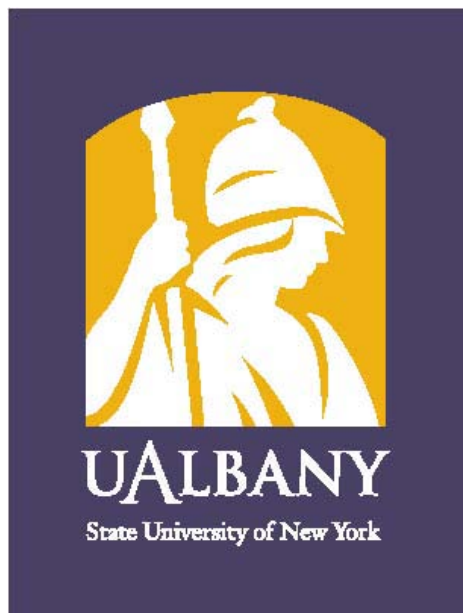


University at Albany

Graduate Student Assessment Survey, 2008

Report on Key Findings



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Assessment Report No. 26

Key Findings of the University at Albany 2008 Graduate Student Assessment Survey

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University at Albany 2008 Graduate Student Assessment Survey

Executive Summary

Introduction.

Between April 16th and May 28th, 2008, The University at Albany surveyed its graduate students on a wide variety of issues related both to their academic and non-academic experiences at UAlbany. A total of 1,652 graduate students participated in the survey, representing 44% of the 3,778 matriculated graduate students at UAlbany in the Spring 2008 semester.

Survey Results, by Section:

- 1) Overall Satisfaction. Overall, both doctoral and master's students report generally favorable satisfaction ratings with UAlbany.
- 2) Faculty Characteristics. Both doctoral and master's students indicate considerable satisfaction with faculty instruction and prestige and with academic course content and requirements.
- 3) Academic Advisement and Faculty Mentoring. Results are more mixed for advisement and mentoring. Satisfaction with general advisement is lukewarm, with some important exceptions. In general, Ph.D. students are more satisfied than master's students with their program's advisement and mentoring. Students writing a thesis or dissertation are very satisfied with their own thesis or dissertation advisors.
- 4) Research Opportunities. UAlbany graduate students are generally satisfied with research opportunities, with Ph.D. students again showing higher levels of satisfaction than master's students. Satisfaction is lower for areas related to professional development, particularly regarding preparation to write proposals.
- 5) Research & Teaching Appointments/Financial Aid. While most Ph.D. students reported having had assistantships or other types of funding, the numbers are much smaller for master's students. Assistantships are the primary source of funding for Ph.D. students, while loans are the primary source for master's students. In both groups, those who receive either teaching or research assistantships rate their experiences highly, but are somewhat less likely to feel that they have been adequately trained or supervised. Both groups average 28-29 hours of paid work per week, although for Ph.D. students, this is largely from assistantships and for master's students, it is largely from outside employment.
- 6) Facilities, Resources and Services. UAlbany graduate students are generally satisfied with academic services and facilities, particularly information technology and libraries. Satisfaction with non-academic services is more mixed, with satisfaction high with bus services and the campus center, and lower with dining, parking, and study areas. Satisfaction with a variety of student support services is mixed.
- 7) Program/Campus Climate. This section of the survey shows some of the highest levels of satisfaction with UAlbany. Both master's and Ph.D. students feel faculty treat them with respect and collegiality and are happy with morale and student-faculty relations. Very large majorities agree that faculty treat graduate students from a wide variety of demographic groups with respect. Questions related to students' role in governance are more mixed, with Ph.D. students feeling more included than master's students.
- 8) Campus Life/ Off-Campus Life. This section of the survey shows that Ph.D. students participate at a higher level than master's students in a variety of student activities and groups, but both groups rate their satisfaction with campus events at the same modest level. Both groups find a variety of areas to be major challenges to progressing toward their degrees – particularly work, finances, and family obligations.
- 9) Professional Development and Placement. UAlbany graduate students are generally very positive about their programs' preparation for careers in their field, but less satisfied with preparation for the actual job search. A minority of UAlbany graduate students plans to continue their graduate education in a wide variety of fields and degrees. Those who plan on moving directly into their careers are heading toward a wide variety of fields, with a large majority of Ph.D. students planning on careers in academia. Among those with positions lined up, the median salary for Ph.D. students was between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year, while the median salary for master's students was between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year.

Key Findings of the University at Albany 2008 Graduate Student Assessment Survey

I. Survey Administration.

Between April 16th and May 28th, 2008, The University at Albany surveyed its graduate students on a wide variety of issues related to their academic experiences at UAlbany. These surveys were developed by UAlbany's Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness (IRPE), in consultation with the Office of Graduate Studies. The survey was reviewed and approved by UAlbany's Institutional Review Board (protocol number 08-111) and administered via e-mail invitations with a link to a web survey.

All matriculated graduate students with e-mail addresses were sent a pre-notification e-mail explaining the survey, followed a few days later by an invitation e-mail. Two reminder e-mails were then sent to students who had not yet completed the survey; a final request was sent to students for whom we had non-UAlbany e-mail addresses if they had not started the survey. In addition, Department Chairs and Program Directors were asked to send e-mails to students in their programs and to place fliers around their departments or in student mailboxes.

II. Survey Participation.

As shown in below, a total of 1,652 graduate students participated in the survey, including 1,384 completed surveys and 268 partials. These numbers represent 44% of the 3,778 matriculated graduate students at UAlbany in the Spring 2008 semester. This response rate is substantially higher than those of other student surveys at UAlbany over the last few years and allows a high level of confidence in the reliability of survey estimates. As shown in Appendix B, student participant demographics are similar to the population as a whole on a number of dimensions, including gender, ethnicity, degree sought, college, age, GPA and number of credits.

Detailed survey responses were provided to the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Provost in "topline" reports for the survey, for the overall sample and separately for Master's and Doctoral students. In addition, topline reports by department and program are being made available to Deans, program directors and department chairs.

Survey Dates:	4/16 – 5/28, 2008
Population of Matriculated Graduate Students:	3,778
Completed Surveys:	1,384
Partial Surveys:	268
Total Surveys:	1,652
Response Rate (completes):	36.6%
Response Rate (w/partial):	43.7%
Confidence Interval:	+/- 2.1% ¹

¹ Based on 95% confidence, and including completed surveys only. Questions answered by all respondents have a confidence interval as low as 1.8%. Figures for master's students only have a confidence interval as low as 2.3%; Figures for Ph.D. students only have a confidence interval as low as 2.9%

III. Survey Results. This report summarizes results of the 2008 UAlbany Graduate Student Assessment Survey for all respondents, as well as separately for master’s and Ph.D. students. Most questions in this survey used 5-point Likert scales; in most cases the graphs show the combined percentages of students who chose either the top or the second highest response category. Each graph shows those combined percentages for all respondents (the “Total” bar) as well as separate bars for master’s students and Ph.D. students. For some items on post-graduation plans or activities separate charts for master’s and Ph.D. students were created as merited by especially large differences in response patterns.

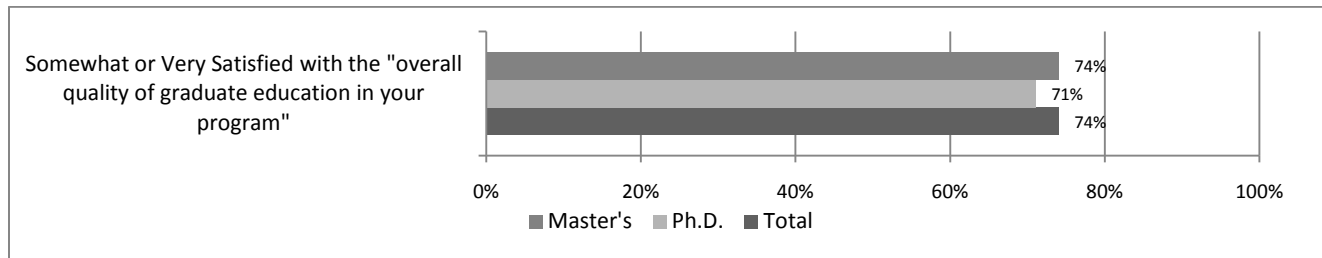
The Graduate Student Assessment Survey was both lengthy and highly detailed in terms of the numbers of questions asked, and very broad with regard to the number of topics covered. The topics covered are reflected in the titles of the nine sections included in this report:

- 1) Overall satisfaction with UAlbany;
- 2) Graduate instruction and faculty characteristics;
- 3) Advisement and faculty mentoring;
- 4) Research opportunities;
- 5) Research & teaching appointments & financial aid;
- 6) Facilities, resources and services;
- 7) Program/campus climate;
- 8) Campus life/off-campus life;
- 9) Professional development and placement

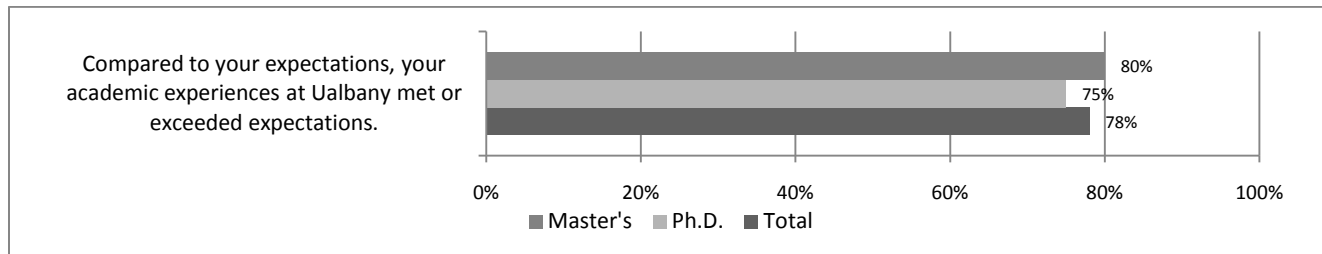
Part 1: Overall Satisfaction with UAlbany

Overall both doctoral and master’s students report generally favorable satisfaction ratings with UAlbany.

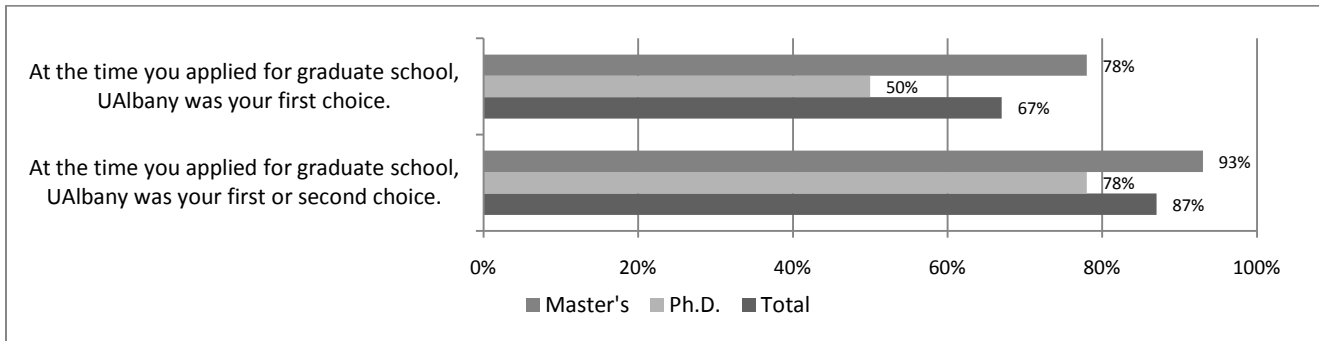
- **Most are satisfied with quality of graduate education (Q1):** Almost three quarters of respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with the overall quality of graduate education in their program.



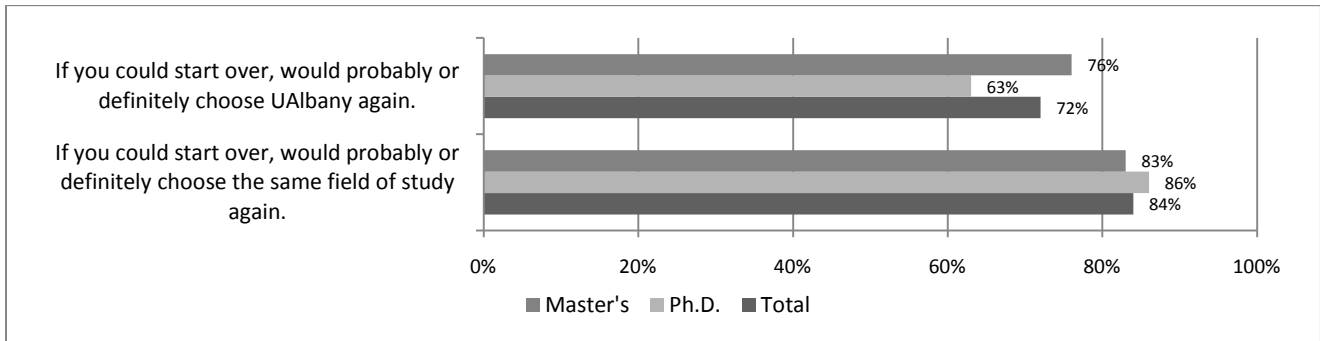
- **UAlbany met or exceeded academic expectations (Q1a):** A large majority of respondents felt that their academic experience met or exceeded their expectations.



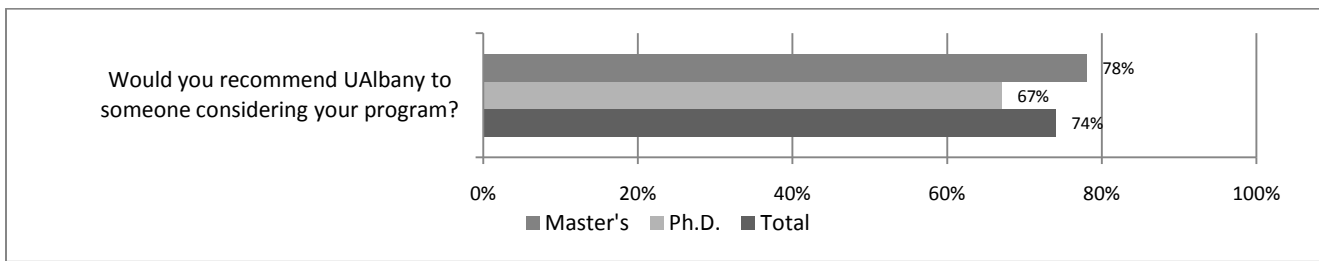
- UAlbany was first or second choice (Q1b):** For two thirds of UAlbany’s graduate students UAlbany was their first choice; for nearly 90% UAlbany was either their first or second choice. Both of these figures are markedly higher for Master’s students than for doctoral students.



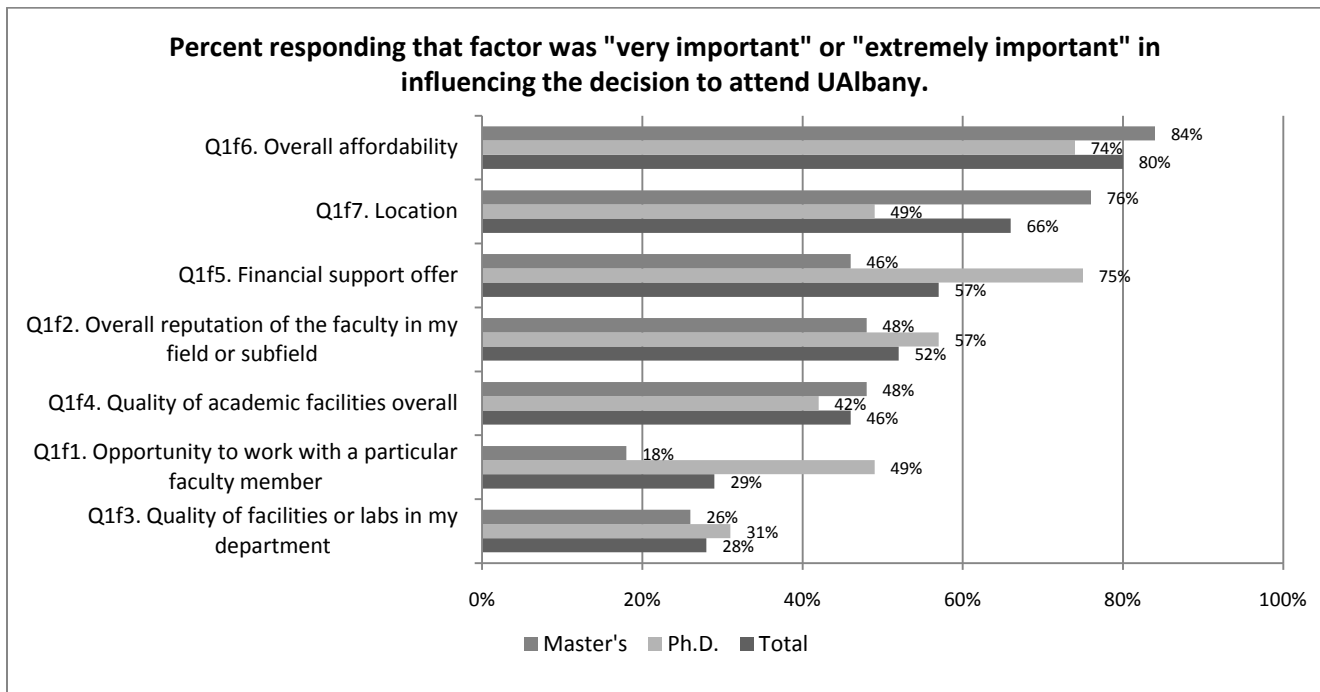
- Most students would choose UAlbany again (Q1c & Q1d):** Around three quarters of master’s students and two thirds of doctoral students would choose UAlbany if they had it to do over again. Over 80% would choose the same field of study again.



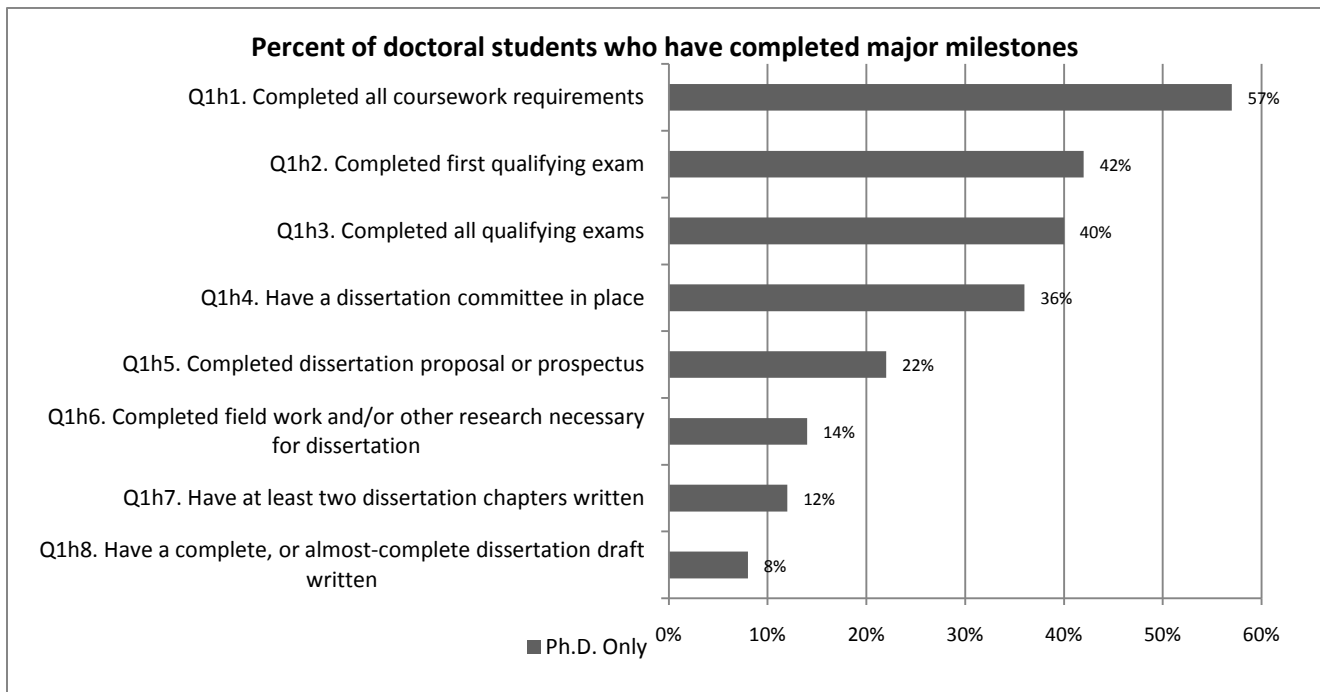
- Most would recommend UAlbany (Q1e):** Nearly three quarters of UAlbany graduate students would recommend UAlbany to someone considering their program, with master’s students again more positive than doctoral students.



