



SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

# A Data Walk on Student Engagement @ SU

Hosted by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

February 2025

# WHAT IS A DATA WALK?

A data walk is a tool that shares data with stakeholders in an accessible, purposeful way to encourage understanding and discussion of data relevant to their lives.

**Sharing NSSE data with the Southwestern community can:**

- Empower stakeholders with information about student perceptions
- Provide an estimate of how students spend their time and what they gain from attending Southwestern
- Inspire further discussion or action around areas of concern to inform practices and improvement

# WHAT IS NSSE?

**The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects data from over 250,000 students annually. Since 2000 over 6.5 millions students from 1,700 four-year institutions have completed the survey about their undergraduate experience inside and outside of the classroom.**

Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality:

- The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities.
- The second is how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate student participation in activities that matter to student learning.

NSSE surveys undergraduate students in their first and final year to measure their levels of engagement and their perceptions of experiences at Southwestern.

## NSSE Comparison Groups

**Southwest Private** (18 NSSE institutions in the same geographic region and private sector)

**Private, Baccalaureate/Arts & Sciences** (86 NSSE institutions sharing Southwestern's 2021 Basic Carnegie Classification "Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences Focus")

**SU Cohort Schools** (14 NSSE institutions that appear on the Board of Trustees or Strategic Planning Cohort lists)

Southwestern has participated in NSSE since 2003.

# What did First-Year Students Say?

*Highest & Lowest Engagement Indicators*

## First-year

### Highest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information<sup>b</sup> (QR)

Quality of interactions with academic advisors<sup>d</sup> (QI)

Talked about career plans with a faculty member<sup>b</sup> (SF)

Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (...) <sup>b</sup> (QR)

Institution emphasis on helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (...) <sup>c</sup> (SE)

### Lowest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

Institution emphasis on providing support to help students succeed academically<sup>c</sup> (SE)

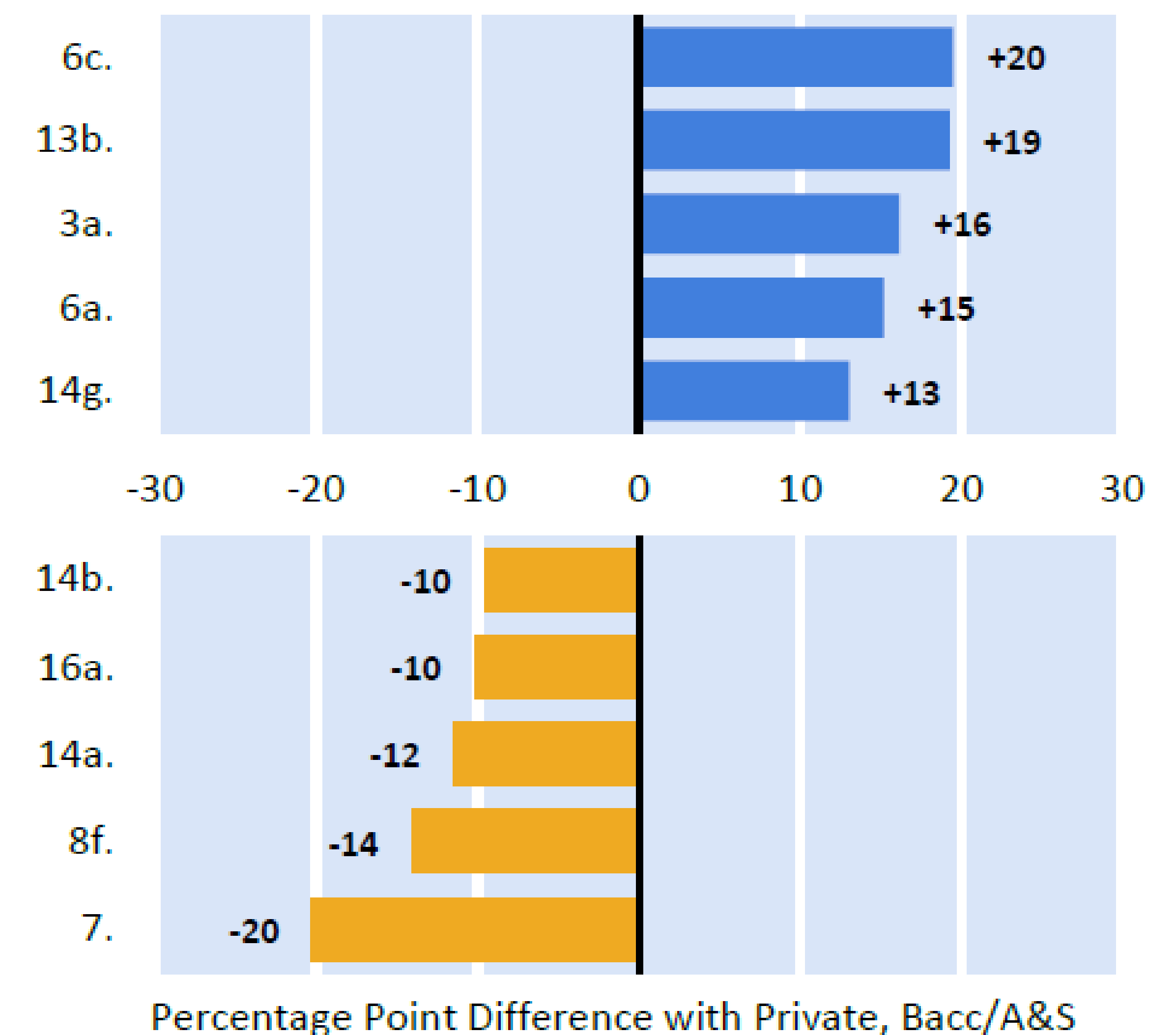
Spent more than 15 hours per week preparing for class

Institution emphasis on studying and academic work<sup>c</sup>

Discussions with...People from countries other than your own

Assigned more than 50 pages of writing<sup>g</sup>

These questions represent the largest differences (in percentage points) in Southwestern student responses relative to other private, baccalaureate institutions with an arts & science focus.



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Comparing first-year with senior student responses, is there anything that surprises you?

Why? Your reflections....



