IT and EdTech Leaders in ATS Schools

ATS Research Webinar on Leadership

Deborah H.C. Gin, Director of Research and Faculty Development, Association of Theological Schools
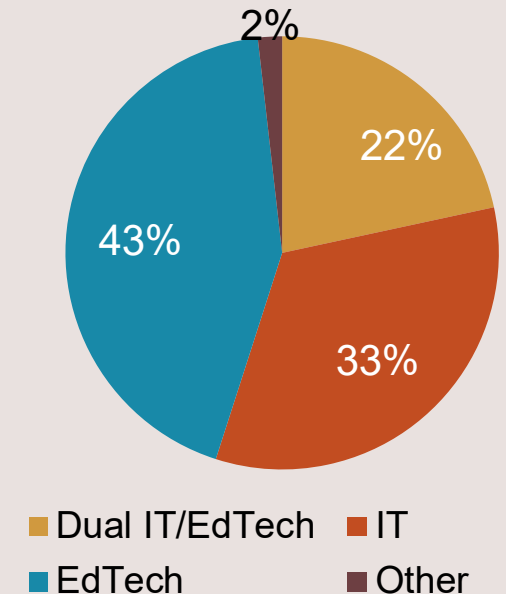
Julie Newton, Chief Technologist for CHANGE & AdminWise Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

ATS Leadership Studies: IT and EdTech Leaders

- Conducted 2020-21 – survey to all IT/EdT leaders plus 26 interviews
- Purposes
  1. **Status of the Role**—changes? nature of work? satisfaction and longevity? effectiveness? institutional support?
  2. **Needed Changes in ATS Programming**

- Sample size of 110, 35% response rate
  - Good representation by type of school
    IT – underrepresented by embedded, largest
    EdT – underrepresented by evangelical and catholic/orthodox, small- and mid-sized
  - Good representation by individual demographics
    IT – underrepresented by male, Asian
    EdT – underrepresented by male
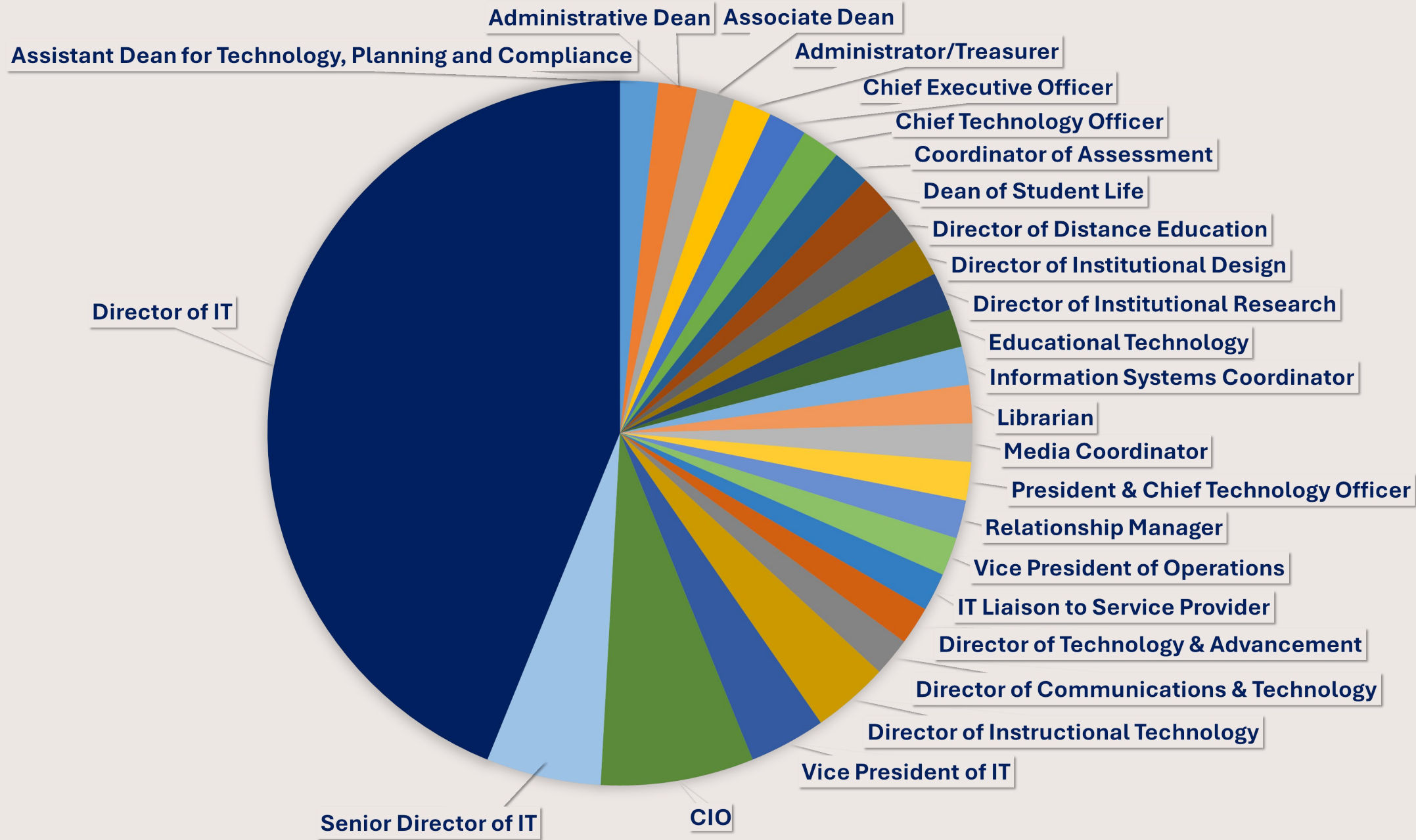
Job Roles of Survey Respondents

