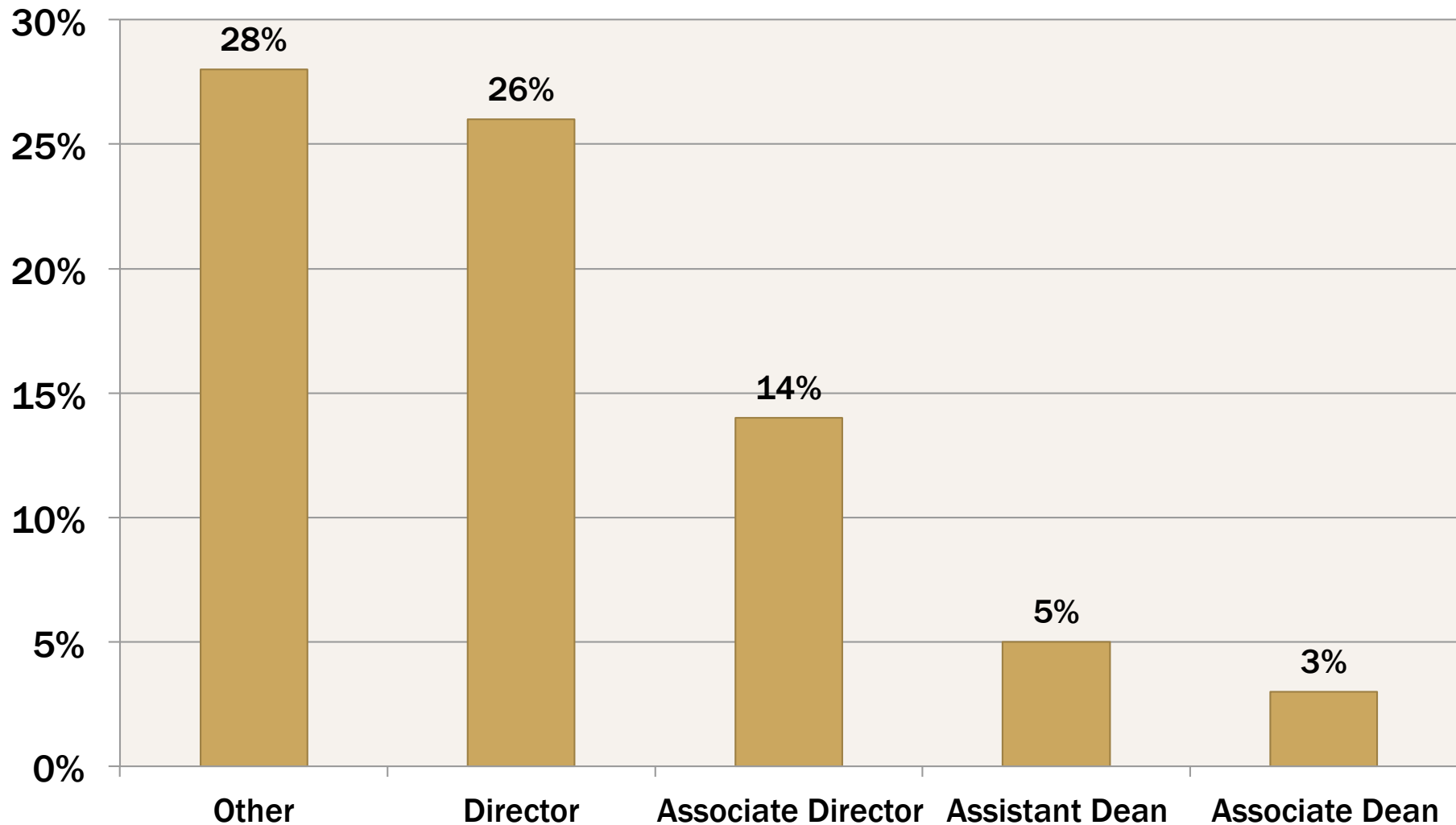




# MEN TEND TO EARN MORE THAN WOMEN

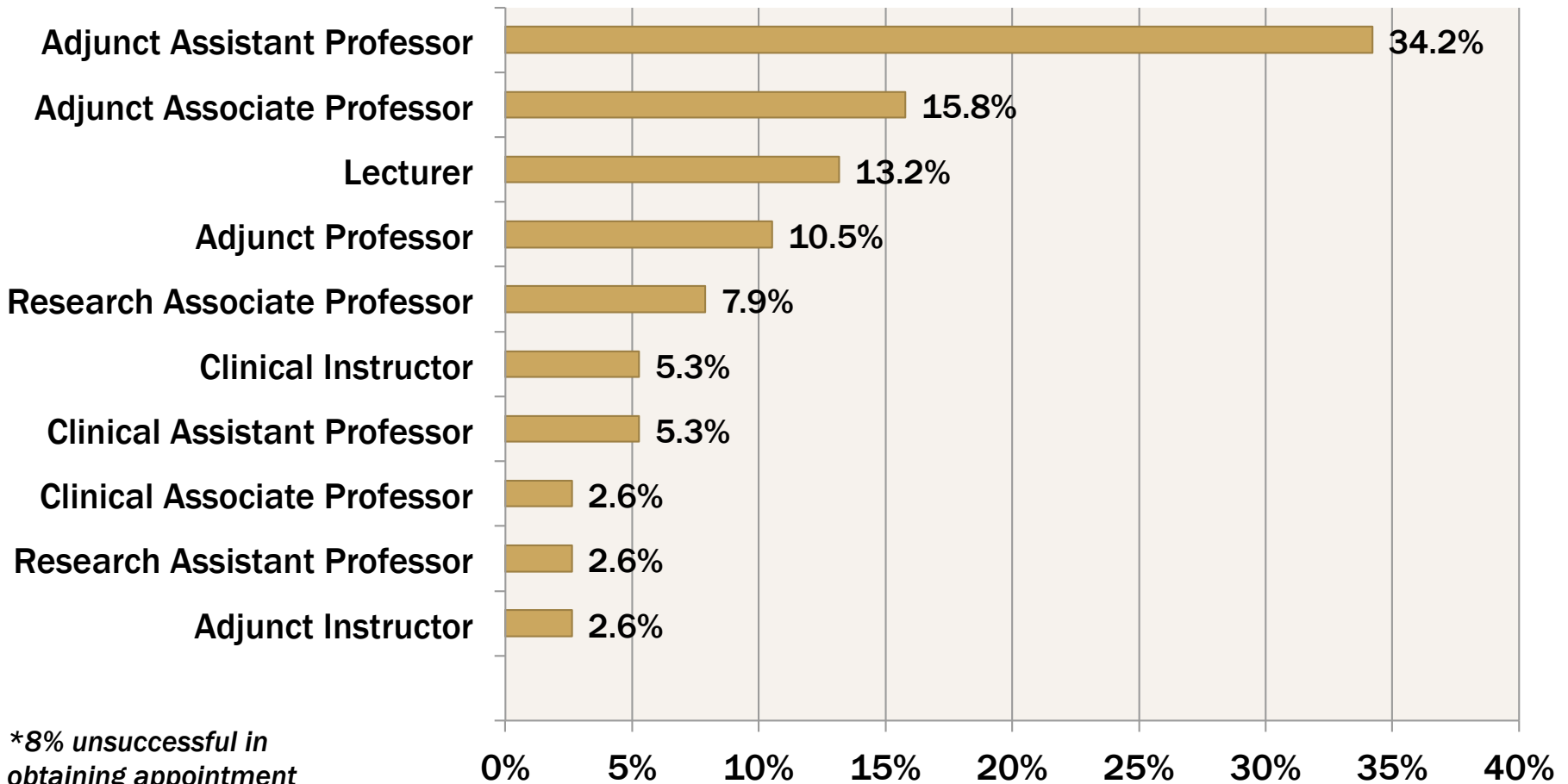
- More than half of the survey respondents earn \$50,000-\$100,000 per year (FTE)
  - Arts and Sciences altacs are all paid under \$100,000
  - Altacs in the Professional schools are all paid *more* than \$50k
  - Most of the altacs in the other two categories are paid *over* \$100,000
- Men tend to out earn women as the salary increases.
- Put another way, most of the high-earning altacs on campus are men, with a clustering of lower-earning women (\$30-\$75K), particularly in Arts and Sciences.