# What did Senior Students Say?

*Highest & Lowest Engagement Indicators*

## Senior

### Highest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

Completed a culminating senior experience (...) (HIP)

Worked with other students on course projects or assignments<sup>b</sup> (CL)

Discussions with... People with religious beliefs other than your own<sup>b</sup> (DD)

Quality of interactions with student services staff (...) <sup>d</sup> (QI)

Quality of interactions with academic advisors<sup>d</sup> (QI)

### Lowest Performing Relative to Private, Bacc/A&S

I feel comfortable being myself at this institution<sup>h</sup> (SB)

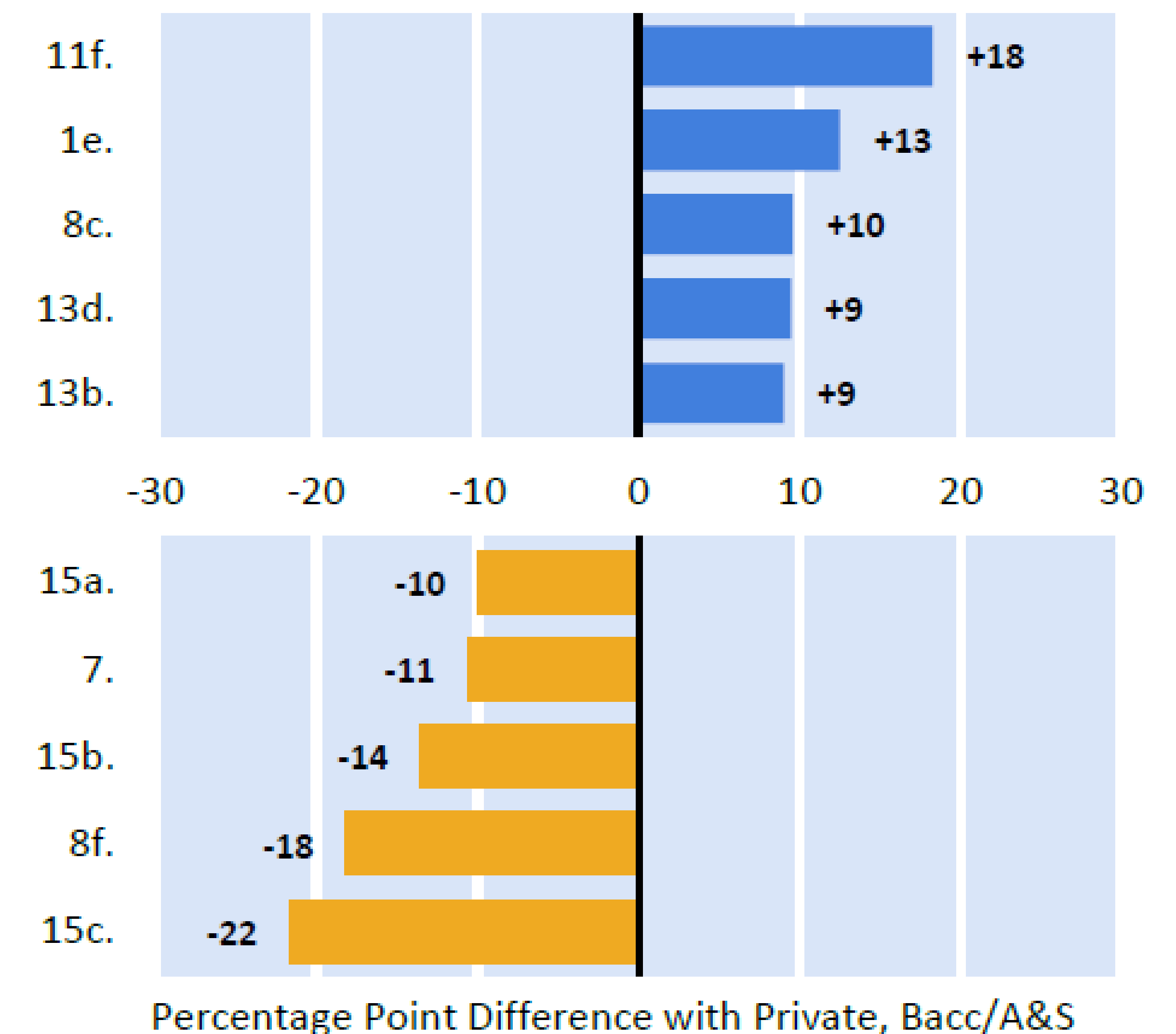
Assigned more than 50 pages of writing<sup>g</sup>

I feel valued by this institution<sup>h</sup> (SB)

Discussions with... People from countries other than your own

I feel like part of the community at this institution<sup>h</sup> (SB)

These questions represent the largest differences (in percentage points) in Southwestern student responses relative to other private, baccalaureate institutions with an arts & science focus.



# High Impact Practices

*An area of strength at Southwestern*

Due to their positive associations with student learning and retention, certain undergraduate opportunities are designated "high-impact." High-Impact Practices (HIPs) share several traits:

- Demand considerable time and effort,
- Facilitate learning outside of the classroom,
- Require meaningful interactions with faculty and students,
- Encourage collaboration with diverse others, and
- Provide frequent and substantive feedback.

NSSE asks students about their participation in the six HIPs shown in the box at right.

