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ATS Research Webinar on Chief Academic Officers



The Study

Conducted 2020-21 – survey to all chief academic officers plus 20 interviews

Purposes

Status of the Role—changes? nature of work? satisfaction and longevity? effectiveness?

Needed Changes in ATS Programming

Sample size of 136, 52% response rate

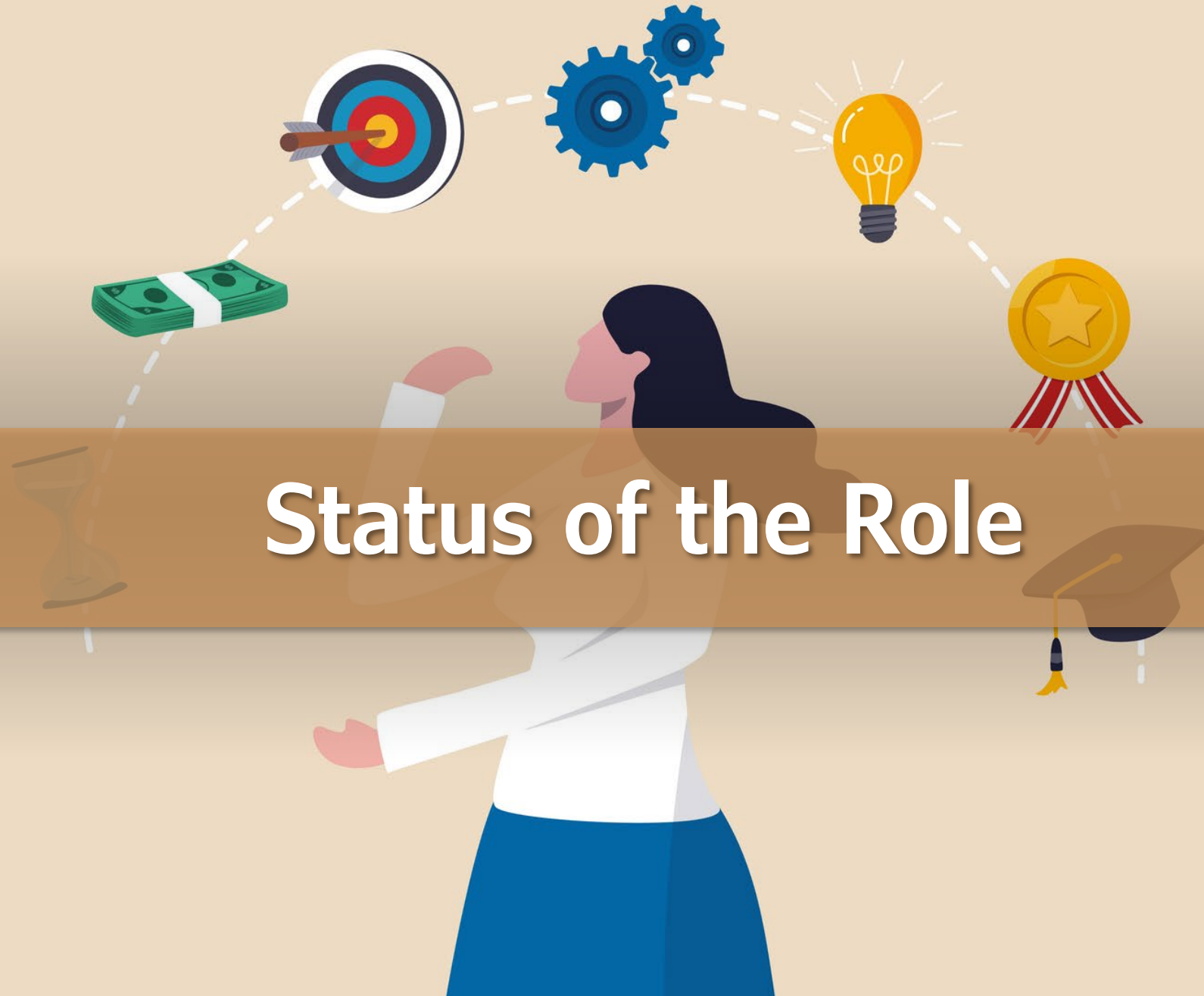
Very good representation by **type of school**