2%
22%
33%
43%

- Dual IT/EdTech
- IT
- EdTech
- Other

Source: ATS Leadership Studies, 2019-2021

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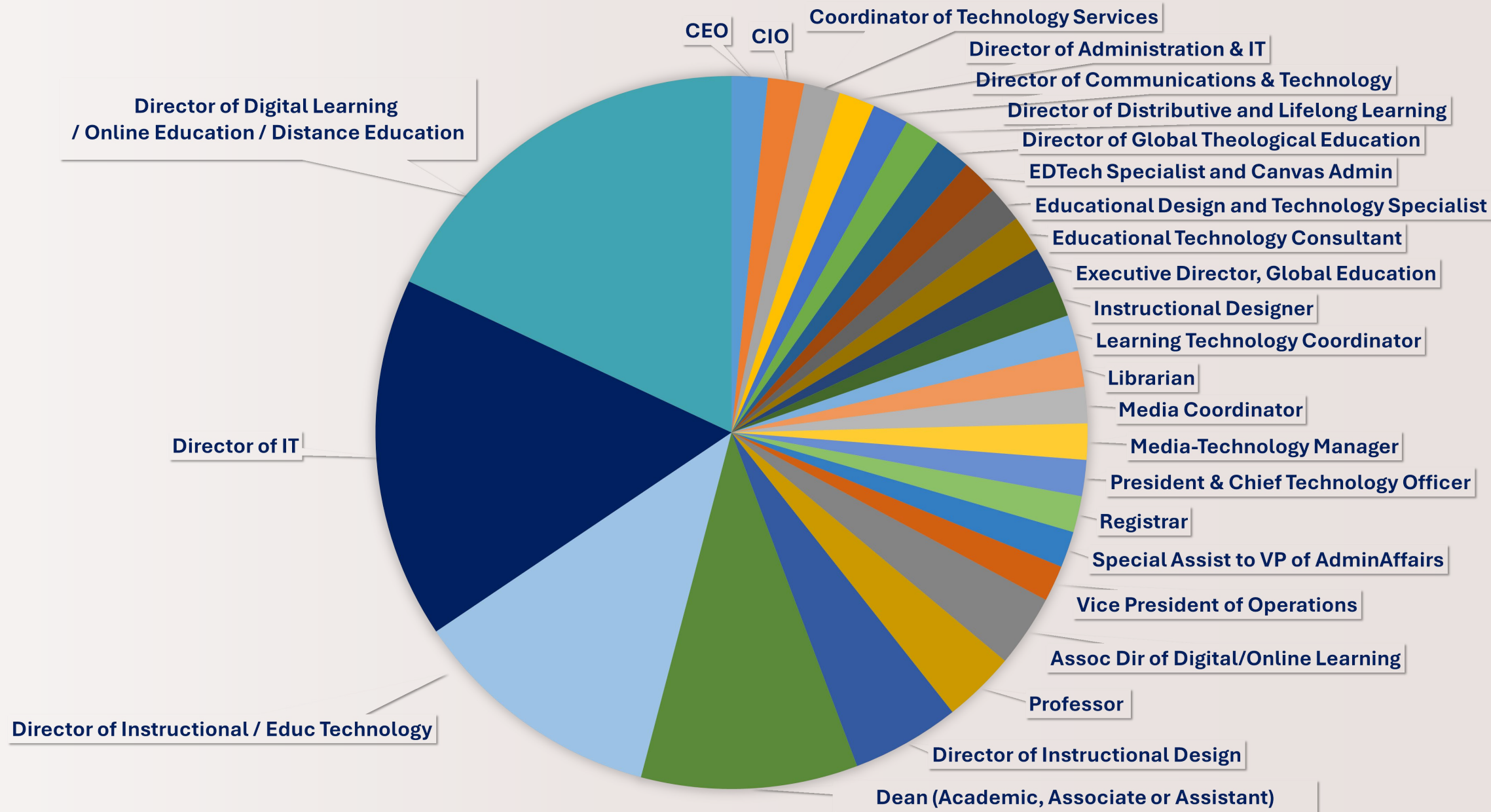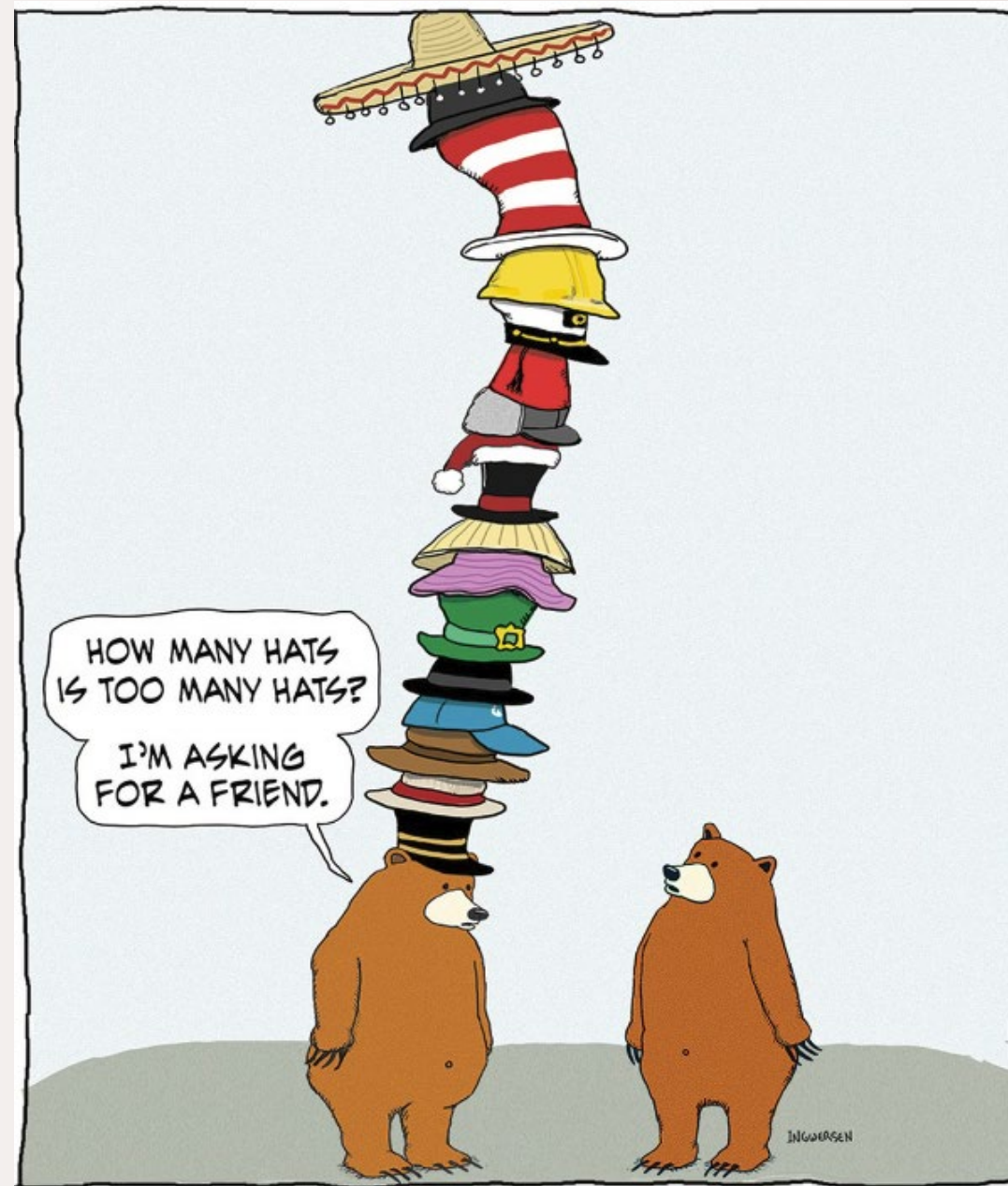
Status of the Role

