



**Northern Illinois  
University**

**Distributed Education:  
Status, Concerns,  
Consequences**

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# Outline



- **The Survey**
- **Summary of Results**
- **Conclusions**
- **Discussion**



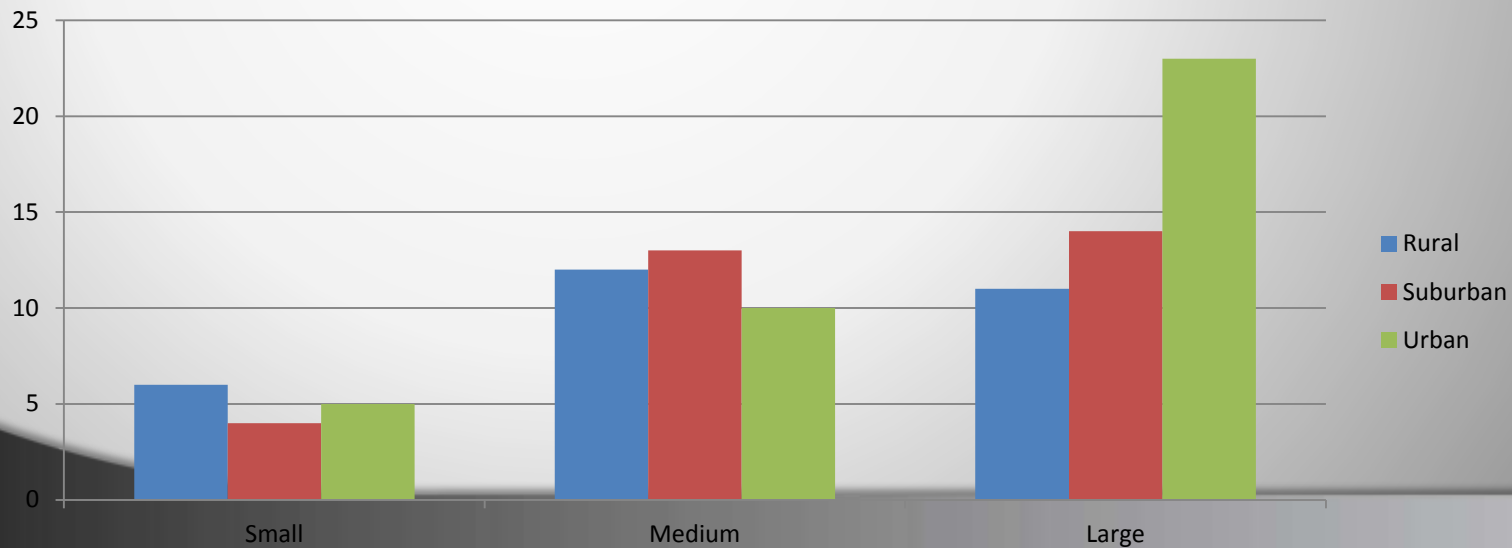
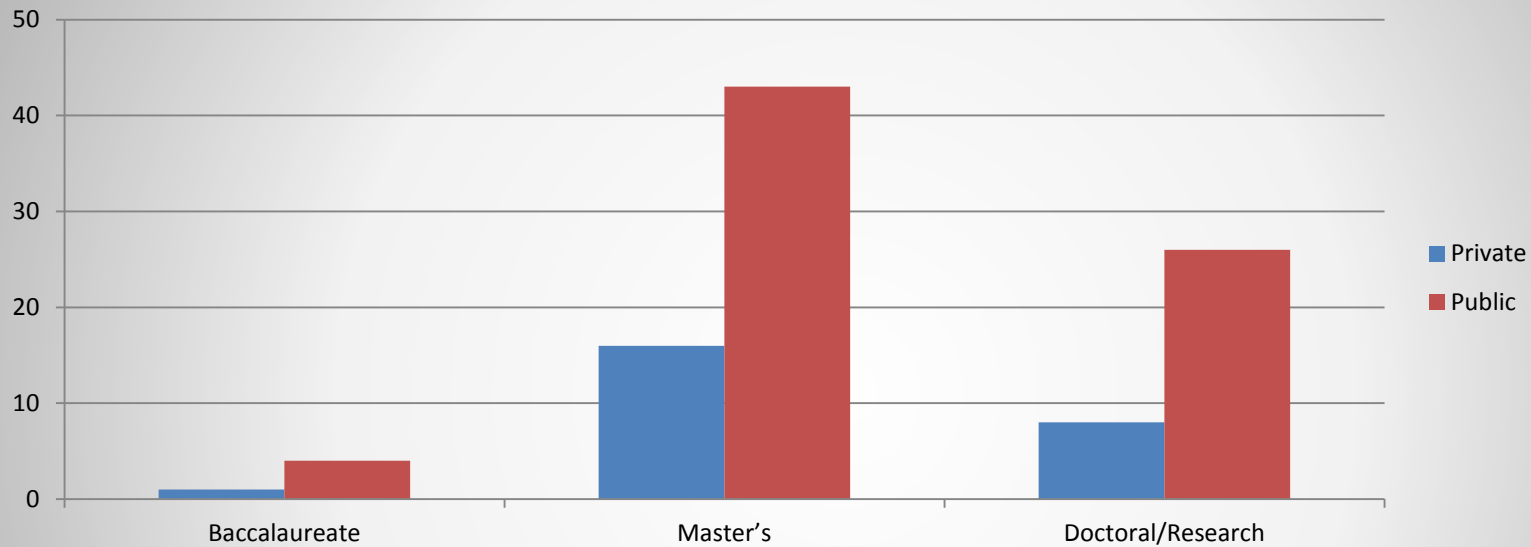
# The Survey