Ecclesial family, Size, Relatedness, Country, Carnegie type

Very good representation by **individual demographics**

Race, Gender

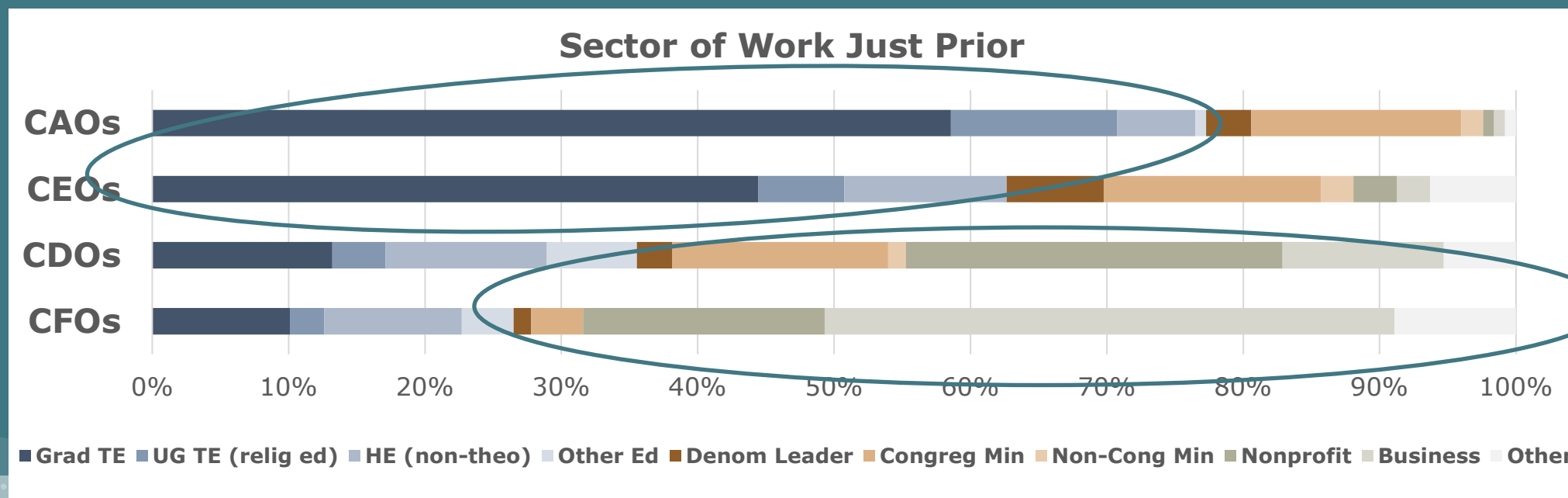




Status of the Role

Who are the Leaders?

- Avg 5.6 years service in role
- Prior experience—**Avg 1.1 years** as a CAO elsewhere
- 88% PhD + 17% Other doctorate; 55% MDiv
- Previous work
 - ✓ Congregational work (65%)
 - ✓ UG religious higher education (40%)
 - ✓ **Business** (23%)
- Just prior
 - ✓ Grad TE (59%), Congregational ministry (15%), UG Rel Ed (12%)



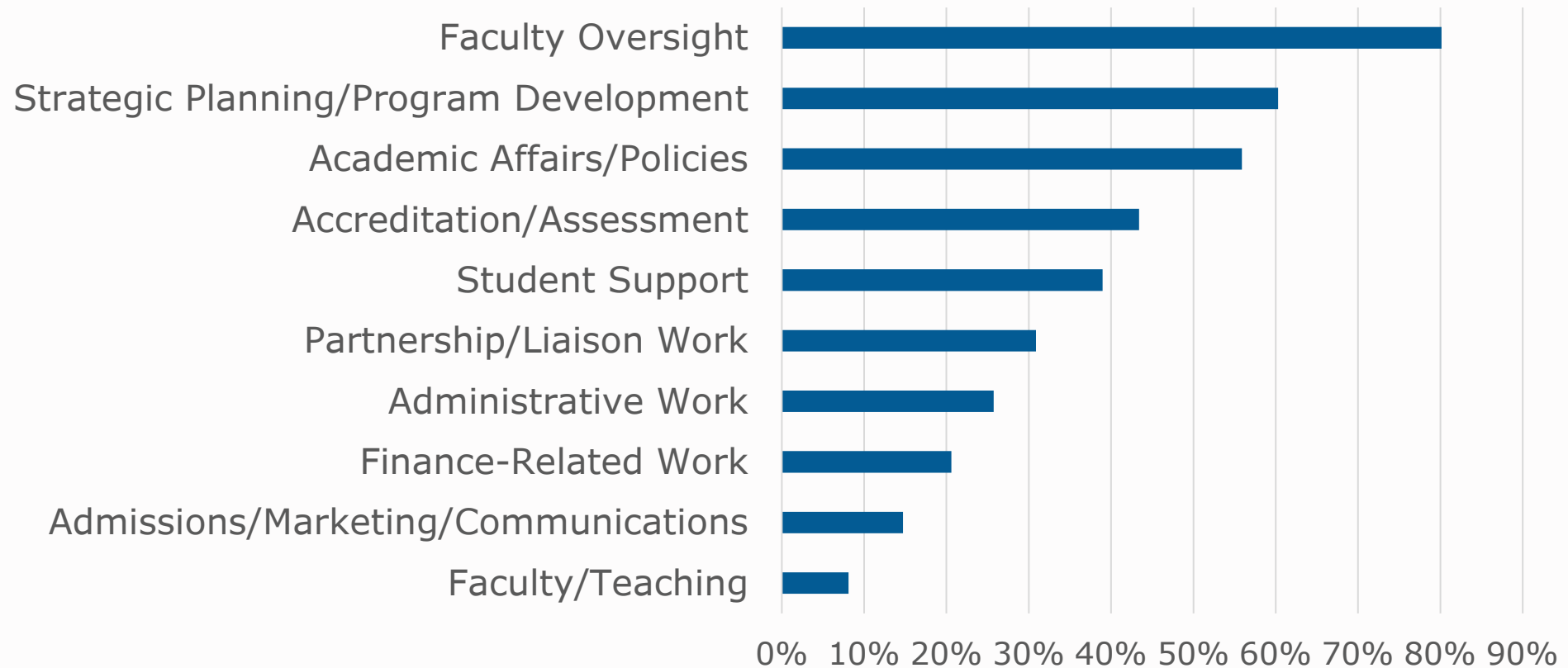
*It's the position that really
glues the institution
together.*