## *High-Impact Practices in NSSE*

### **Service-Learning**

Courses that included a community-based project

### **Learning Community**

Formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together

### **Research with Faculty**

Work with a faculty member on a research project

### **Internship or Field Experience**

Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement

### **Study Abroad**

### **Culminating Senior Experience**

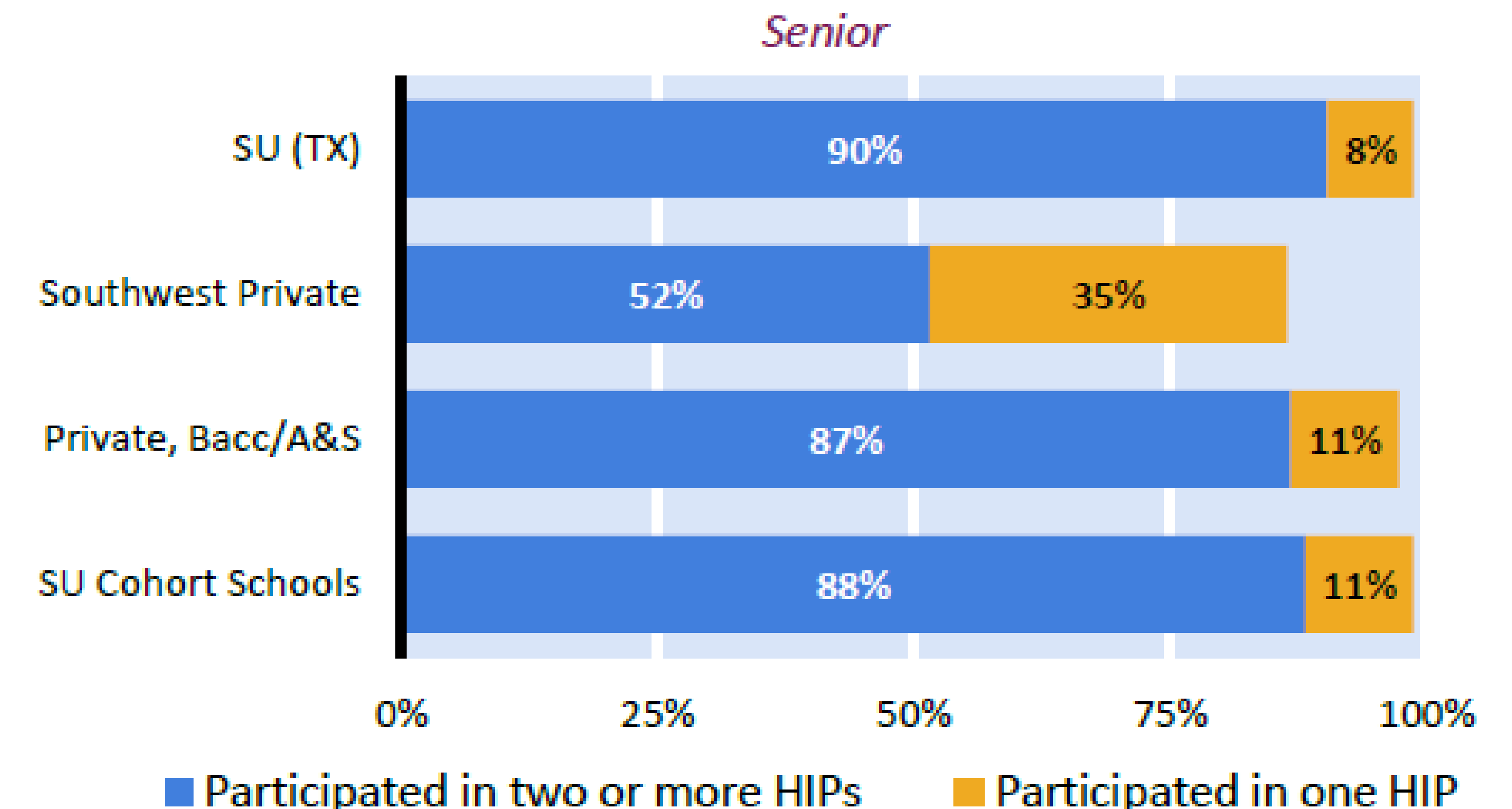
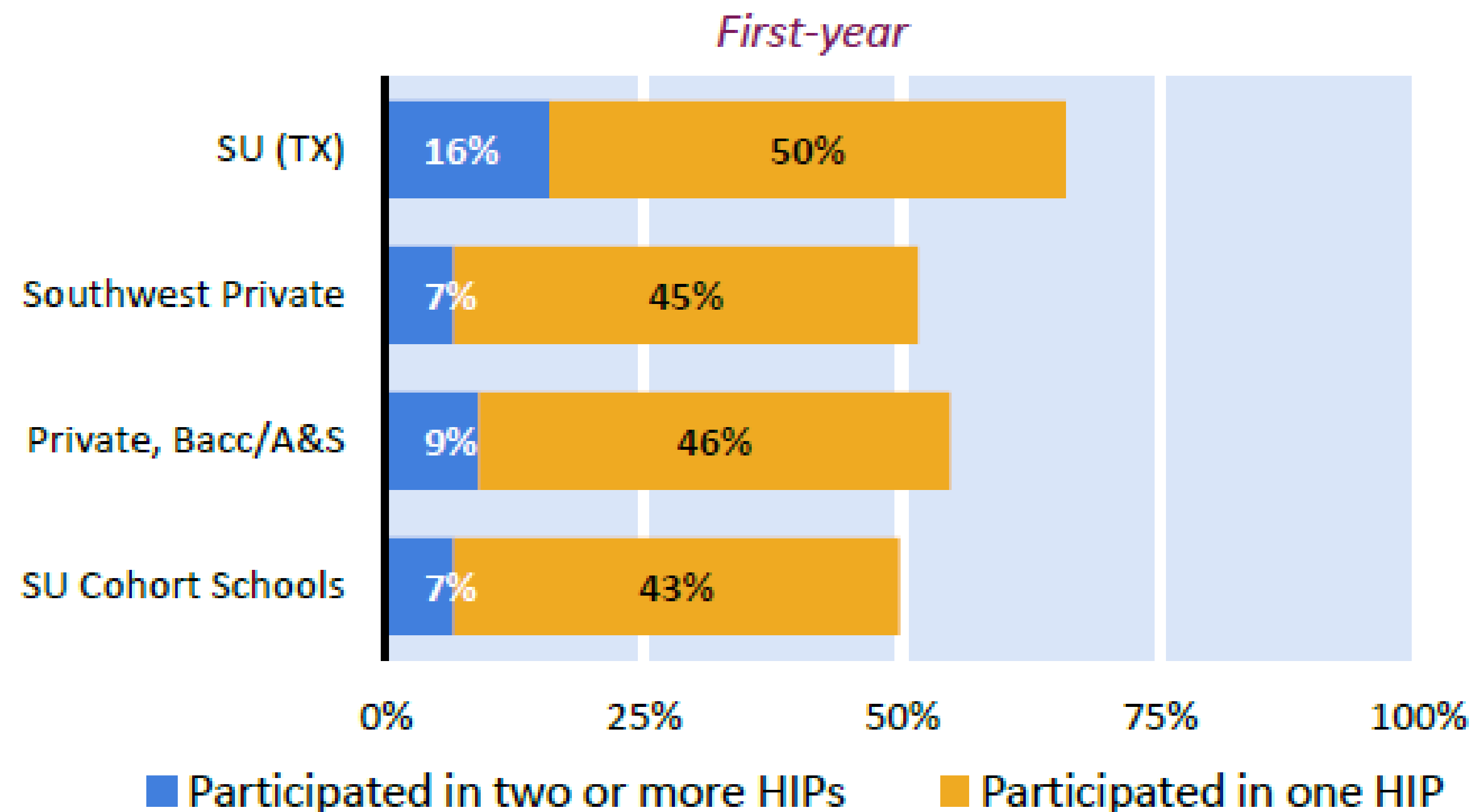
Capstone course, senior project or thesis, portfolio, recital, comprehensive exam, etc.