Who are the leaders?

Avg 7 years service in role—longest among senior leaders

Prior experience was Avg 4.1 years as senior IT; and 2.7 years as senior EdTech

Just prior to their position, mainly from:

IT leaders
Business (31%)
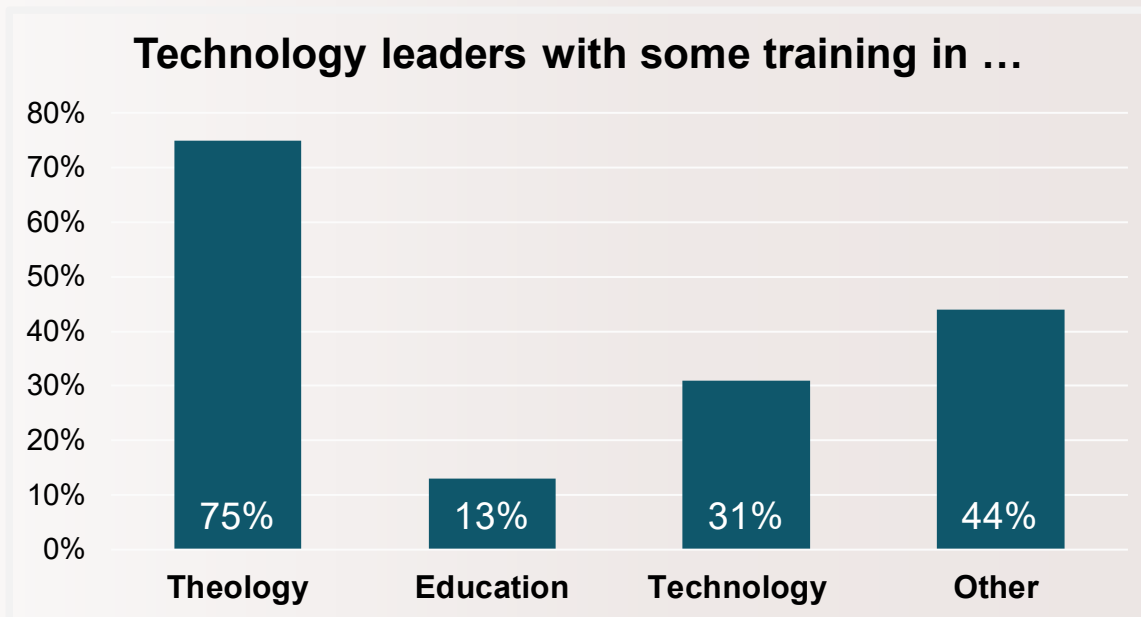Higher Ed (20%)

EdTech leaders
Higher Ed (31%)
Graduate theological education (23%)

Education / Certifications:

44% have no formal education for the work they do.
26% of IT leaders have industry certifications

Status of the Role

Technology leaders with some training in …

Bar chart values:
- Theology: 75%
- Education: 13%
- Technology: 31%
- Other: 44%

Hiring Process
- ***Only 25% - traditional pathway*** (application)
- 45% - offered the job without applying
- 20% - invited to apply then hired

"…just added this to my job."