—CAO from largest, freestanding ML

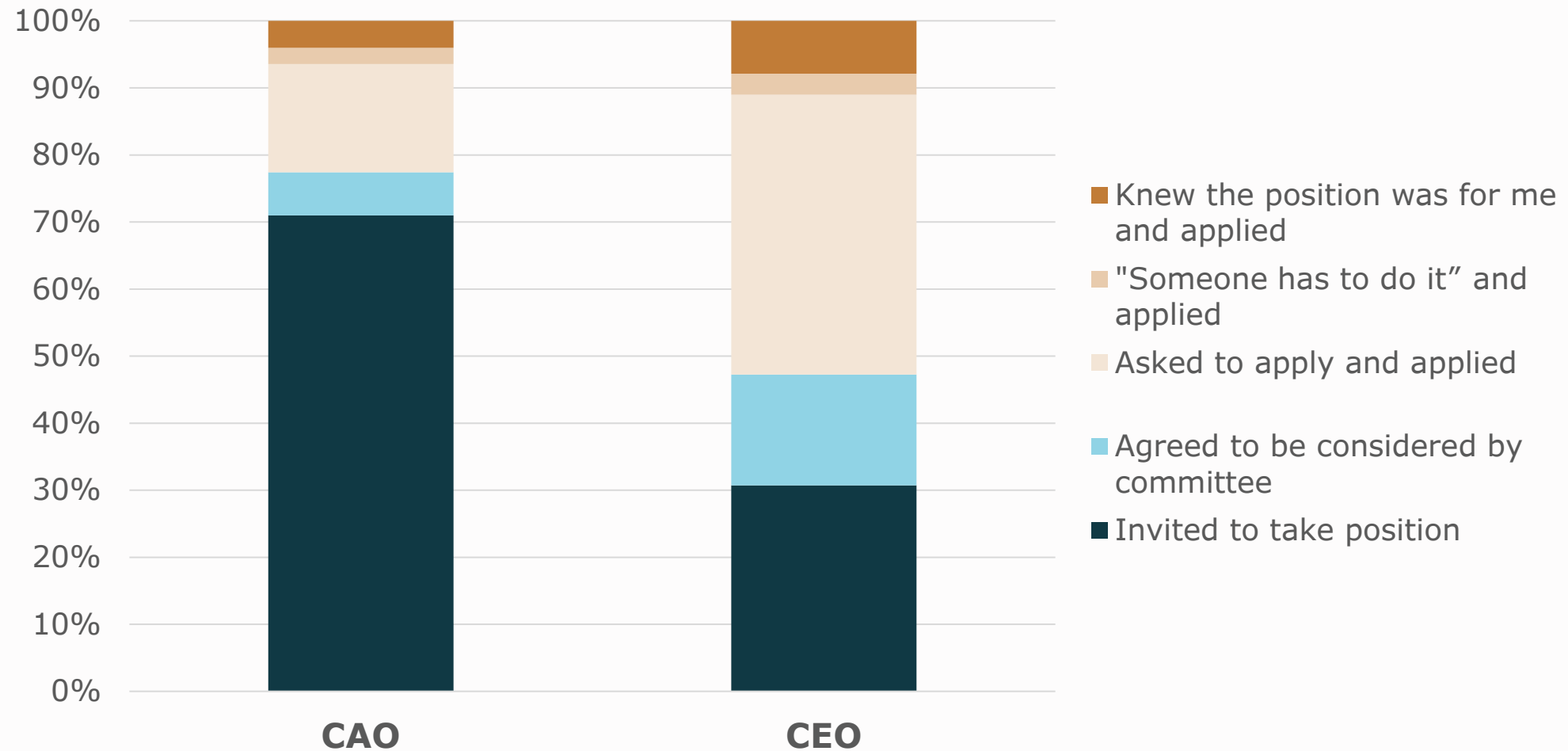


Roles & Responsibilities

CAO Primary Responsibilities



Paths to the Role



Longevity in the Role

Satisfaction in the Role?

Overall satisfied, but lowest of all C-suite roles

Most satisfied with (of 11 work features):

- Relationships with coworkers
- Work they do
- Relationship with faculty

Least satisfied with:

- Salary
- Supervision/oversight they receive

Largest gaps between importance and satisfaction:

- Functioning of work team
- Supervision/oversight they receive

Intentions to leave?