# The Survey



- Survey was distributed to 726 member institutions of CCAS (one survey per institution)
- Survey results were collected from Feb. 8, 2013 to Feb. 19, 2013
- There were 130 responses, with approximately 100 providing responses to all parts of the survey.

# Profile of Respondents





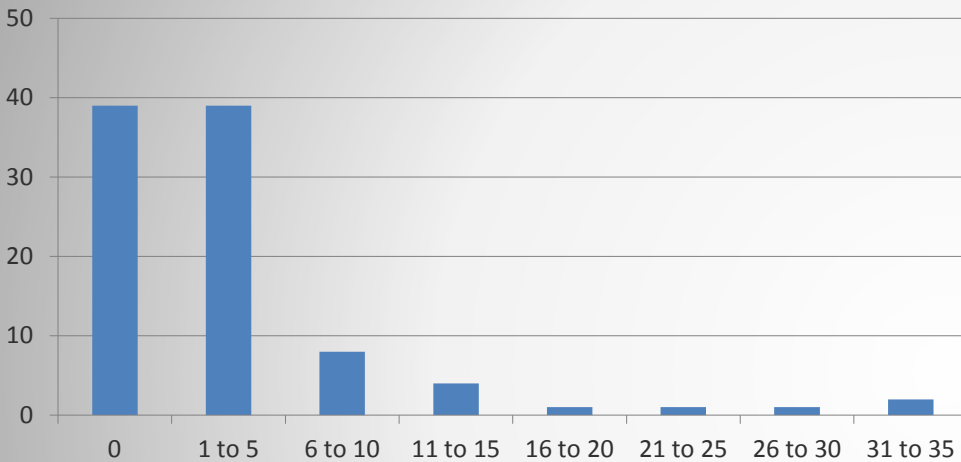
## **Summary of Results**

- **Extent and Organization of DE Engagement**
- **Policy Issues**
- **Consequences of DE Engagement**