- Factors Influencing School Choice (Q1f):** The top three factors influencing the decision to attend UAlbany were affordability, location and the financial support offer. For doctoral students, the top three were the financial support offer, affordability and the reputation of their department's faculty.



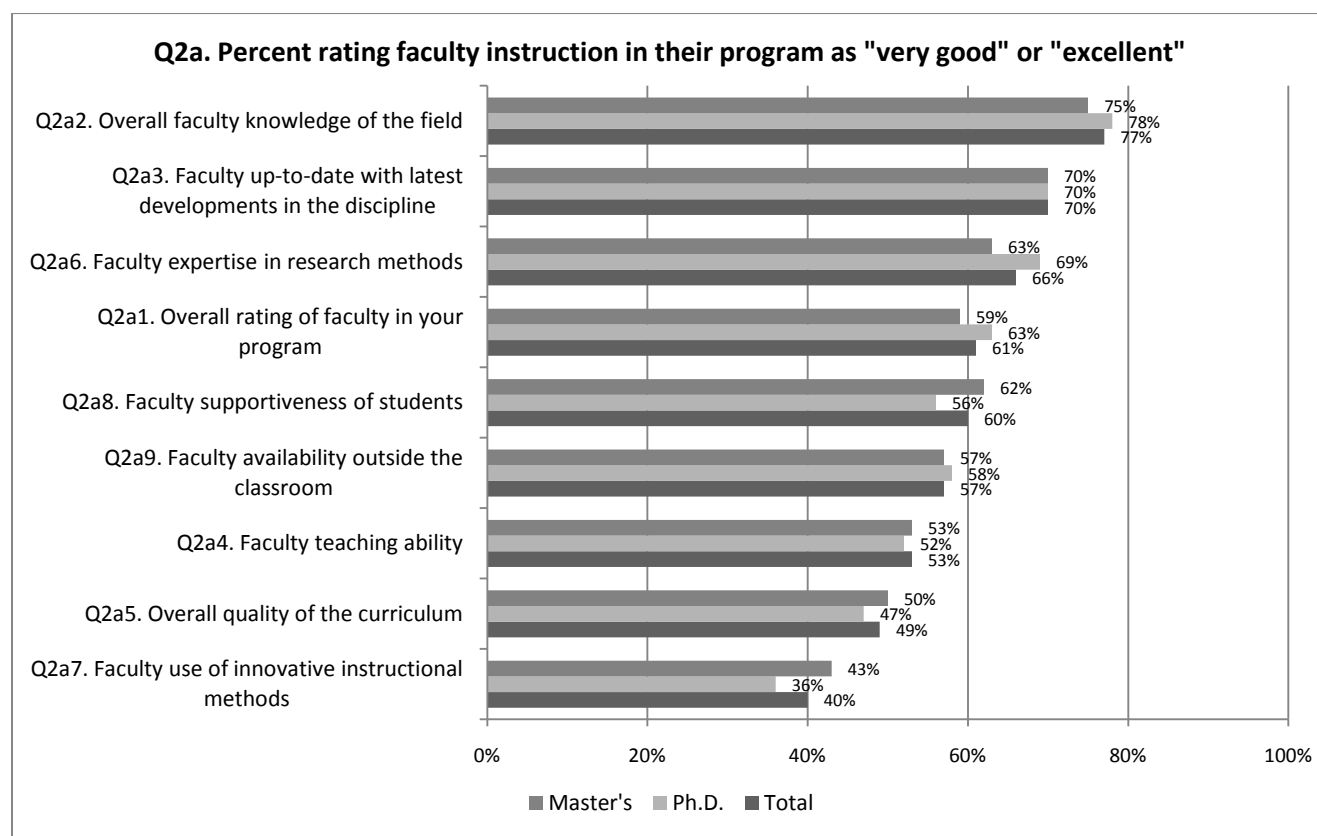
- Progress in Doctoral Program (Q1h):** The chart below shows the progress of doctoral students toward their degree as measured by completion of important milestones. Responses range from a high of 57% who have completed all required coursework to a low of 8% who have written a complete or nearly-complete dissertation draft.



Part 2: Graduate Instruction and Faculty Characteristics

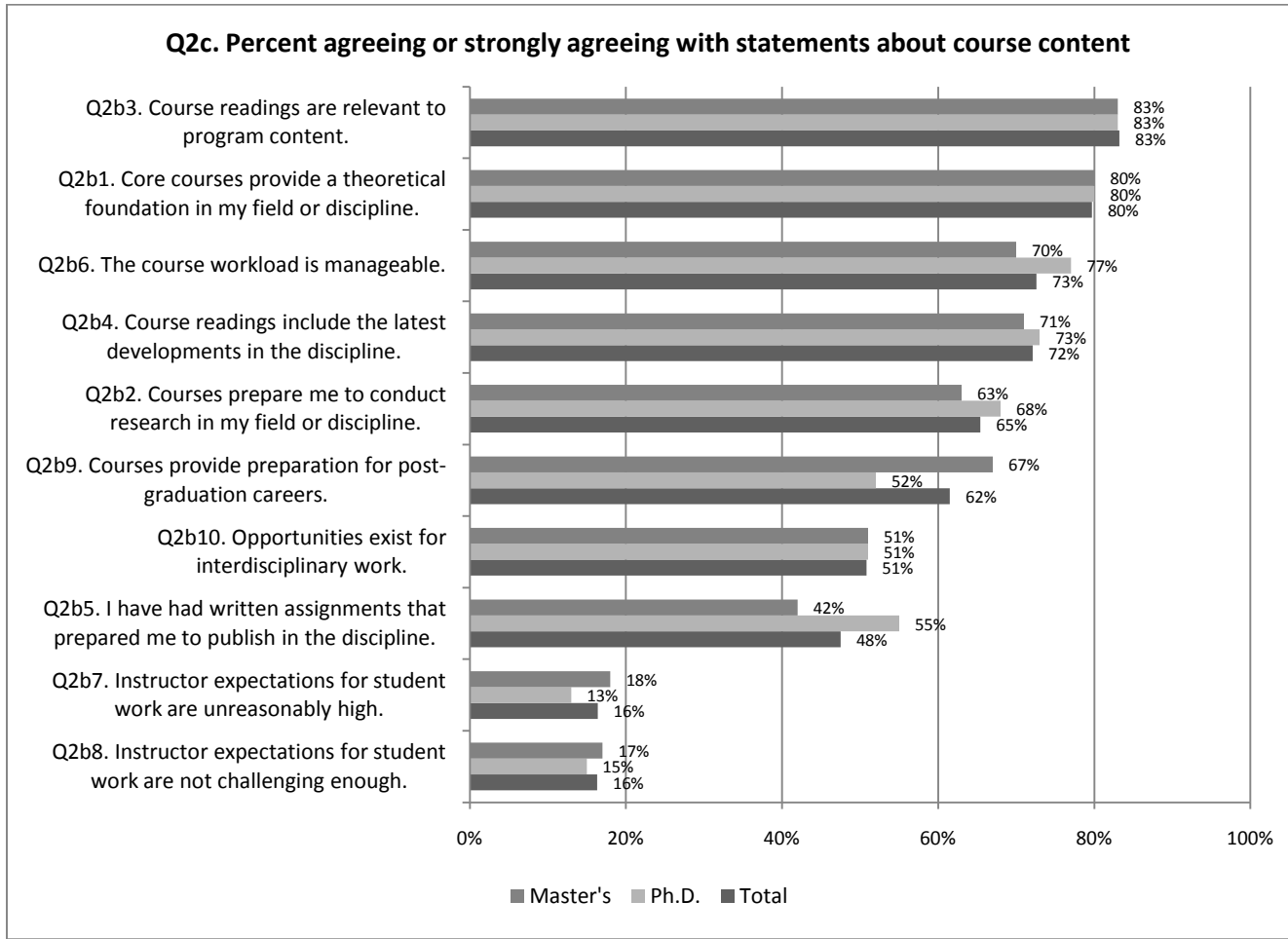
Both doctoral and master's students indicated considerable satisfaction with faculty instruction and prestige and with academic course content and requirements.

- **Faculty Instruction (Q2a):** Both master's and doctoral respondents rated faculty instruction highest on aspects of "knowledge in the field," "up-to-date with the latest developments," "expertise in research methods" and overall ratings. However, students provided less positive ratings for "faculty teaching ability," "faculty use of innovative instructional methods," and "overall quality of curriculum."²

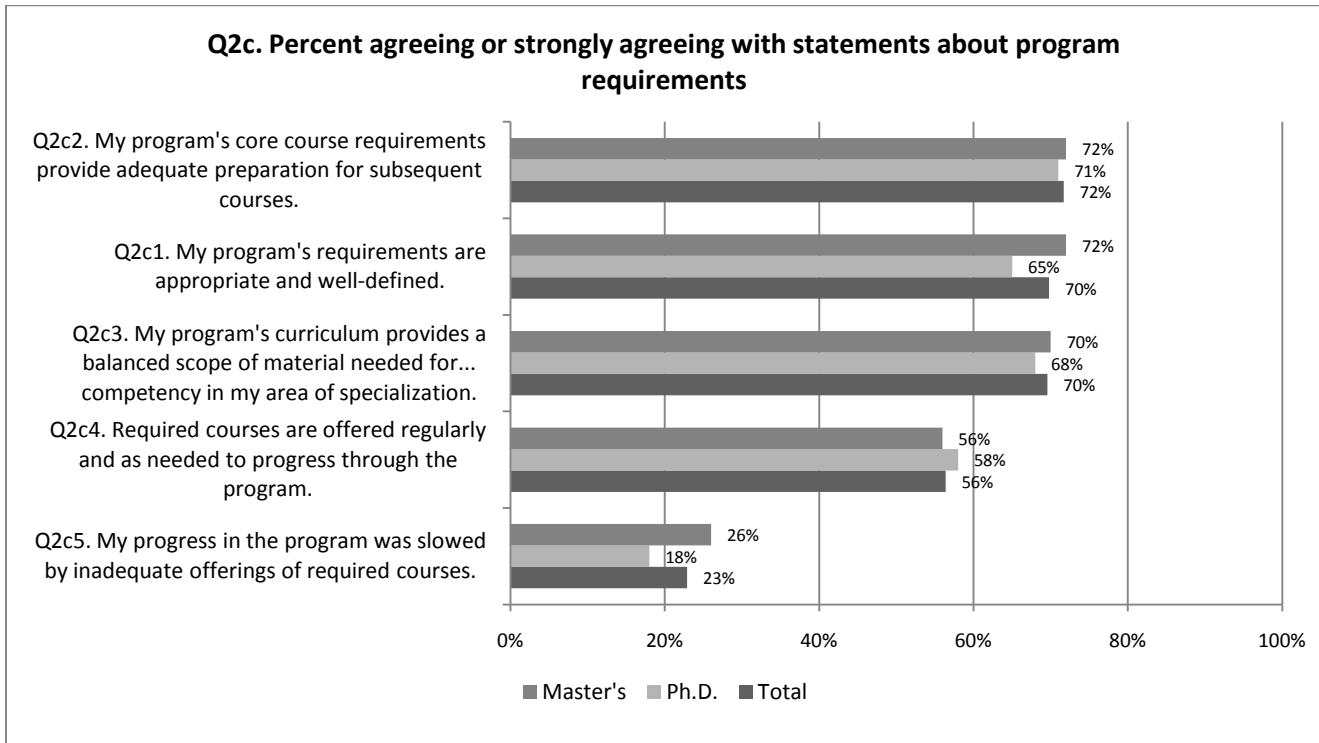


² We should note that although the middle option in the five-point scale is often considered a neutral response, that is more the case for bi-polar scales, in which responses on one side of the midpoint are actually negative and those on the other side are positive (e.g., agree/disagree or satisfied/dissatisfied). This scale is uni-polar, indicating degrees of positivity, and even the middle option is "good." If we were to include here students who rated their instruction as "good," the numbers would be considerably higher.

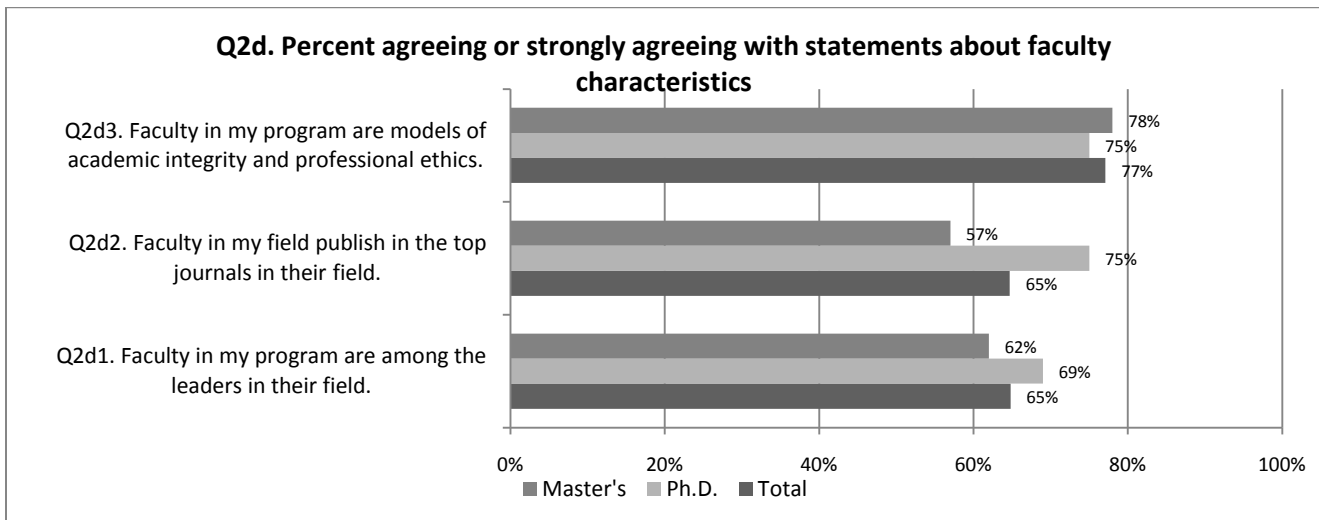
- Academic Course Content (Q2b):** Of the list of 10 statements about course content, fully 6 received agreement or strong agreement from over 60% of UAlbany graduate students, with the statements “Course readings are relevant to program content” and “Core courses provide a theoretical foundation in my field or discipline” both receiving 80% agreement. Two statements relating to interdisciplinary work and preparation for publication received more tepid support. Finally, two negatively-worded questions on the level of expectations or challenges received agreement from fewer than 20% of UAlbany graduate students.



- Program Requirement (Q2c):** Around 70% or more of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “program requirements are appropriate,” “core course requirements prepare them for subsequent courses,” and that their “curriculum provides a balanced scope for graduate-level competency in their field.” Respondents exhibited less agreement with “Required courses are offered regularly as needed,” although only 23% agreed that inadequate course offerings slowed their progress.



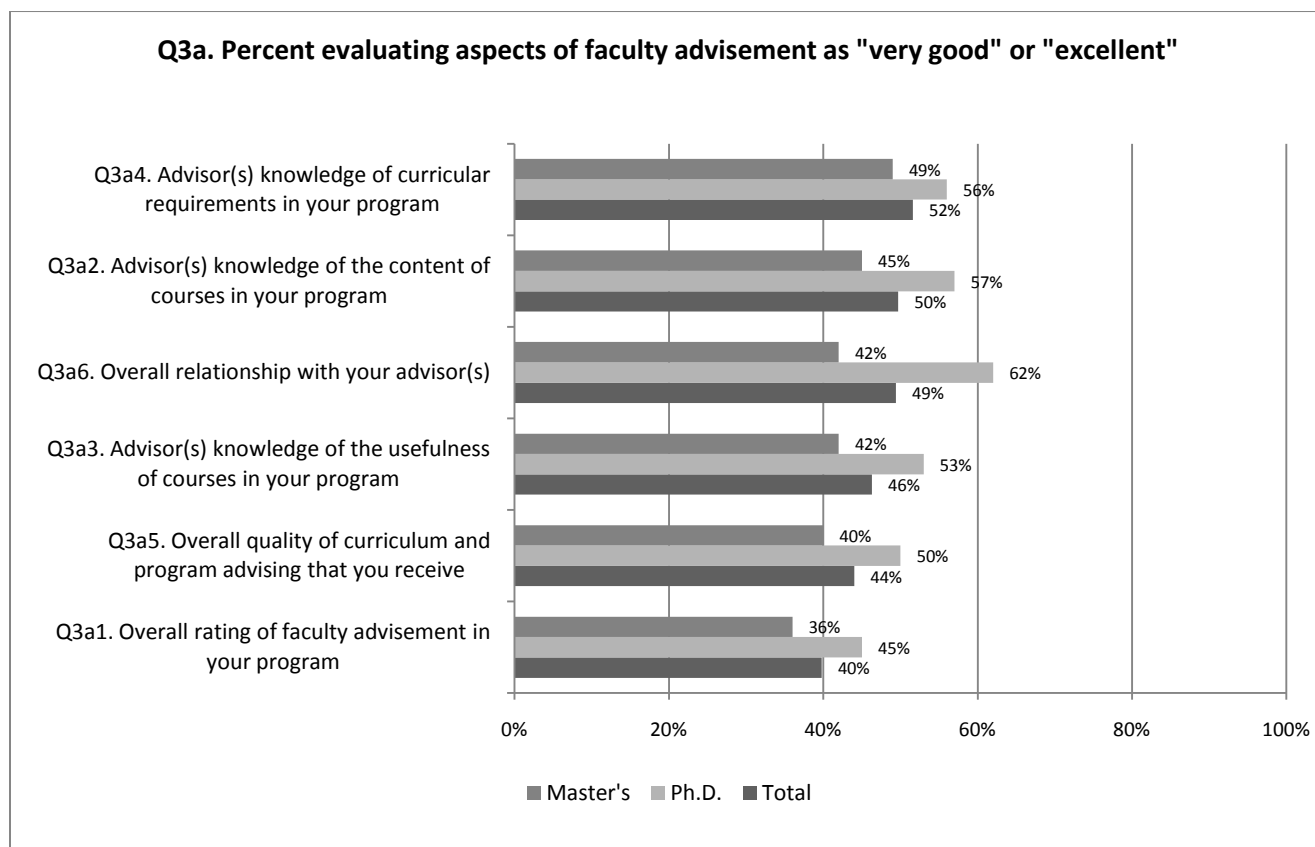
- Faculty Characteristics (Q2d):** More than three quarters of respondents agreed that faculty in their program are “models of integrity and professional ethics” while around two thirds agreed that they are “leaders in the field,” and “publish in top journals,” with doctoral students indicating more positive responses than master’s students in the latter two areas.