(Senior IT, small denominational school)

Source: ATS Leadership Studies, 2019-2021

Status of the Role

Satisfaction in the Role?

Overall satisfied, but IT is lowest of all senior leaders
Most satisfied with (of 11 work features):
- Relationships with coworkers
- Work they do
- Functioning of work teams

Least satisfied with:
- Promotion opportunities → also least important
- IT—salary; EdT—professional development opportunities → moderately important

Intentions to leave?
- 25% said they intended to leave their position in next 12 months
- Actively looking for other jobs—not looking but closest to looki...
- Retire from current job—least likely of all senior leaders

Retention?
- Lower-level positions; regional challenges; belief in mission

> "...retaining effective employees through better salary packages and more opportunities."
>
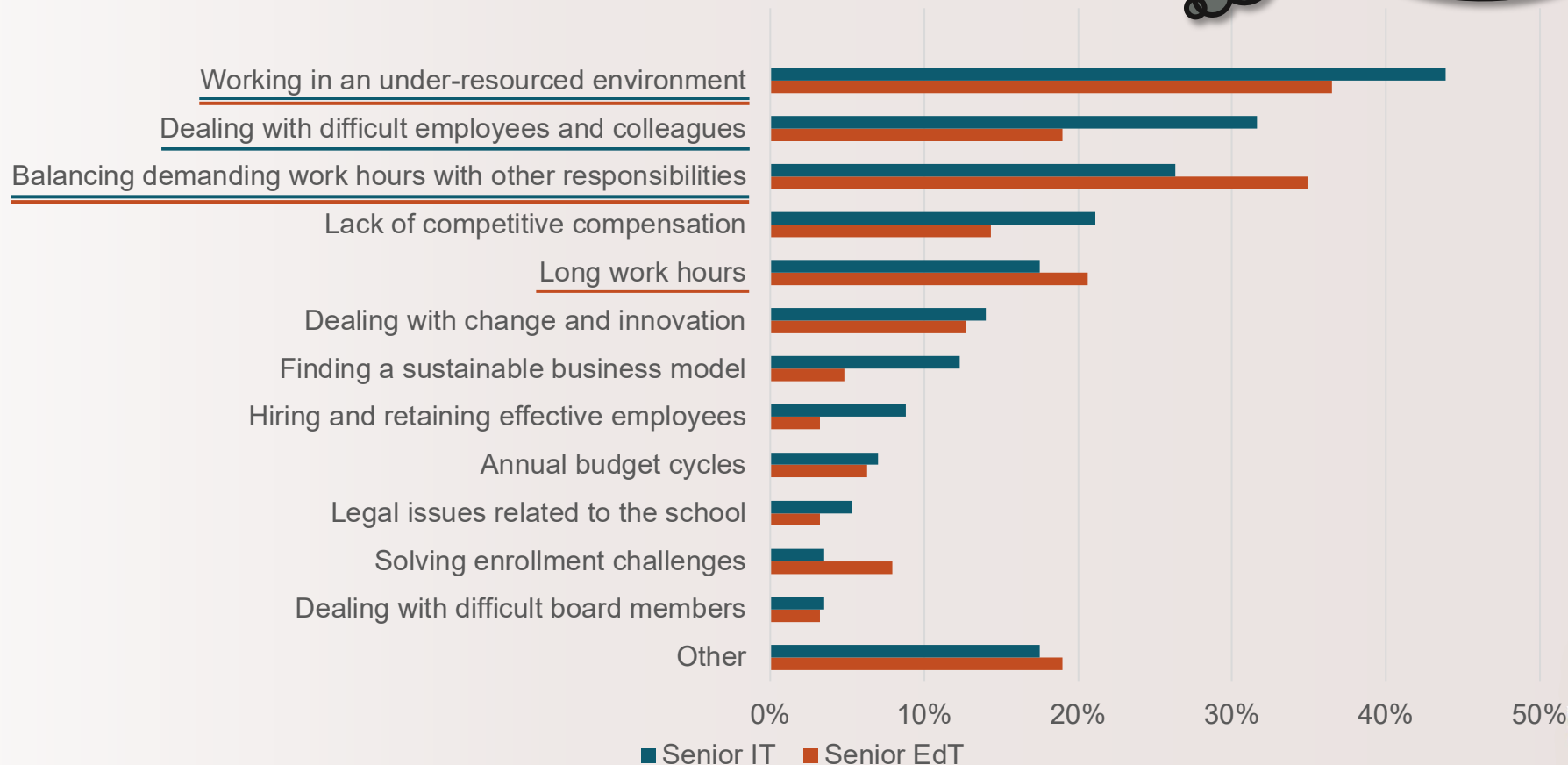> (Senior EdT, large evangelical school)