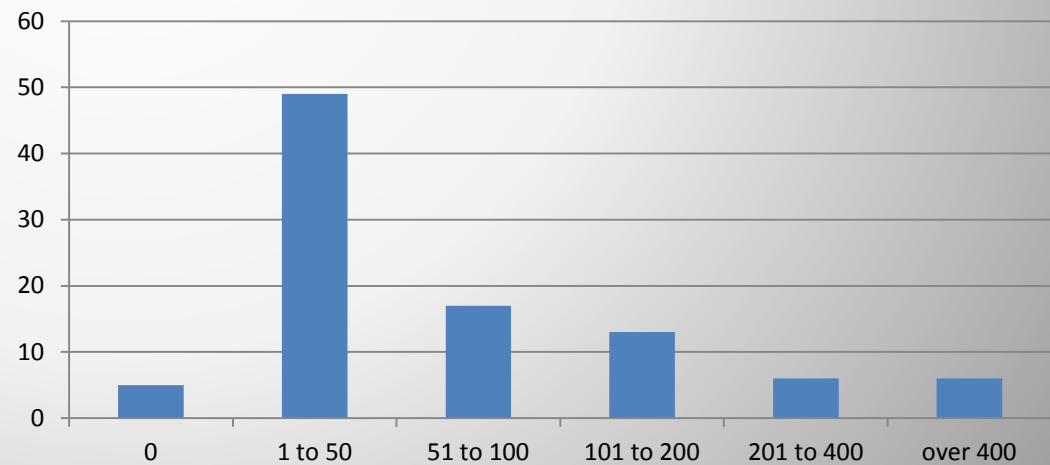
# Extent of DE Engagement



## Number of DE Degree Programs



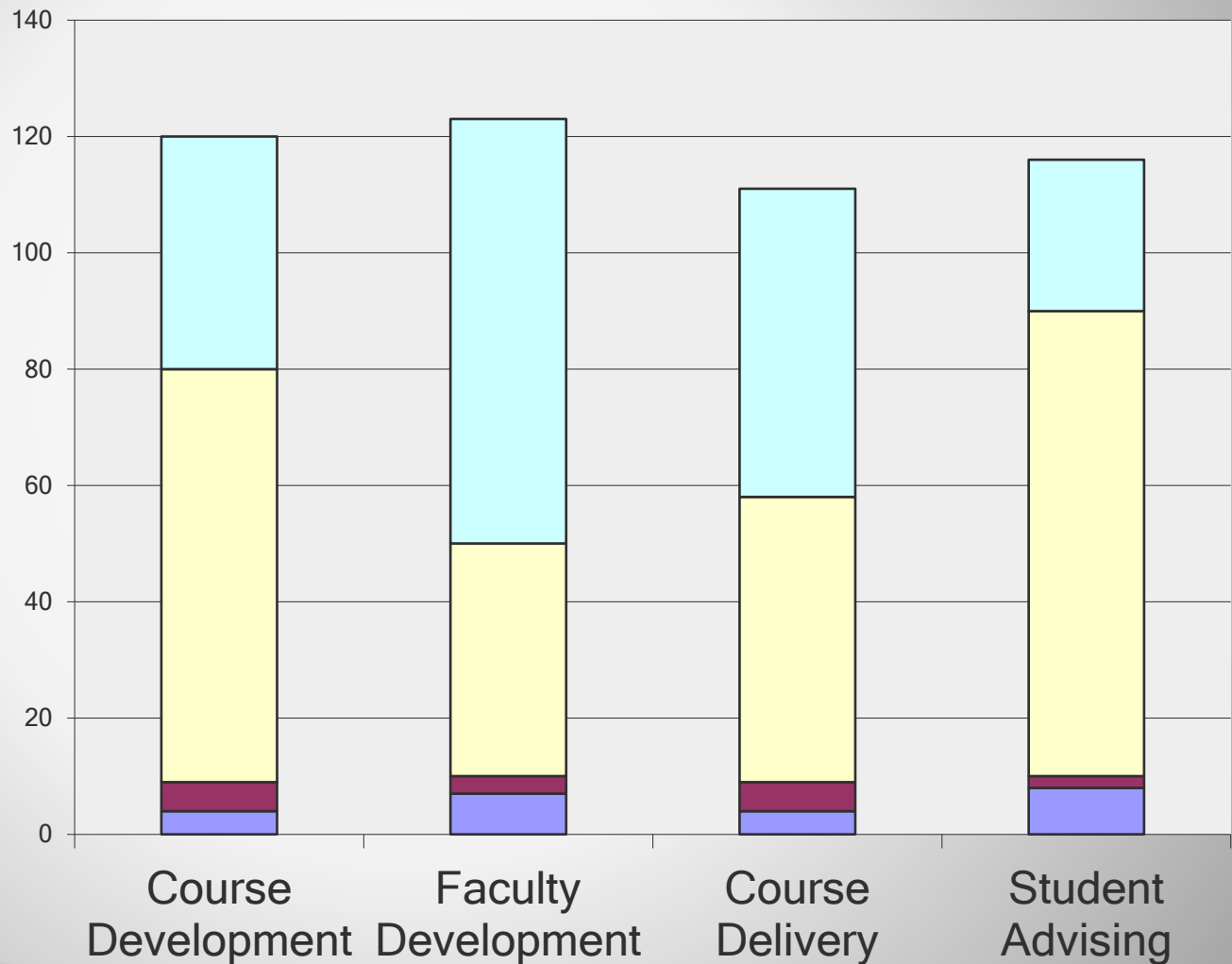
## Number of DE Sections



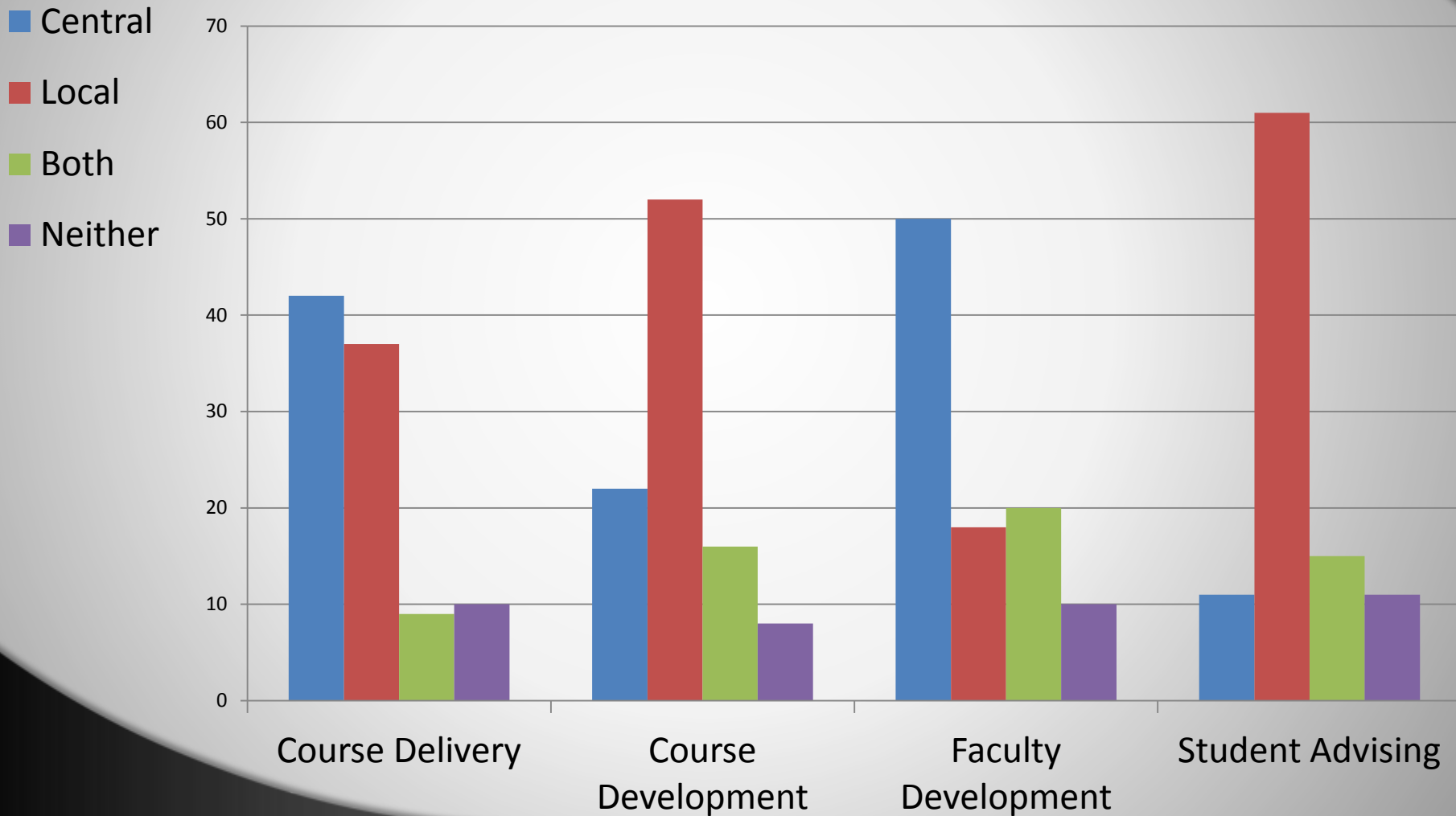
# Organization of DE Efforts



- Central
- Local
- Outside Provider
- Not Currently Handled



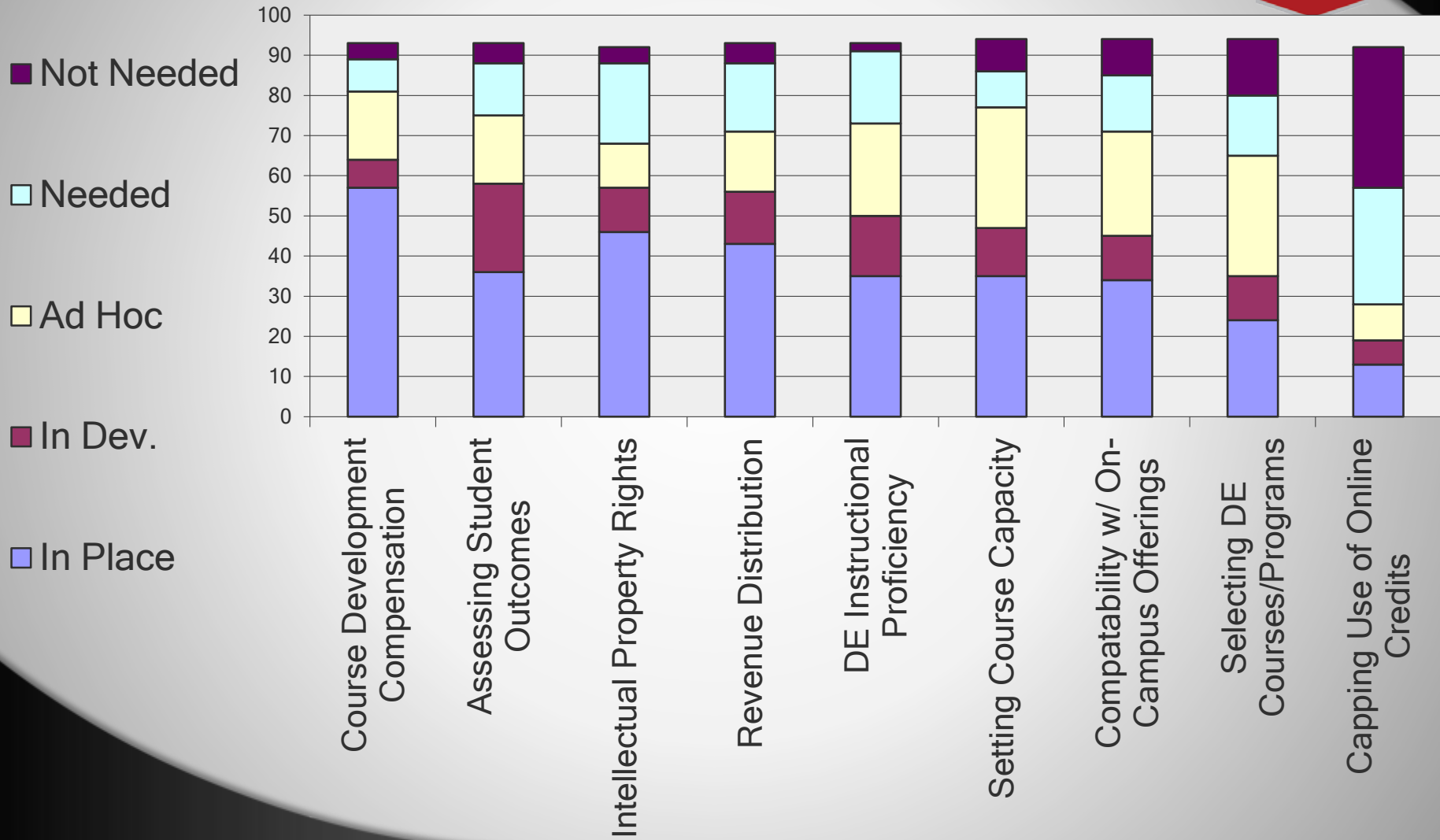
# Organization: Central vs. Local





# Policy Issues

# Policy Status



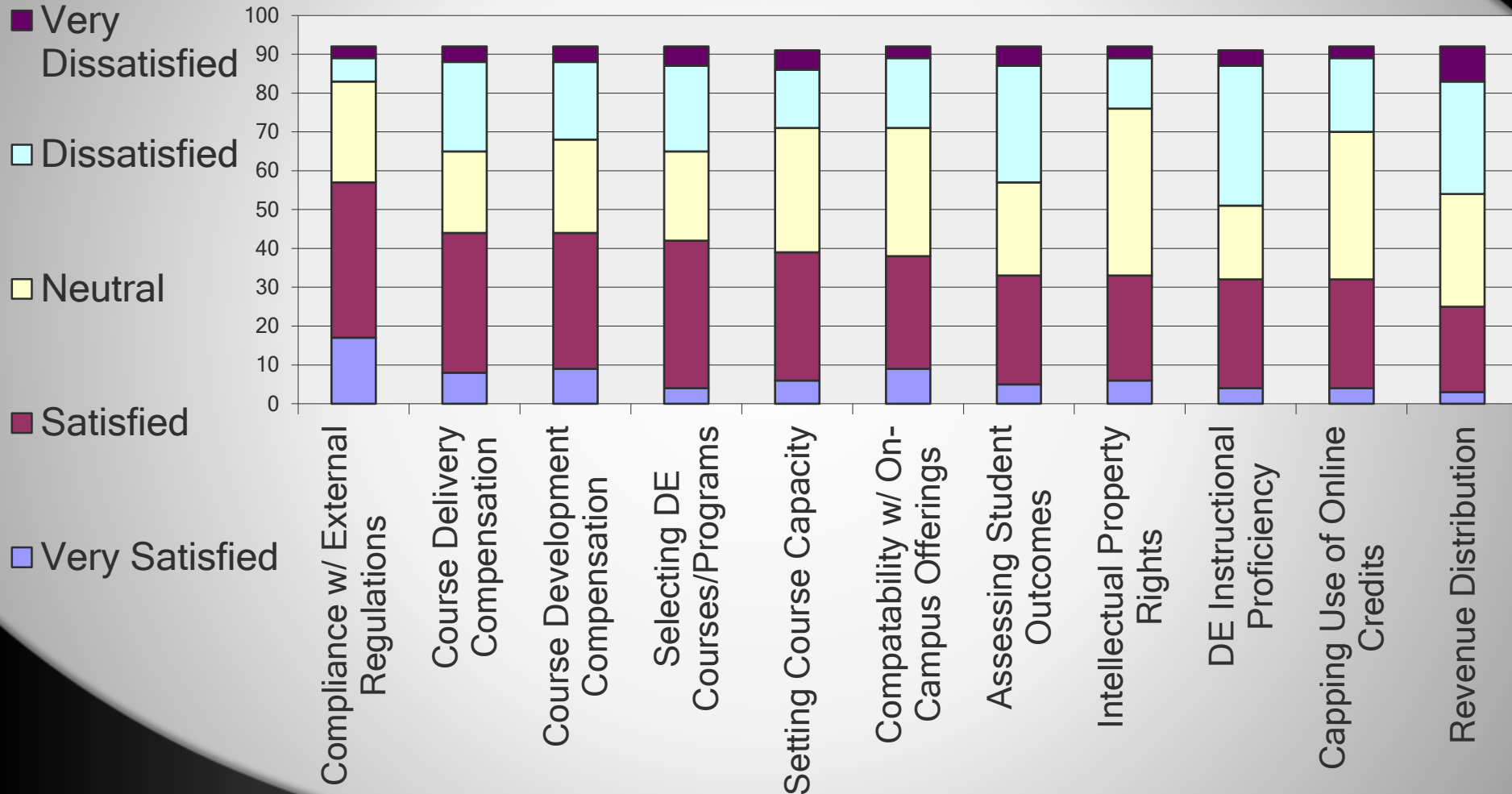
# Policies



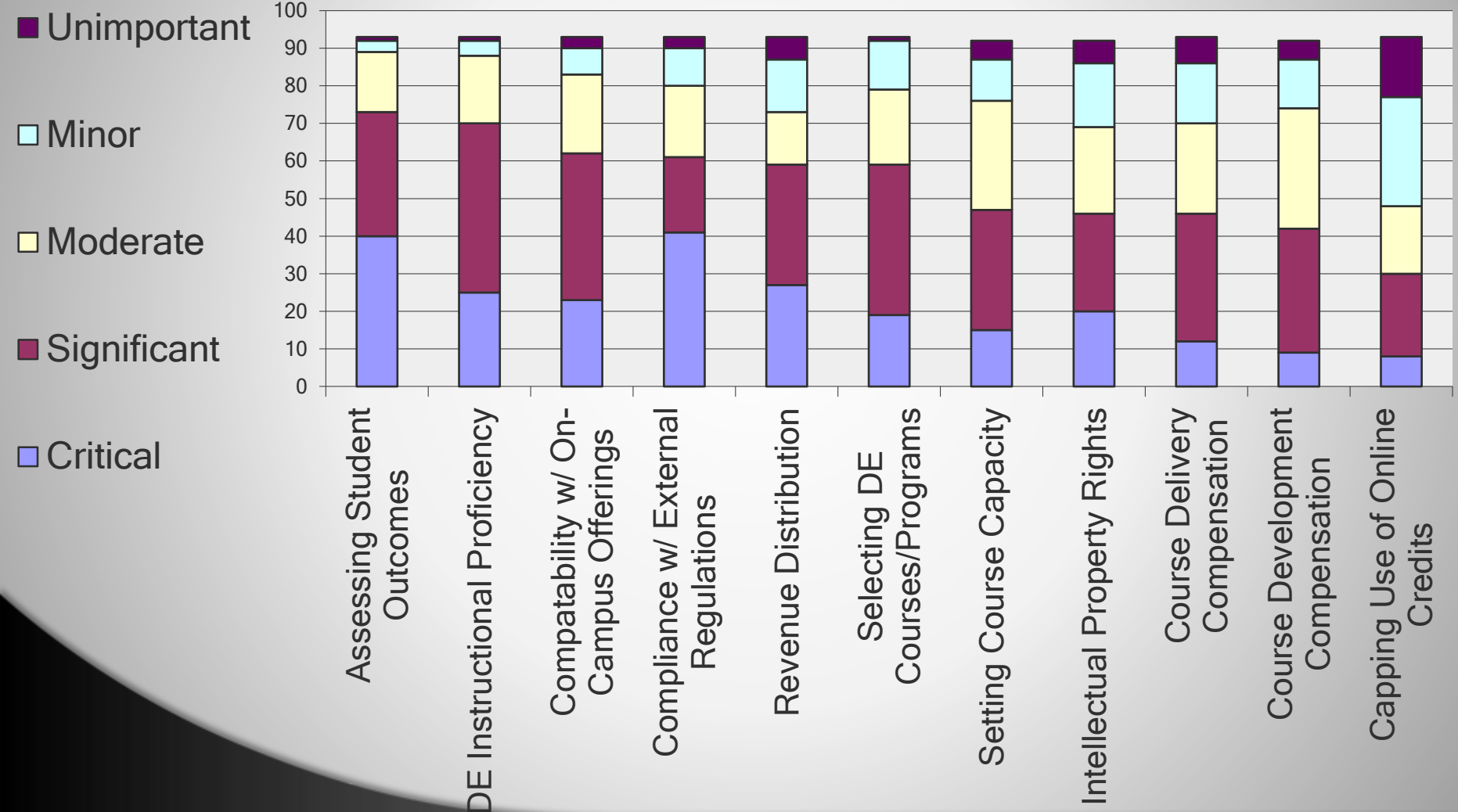