- 15% said they intended to leave their position in next 12 months (+13% not sure)
- Retire from current job—44% see themselves
- Actively looking for other jobs—mostly not looking but 6 out of 10 have thought about leaving

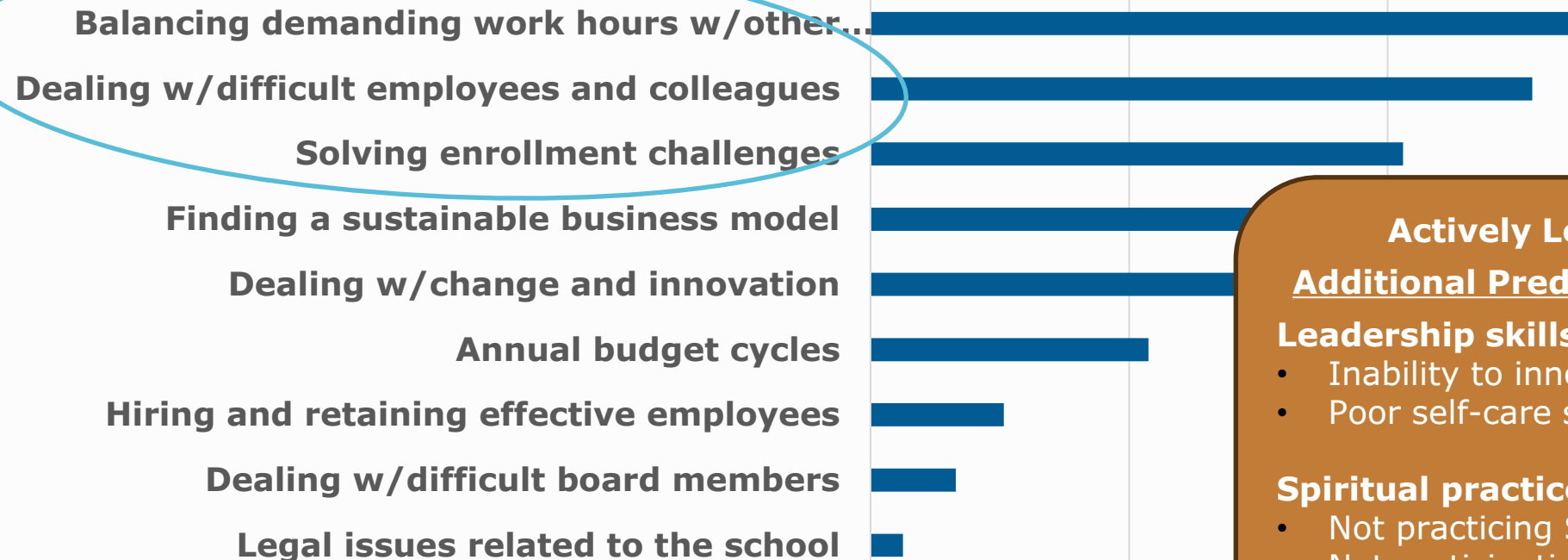
Longevity in the Role

Actively Looking—Strongest Predictors

Not stress but dissatisfaction:

- #1—Dissatisfaction w/CEO
- #2—Dissatisfaction w/work they do

Greatest Causes of Work-Related Stress



Actively Looking—Additional Predictive Factors

Leadership skills:

- Inability to innovate
- Poor self-care skills

Spiritual practices:

- Not practicing Sabbath
- Not participating in leadership of worship services





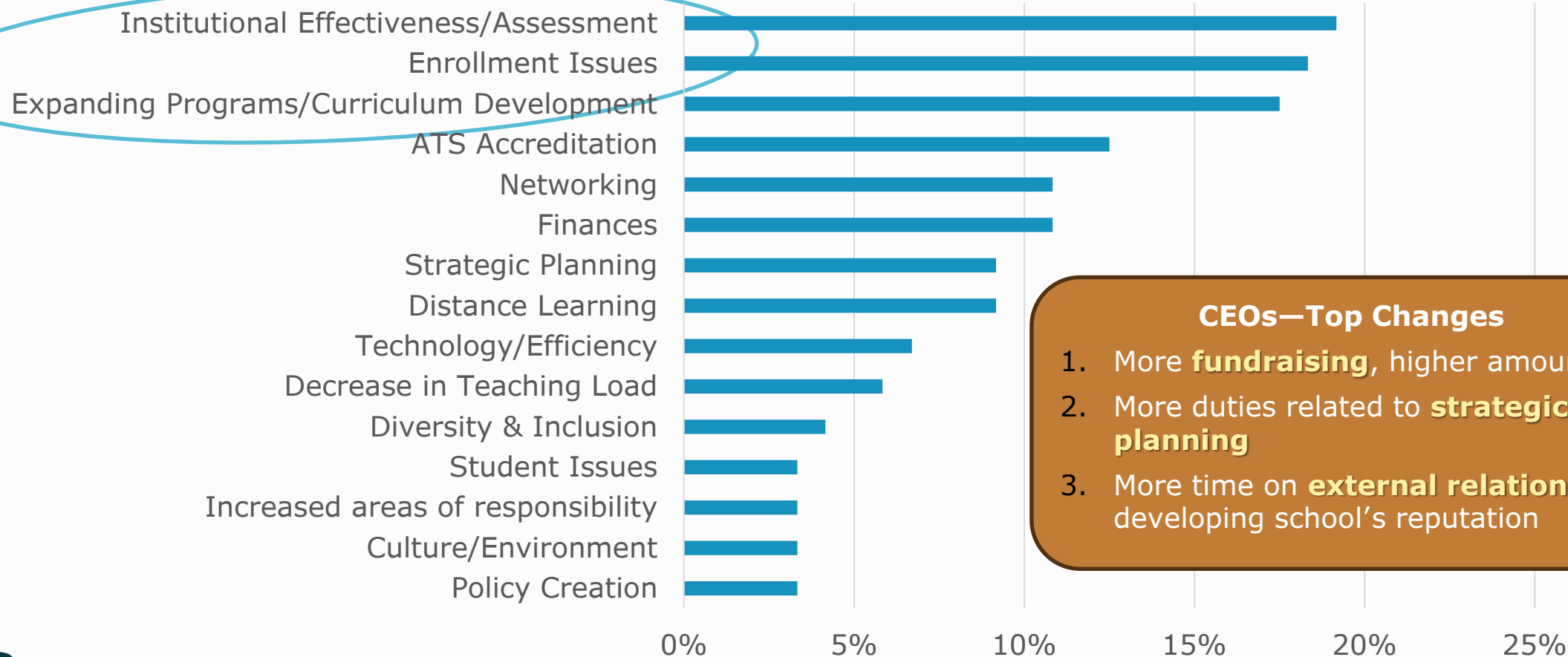
Nature of the Work

Changed Nature of Work

What was a surprise to me when I took on this role was the amount of reporting that has to be done.

—CAO from mid-sized, freestanding EV

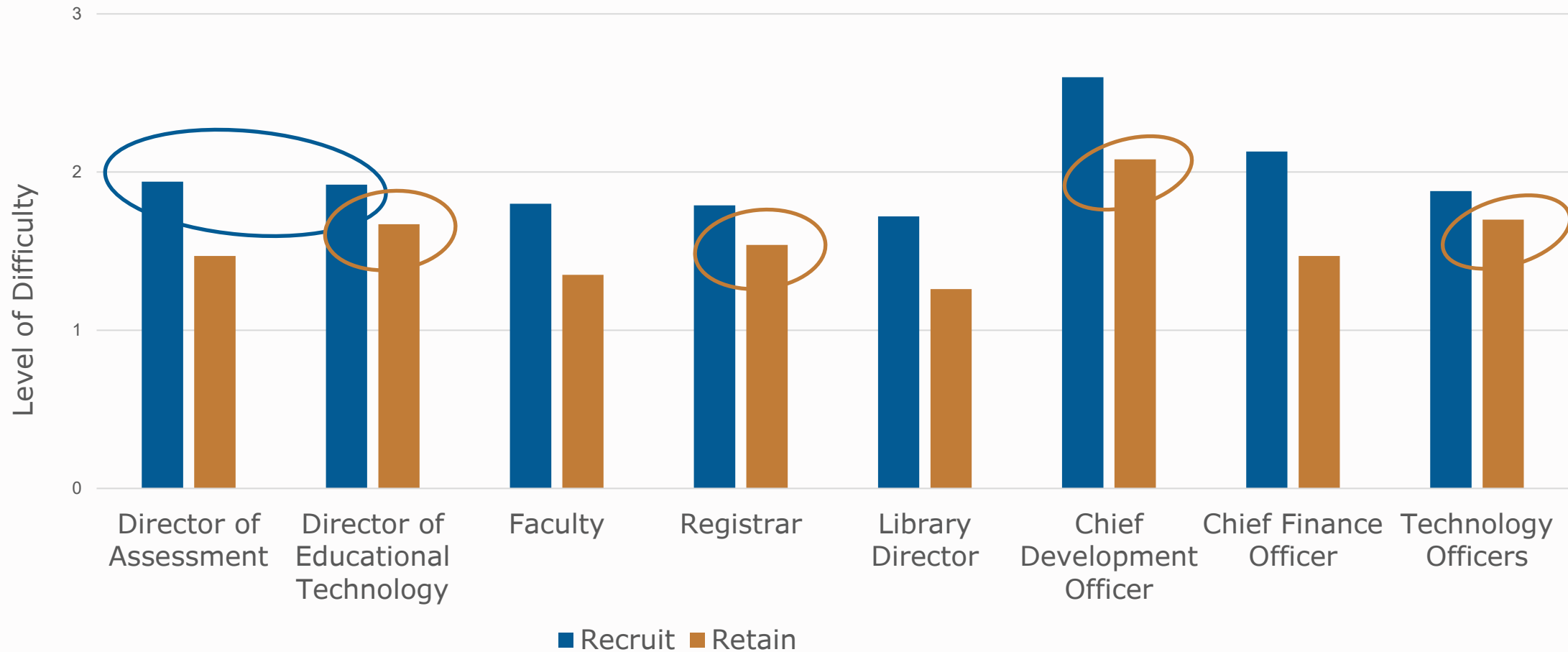
Compared to predecessor, how has your work changed?