Part 3: Academic Advisement and Faculty Mentoring

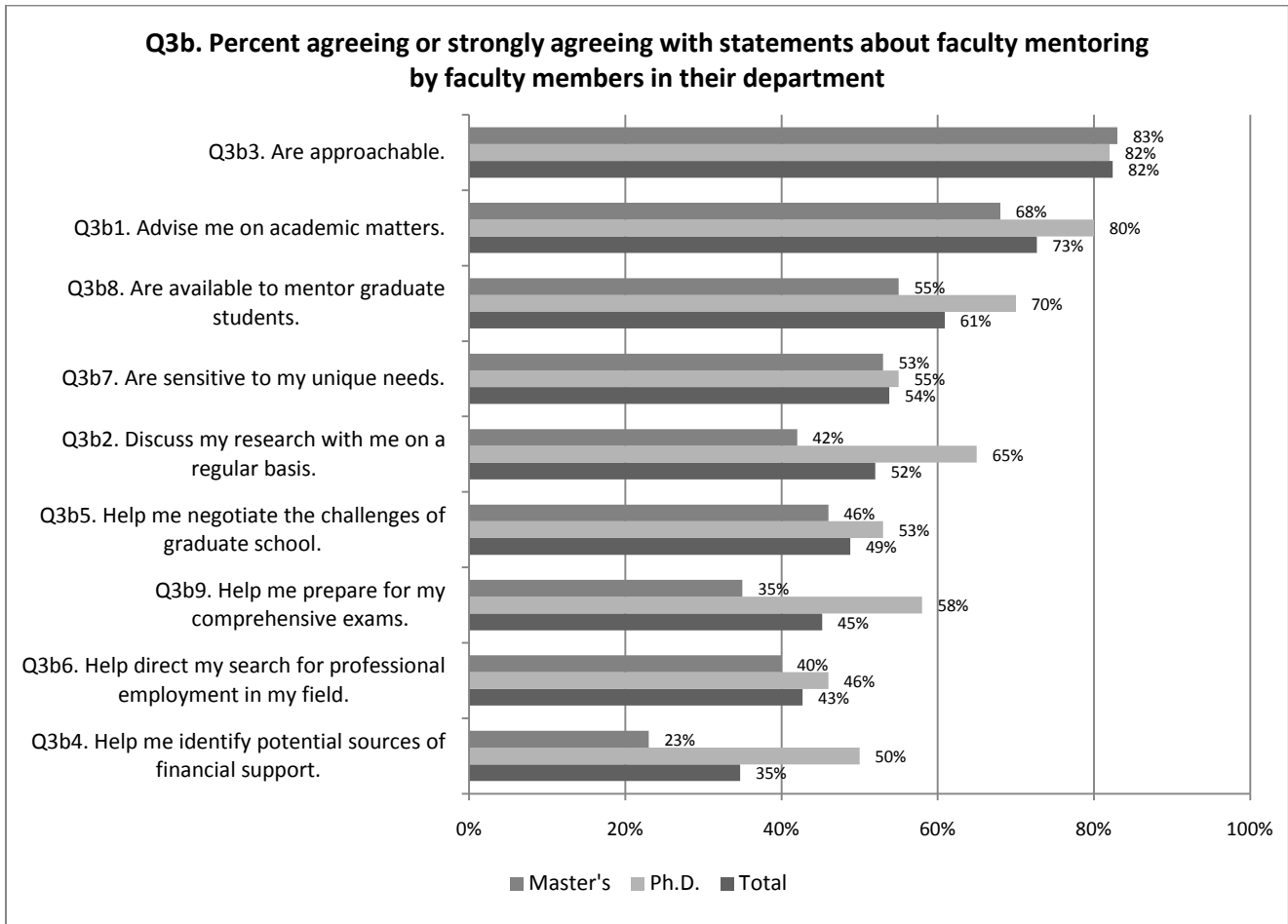
Results are more mixed for advisement and mentoring. Satisfaction with general advisement is only lukewarm, with some important exceptions. In general, Ph.D. students are more satisfied than master's students with their program's advisement and mentoring. Students writing a thesis or dissertation are very satisfied with their own thesis or dissertation advisors.

- **Academic Advisement (Q3a):** In academic advisement we see markedly lower ratings than for other aspects of graduate education, with master's students less positive than doctoral students on every measure. Doctoral students gave their highest ratings to their relationship with their own advisor, and their advisor's knowledge about the program. Master's students' ratings were below 50% for the combined "very good" and "excellent" responses on every measure. On the core question evaluating faculty advisement in their program overall, only 45% of doctoral students and 36% of master's students rated their program as "good" or "excellent."³

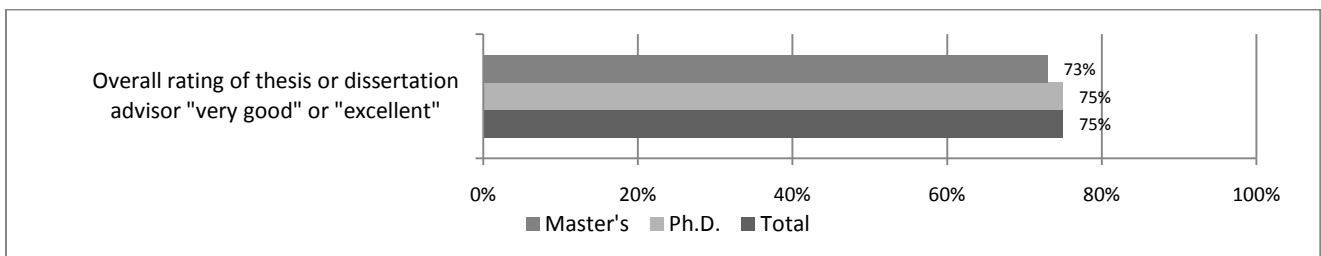


³ See the previous note regarding uni-polar scales with "good" as the middle option. Even so, if we look at the mean score on the 1-5 scale, all are above the middle point of "3," ranging from a low of 3.16 for Q3a1 to a high of 3.49 for Q3a4. Even for master's students, the lowest rating (for Q3a1) is 3.05, just slightly past the mid-point, meaning that the average rating is still "good."

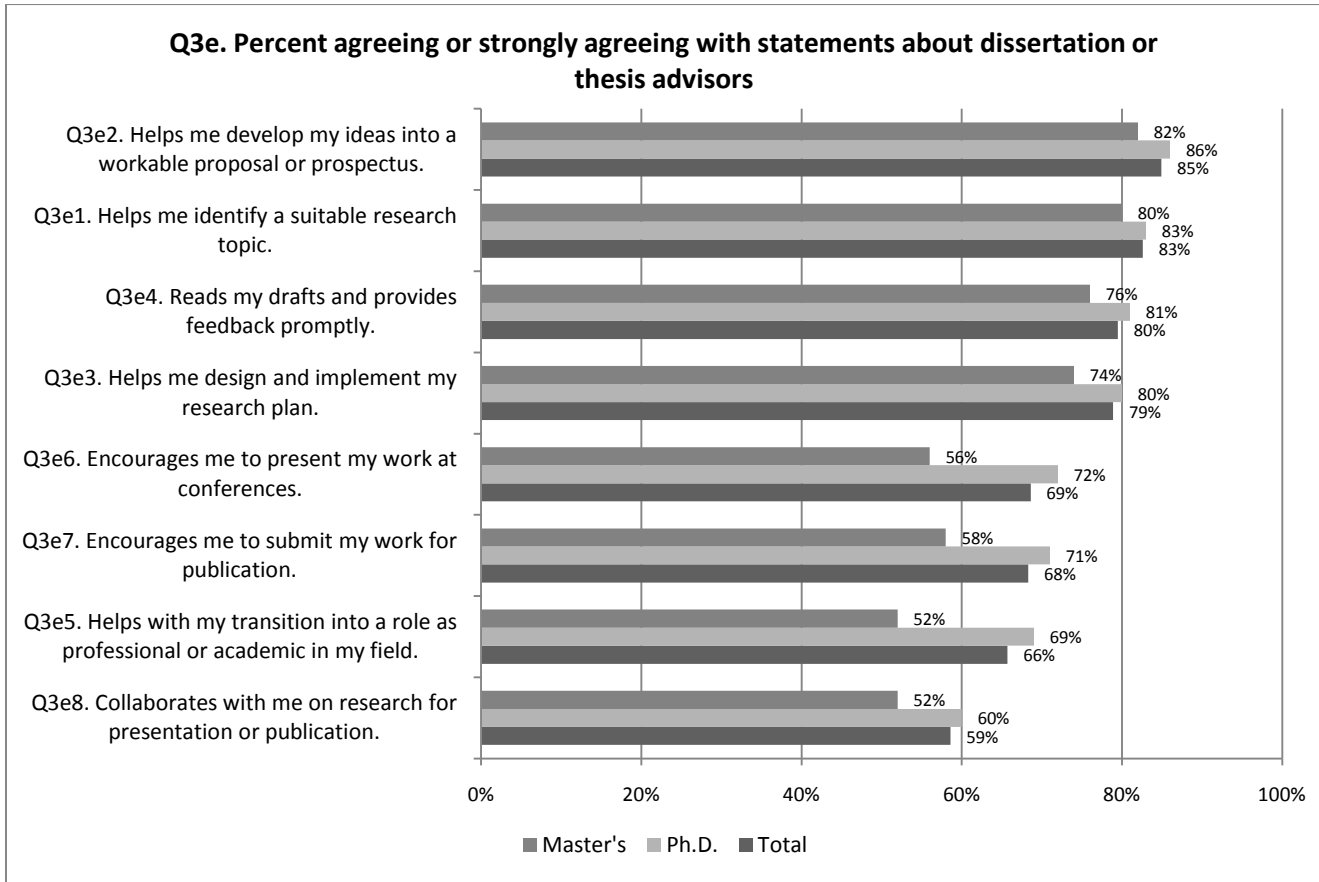
- General Faculty Mentoring (Q3b):** Responses on faculty mentoring in general are higher than for advisement in specific, with large majorities agreeing that faculty members in their program are approachable, advise them on academic matters, and are available to mentor graduate students. Overall, respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty members are approachable (84%), although there are some gaps between master’s and doctoral respondents in detail. Several other items received more mixed agreement, and the two items with the lowest levels of agreement relate to help identifying funding and jobs. As with advisement, several items also show systematically higher levels of agreement among doctoral students than master’s students.



- Thesis/Dissertation Advisor (Q3c & Q3d):** While ratings of faculty advisement in general were not high, students with thesis or dissertation advisors were much more positive about their advisors. Sixty one percent of doctoral and 11 percent of master’s students reported having a thesis or dissertation advisor. Three quarters of them rated their advisor overall as very good or excellent.



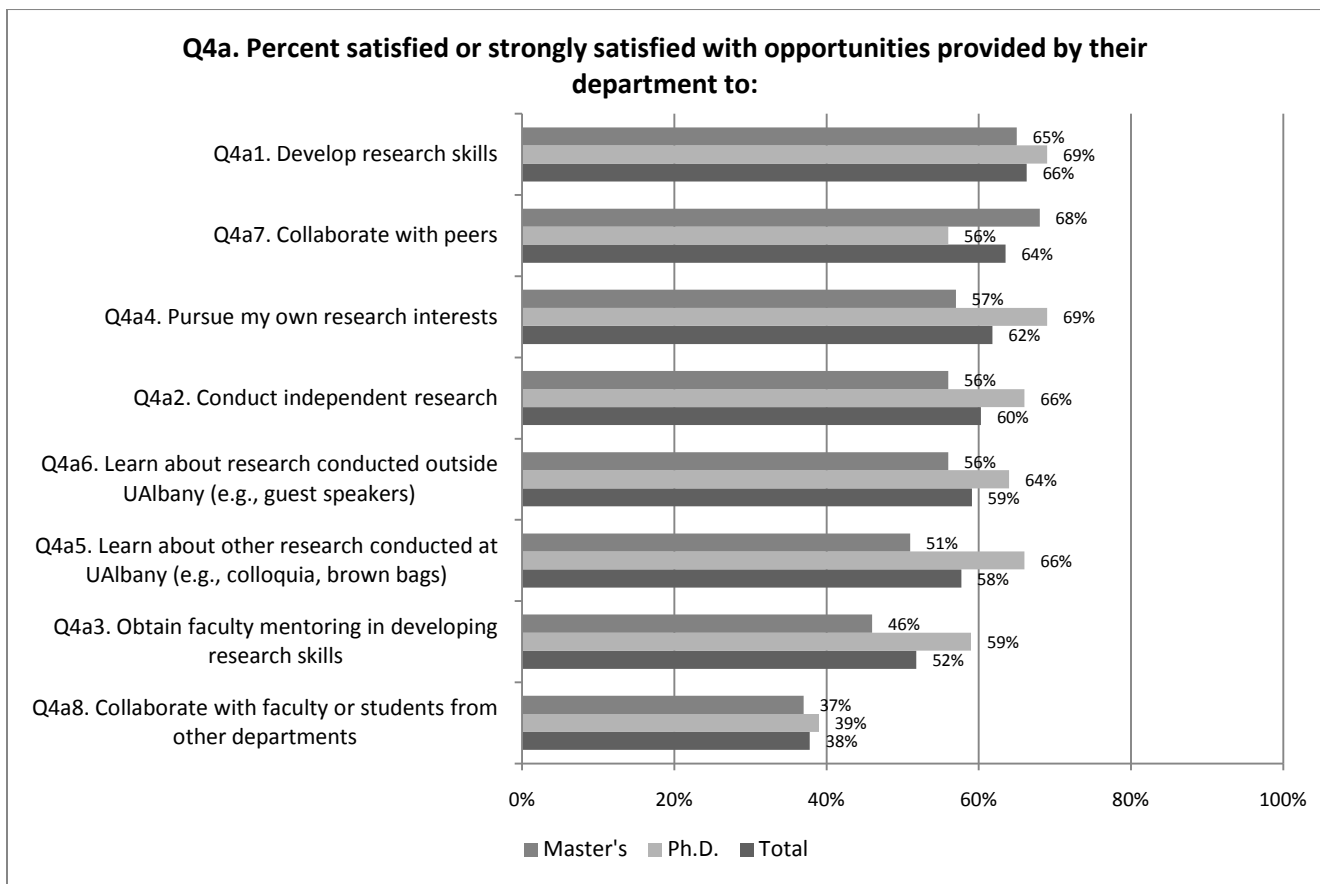
- Thesis/Dissertation Support and Guidance (Q3e):** (asked only of students with a dissertation or thesis advisor) Like the overall rating, large majorities of UAlbany graduate students also agreed or strongly agreed with a variety of more specific statements about their thesis or dissertation advisors. Over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their thesis/dissertation advisor is helpful in “developing ideas into workable proposal/prospectus,” finding a “suitable research topic,” “designing and implementing a research plan,” and “providing prompt feedback.” In these areas, master’s students working on theses had ratings very close to those of Ph.D. students. Other areas, including encouragement to present work at conferences or submit it for publication, helping with transition to a professional role, and research collaboration, indicated lower, but still high, agreement of around two thirds. On each other those areas, master’s students had substantially lower agreement than Ph.D. students.



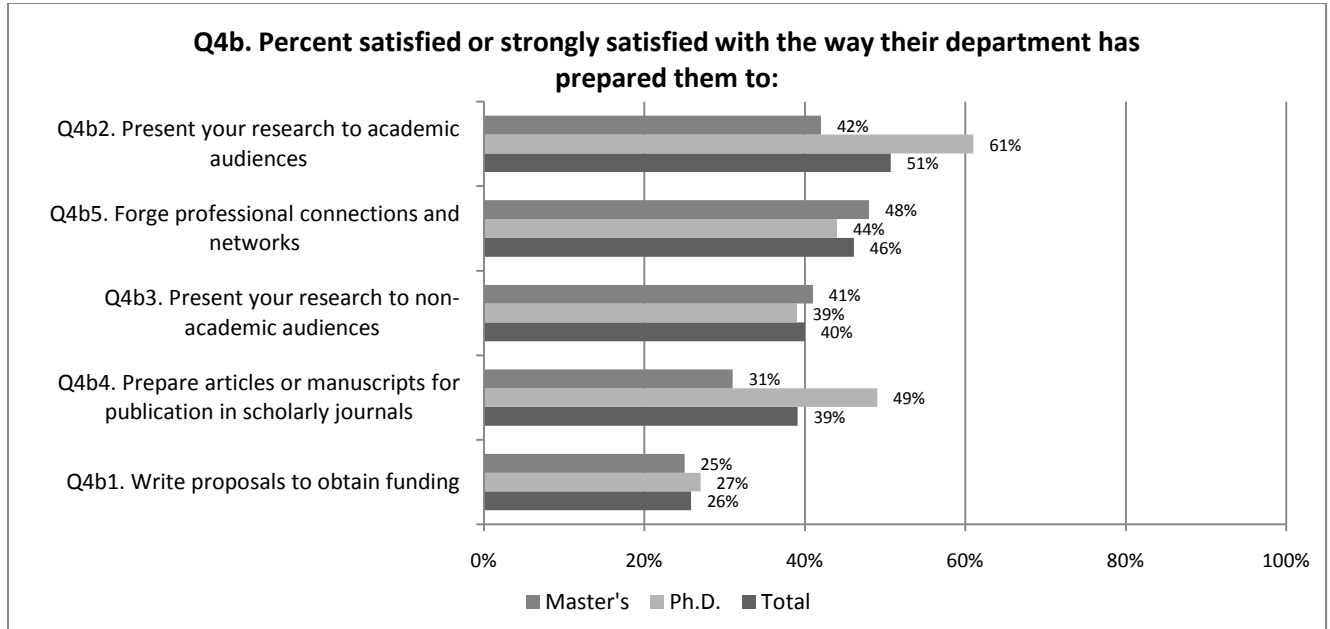
Part 4: Research Opportunities

UAlbany graduate students are generally satisfied with research opportunities, with Ph.D. students again showing higher levels of satisfaction than master's students. Satisfaction is lower for areas related to professional development, with particularly low satisfaction with preparation to write funding proposals.