# TYPICAL PRIMARY RANK TITLES INCLUDE



# 39% HOLD A SECONDARY FACULTY APPOINTMENT\*

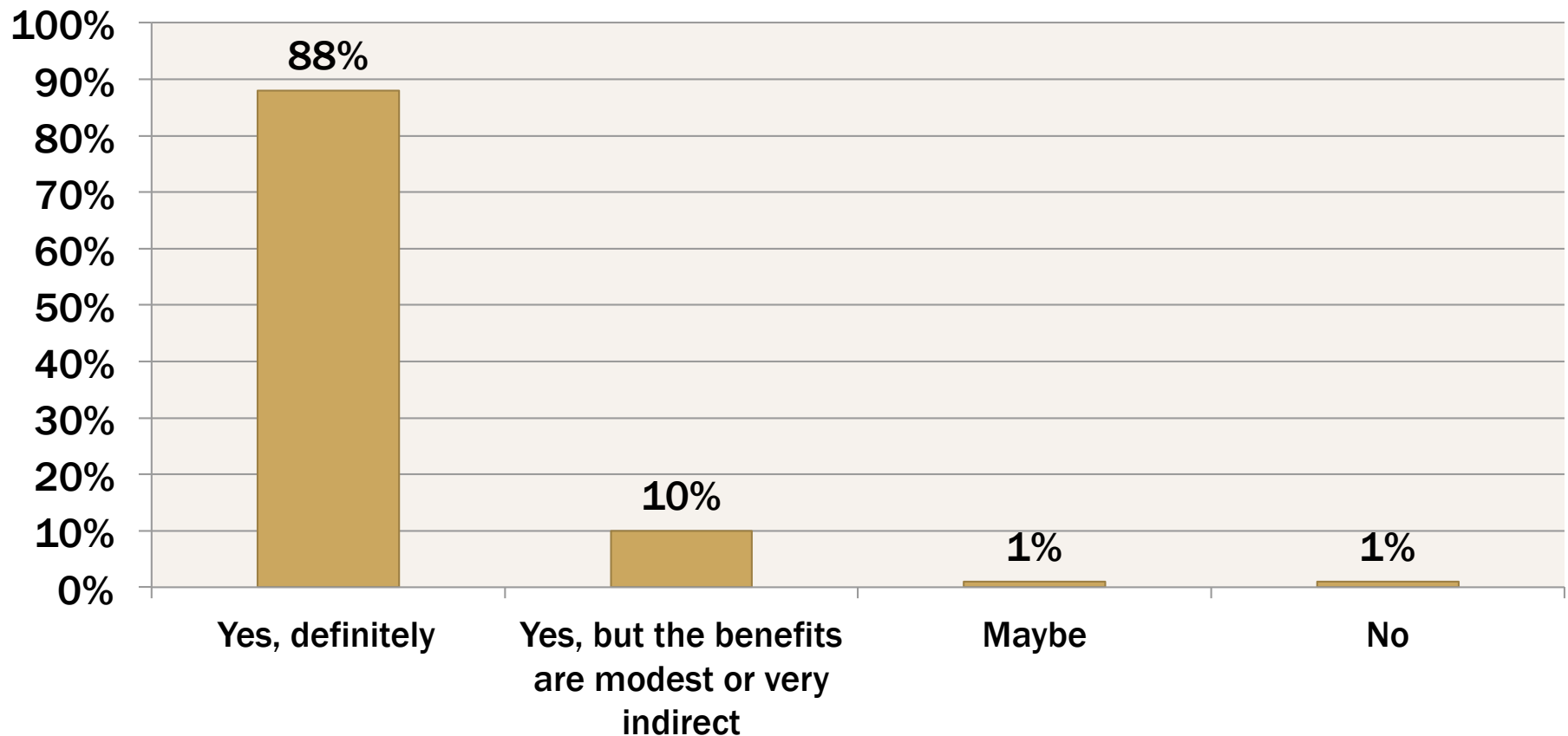
## Secondary Faculty Rank Titles



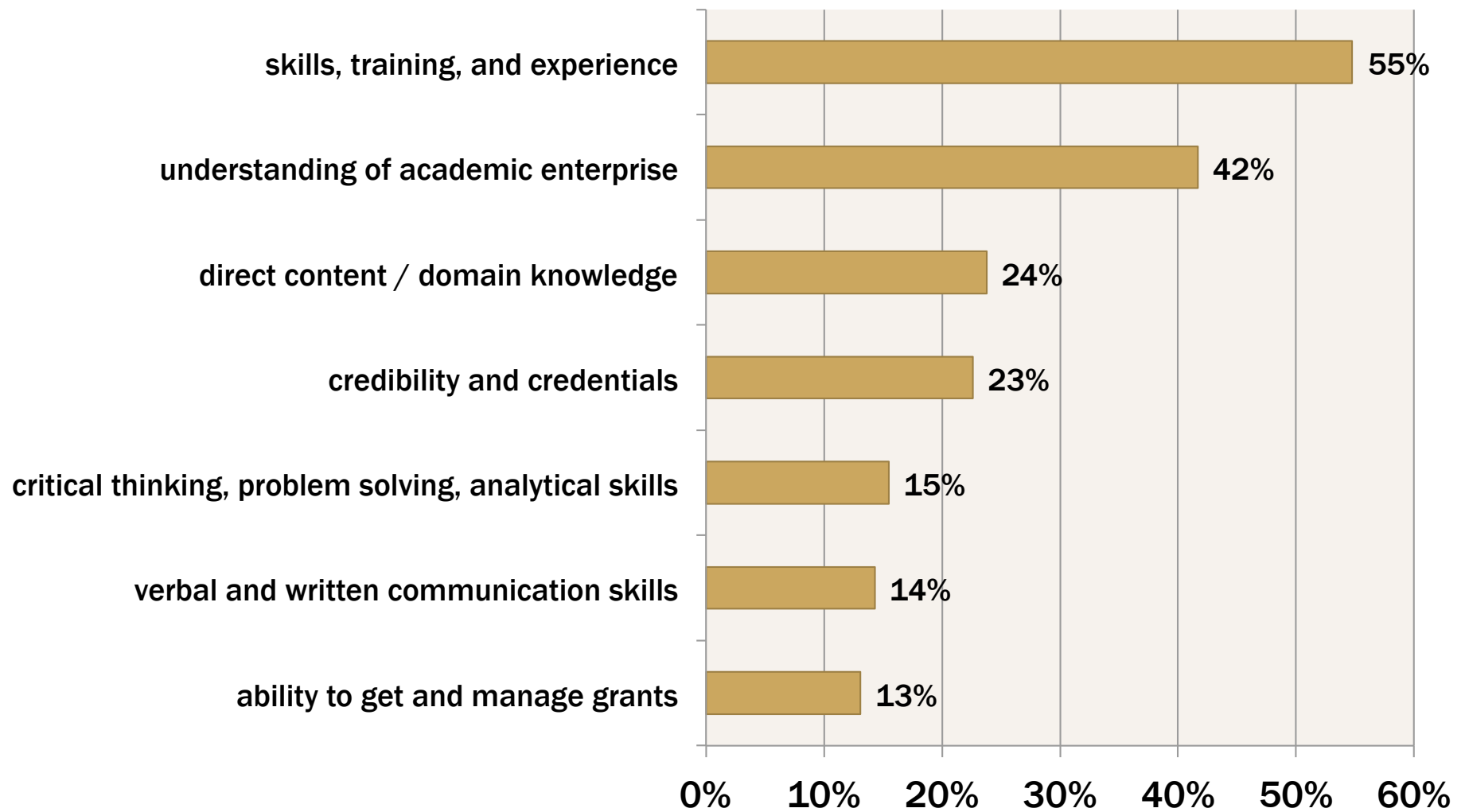
# A CLOSER LOOK

# 64% SAID THEIR PhD WAS PREFERRED OR REQUIRED FOR JOB

Do you think your Ph.D. brings direct or indirect benefits to your ability to conduct your current job?



# TOP 7 REPORTED BENEFITS OF PhD TO JOB / UNIT



# BENEFITS OF PhD FOR THE JOB

- “When working with Graduate students, postdocs, research associates and their faculty mentors and supervisors, it