> "The main reason I've stayed is that I believe in the mission of the school."
>
> (Senior EdT, large mainline school)

Status of the Role

Greatest Causes of Work-Related Stress

Strongest predictors of **actively looking** for other jobs:
Both – dissatisfaction with work
IT – lack of capacity to remain calm under stress

Cause	Senior IT	Senior EdT
Working in an under-resourced environment		
Dealing with difficult employees and colleagues		
Balancing demanding work hours with other responsibilities		
Lack of competitive compensation		
Long work hours		
Dealing with change and innovation		
Finding a sustainable business model		
Hiring and retaining effective employees		
Annual budget cycles		
Legal issues related to the school		
Solving enrollment challenges		
Dealing with difficult board members		
Other		

■ Senior IT   ■ Senior EdT

Status of the Role

Nature of the Work

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Areas of Work and Responsibility

Changes to the Work aka "What keeps Tech Leaders up at night?

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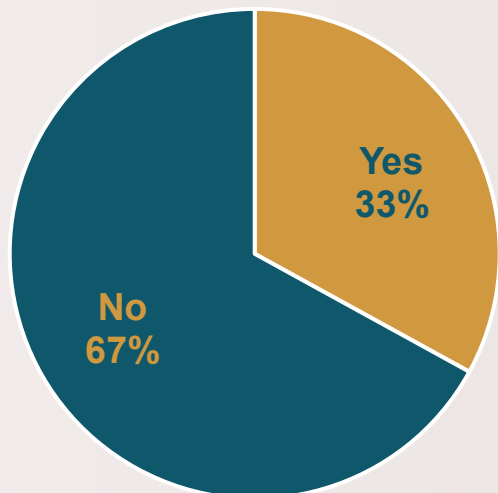
Levels of Institutional Participation

- Participate in budget-making process
- Strategic involvement to fulfill school's mission
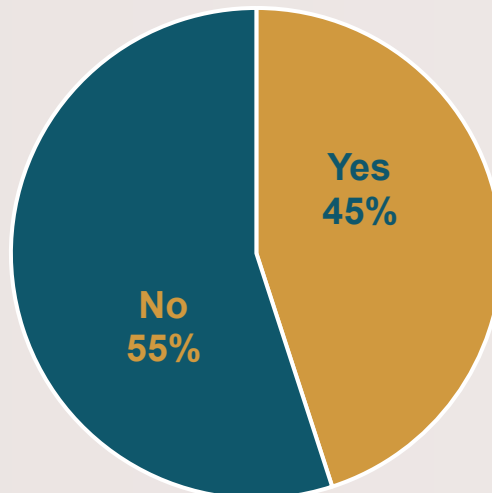- Inclusion in executive decision-making

Qualities Needed for Effectiveness

Nature of the Work

Levels of Institutional Participation

Does IT have an adequate budget?

Yes 33%

No 67%

Does EdTech have an adequate budget?