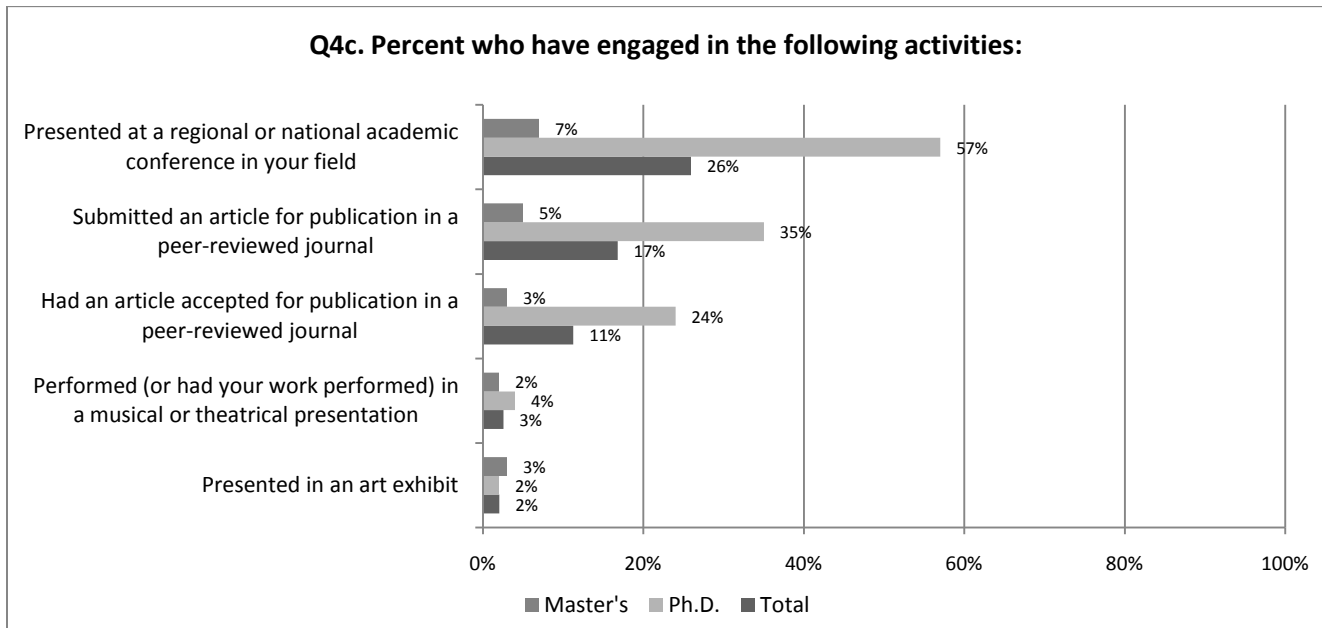
- Departmental/Programmatic Opportunities for Developing Research Interests and Skills (Q4a):**
 Overall around two thirds of both master's and doctoral students were satisfied or very satisfied with department/program opportunities provided to develop their research skills. In most other areas, doctoral students' satisfaction was greater than 60%, while that of master's students was in the 50% range. Interestingly, master's students were substantially more satisfied with regard to opportunities to collaborate with their peers, and both groups were far less satisfied when it came to opportunities to collaborate with faculty or students from other departments.



- Departmental/Programmatic Preparations for Professional Activities (Q4b):** In these areas, master's and doctoral students once again showed markedly different patterns. For Ph.D. students, the top two areas of satisfaction were with preparation to present their research to academic audiences and preparing articles for publication. For master's students, the highest satisfaction was with preparation in forging professional connections and networks. Both groups showed their lowest satisfaction with preparation to write proposals to obtain funding.



- Student participation in field-related academic activities (Q4c):** Over a half of doctoral respondents presented at a regional or national conference while in graduate school, compared to only 7% of master's students. Over a third of Ph.D. students submitted an article for publication, and around a quarter had an article actually accepted. (Looking only at third-year or higher Ph.D. students, 67% reported submitting an article for publication, and 29% have been published.) Far smaller numbers have performed or presented artistic work, a reflection of UAlbany's small fine arts programs.

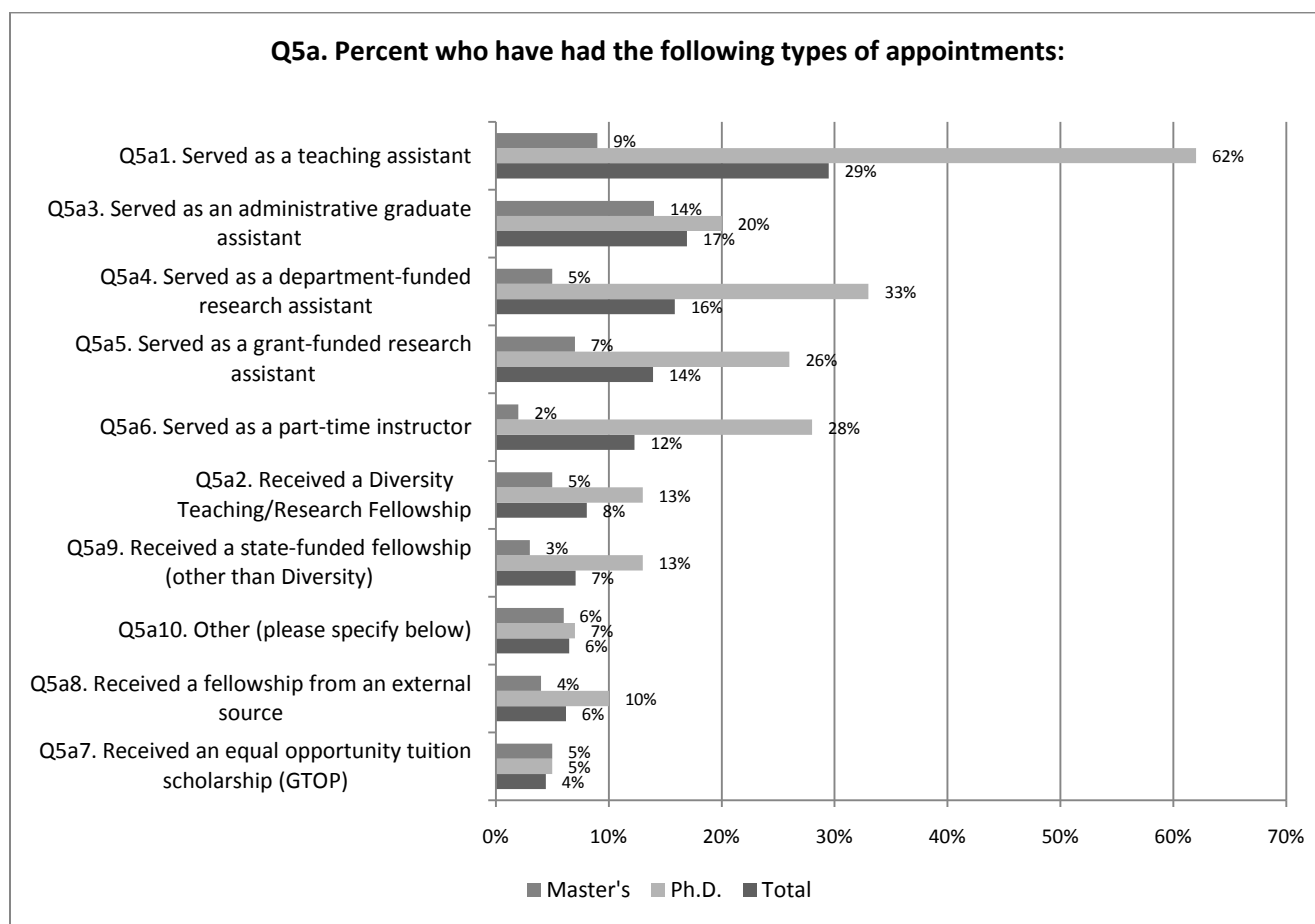


Part 5: Research & Teaching Appointments/Financial Aid

This section of the survey is consistent with institutional data showing that most Ph.D. students have had assistantships or other types of funding, while fewer master's students receive these types of support. In fact, assistantships are the primary source of funding for Ph.D. students, while loans are the primary source for master's students. In both groups, those who received either teaching or research assistantships rated their experiences highly, but were somewhat less likely to feel that they have been adequately trained or supervised. Both groups averaged 28-29 hours of paid work per week,⁴ although for Ph.D. students, those are largely from assistantships and for master's students, those are largely from outside employment.

- **Assistantships and Financial Supports (Q5a):** Of the ten sources of financial support listed, the top five sources of funding for doctoral respondents were teaching assistantships, department-funded research assistantships, part-time instructorships, grant-funded research assistantships, and administrative graduate assistantships.

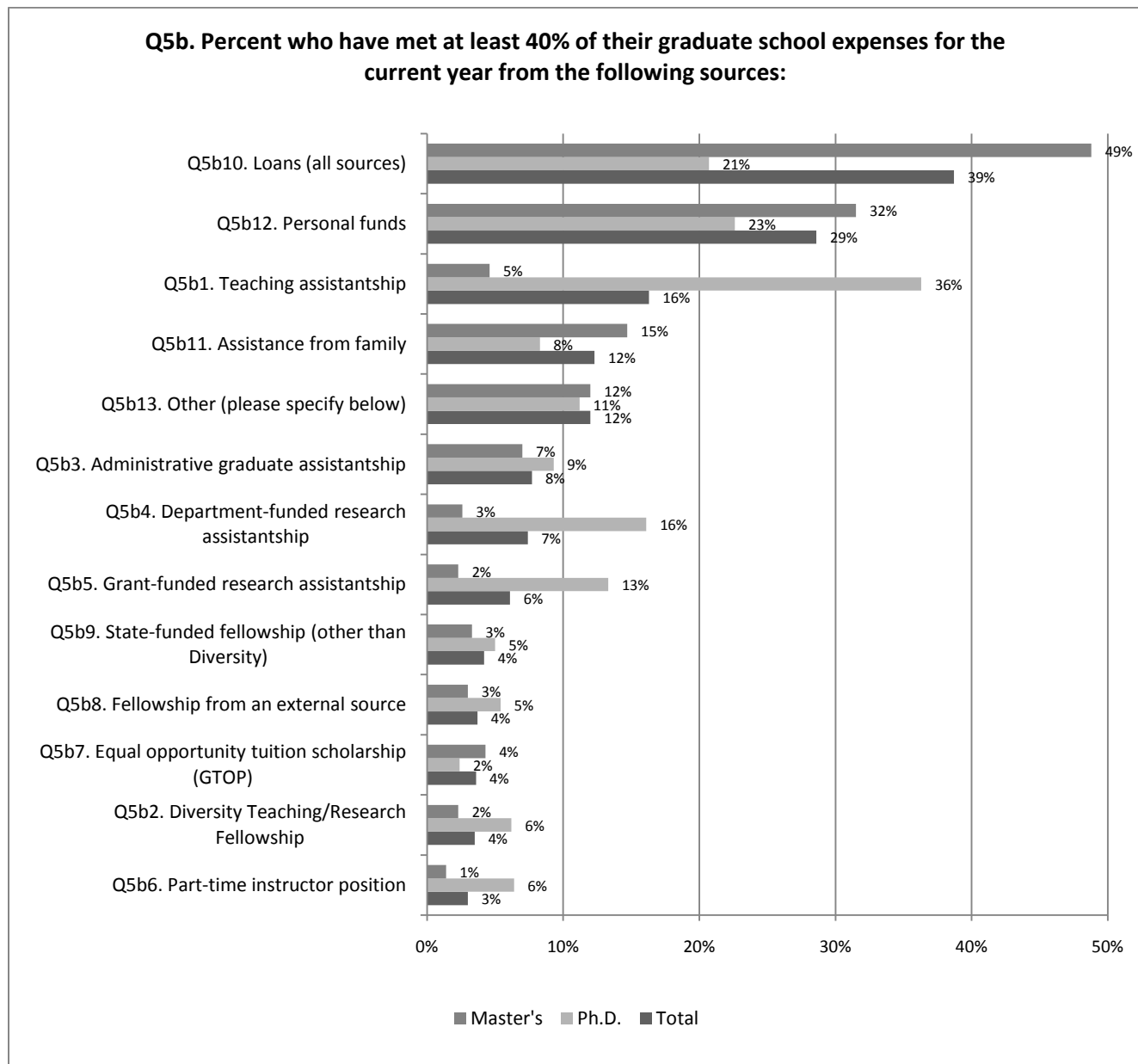
The numbers for master's students reflect the lower levels of funding opportunities compared to Ph.D. students. For master's students, the highest percentages were the 14% who served as administrative graduate assistants and the 9% who have served as teaching assistants.



⁴ These figures are averages; they are not evidence of students with assistantships working more than 20 hours per week.

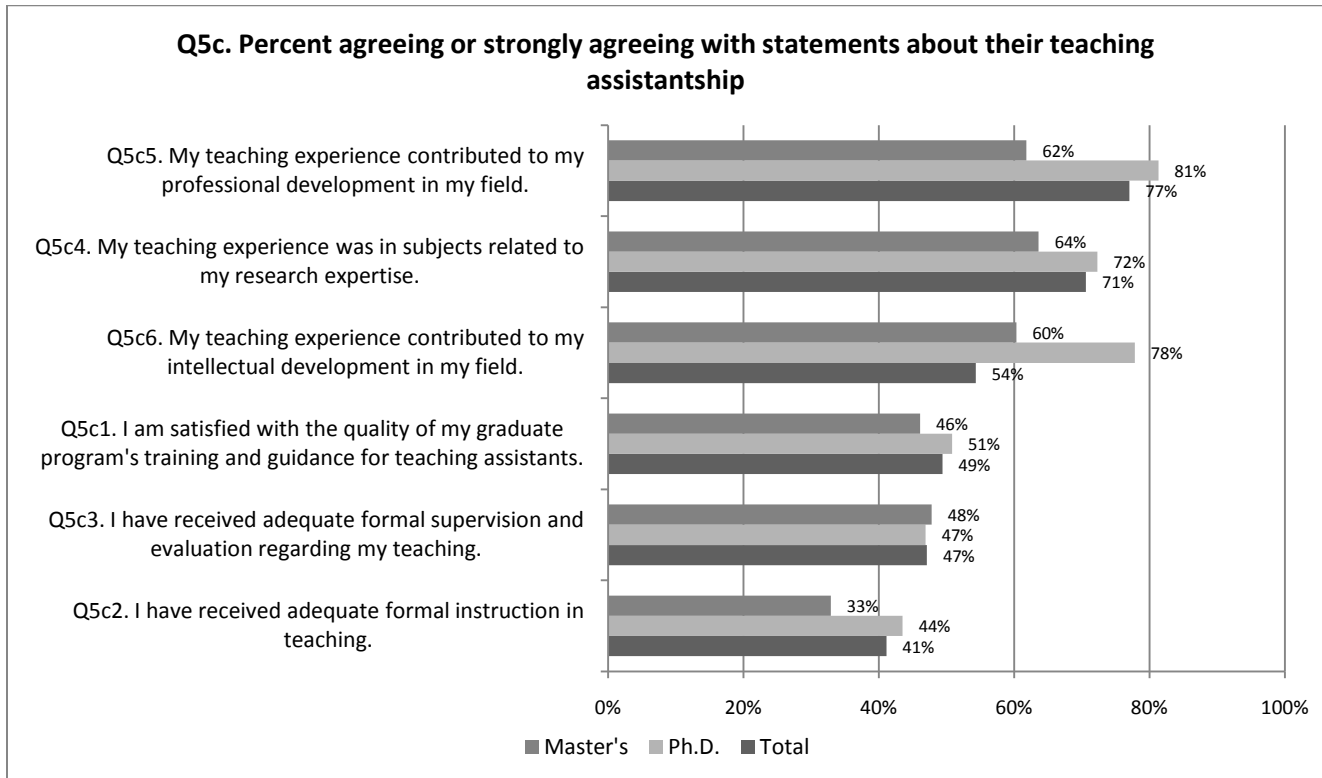
- Percentage of graduate school expenses met, by category (Q5b): Survey respondents were asked for a number of funding sources to estimate which percentage range of their graduate school expenses for the year were met by a variety of sources. The chart below shows combined percentages of those who checked 41-60%, 61-80% and 81-100%.

Again, the survey results show markedly different results for master’s students and Ph.D. students. For Ph.D. students, the top sources were teaching assistantships, personal funds and research assistantships, while for master’s students the top three categories were loans, personal funds and family assistance. The most striking figure on the chart is the 49% of master’s students who relied so heavily on loans. In fact, 31% of master’s students relied 81-100% on loans to cover their graduate school expenses.



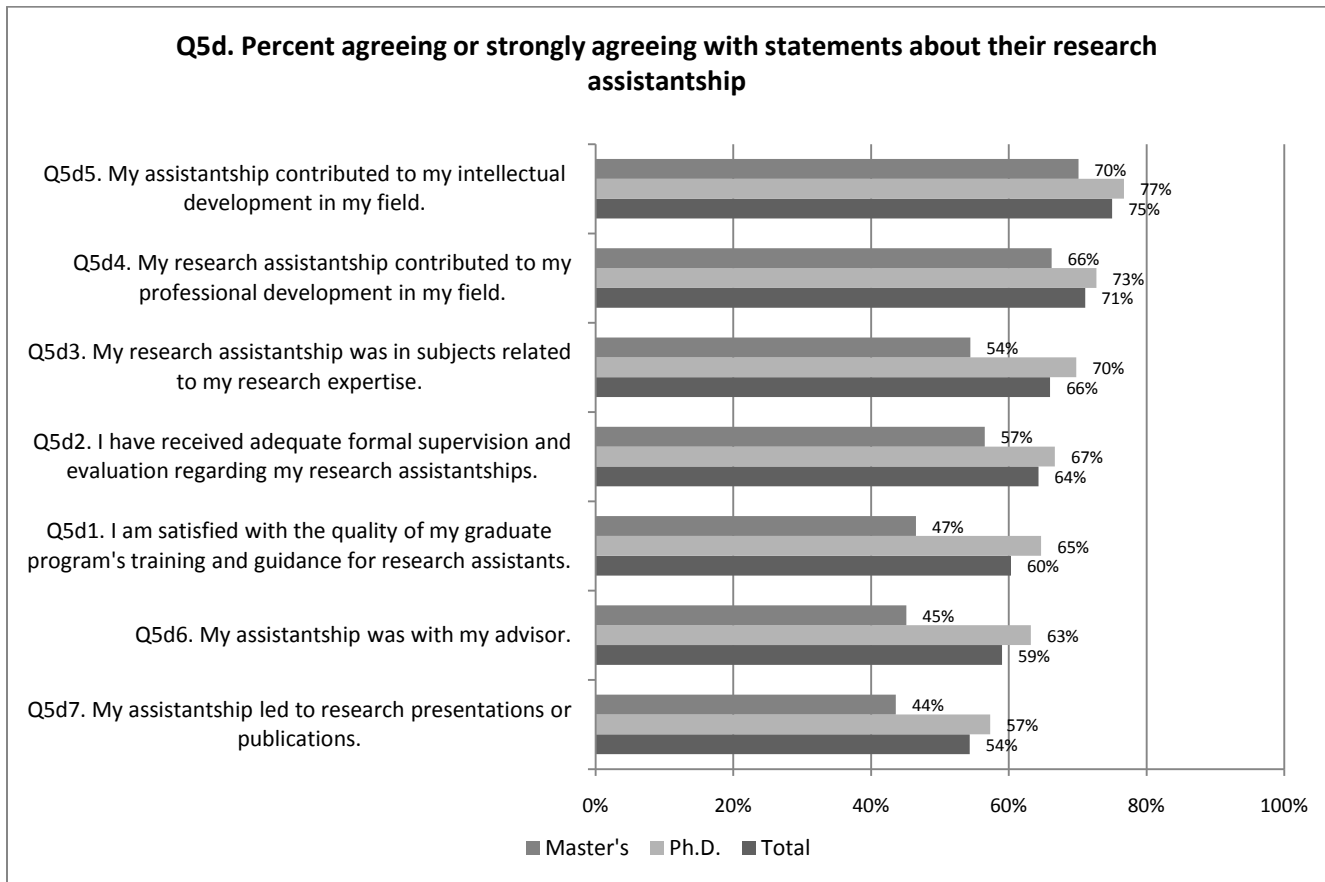
- Teaching Assistant Training and Experiences (Q5c):** Regarding teaching experiences, large majorities of both doctoral and master’s students who have taught agreed or strongly agreed that their teaching experience was in subjects related to their research expertise, that their teaching experience contributed to professional development and their intellectual development in their field, with agreement stronger among Ph.D. students than master’s students.

However, while survey respondents appreciated the value of their teaching experiences, they were far less sanguine about their training and supervision. Overall, only 49% were satisfied with the quality of their training and guidance; 47% agreed that they had adequate supervision and evaluation, and only 41% agreed that they had received adequate formal instruction in teaching.