is important to understand the ‘business’ of the academic and research enterprise and what is required for achievement in academia.”
- “Being considered a peer is essential in establishing a deep and extensive network with other faculty.”
- “I also think that having a Ph.D. intimidates some; I believe I have been overlooked or denied positions because of my Ph.D. (‘over qualified’ ‘won’t stay long’, etc.)”

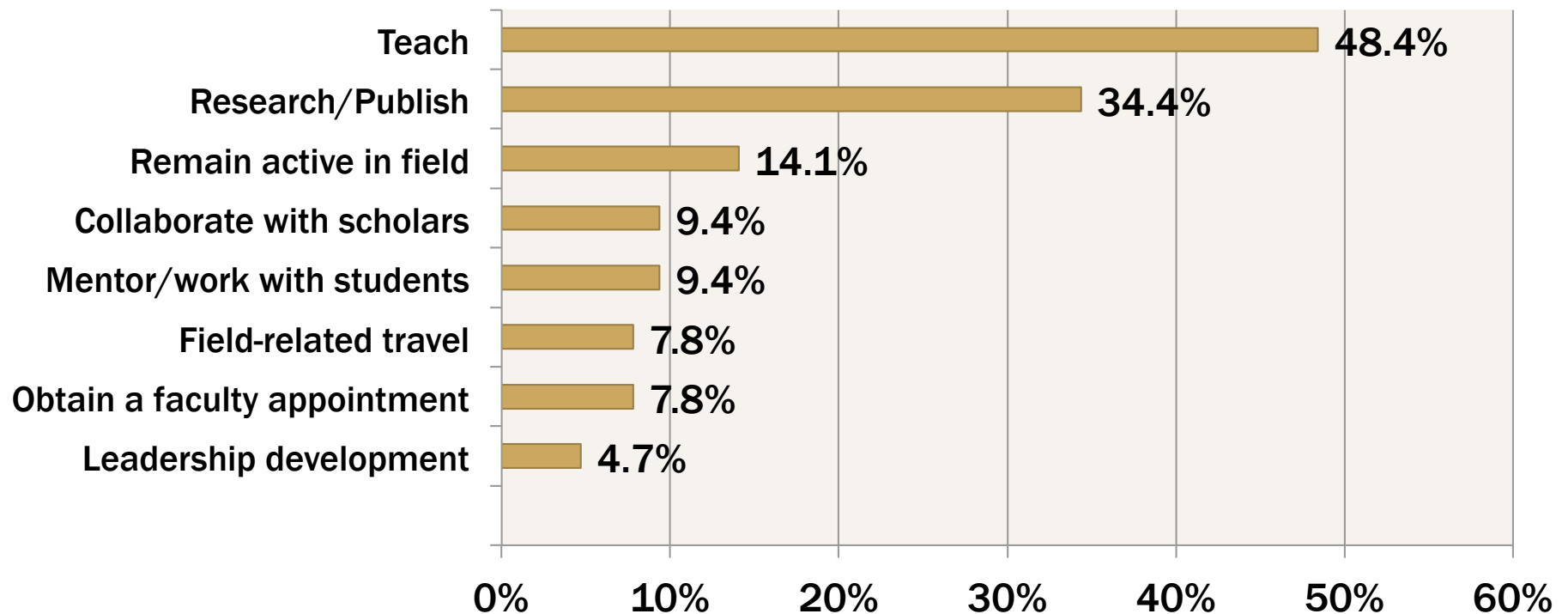
# 73% ENGAGED IN PROFESSIONAL, SERVICE, PEDAGOGICAL AND/OR SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES





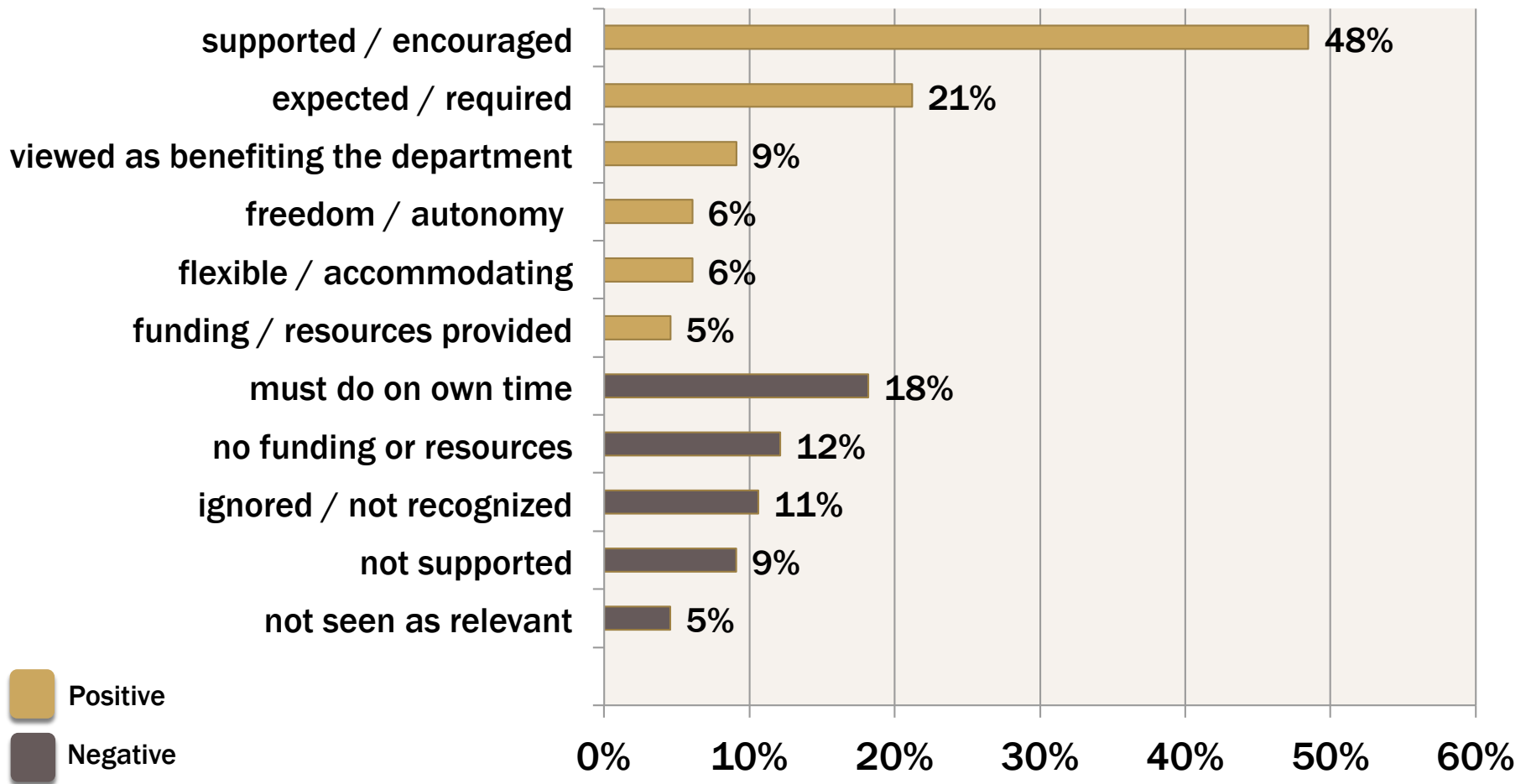
# 64% INTERESTED IN ENGAGING IN SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

- **16% noted the need for flexible time, time off, or sabbatical time to pursue scholarly activities**
  - “I am struggling to make this a priority, so I think my answer is more about what I am hoping and trying to do. I am hoping to do research ... I am also hoping to do research on the outcomes and success measures of our program.”