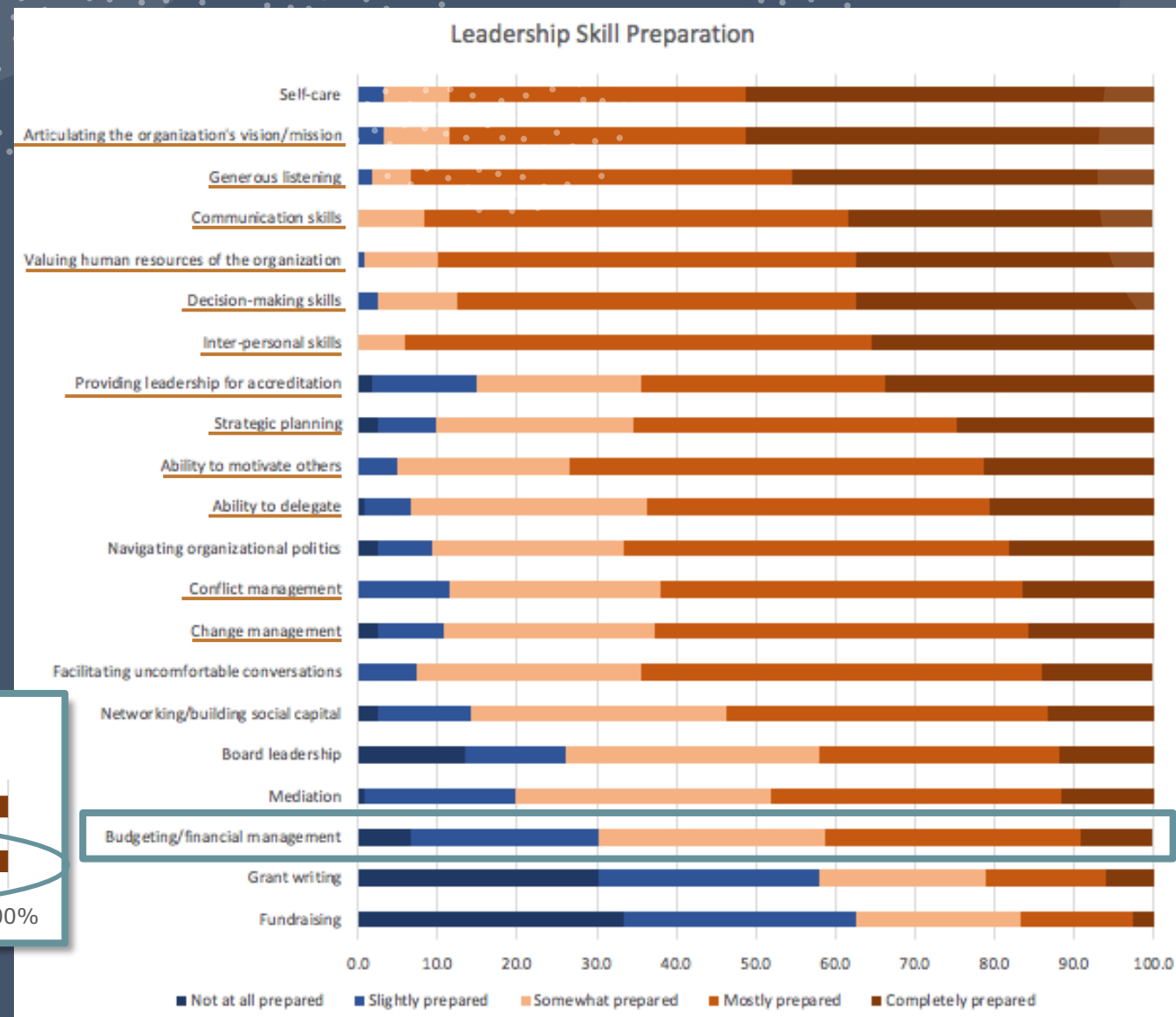
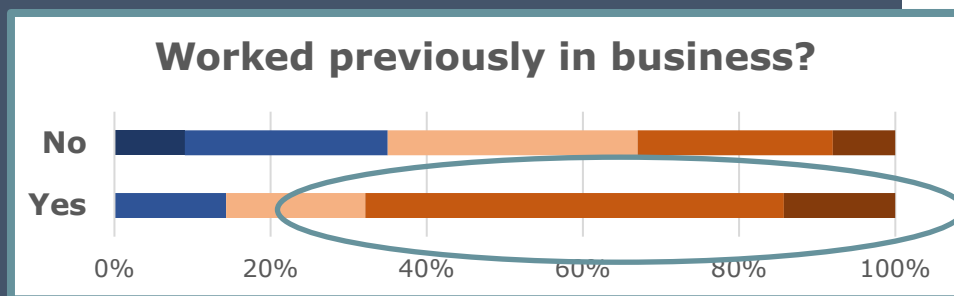
CEOs—Top Changes