# High Impact Practices

*First-Year to Senior Year Growth*

Both figures include participation in service-learning, learning communities, and research with faculty. The senior figure also includes participation in internships or field experiences, study abroad, and culminating senior experiences.

Southwestern students participate in High Impact Practices at greater rates than all three comparison groups in the first-year and over time through graduation.





# High Impact Practices

Southwestern's Center for Integrative Learning and high impact experience offerings are an area of strength as compared to all comparison groups.

## Statistical Comparisons

The table below displays the percentage of your students who participated in a given High-Impact Practice, including the percentage who participated in at least one or in two or more HIPs. It also graphs the difference, in percentage points, between your students and those of your comparison groups. Blue bars indicate how much higher your institution's percentage is compared to the comparison group. Dark red bars indicate how much lower your institution's percentage is compared to the comparison group. (Comparison group percentages appear on the following pages.)

	SU (TX)	Your students' participation compared with:							
	%	Southwest Private		Private, Bacc/A&S		SU Cohort Schools			
<i>First-year</i>		Difference <sup>a</sup>	ES <sup>b</sup>	Difference <sup>a</sup>	ES <sup>b</sup>	Difference <sup>a</sup>	ES <sup>b</sup>		
Service-Learning	62	+12	.25	+13	*	.26	+18	**	.36
Learning Community	10	+3	.10	+1		.03	+4		.13
Research with Faculty	12	+8	*	.32	+5	.16	+5		.17
Participated in at least one	66	+14	*	.29	+11	.23	+16	*	.33
Participated in two or more	16	+9	.30	+7		.21	+9		.30
<i>Senior</i>									
Service-Learning	70	-1	-.03	+7		.15	+14	*	.29
Learning Community	30	+12	*	.29	+3	.06	+8		.17
Research with Faculty	49	+35	***	.77	+2	.03	-3		-.05
Internship or Field Exp.	64	+21	***	.43	-5	-.11	-3		-.07
Study Abroad	31	+24	***	.66	-1	-.02	-6		-.12
Culminating Senior Exp.	94	+57	***	1.34	+18	***	.54	*	.23
Participated in at least one	99	+12	***	.53	+1	.11	+0		.00
Participated in two or more	90	+39	***	.91	+4	.11	+2		.07



# High Impact Practices @ Southwestern?

WHICH HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE IS MOST VALUABLE FOR STUDENTS IN YOUR OPINION? WHY?

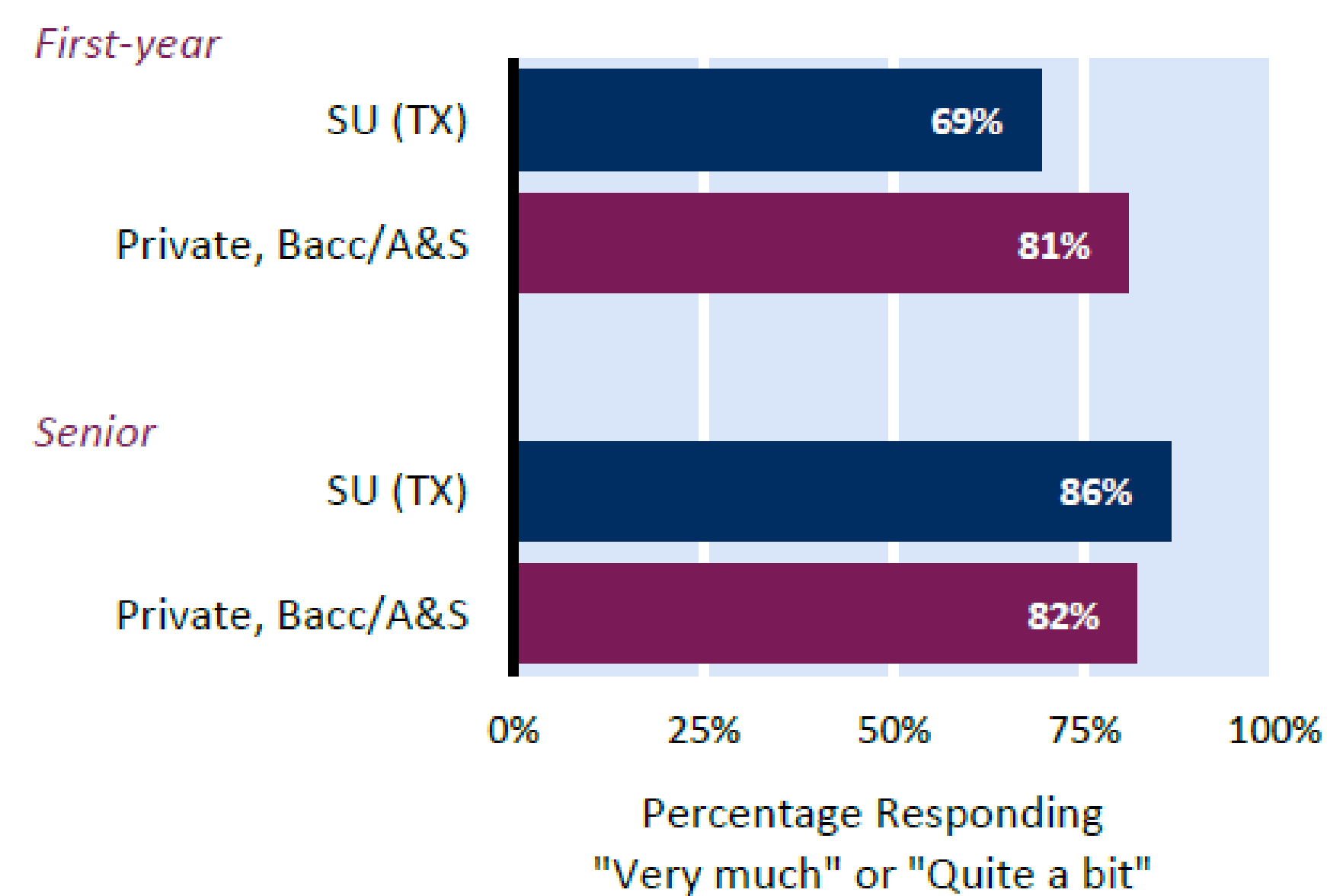
<div>CAPSTONES</div>	<div>INTERNSHIPS</div>
<div>STUDY ABROAD/AWAY</div>	<div>UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH</div>