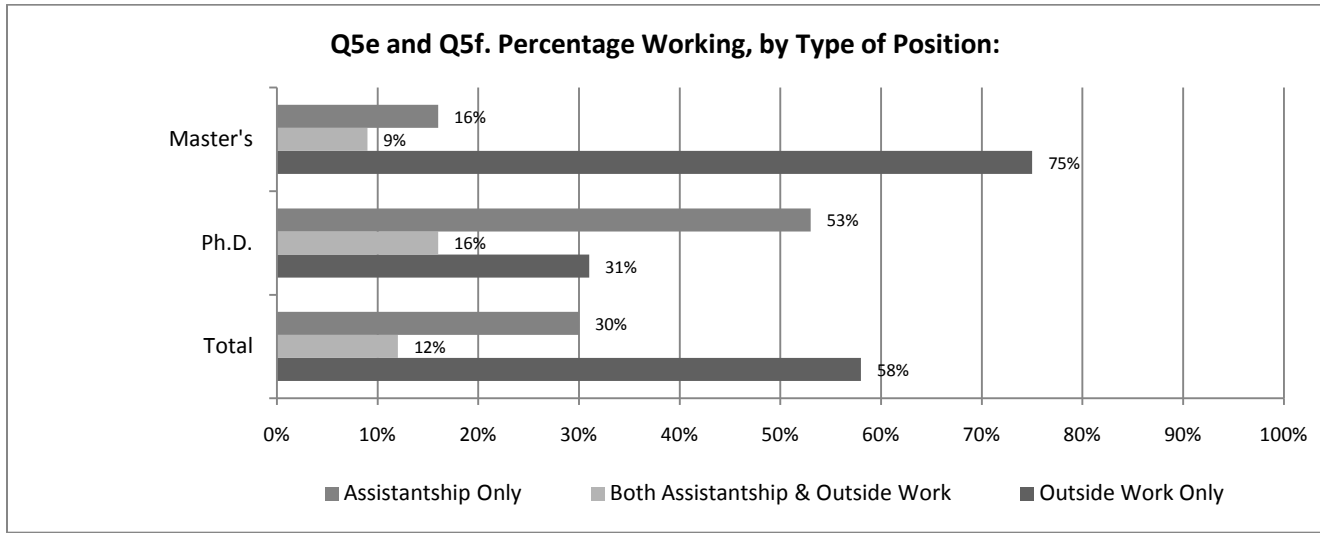


- Research Assistant Training and Experiences (Q5d): Both doctoral and master’s respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their research assistantship contributed to their intellectual development and professional development in their field.

Other areas showed the familiar dichotomy of higher satisfaction among doctoral students than master’s students, with the former showing agreement levels typically in the 60% range and the latter in the 40s and 50s.



- **Hours worked by type of position (Q5e-f):** As shown in the figure below, outside employment is by far the most important category for master’s students, with 75% reporting only outside work, along with 16% with assistantships and 9% with both assistantships and outside work. In contrast, 53% of Ph.D. students reported working only at assistantships, along with 31% who did only outside work and 16% who worked both. Overall, 58% of respondents reported working only outside the University, followed by 30% working only at assistantships, and 12% working some hours at both types of position.



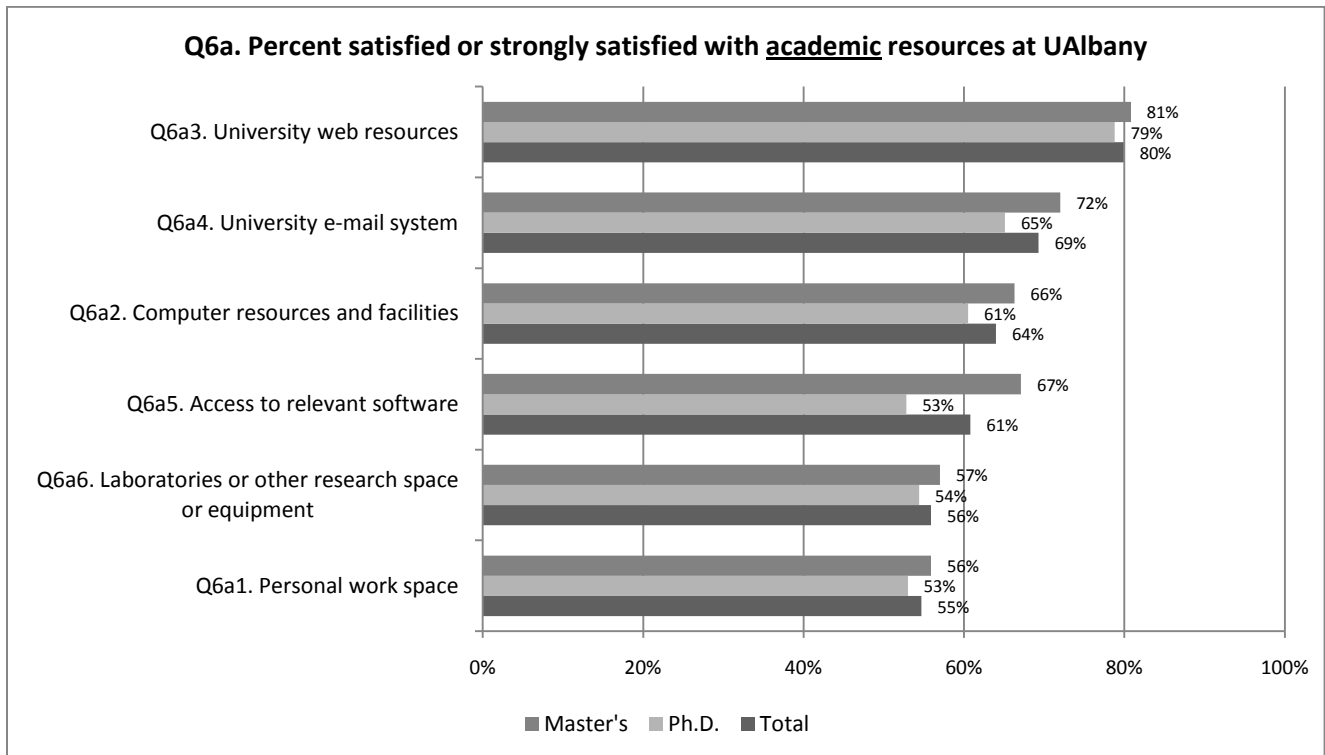
- **Number of hours worked (Q5e-f):** Ph.D. students working only at an assistantship reported working 22 hours per week on average; Ph.D. students who only had “another” type of job reported working on average 33 hours per week. A small but important minority of 16% of Ph.D. students reported working at both an assistantship and another job, and they reported working on average 38 hours per week. A number of combinations of full and/or part-time assistantships, fellowships, research assistantships, and outside work both related to and completely separate from their doctoral work are possible, so care should be taken when making any inferences about this latter population.

Master’s student working only at an assistantship reported working 17 hours per week on average. Those with only “another” type of job reported working 31 hours per week. About 9% of master’s students reported working at both an assistantship and another job, and they reported working on average 32 hours per week. As with Ph.D. students, a number of combinations of full and/or part-time assistantships, research assistantships, and outside work both related to and completely separate from their academic work are possible, so care should be taken when making any inferences about this latter population.

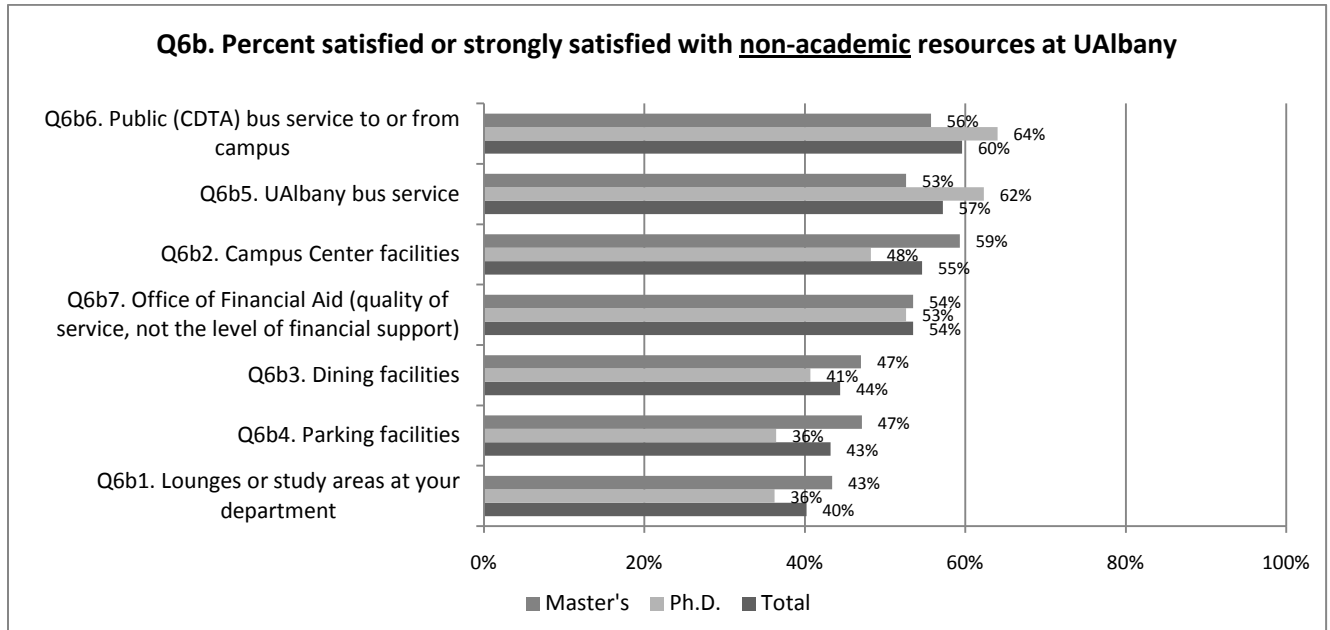
Part 6: Facilities, Resources and Services

UAlbany graduate students were generally satisfied with academic services and facilities, particularly information technology and libraries. Satisfaction with non-academic services was more mixed, with high satisfaction with bus services and the campus center, and lower satisfaction with dining, parking, and study areas. Satisfaction with a variety of student support services was mixed.

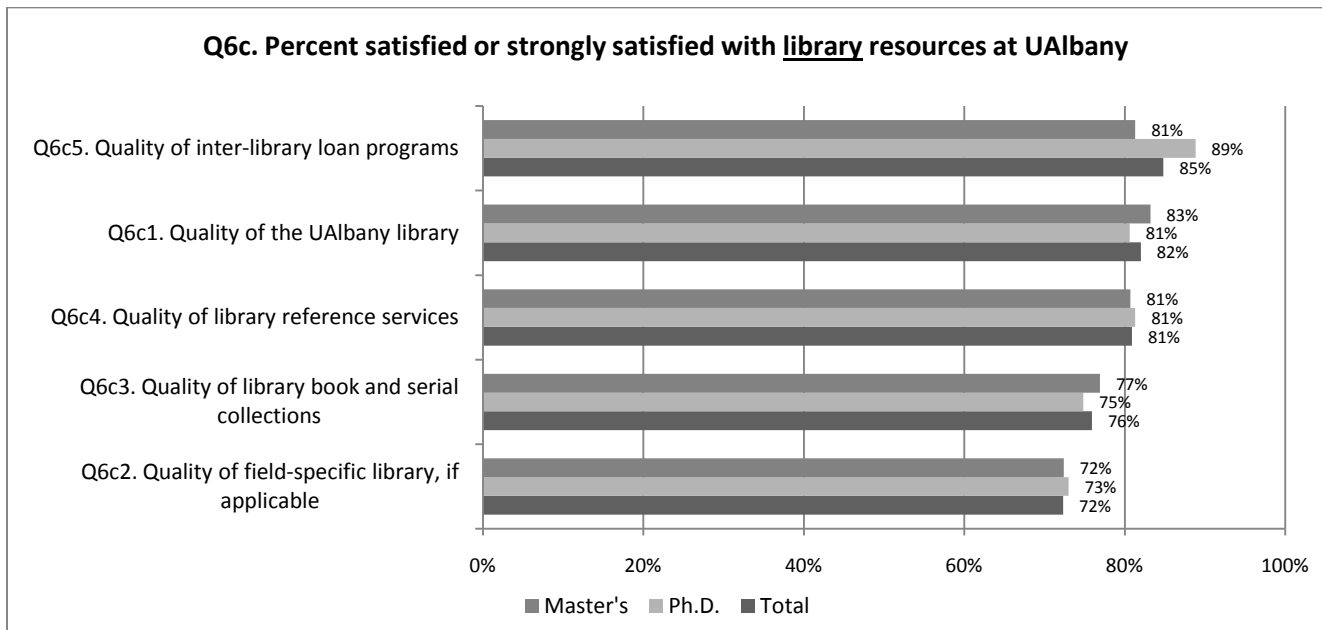
- Academic Facilities and Resources (Q6a):** Graduate students at UAlbany were most satisfied with university web resources, the university email system, and computer resources and facilities. Respondents were least satisfied with personal work space and laboratories or other research space or equipment. Responses for master's and doctoral students were similar for these items, with the exception of access to software, where satisfaction was substantially higher for Ph.D. students than for master's students. The high levels of satisfaction with computer and information technology services at UAlbany are consistent with recent undergraduate surveys.



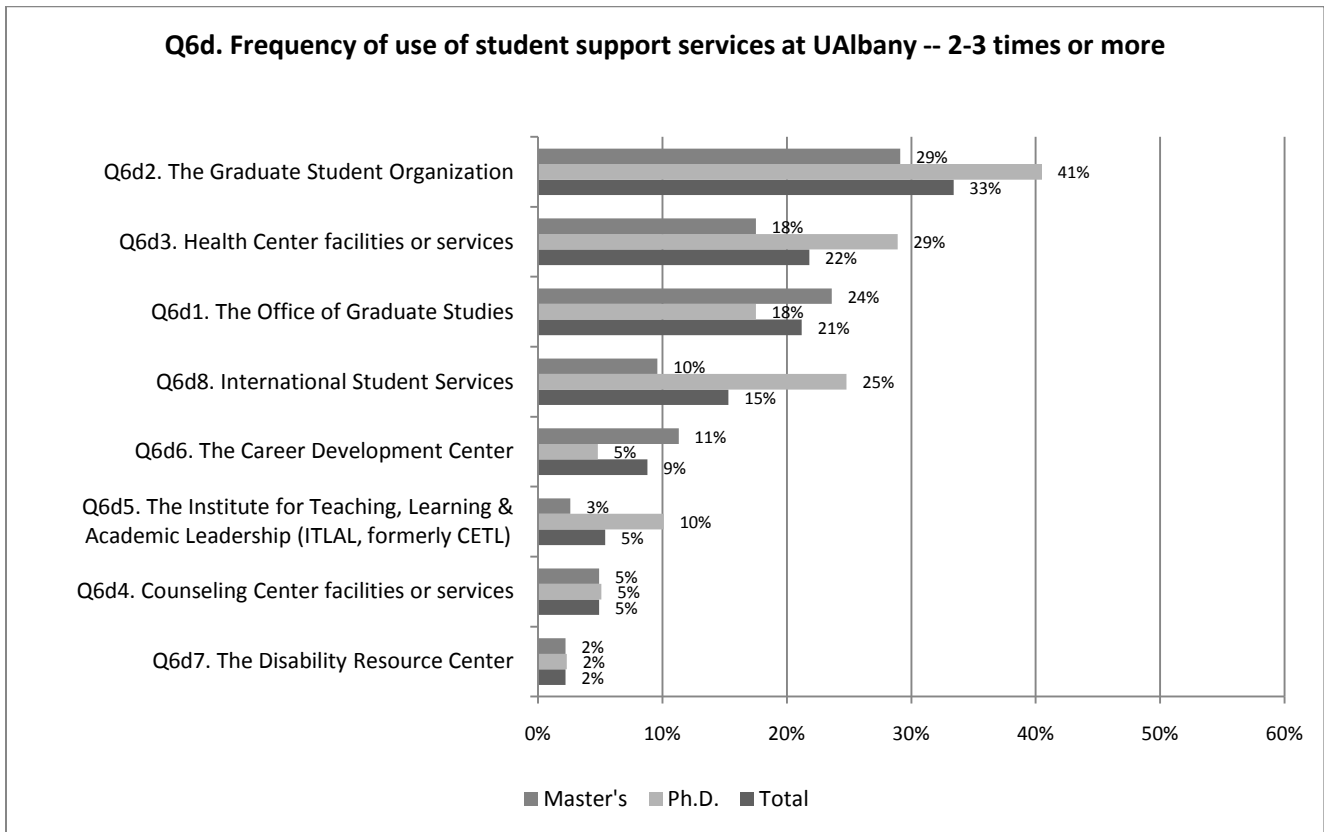
- Non-academic Facilities and Resources (Q6b):** UAlbany graduate students were most satisfied with both CDTA and UAlbany bus services, followed by the Campus Center and the Financial Aid Office. Consistent with recent undergraduate surveys, two of the three areas of lowest satisfaction were dining and parking facilities. The lowest satisfaction, however, was with “lounges or study areas at your department.” Doctoral students had higher satisfaction than master’s students regarding bus service, while master’s students had higher satisfaction with the Campus Center, parking, and study lounges.



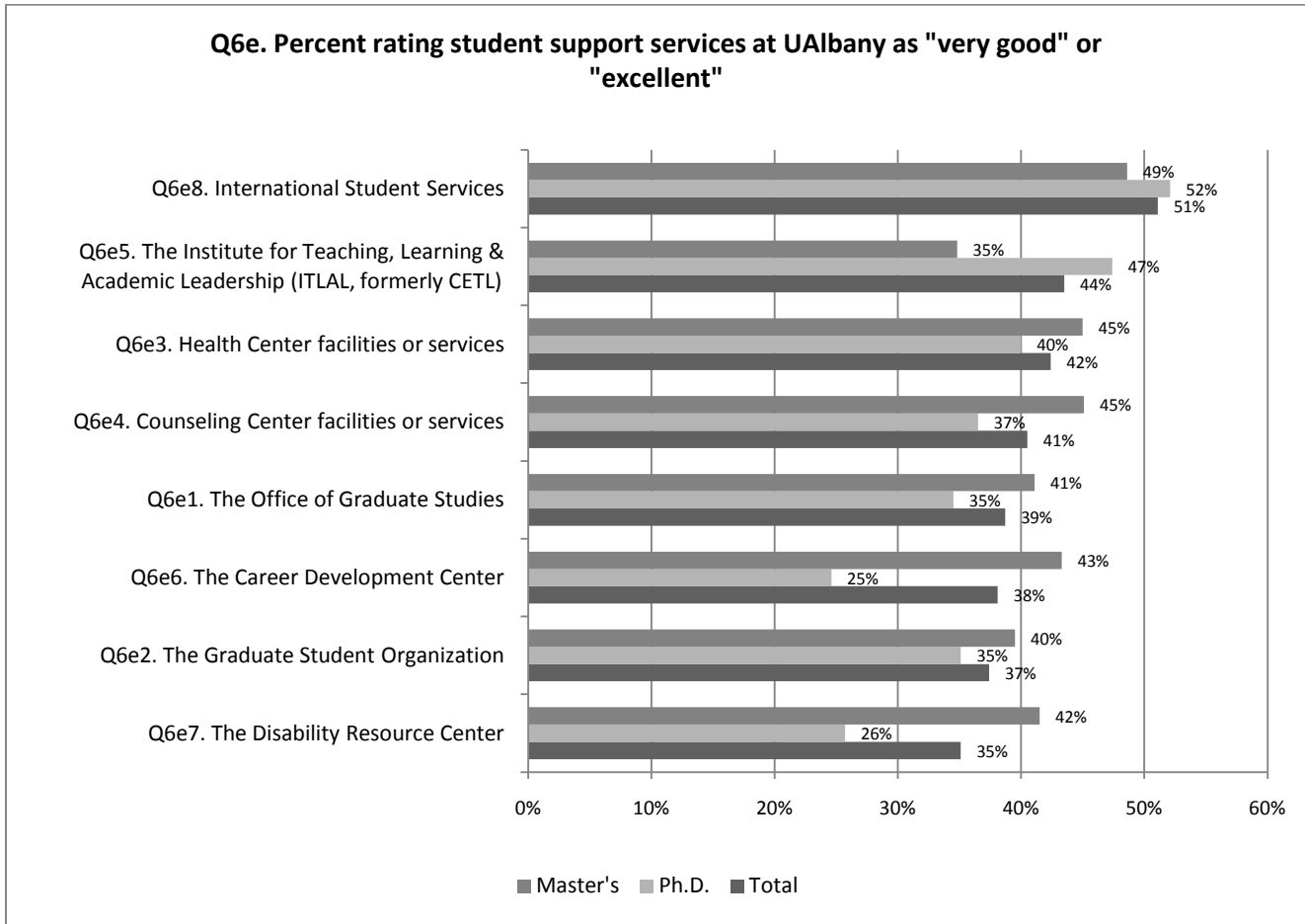
- Library Facilities and Services (Q6c):** Overall, survey respondents expressed very high satisfaction with various library services. Both master’s and Ph.D. students had satisfaction levels over 70% – and often into the 80% range for all items related to UAlbany Libraries. These satisfaction levels are also consistent with recent undergraduate surveys.