Yes 45%

No 55%

Do you participate in the budget-making process?

	IT	Ed Tech
No	93%	82%
Yes	7%	18%

Yes ■ No

Source: ATS Leadership Studies, 2019-2021

Nature of the Work

Levels of Institutional Participation

I have ongoing strategic conversations to ensure resources are used to fulfill the school's mission.

Legend: Agree, Strongly agree

Categories: CEO, CAO, CFO, CDO, SPAN, IT, EdT
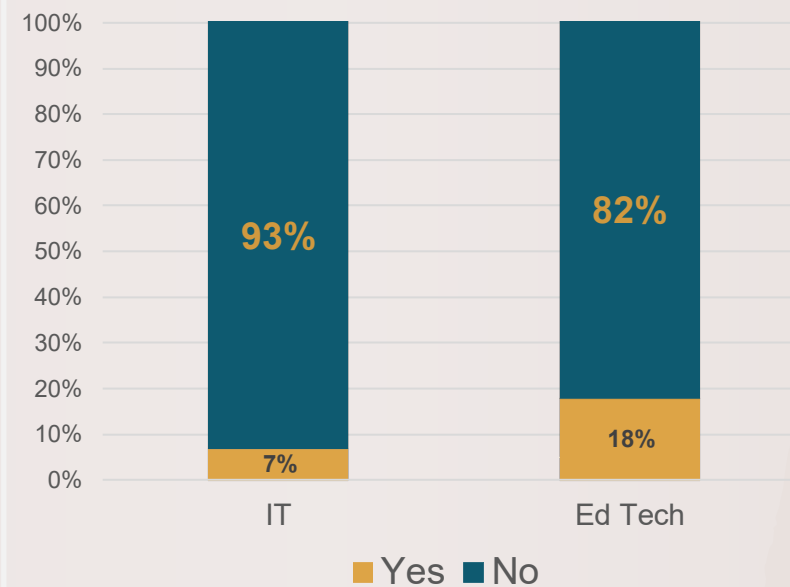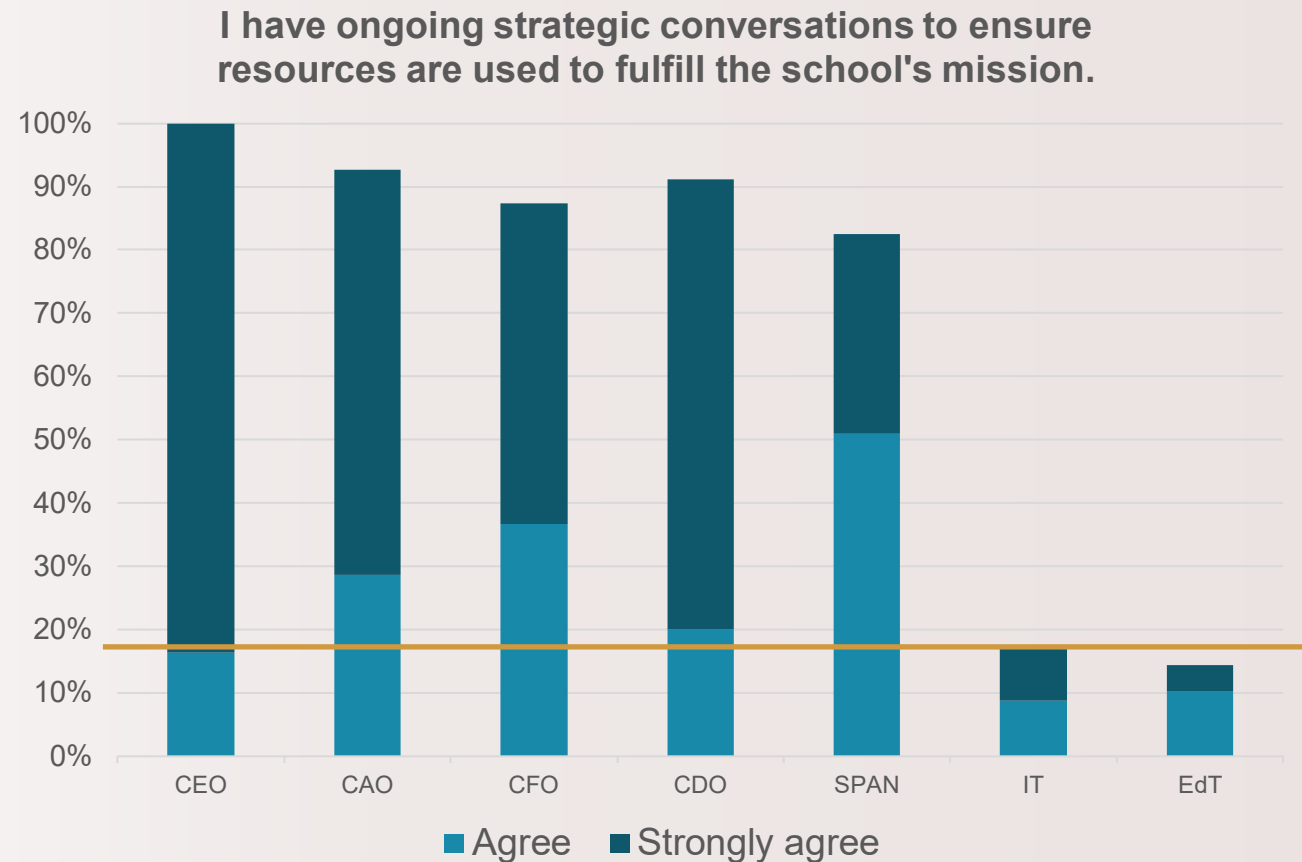
Nature of the Work