# Academic Challenge @ SU

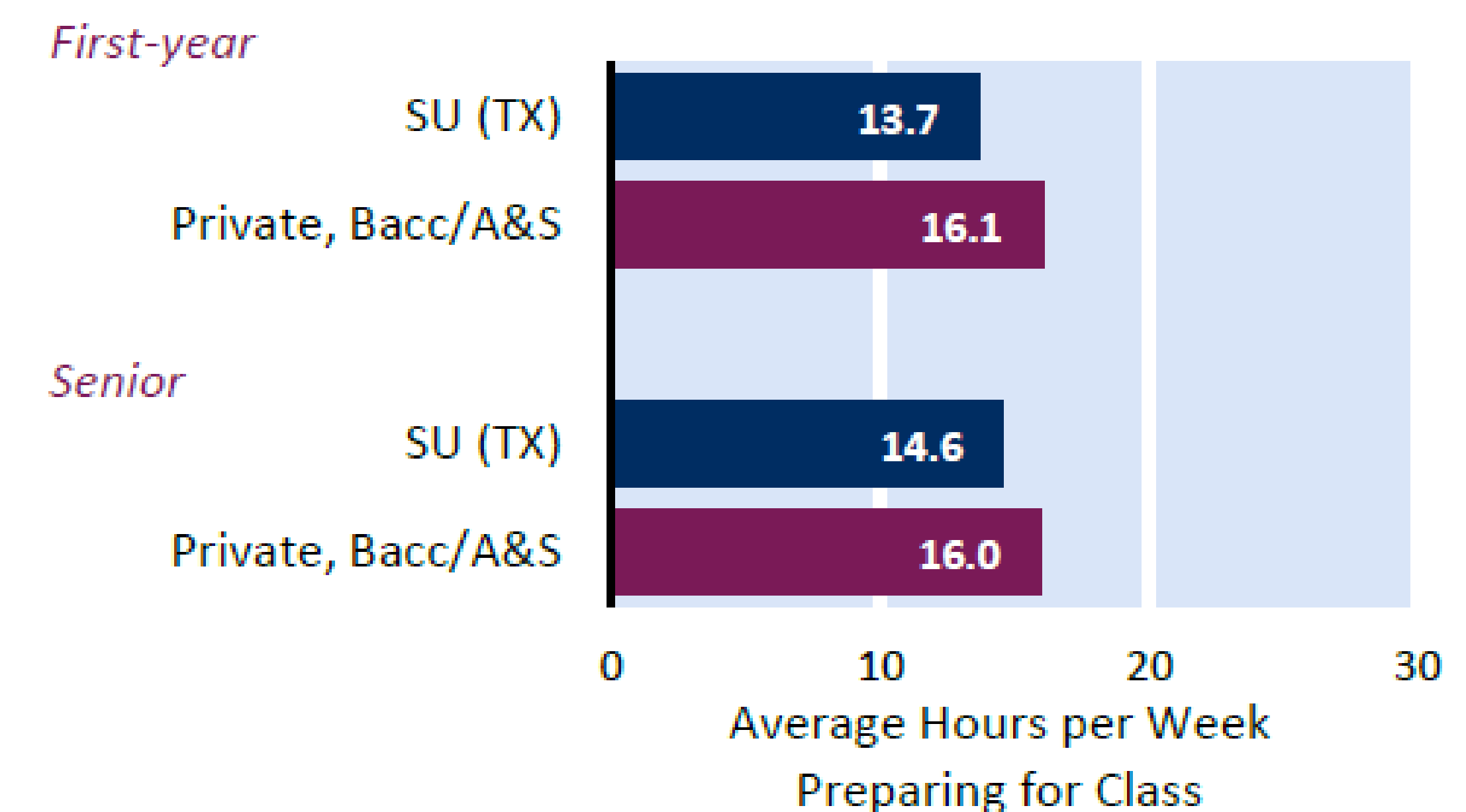
*Student Perceptions*

The Academic Challenge theme contains four Engagement Indicators as well as several other items in the Engagement Indicators report.