- Use of General Student Support Services (Q6d): The chart below shows percentages of UAlbany graduate students who reported having used each of several facilities at least 2-3 times during their time as a graduate student at UAlbany. The highest reported usage was for the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), the Health Center and the Office off Graduate Studies. The lowest reported usage was for the Disability Resource Center, the Counseling Center, and the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL). Ph.D. students were more likely than master’s students to have used the GSO, the Health Center, International Student Services and ITLAL, while master’s students were somewhat more likely to have used the Office of Graduate Studies and Career Services.



- Quality of General Student Support Services (Q6e):** In the next set of questions, students were asked to evaluate the quality of services received at these offices.⁵ The top three ratings regarding service quality were International Student Services, ITLAL and the Health Center. In general, master’s students tended to give higher ratings than doctoral students; this was especially true regarding the Career Development Center and at the Disability Resource Center. However, Ph.D. students’ ratings of ITLAL were substantially higher than those of master’s students.

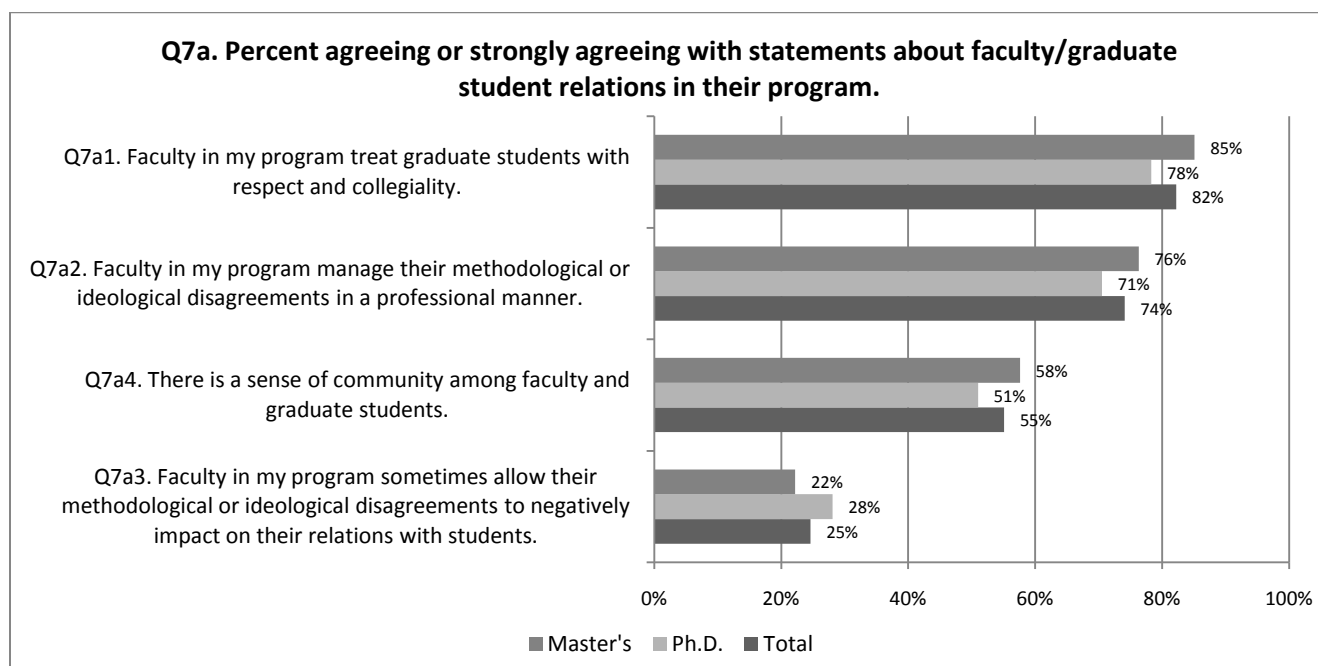


⁵ Only those who did not select “NA/Have Not Used” are included in these percentages. Nonetheless, it is clear from the raw numbers that many people who did not use the services evaluated them anyway; most of these respondents chose the middle option, “good,” which had a tendency to reduce the percentages of those choosing the top two categories, as shown in the chart for Q6e. Also, please see previous notes on uni-polar scales with “good” as the middle option.

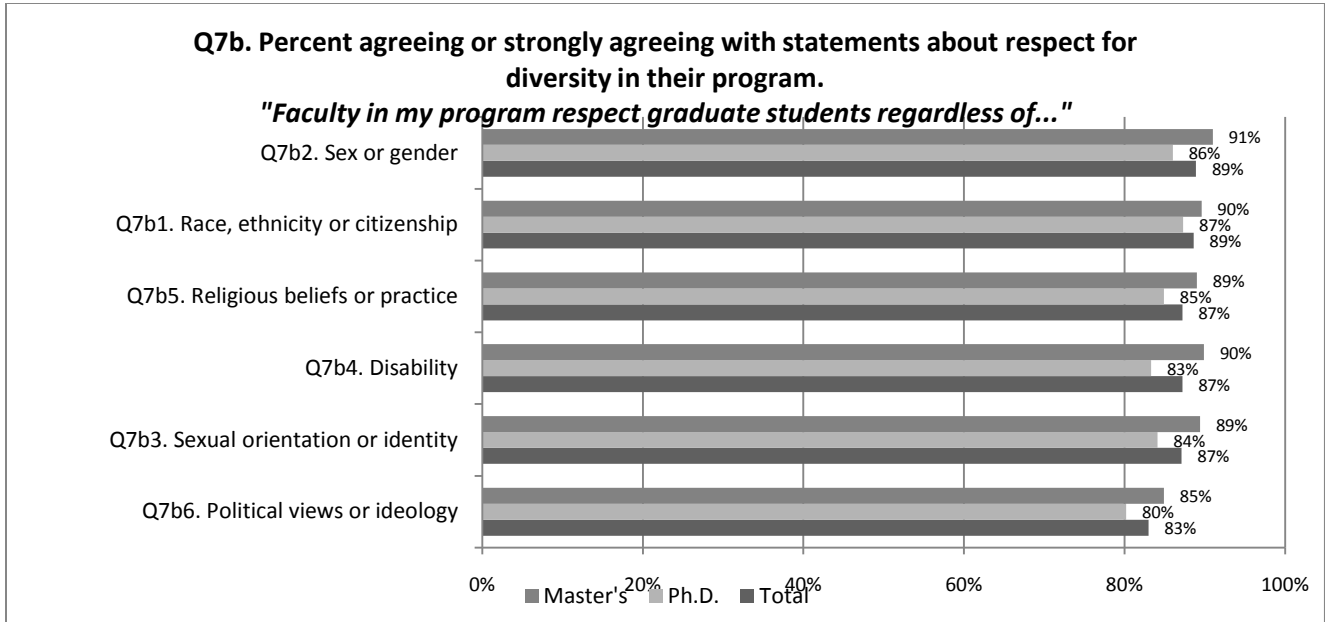
Part 7: Program/Campus Climate

This section of the survey shows some of the highest levels of satisfaction with UAlbany. Both master's and Ph.D. students felt faculty in their program treat them with respect and collegiality and were happy with morale and student-faculty relations. Very large majorities agreed that faculty treat graduate students from a wide variety of demographic groups with respect. Questions related to students' role in governance were more mixed, and Ph.D. students felt more included than master's students.

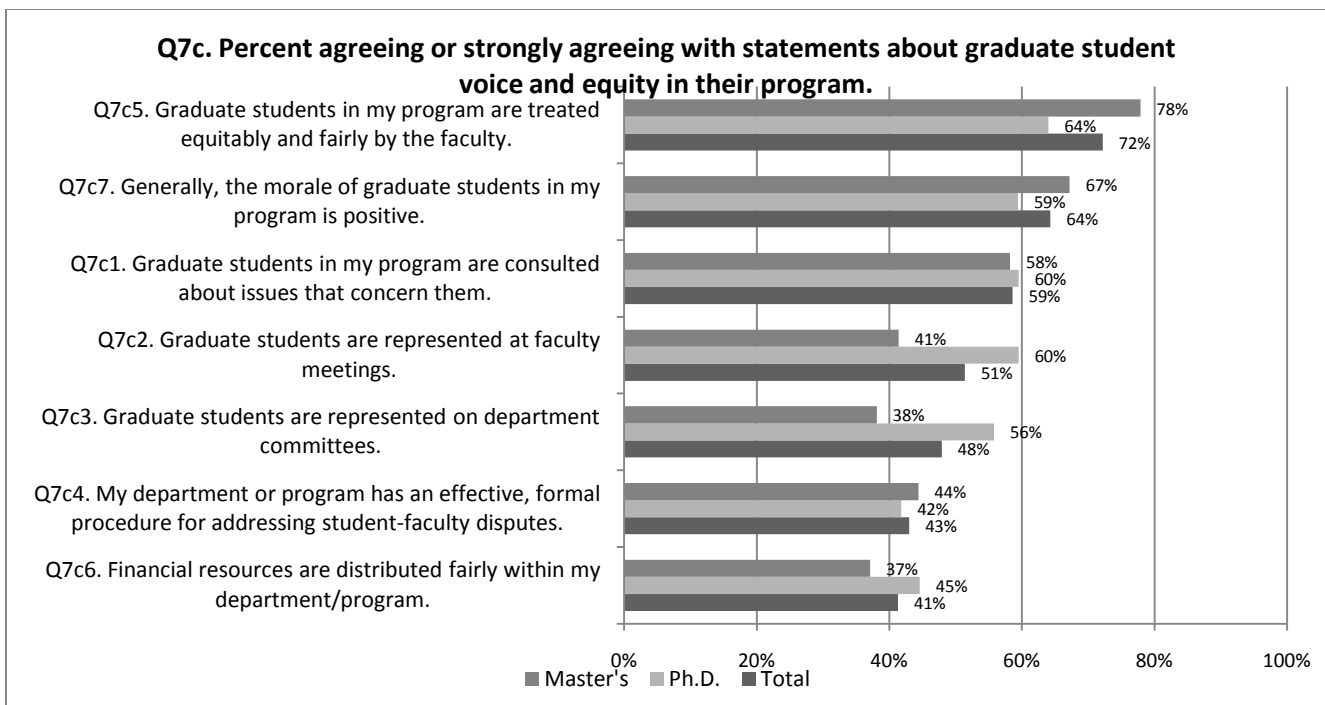
- **Faculty/Graduate Student Relations (Q7a):** A large majority of respondents agreed that faculty in their program treat graduate students with respect and collegiality and that faculty manage methodological or ideological disagreements in a professional manner – and only around one in four felt that these types of disagreements negatively impact graduate students. However, respondents reported less agreement with the existence of a sense of community among faculty and students.



- **Faculty Respect for Diverse Students (Q7b):** By very large majorities (80%-91%), UAlbany graduate students agreed that faculty respect students regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, or political views.



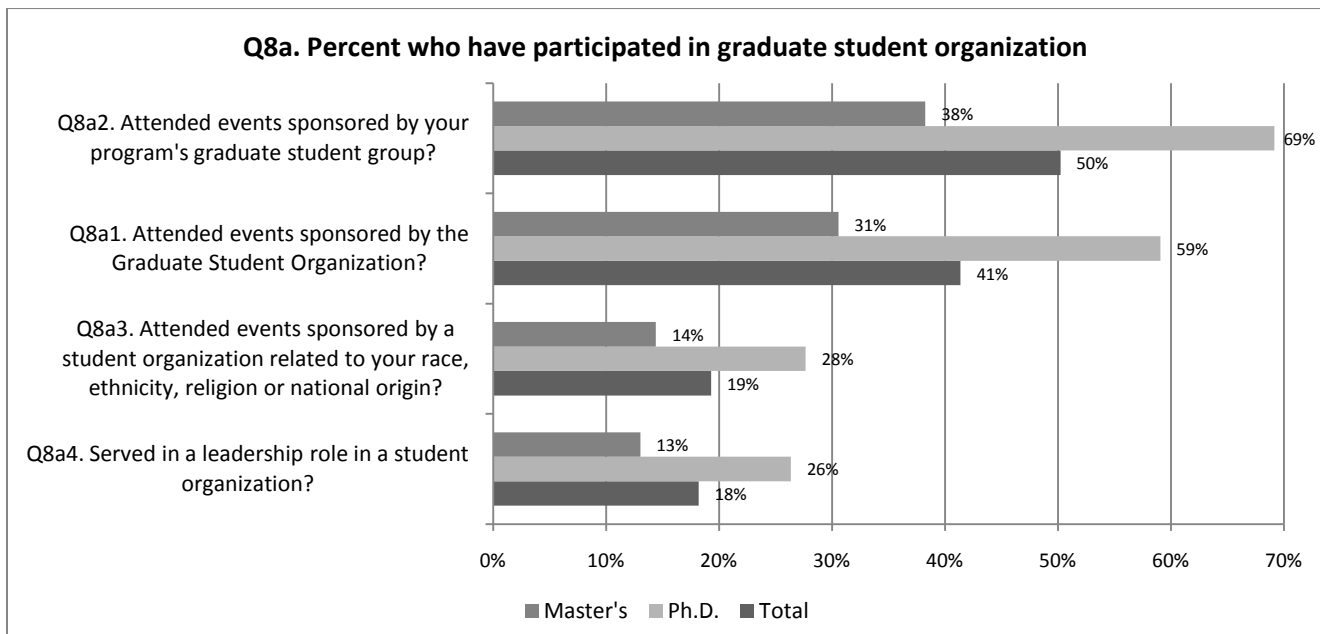
- **Student Voice and Equity (Q7c):** Nearly three quarters of UAlbany graduate students agreed that students in their program are treated fairly by their faculty; nearly two thirds agreed that student morale in their program is positive. In both of these areas, agreement was stronger among master's students than among Ph.D. students. Nearly 60% of respondents agreed that students are consulted appropriately in matters that concern them. More modest levels of agreement (around 50%) were found with statements regarding student representation at faculty meetings and department committees; on both these questions, agreement was much higher among Ph.D. students than master's students. The lowest levels of agreement (just over 40%) were for items on procedures for addressing student-faculty disputes and fair distribution of financial resources.



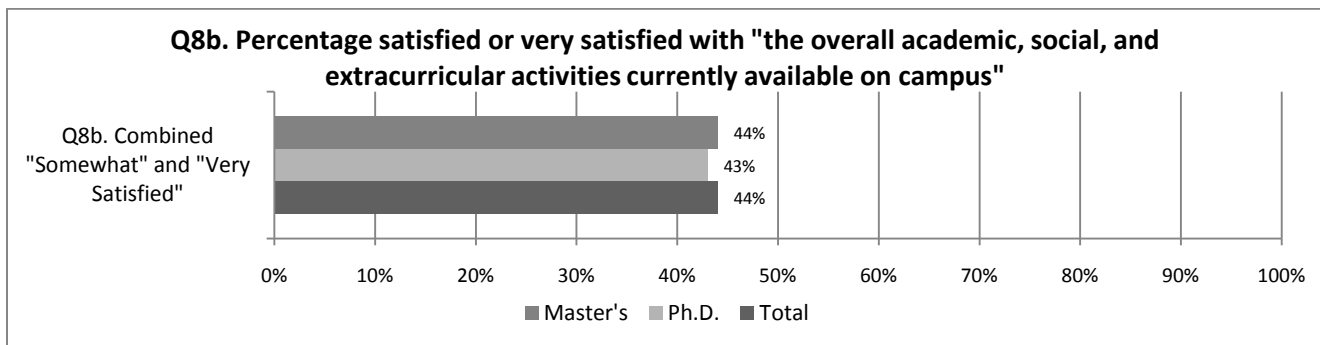
Part 8: Campus Life/ Off-Campus Life

This section of the survey shows that Ph.D. students participated at a higher level than master's students in a variety of student activities and groups, but both groups rated their satisfaction with campus events at the same modest level. Both groups found a variety of areas to be major challenges to progressing in their programs, particularly work, finances, and family obligations.

- **Participation in campus life (Q8a):** The most striking finding related to the questions on participation in campus groups was the large gap between the relatively high level of participation among Ph.D. students compared to master's students.

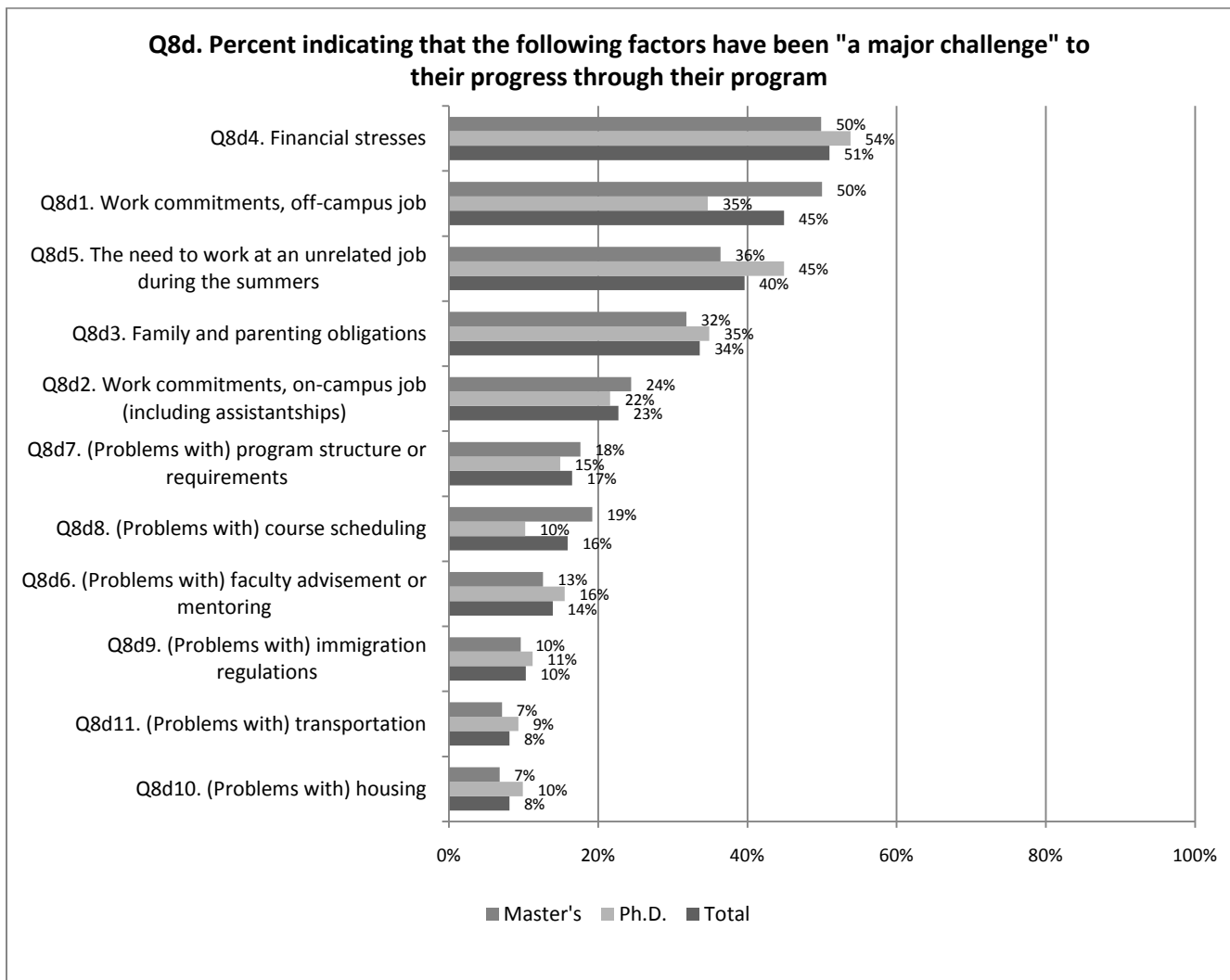


- **Overall Satisfaction with Campus Events (Q8b):** Despite the large gap in participation between Ph.D. and master's students, the two groups were equally satisfied with those activities.