1. More **fundraising**, higher amounts
2. More duties related to **strategic planning**
3. More time on **external relations**, developing school's reputation

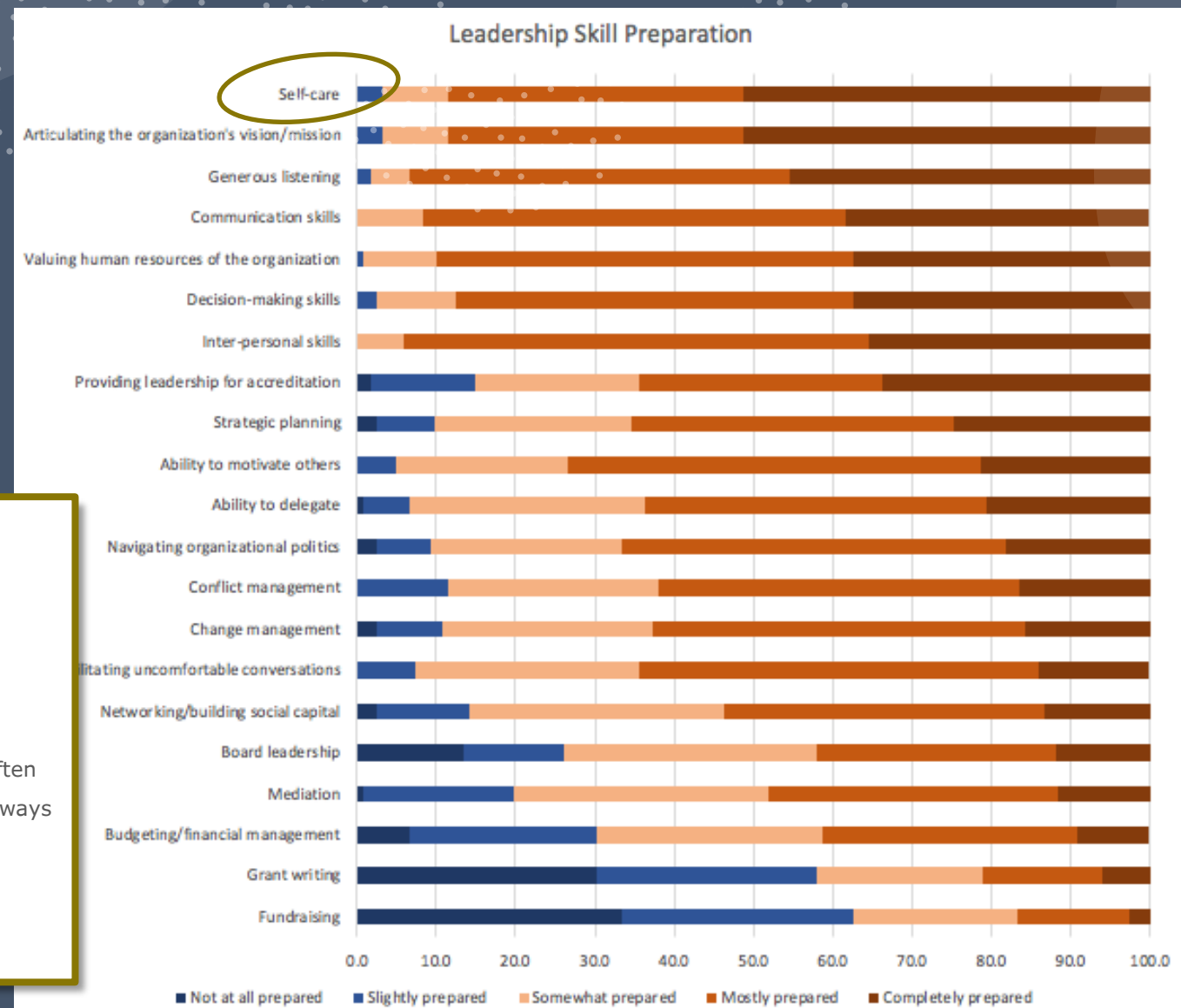
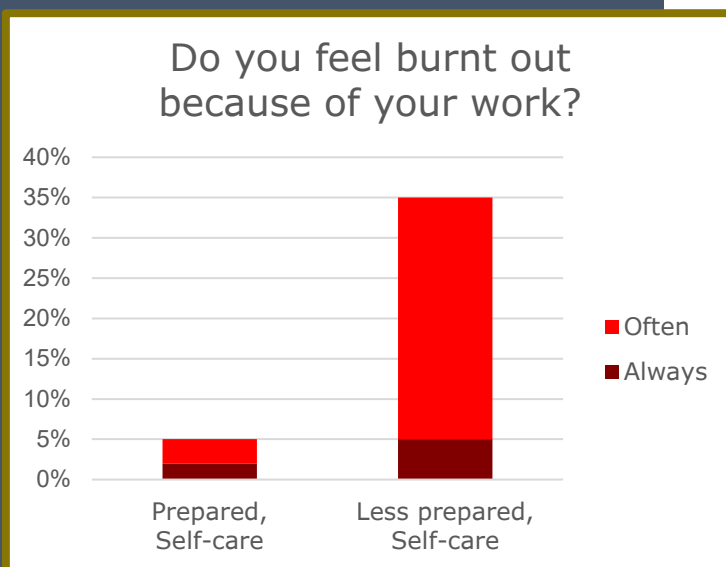
Recruiting/Retaining Employees