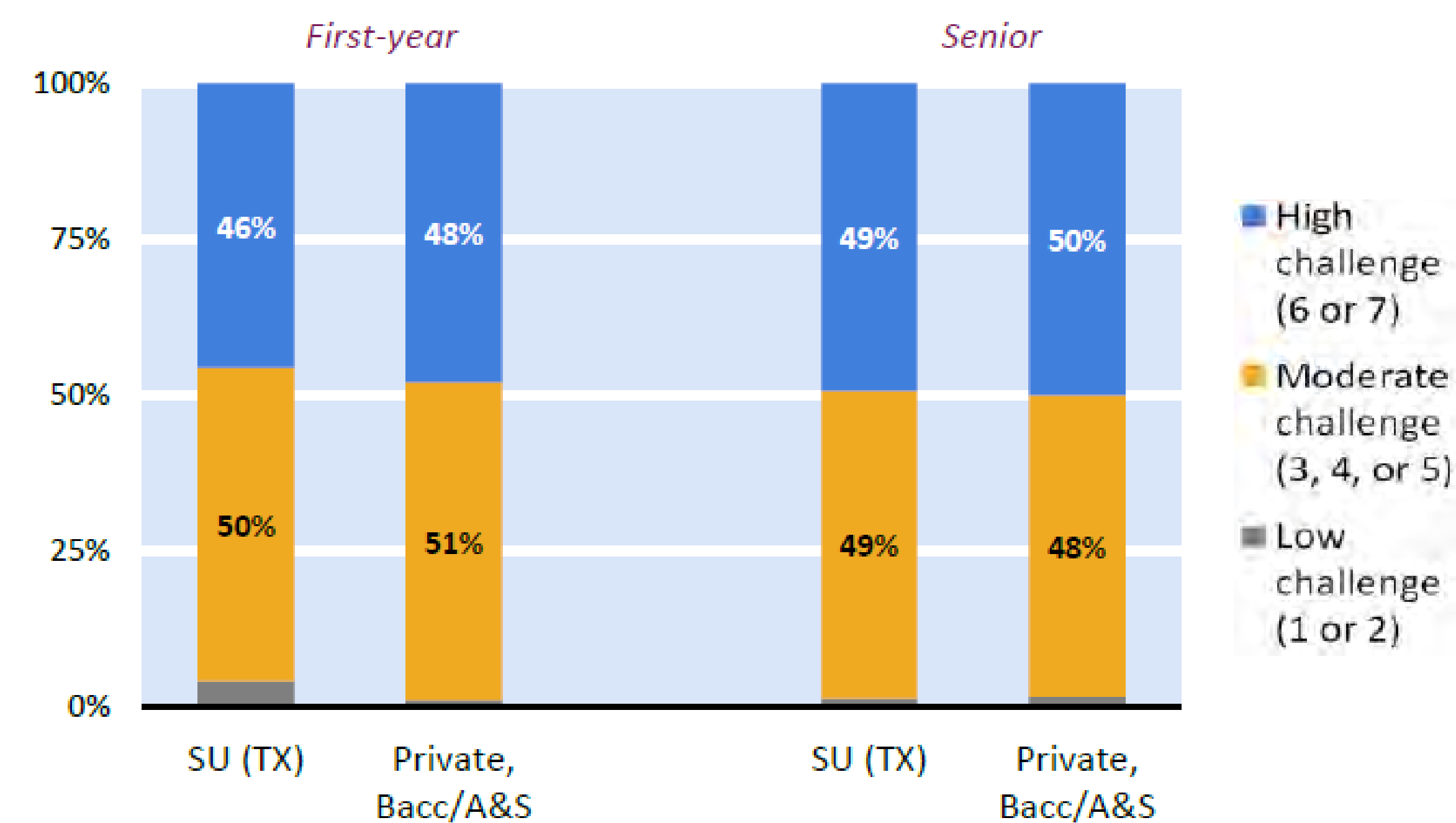
## Academic Emphasis



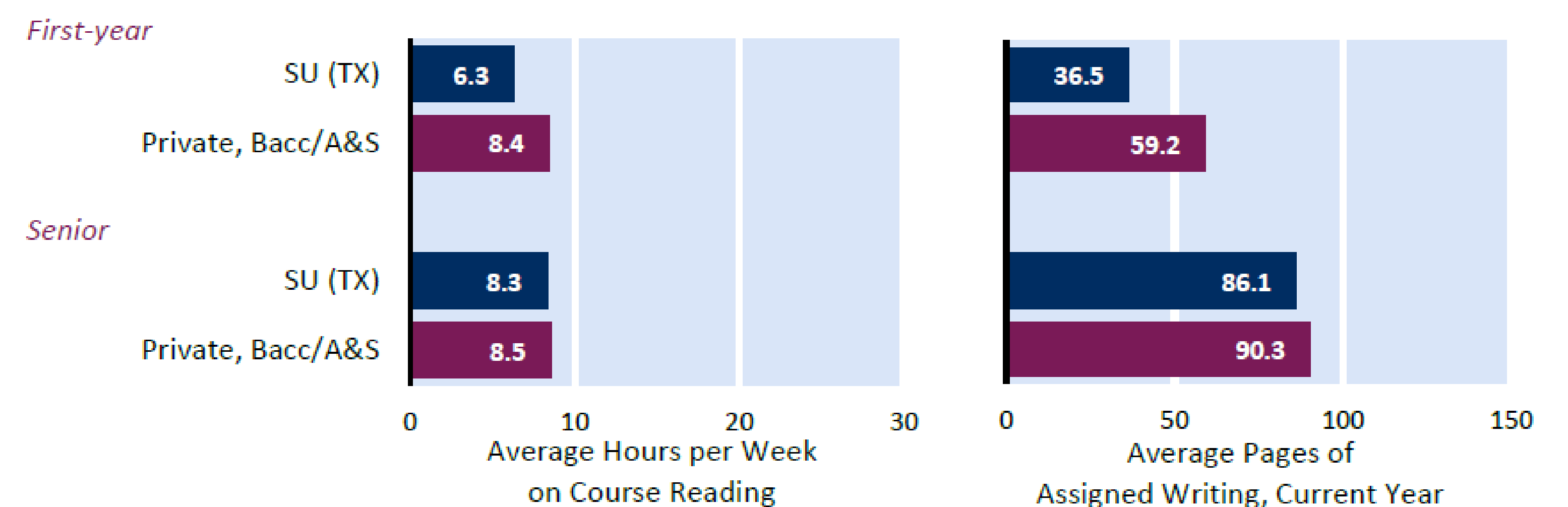
## Time Spent Preparing for Class



## Challenging Students to Do Their Best Work



## Reading and Writing



# Experiences with Faculty

## First-Year Perspectives

First-year students responded more favorably on **Student-Faculty Interactions** relative to comparison groups. Their responses on **Effective Teaching Practices** more closely mirror comparison groups.

The table below displays how your students responded to each EI item, and the difference, in percentage points, between your students and those of your comparison group. **Blue** bars indicate how much **higher** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group. **Purple** bars indicate how much **lower** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group.















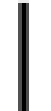


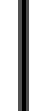


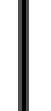


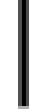



		Percentage point difference <sup>a</sup> between your first-year students and					
	SU (TX)	Southwest Private		Private, Bacc/A&S		SU Cohort Schools	
Student-Faculty Interaction							
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"...	%						
3a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member	54	+17	<div></div>	+16	<div></div>	+20	<div></div>
3b. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	32	+12	<div></div>	+6	<div></div>	+7	<div></div>
3c. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	41	+16	<div></div>	+5	<div></div>	+3	<div></div>
3d. Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	44	+15	<div></div>	+8	<div></div>	+9	<div></div>
Effective Teaching Practices							
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much instructors have...							
5a. Clearly explained course goals and requirements	77	-4	<div></div>	-5	<div></div>	-8	<div></div>
5b. Taught course sessions in an organized way	81	+2	<div></div>	+1	<div></div>	-2	<div></div>
5c. Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	79	+3	<div></div>	+1	<div></div>	-3	<div></div>
5d. Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	68	-4	<div></div>	-1	<div></div>	-1	<div></div>
5e. Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	76	+8	<div></div>	+8	<div></div>	+4	<div></div>

# Experiences with Faculty

Senior perspectives

Seniors responded more favorably on **Student-Faculty Interactions** relative to comparison groups. Their responses on **Effective Teaching Practices** more closely mirror comparison groups.