# LIMITED RECOGNITION / SUPPORT FOR SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

## Supervisor Attitudes



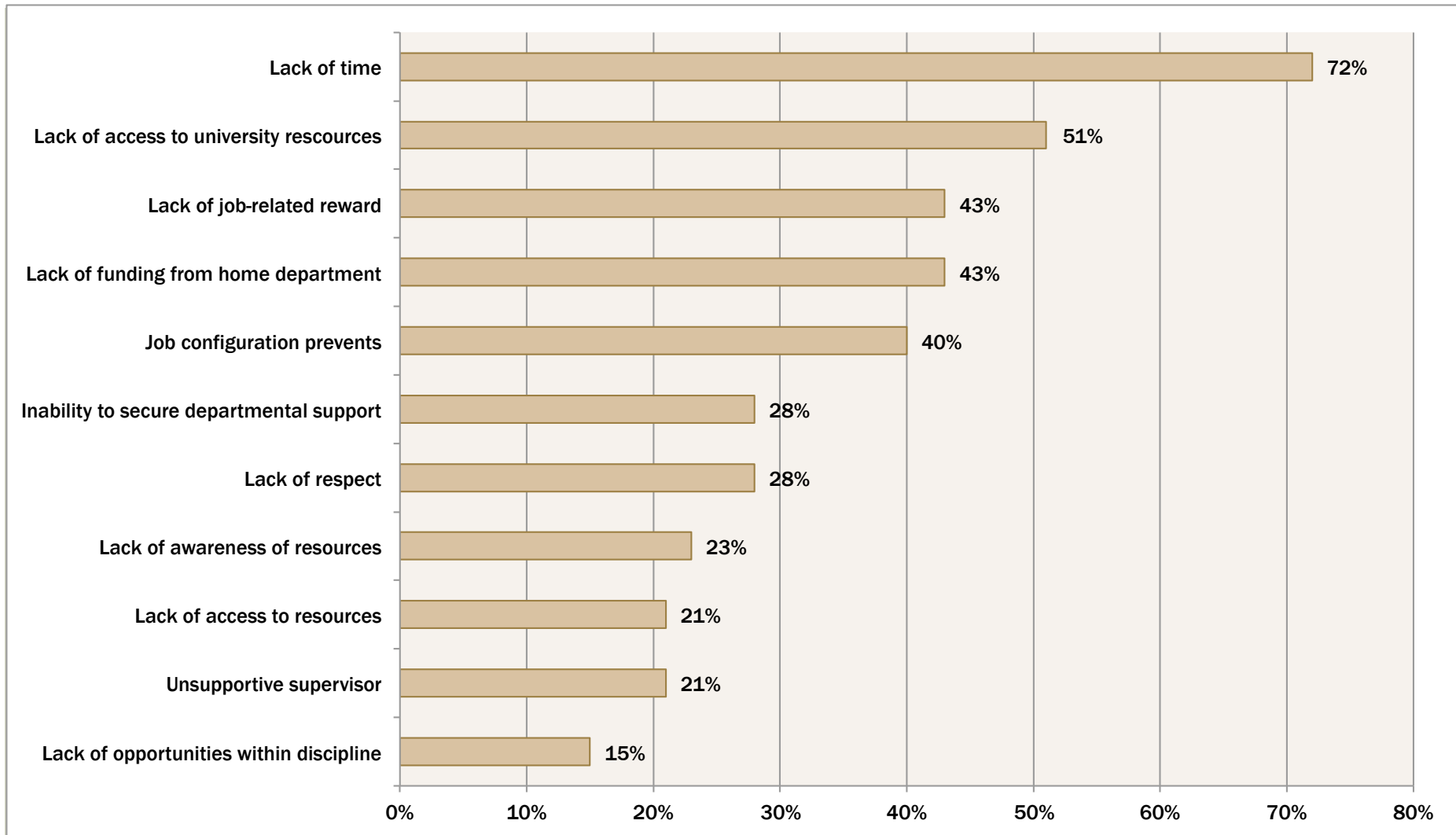
# SUPERVISOR SUPPORT FOR SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

- “I am given full freedom by my supervisor to engage in these activities, as she knows that I will be judicious about finding the right balance. She understands that it connects our office with the larger campus in deep and meaningful ways. Oddly enough, the department in which I teach is more or less dismissive of my contributions to its curriculum. I’ve never quite been able to fathom that...”
- “I am autonomous in my work and thus, contributions outside my funded projects are entirely voluntary. Ironically, my ‘outside’ work has led to grant funding more often than my funded research efforts. My supervisor is supportive of my work.”