Leadership Preparation Gaps



Leadership Preparation Gaps



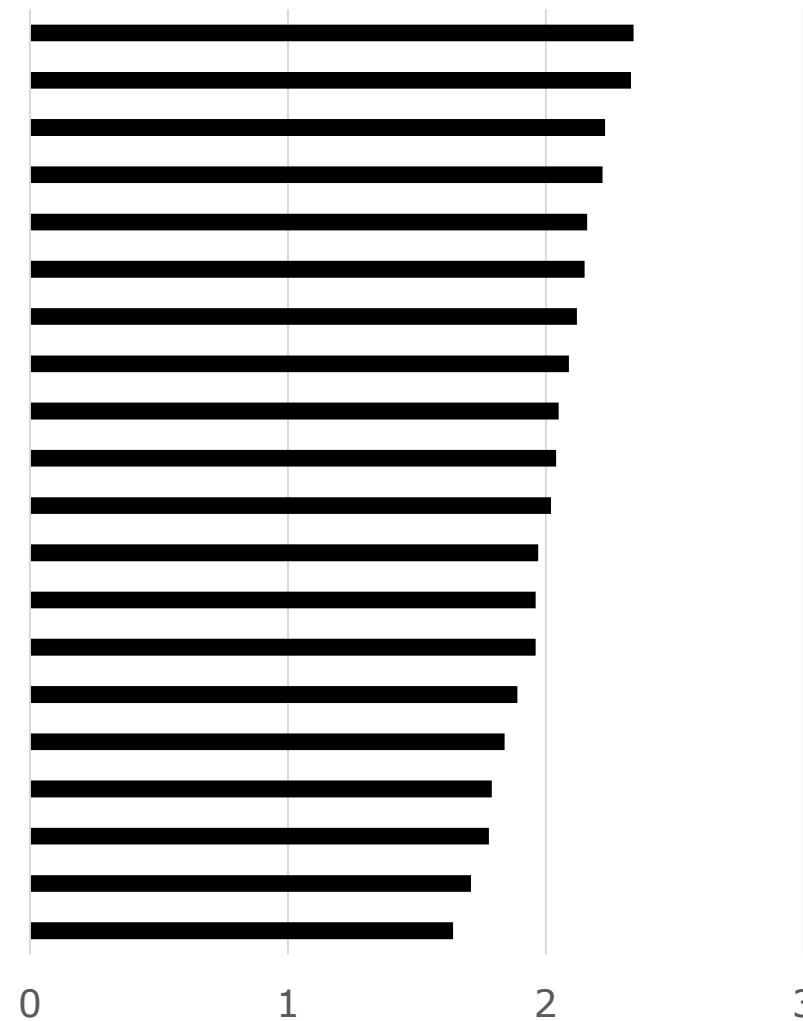


Future Outlooks

Program Interest



- Strategic planning
- Change management
- Grant writing
- Conflict management
- Facilitating uncomfortable conversations
- Developing sustainable business models
- Ability to motivate others
- Budgeting/financial management
- Networking
- Articulating the org's vision
- Fundraising
- Decision-making
- Mediation
- Navigating organizational politics
- Valuing human resources
- Board leadership
- Ability to delegate
- Communication skills
- Inter-personal skills
- Generous listening



Future Outlooks

INTEREST:

- Cohorts of similar schools
- Presenters from schools like my own; experts from outside theological education
- Fewer than 3 days for event
- Scheduled back-to-back with another ATS event or biennial meeting
- One-on-one meetings with a mentor (e.g., long-serving or retired person in my role)
- Conflict management
- Sustainable business models/financial viability
- Cultivating healthy CEO-CAO relationships
- Prioritizing self-care and practices of spiritual formation

UPCOMING OFFERINGS:

- *CFOs Conference, November 11-13*
- **Entering Student Questionnaire Webinar, November 19**
- *Executive Leadership Intensive, December 8-11*
- **Accreditation Self-Study Workshop, February 23-24**
- **CAOS Conference, April 7-9**
- *New Faculty Gathering, April 22-24*
- **ATS Biennial Meeting, June 23-25**





Questions

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