The table below displays how your students responded to each EI item, and the difference, in percentage points, between your students and those of your comparison group. **Blue** bars indicate how much **higher** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group. **Purple** bars indicate how much **lower** your institution's percentage is from that of the comparison group.

		Percentage point difference <sup>a</sup> between your seniors and			
		SU (TX)	Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort Schools
Student-Faculty Interaction					
Percentage of students who responded that they "Very often" or "Often"...		%			
3a.	Talked about career plans with a faculty member	60	+22 	+3 	+7 
3b.	Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)	49	+27 	+8 	+12 
3c.	Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class	58	+32 	+8 	+6 
3d.	Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member	49	+19 	+8 	+11 
Effective Teaching Practices					
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much instructors have...					
5a.	Clearly explained course goals and requirements	87	+6 	+2 	-0 
5b.	Taught course sessions in an organized way	85	+6 	+1 	+0 
5c.	Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points	81	+9 	-2 	-1 
5d.	Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	73	+5 	+0 	-0 
5e.	Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments	73	+3 	+0 	-2 



# Campus Environment

## First-Year Perspectives

First-Year student interactions with academic advisors scored the strongest statistically of all survey questions

First-year students responded quite favorably on the **Quality of Interactions** and **Supportive Environment** at SU. The highest percentages are highlighted.

		Percentage point difference <sup>a</sup> between your first-year students and			
	SU (TX)	Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort Schools	
<b>Quality of Interactions</b>					
Percentage rating a '6' or '7' on a scale from 1="Poor" to 7="Excellent" their interactions with...					
13a. Students	55	-5	+2	+0	
13b. Academic advisors	76	+13	+19	+24	
13c. Faculty	76	+13	+13	+11	
13d. Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)	62	+3	+13	+16	
13e. Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	55	-5	+7	+9	
<b>Supportive Environment</b>					
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much the institution emphasized...					
14b. Providing support to help students succeed academically	69	-6	-10	-10	
14c. Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	85	+10	+5	+4	
14d. Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	66	+6	+3	+1	
14e. Providing opportunities to be involved socially	81	+9	+7	+8	
14f. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	75	+10	+6	+10	
14g. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	51	+4	+13	+17	
14h. Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)	66	+5	-3	-0	
14i. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	60	+19	+3	+4	

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# Ways to Improve Campus Environment

**DO YOU HAVE IDEAS ON HOW SOUTHWESTERN CAN IMPROVE ON THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT?**

PLEASE TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS...

# Campus Environment

## Senior Perspectives

Seniors responded less favorably on **Quality of Interactions** than First-Year students. Senior responses on the **Supportive Environment** were mixed.

**Learning support services, academic & personal support, and interactions with academic advisor and faculty scored the highest percentages.**

		Percentage point difference <sup>a</sup> between your seniors and			
	SU (TX)	Southwest Private	Private, Bacc/A&S	SU Cohort Schools	
<b>Quality of Interactions</b>					
Percentage rating a '6' or '7' on a scale from 1="Poor" to 7="Excellent" their interactions with...					
13a. Students	47	-19	-5	-5	
13b. Academic advisors	71	+9	+9	+9	
13c. Faculty	72	+6	+6	+3	
13d. Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)	48	-7	+9	+13	
13e. Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	33	-25	-5	-2	
<b>Supportive Environment</b>					
Percentage responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit" about how much the institution emphasized...					
14b. Providing support to help students succeed academically	74	+2	-0	+1	
14c. Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	80	+12	+8	+9	
14d. Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	56	+0	+1	-0	
14e. Providing opportunities to be involved socially	68	+8	-1	+0	
14f. Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)	65	+9	+6	+11	
14g. Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	28	-10	+1	+6	
14h. Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)	55	+6	-9	-6	
14i. Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	47	+13	-7	-7	

# How Students Assess Their Experience @ SU

Students' perceptions of certain aspects of cognitive and affective development, as well as their overall satisfaction with the institution, provide useful evidence of their educational experiences.