# LIMITED RECOGNITION / SUPPORT FOR SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

- “My scholarship is what I do ‘on the side’ ‘in my spare time.’ It is not a formal part of my job description but is important to me professionally. I’ve asked for research assistants and have been denied by supervisors since my scholarship does not directly relate to my primary job responsibilities, even though I proposed viable mechanisms to incorporate undergraduate and graduate student research assistants to help move along my research, this assistance was not approved. Also, I cannot write for funding to support my research like a typical faculty member. No travel assistance is provided either for presenting at conferences.”
- “The activities are supported in the sense that I regularly get funding from my department to underwrite professional travel and ongoing participation in my professional organizations (which also benefits my work for the department), and in the sense that I have the freedom to manage my own time and make space for these activities. They are not supported in the sense that I get no recognition in my annual reviews for these activities and there is no prospect of a raise, or any form of advancement in this job as a result of those activities. My supervisor hardly even asks about them and shows no interest in talking to me about them. This is dispiriting.”

# 47% REPORT FACING BARRIERS TO ENGAGING IN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES



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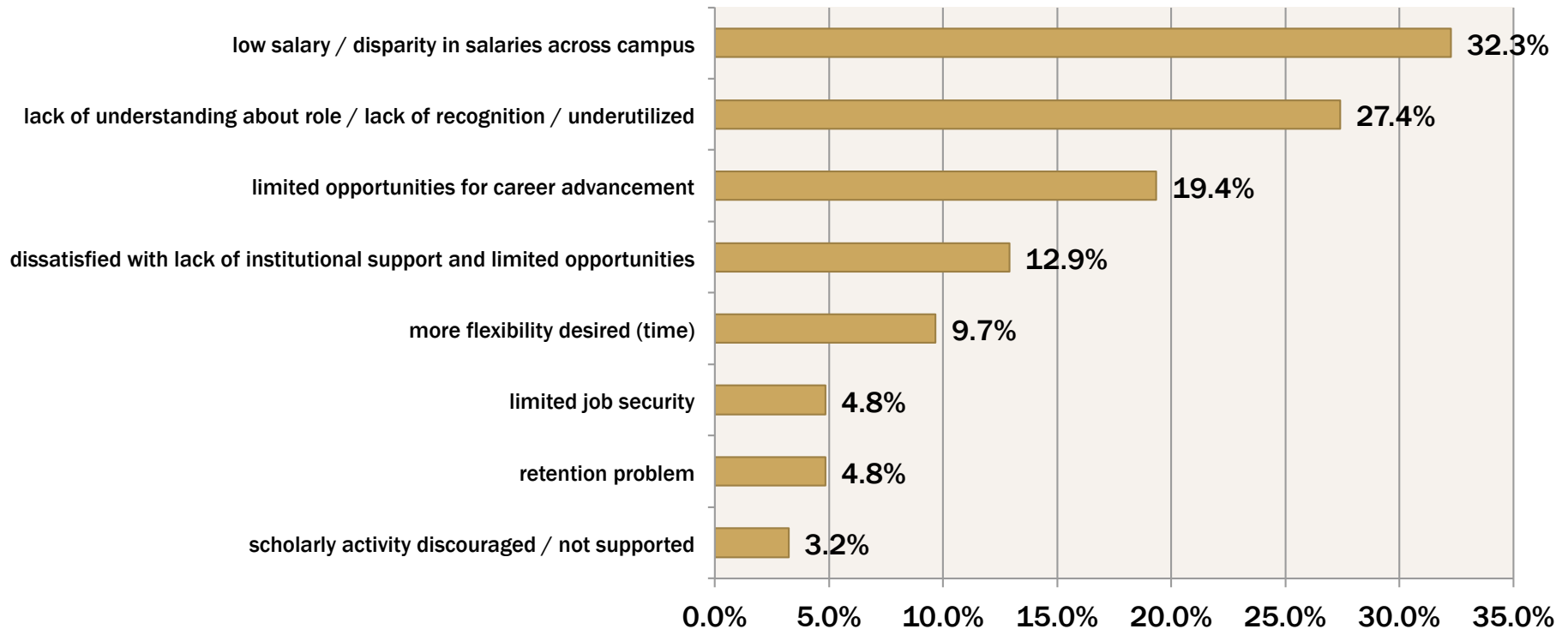
- “I believe that I have been overlooked to teach at UNC because I do not fit whatever mold they are looking for. Instead outside people are brought in who have less experience, and lower degrees than me.”
- “Besides personal enrichment and the joys of disciplinary engagement, I fear that participating in more professional activities will not actually benefit my career because my current position is kind of a dead end. Where do I go from here?”
- “There is no structure for the advancement and promotion of EPA non-faculty. ... My job responsibilities continue to increase with no increase in pay or official position title. If I were EPA Faculty, I would have easily been promoted at least once by now. In order to achieve this in current position, my only recourse is to leave the university for a higher position elsewhere, and then return later at a comparable position.”