- Challenges Surrounding Graduate Work (Q8d):** The top three major challenges for respondents were financial stresses, work commitment for an off-campus job, and the need to work at an unrelated job during the summers. Family and parenting obligations were major challenges for over a third of UAlbany graduate students.

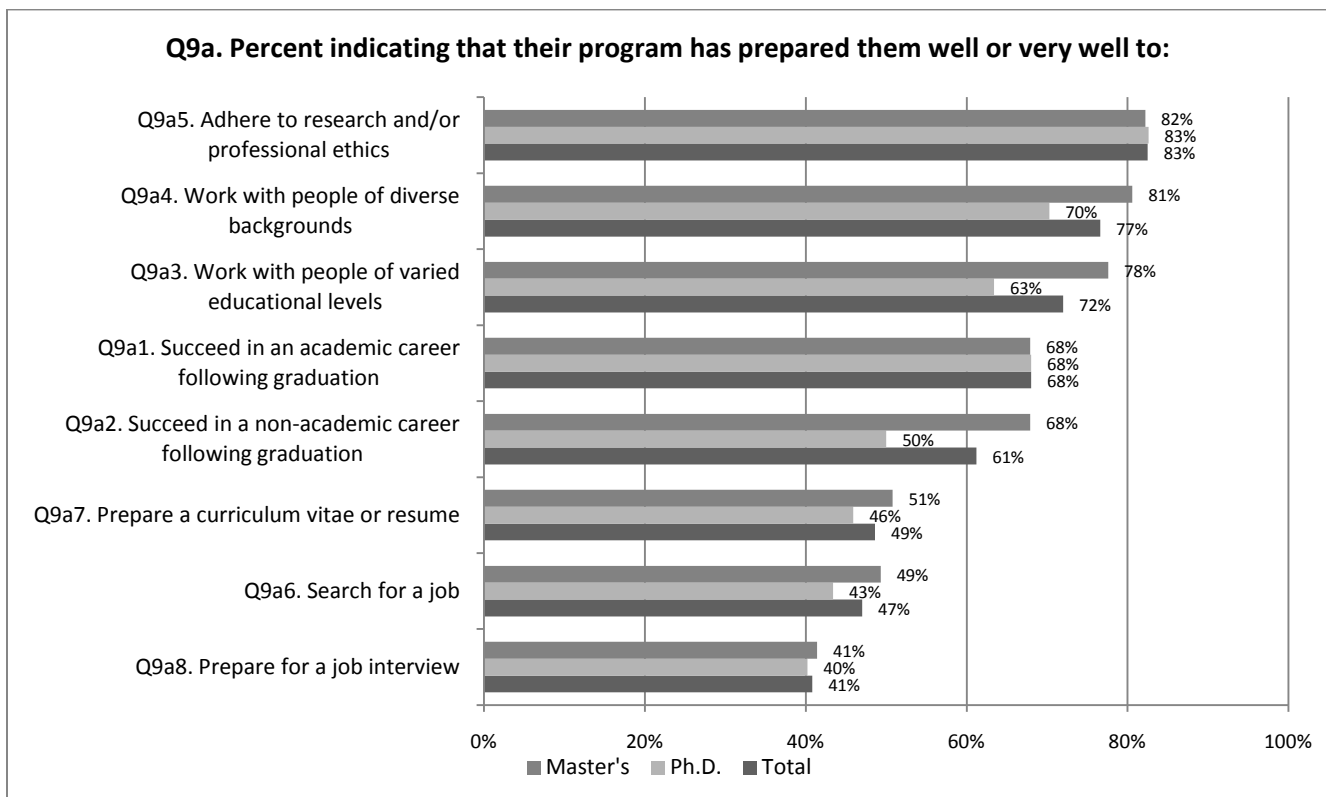
The items cited least frequently as major challenges were related to transportation, housing, and advisement. Immigration regulations were only cited by 10% overall, but this number would obviously be higher for international students.



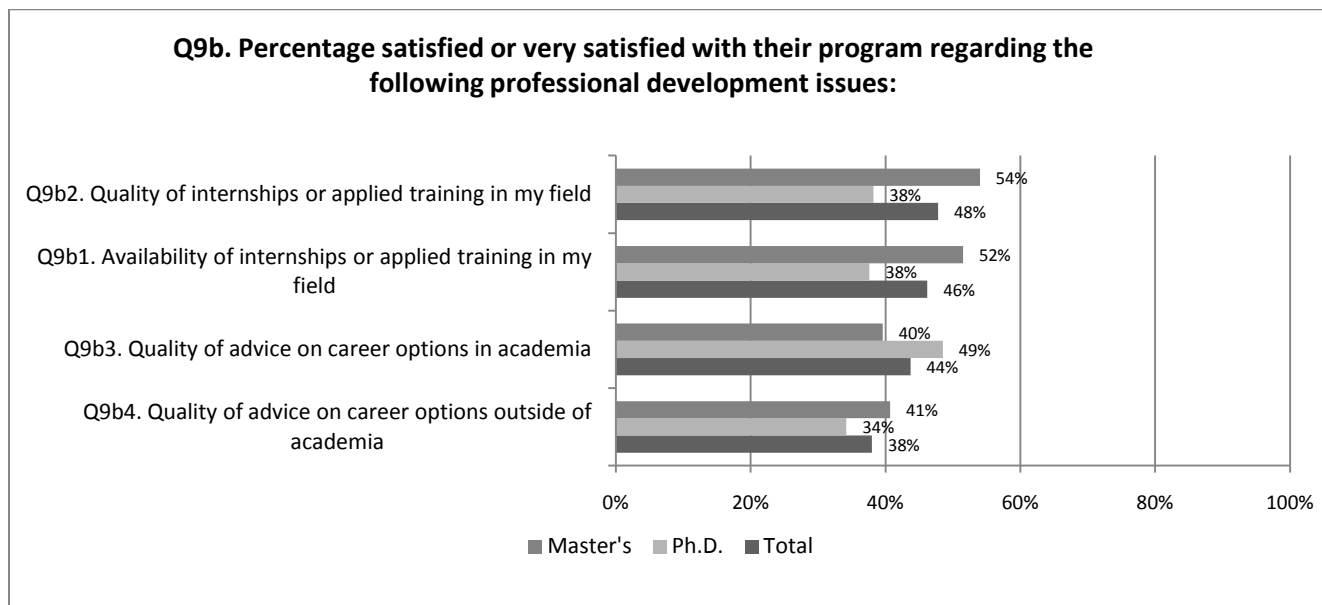
Part 9: Professional Development and Placement

UAlbany graduate students were generally very positive about their programs with regard to preparation for careers in their field, although they were less satisfied with preparation for the actual job search. A minority of UAlbany graduate students planned to continue their graduate education in a wide variety of fields and degrees. Those who planned on moving directly toward their careers are heading toward a wide variety of fields, with a large majority of Ph.D. students planning on careers in academia. Among those who had positions lined up at the time of the survey, the median salary for Ph.D. students was between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year, while the median salary for master's students was between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year.

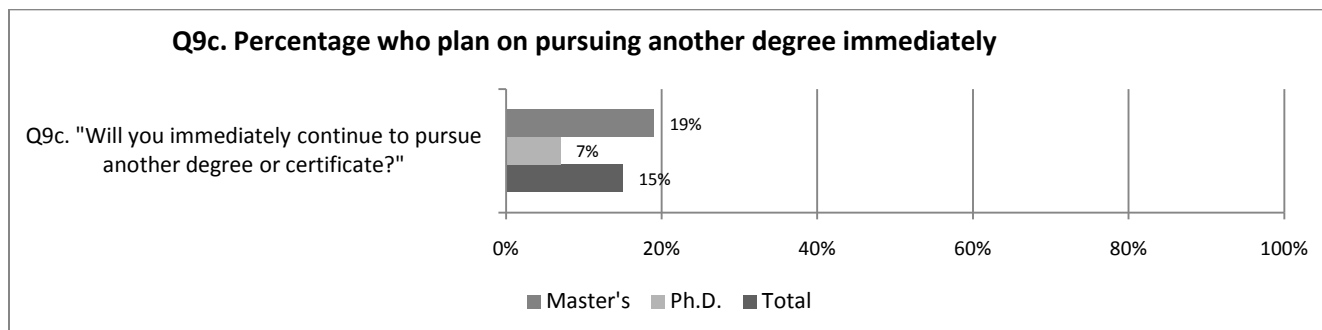
- Program Preparation for Professional Development (Q9a):** More than two thirds of respondents rated their program's preparation highly regarding adhering to research and/or professional ethics, working with people of diverse backgrounds, working with people of varied educational levels, and succeeding in an academic career. Similar percentages of master's students gave a equally high ratings to preparation for non-academic careers. UAlbany graduate students were less positive regarding items directly related to preparation for job searches. Fewer than 50% felt they were prepared well or very well to prepare for a job interview, search for a job or prepare a c.v. or résumé.



- Internships and Career Advice (Q9b): Just over half of master’s students were satisfied with availability and quality of internships and applied training in their field, while fewer than half of Ph.D. students were satisfied. Fewer than half overall were satisfied with career advice.⁶

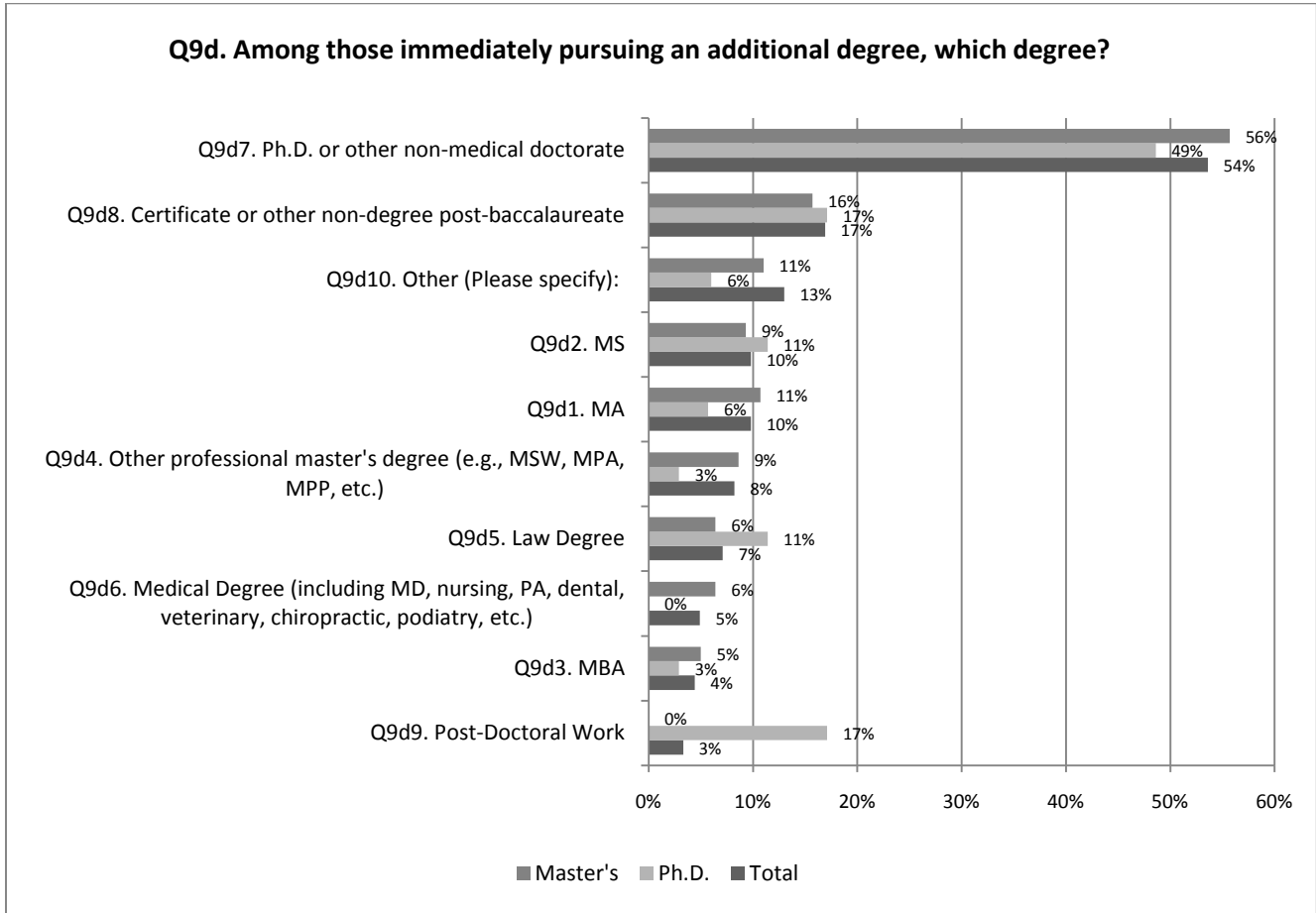


- Further Education (Q9c): Only a small minority of UAlbany graduate students planned to pursue another degree immediately after completing their work here. That number was higher for master’s students than Ph.D. students.

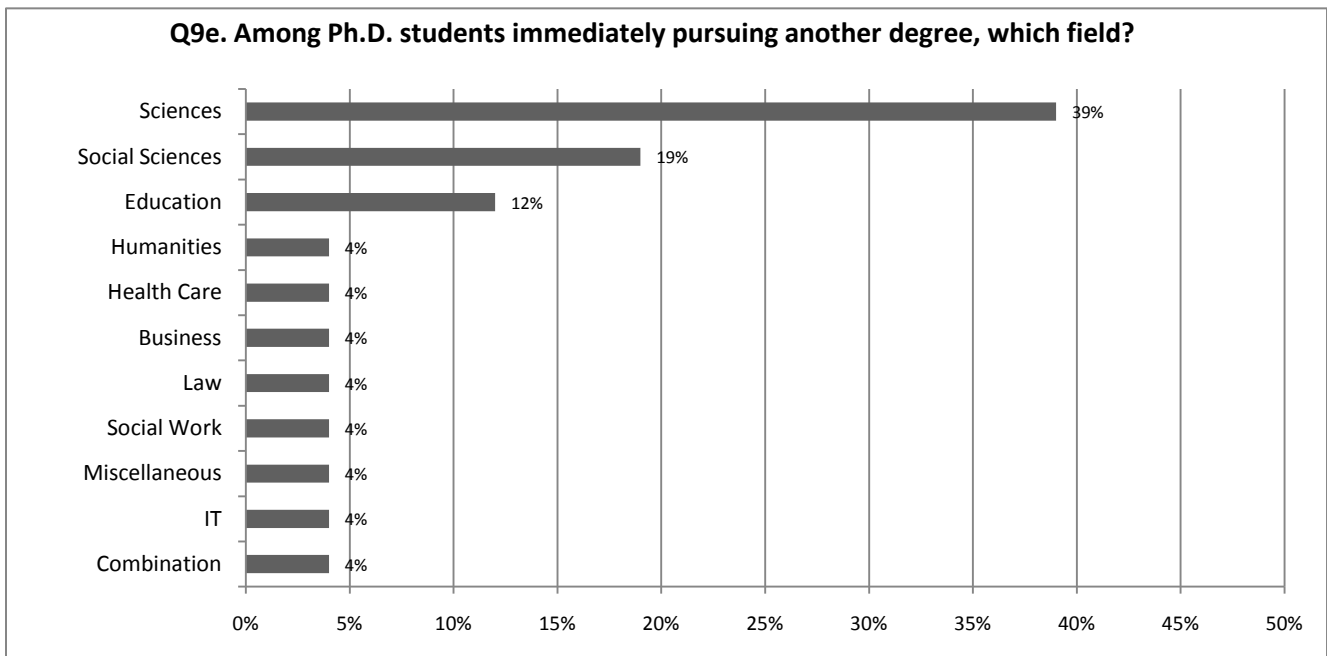
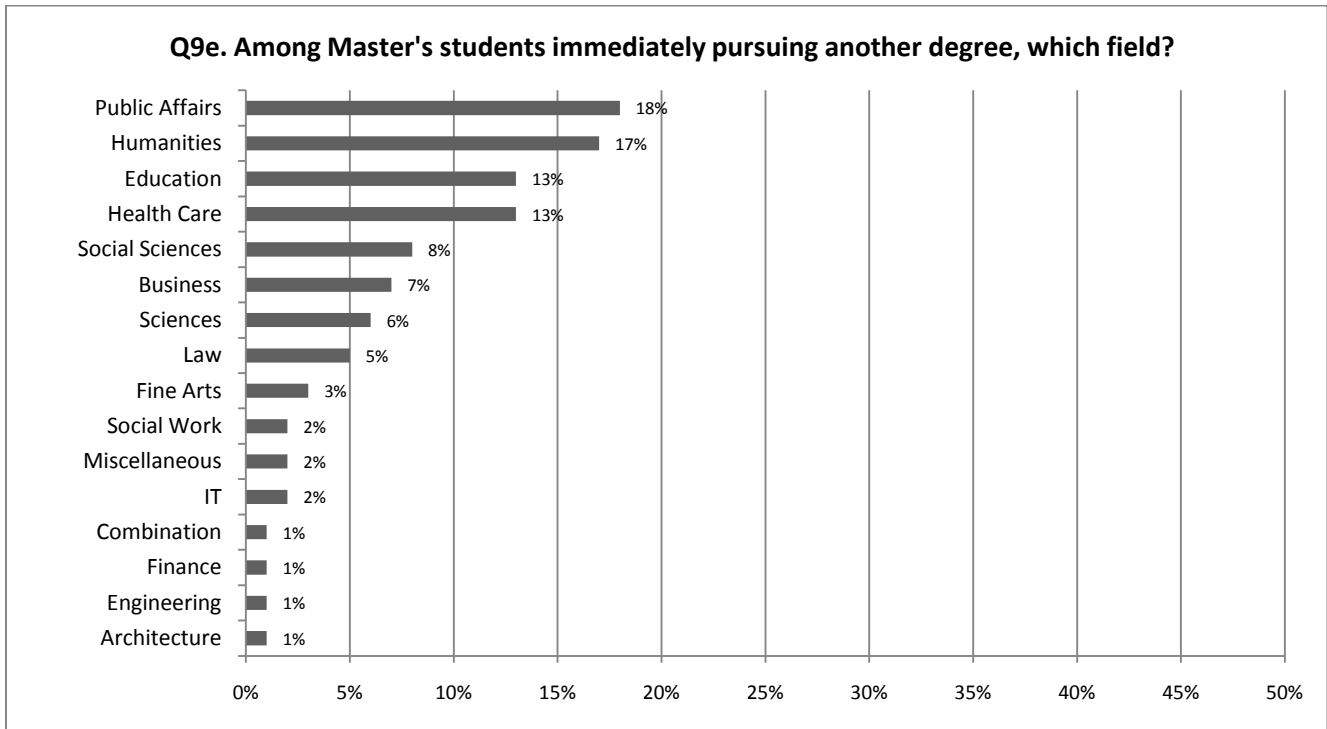


⁶ The finding regarding internships is likely another example of respondents using the middle option of “neutral” as the equivalent of “not applicable.” Only a small minority of Ph.D. students were actually dissatisfied with internships. This may also be the case with master’s students’ responses related to academic jobs and Ph.D. students’ related to non-academic jobs.