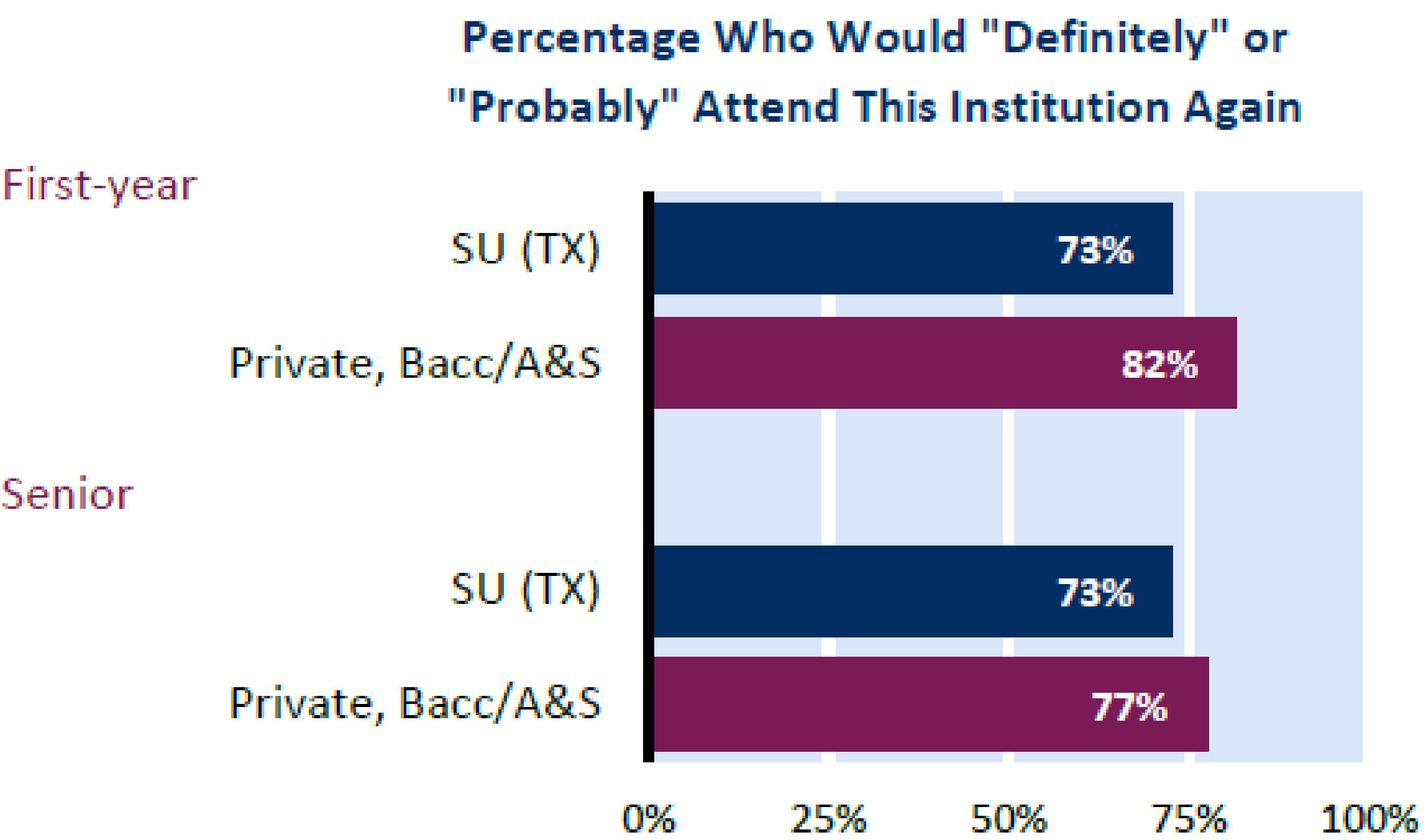
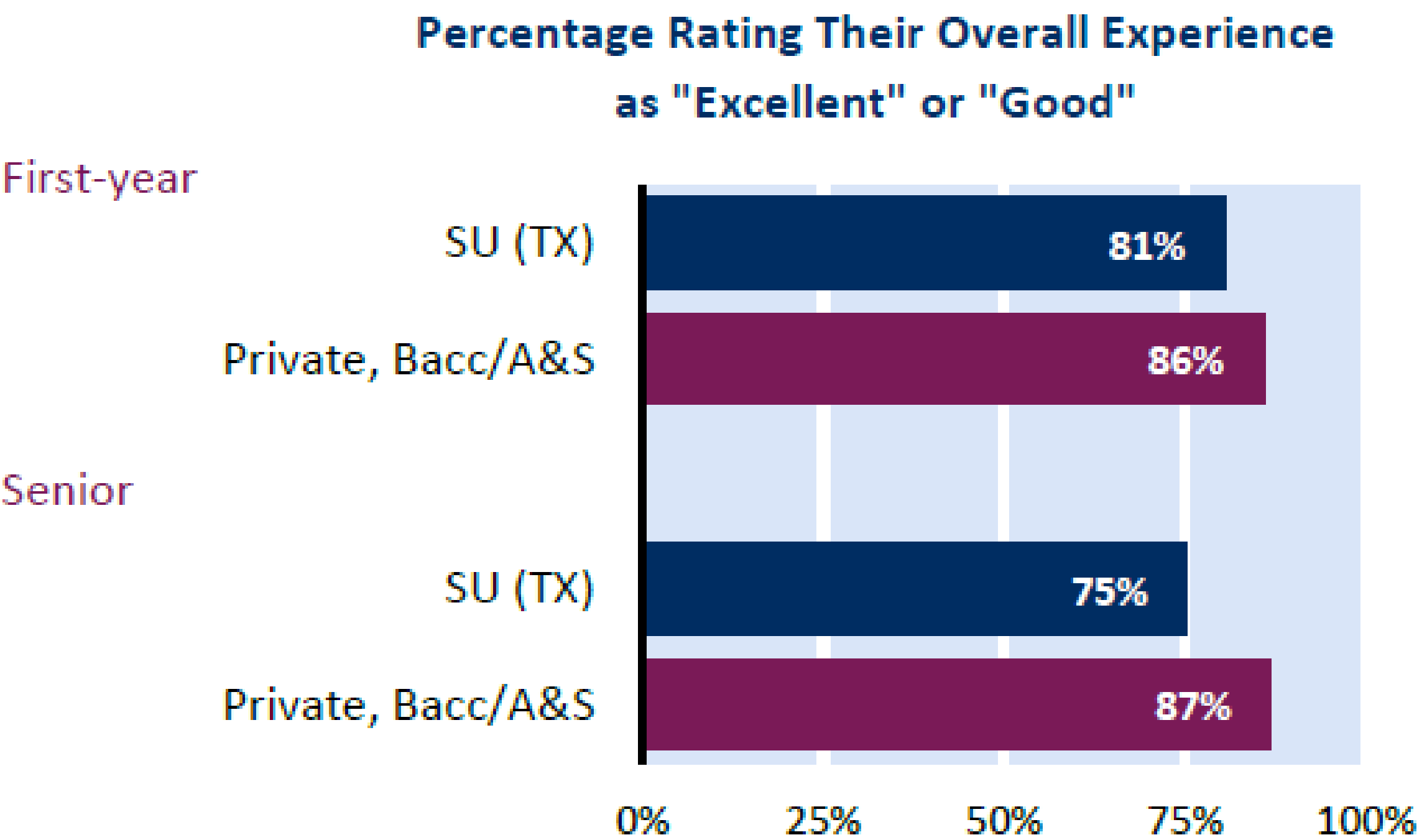
## Perceived Gains Among Seniors

Students reported how much their experience at your institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ten areas.

Perceived Gains (Sorted highest to lowest)	Percentage of Seniors Responding "Very much" or "Quite a bit"
Thinking critically and analytically	93%
Writing clearly and effectively	89%
Speaking clearly and effectively	80%
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	73%
Working effectively with others	72%
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	67%
Solving complex real-world problems	62%
Being an informed and active citizen	62%
Understanding people of other backgrounds (econ., racial/ethnic, polit., relig., nation., etc.)	62%
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	59%

## Satisfaction with SU (TX)

Students rated their overall experience at the institution, and whether or not they would choose it again.



**What do graduates gain the most after  
four years at Southwestern?**

**How has student engagement prepared  
students for their future?**