# JOB SATISFACTION TEMPERED BY FRUSTRATIONS

■ Most are satisfied (86%)

■ 28% Very Satisfied | 30% Satisfied | 28% Somewhat Satisfied

## Comments Related to Job Frustration



# JOB SATISFACTION

- “In general, I am very satisfied. I feel I am recognized as a significant contributor to the intellectual direction of my program ... I feel very intellectually engaged. I am pleased by my ability to apply for research grants and awards, etc. ... I do wish that teaching were central to my work ... I also wish I were able to get a research/writing paid leave to really focus on this book I want to write.”
- “I really like my current job. I get to work with data, analyze data, design and administer surveys and create reports that people actually use ... I don't have to publish academic journal articles, which I realized after I was in grad school that I didn't enjoy very much. And in my current job I don't have to bring in grant money.”
- “I have great freedom to ‘self-direct’ my scholarly activities, my classroom teaching, and my mentoring of graduate students. At the same time, not being tenure-track faculty frees me from (or makes more optional) certain administrative burdens (as well as the need to pursue tenure!), so in some ways I feel I have GREATER freedom to be a scholar than my tenure-track colleagues ... I have used the freedom of my ‘altac’ status to publish [extensively] ... and serving on boards of various service organizations.”



# FRUSTRATIONS

- “my current employment situation is dissatisfactory for numerous reasons: extremely low salary, lack of job security, lack of recognition for my work, job description that does not reflect my actual duties, extremely ineffective supervisor, extremely difficult human resources manager, lack of opportunities for advancement, lack of alternative career paths. I have been fairly vocal about most of these issues, but have been told nothing can be done to resolve them.”
- “I am dissatisfied with the lack of University support for my sort of position, ranging from lack of a salary line ... which seems to be available in most other institutions. Most of all, there is no provision for progress through the rank pay increments and I feel that ... I am about \$10K--\$15K a year behind my peers.”
- I feel that I am vastly underpaid for what I do, my job title does not reflect accurately what I do, and I'm somewhat exploited in my job (asked to do things far outside my job description, with a sometimes unbearable workload). I don't want to complain too vociferously, especially given the current state of the economy and the number of people who would jump at the chance to have my job, even for less money. But, nonetheless, I do often feel undervalued.”

# PROFESSIONAL GROWTH IS AN ISSUE

- Respondents were split on having a clear idea of their professional career path, 49% indicated they have a clear idea of their career path while 51% indicated they did not.
  - A dozen comments were related to limits on career paths imposed by the culture and structure of positions at UNC
  - 6 people indicated a plan to retire
  - 4 cited a required of faculty ranks for position mobility
  - 4 indicated they were either looking for alternative employment outside of UNC
  - Others indicated alternative employment as the next stepping stone

“Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a career path or trajectory at UNC, which forces staff to look at positions at other institutions. Unlike for faculty, there does not seem to be any upward mobility.”

“Perhaps a more organized discussion of what ‘alt-ac’ careers can, should, or might look like would benefit others in positions such as ours, as well as graduate students who are looking for alternative options to the tenure-track luge course.”

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

# SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

- “a) opportunity for admins to work towards tenure; b) altacs to be able to have full faculty appointments in addition to their admin roles (it works the other way for academics who move into admin); c) encouraging departments to consider academic components of administrative positions”
- “Professor of the practice category in the College / Mechanism to transition to faculty status / More consistent Adjunct policies across campus units / Awards for being outstanding administrator / Access to more Center Director and Executive Director opportunities”
- “Opening of higher administrative positions to altac staff as well as faculty; creation of a program of research support for altac scholars; increase of the stipend for altac scholars who teach (mine is the same as a grad student or recent PhD with far less experience); creation of a leadership development program that is workable and appropriate for altacs -- and building of pathways for us to follow out of that into campus leadership roles. Mentoring would also be helpful.”

# SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

- “I think that reward structures that help to make up for the lower pay and lack of upward mobility would be helpful. For instance, Intel gives employees a sabbatical for every 7 years of work. A similar sabbatical program would be of benefit to UNC - these could be of varying duration with varying requirements on work is done during the sabbatical based on department or university policies. Or a program that grants some period of time to employees to pursue commercialization of technologies while having a promise that their jobs would be held for them.”
- “Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a career path or trajectory at UNC, which forces staff to look at positions at other institutions. Unlike for faculty, there does not seem to be any upward mobility.”
- “I would love to be able to have a 9- or 10-month contract so that I could do more research/writing in the summers, or to be able to work part-time in the summer to accommodate that. Or that I could get a significant research leave, for a summer or a semester.”

# PROMOTE THE UNIVERSITY MISSION “THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF OUR EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY AND STAFF” \*

- **Foster scholarly activities**
  - highlight scholarly contributions
  - encourage adjunct faculty appointments
  - flexible schedules to facilitate release time, sabbaticals, or overload teaching
- **Expand access to resources**
  - funding to pursue scholarly activities and attend conferences
  - internal fellowships
  - opportunities to serve as research assistant mentors
- **Encourage professional development**
  - mentoring
  - leadership development
  - pathways for advancement

\*UNC-CH Mission Statement, November 2009, BOG