Qualities of Effectiveness

- Ability to explain clearly
- Adaptability to constant change
- Clear written communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Cultural sensitivity
- Customer service (friendliness)
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Listening skills
- Patience
- Strategic Planning
- Understanding business
- Understanding pedagogy

"A broad range of technical abilities, everything from resetting passwords to running cables to writing some basic scripting knowledge…"

(Senior Dual-Tech, midsized Roman Catholic school)

"My job is bridging the gap between everybody else on this campus, executive leadership, deans, all these other people, and IT…"

(Senior IT, large Evangelical school)

"That ability to learn, more than anything, has helped me here."

(Senior IT, large Evangelical school)

Status of the
Role

Nature of the
Work

Future Outlook

Future Outlook

Technology Leaders are most interested in:

FROM ATS:
- Networking
- Trainings
  - Strategic Planning, Change Management, Conflict management (EdTech) and Decision-making skills (IT)
  - Orientations to theological education, HigherEd

EXTERNAL TO ATS:
- Orientations at their own seminaries (org culture)
- Shared services like group purchasing, shared resources

"Any assistance that could be offered in actually consolidating, and actually communicating things that would be beneficial, things that would save my institution money and time, would be very welcome."

(Senior IT, mid-sized stand-alone Mainline school)

Future Resources

Lilly Endowment funded an initiative to create cost-effective shared administrative services and access to affordable expertise
so that seminaries can devote more of their resources to their primary mission of educating leaders for the church and world.

AdminWise
Shared Services

Created by **Change Initiative** - A Lilly Endowment, Pathways for Tomorrow Grant

IT Security · **CIO Consulting** · CFO Services · Financial Aid · Title IX · HR · Health Insurance · **Resource Hub**

Oct 25th
ATS Tech Mini Conference

Bring your own topic!
Cybersecurity
Education Technology
Distance Education Pedagogy
Remote Work
Remote Students
Cloud vs On-Premises
A/V Technology
Network Backup Strategies
M365 & Google
AI Conversations
Budgetary Challenges
Project Successes
All topics are open!

Learn from your peers

Join us for a full day of ATS peer gathering on Oct 25 for our free mini conference after Educause on Oct 21-24.

San Antonio, Texas

Cost: ATS mini conference is free. Participants are responsible for their own hotel, airfare, food, and Educause conference costs.

Limit: 25 ATS participants

Registration: will open in June.
Hotel: ATS is negotiating a group rate.

Questions?: contact Saren Williams at williams@ats.edu

Questions, Discussion

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