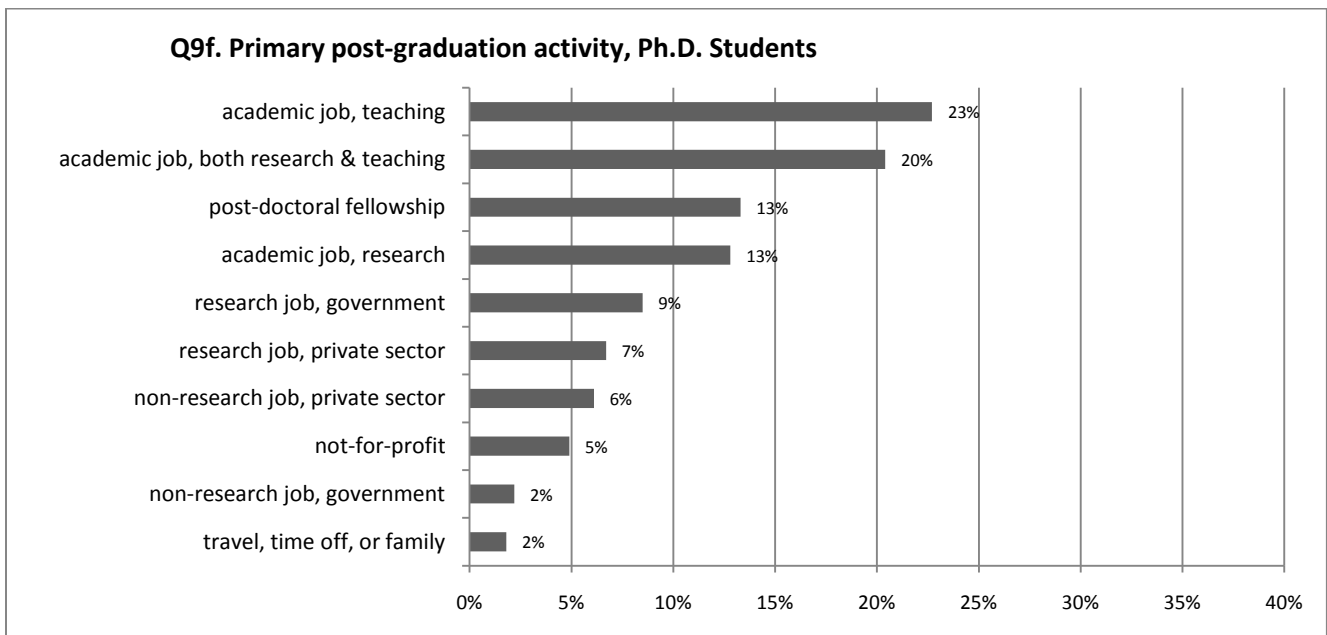
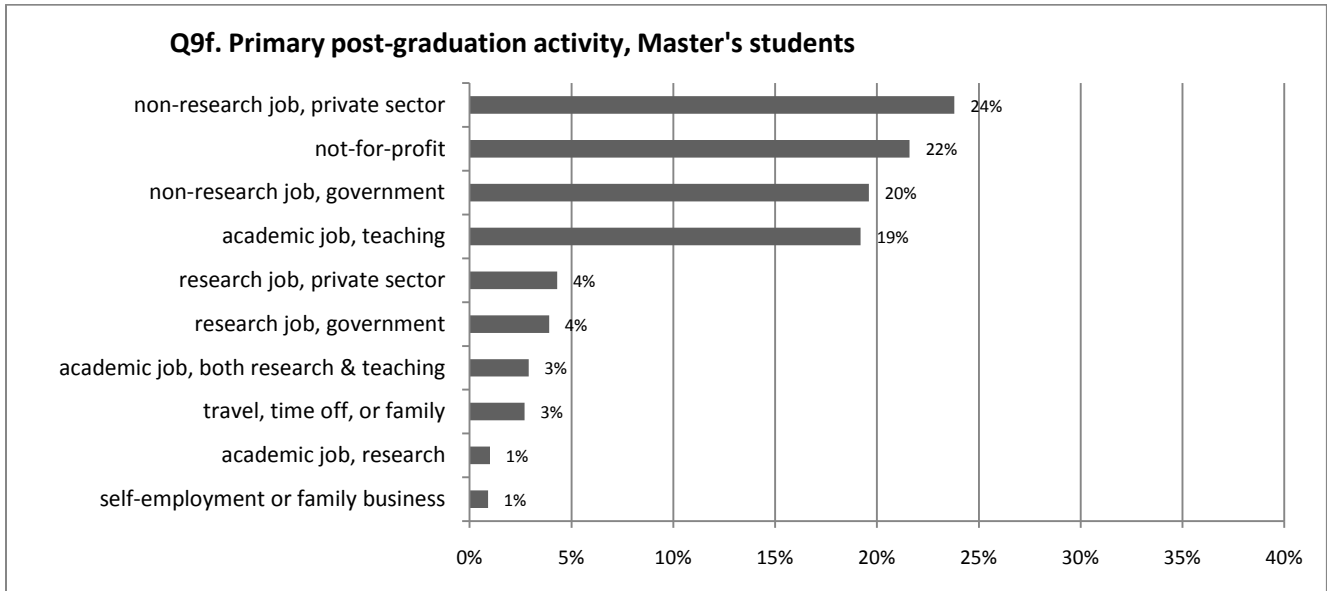
- Future Educational Plans: Type of Degree (Q9d): Of those respondents who planned to attend further degree or certificate programs, the most common degree to be pursued was a Ph.D., followed by a certificate. For Ph.D students, post-doctoral fellowships and law degrees were also popular responses.



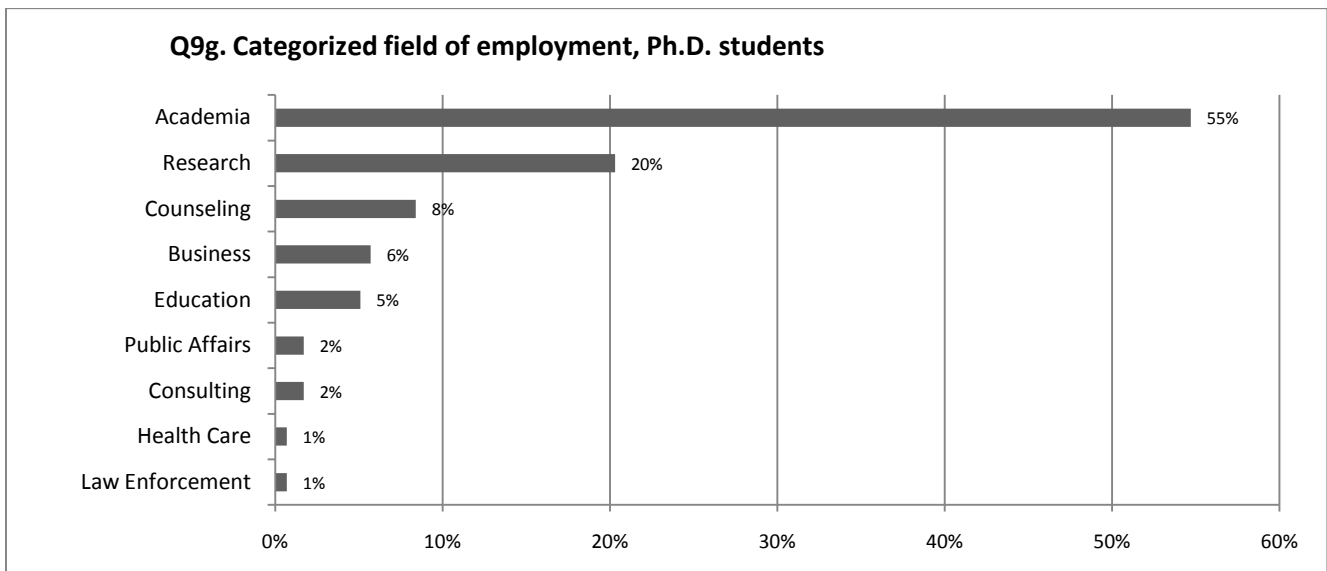
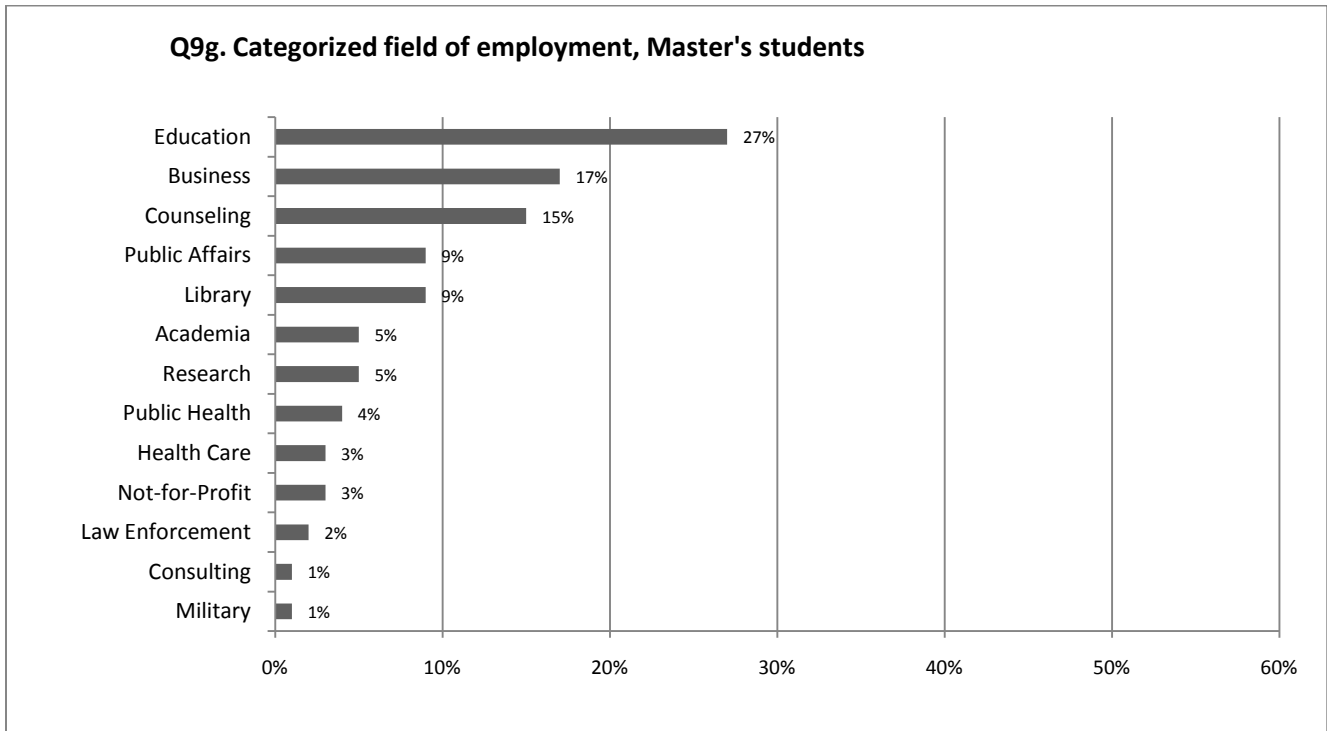
- **Future Educational Plans: Field of Study (Q9e):** For master's students the top three fields were public affairs, humanities, education and health care. For Ph.D students the top three were sciences, social sciences and education.



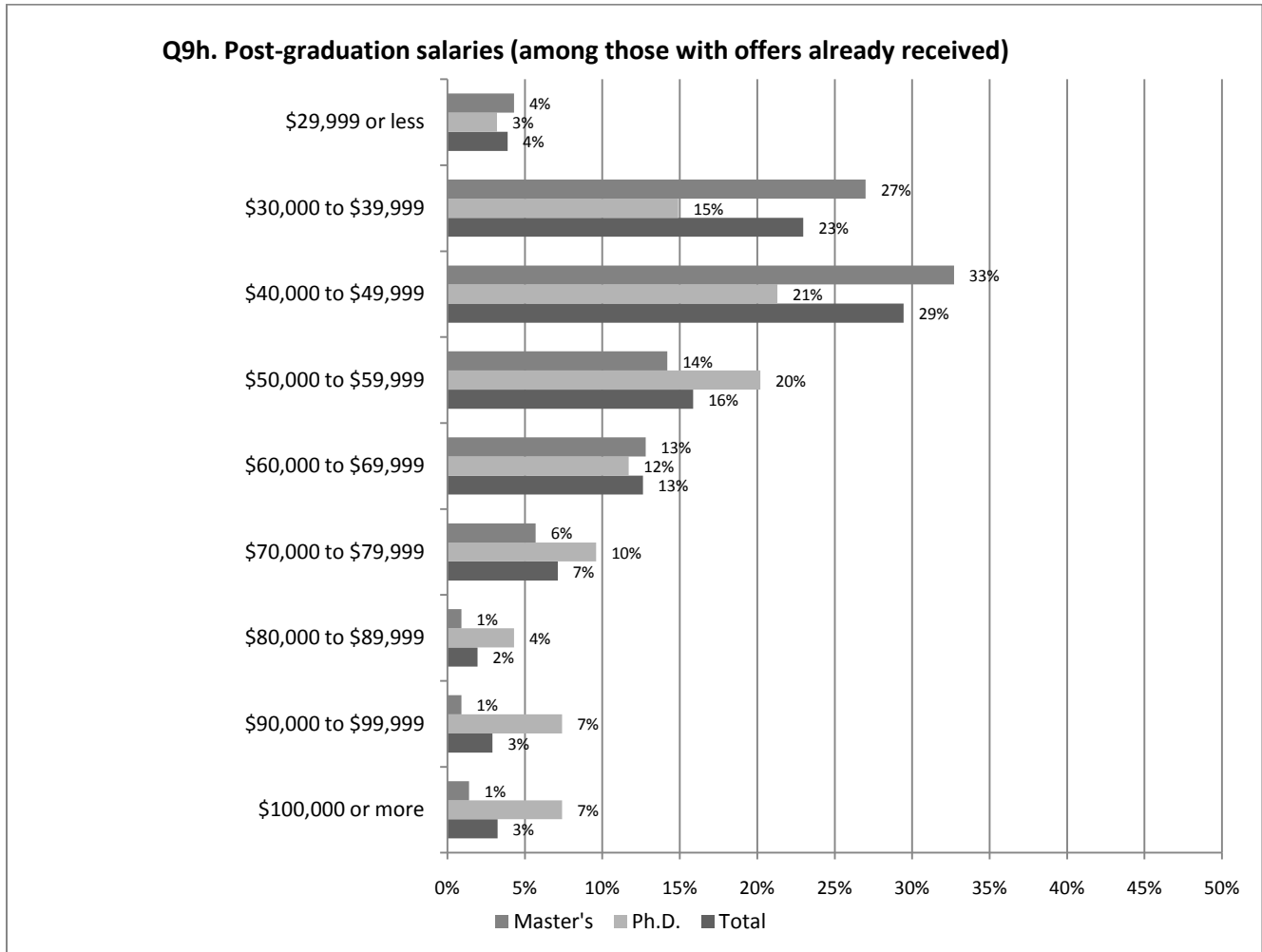
- Primary Post-graduation Plan or Activity (Q9f):** For master's students not continuing their education, the top post-graduation plans were non-research jobs in the private sector, the not-for-profit sector, non-research jobs in the government, and academic jobs with teaching as primary focus. For doctoral respondents the top plans were academic jobs with teaching as primary focus, academic jobs with equal focus on teaching and research, academic job with research as primary focus, and post doctoral fellowships.



- **Fields of Employment (Q9g):** The top three fields of post-graduation employment for master's students were education, business and counseling. For Ph.D. students, academia dwarfed all other fields at 55%; research followed at 20%.



- Salary Ranges of Post-graduation Jobs (Q9h):** When survey respondents who already have their post-graduation employment lined up were asked what their salary was going to be, the median overall and for master's students was between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year; for Ph.D. students the median was between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year. Looking at the low and high ends of the scale, only 4% of master's graduates and 3% of Ph.D. graduates were going to be earning below \$30,000 a year, while 9% of master's graduates and nearly 30% of Ph.D. graduates were going to be earning over \$70,000 a year.



IV. Looking Ahead.

This survey was launched in Spring 2008, as a pilot assessment project in recognition of the fact that the University had not previously conducted a comprehensive assessment survey of UAlbany's graduate students. The larger-than-expected student response has enabled us to share program-level survey results with most of UAlbany's department chairs and program directors. The success of this assessment project makes it very likely that it will become a regular part of UAlbany's Assessment Plan, with a likely re-administration in Spring 2011. In advance of the anticipated re-administration, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness is looking forward to feedback from various campus constituencies regarding the usefulness of the results and the survey instrument.

Appendix A: Sample and Demographic Report

	Sample Demographics		Population Demographics		Response Rate
Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Percent
White	997	60.4	2408	63.7	41%
Black	93	5.6	209	5.5	44%
Hispanic	53	3.2	142	3.8	37%
Asian or Pacific Islander	40	2.4	107	2.8	37%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	8	0.5	17	0.4	47%
Non-Resident	305	18.5	555	14.7	55%
Unknown	156	9.4	340	9.0	46%
Total	1652	100	3778	100	44%
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Female	1093	66.2	2350	62.2	47%
Male	559	33.8	1425	37.7	39%
Blank	0	0.0	3	0.1	NA
Total	1652	100	3778	100	44%
Student Type	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Masters	1001	60.6	2346	62.10	43%
Doctorate	607	36.7	1325	35.07	46%
Certificates	44	2.7	107	2.5	41%
Total	1652	100	3778	100	44%
College	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Arts & Sciences	532	32.2	1107	29.3	48%
Public Health	161	9.7	330	8.7	49%
Education	348	21.1	936	24.8	37%
Business	123	7.4	327	8.7	38%
Criminal Justice	63	3.8	98	2.6	64%
Rockefeller	117	7.1	266	7.0	44%
Social Welfare	147	8.9	375	9.9	39%
Nanoscience	9	.5	31	.8	29%
Computing & Information	150	9.1	304	8.0	49%
Other	2	.1	4	.1	50%
Total	1652	100	3778	100	44%
Additional Demographics	Average or Percent		Average or Percent		
Age	31		32		
UAlbany GPA	3.50		3.43		
3 or fewer credits	20.8%		28.0%		
9 or more credits	61.9%		50.5%		
12 or more credits	40.1%		30.6%		