The “policy gap” might be thought of as the % of schools who indicate that a policy is needed, but that they have no policy, or only ad hoc policy.

Size of Gap	Policy Issues
15 to 20 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring compliance with state &amp; federal regulations &amp; accreditation</li><li>• Determining which courses and/or programs will be offered via DE</li></ul>
25 to 35 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessing student outcomes</li><li>• Managing Intellectual Property rights</li><li>• Ensuring compatibility with on-campus offerings</li><li>• Revenue distribution</li></ul>
40 to 50 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compensation for course development</li><li>• Setting cap for the number of online courses that can apply towards a degree</li><li>• Compensation for course delivery</li><li>• Ensuring instructional proficiency in DE environment</li><li>• Setting course capacities</li></ul>

# Satisfaction with Policies



# Importance of Policy Issues



# Obstacles to Improvement



## Vision

(X 6) no sense of urgency

(x 4) divergent goals between administration and faculty

(x 2) lack of clear policy

## Funding Model

(x 7) finances/funding model

(x 3) divided authority over resources needed to advance DE

## Governance & Control

(x 2) difficulties in moving through bureaucracy/governance

(x 2) state control

# Other Policy Issues



## Course Delivery Issues

- (x 2) Need for institutional policy that distinguishes hybrid from true distance courses
- Developing workable policy for delivering laboratory experiences for science courses

## Student Issues

- (x 2) Ensuring ethical conduct by students
- (x 2) Issues with transfer students

## Faculty Issues

- Integrating on-line faculty into department life

# Other Policy Issues



## Organizational Issues

- Control of on-line courses and revenue flow from them
- Determining marketability of degree programs and courses
- Differential compensation for DE courses

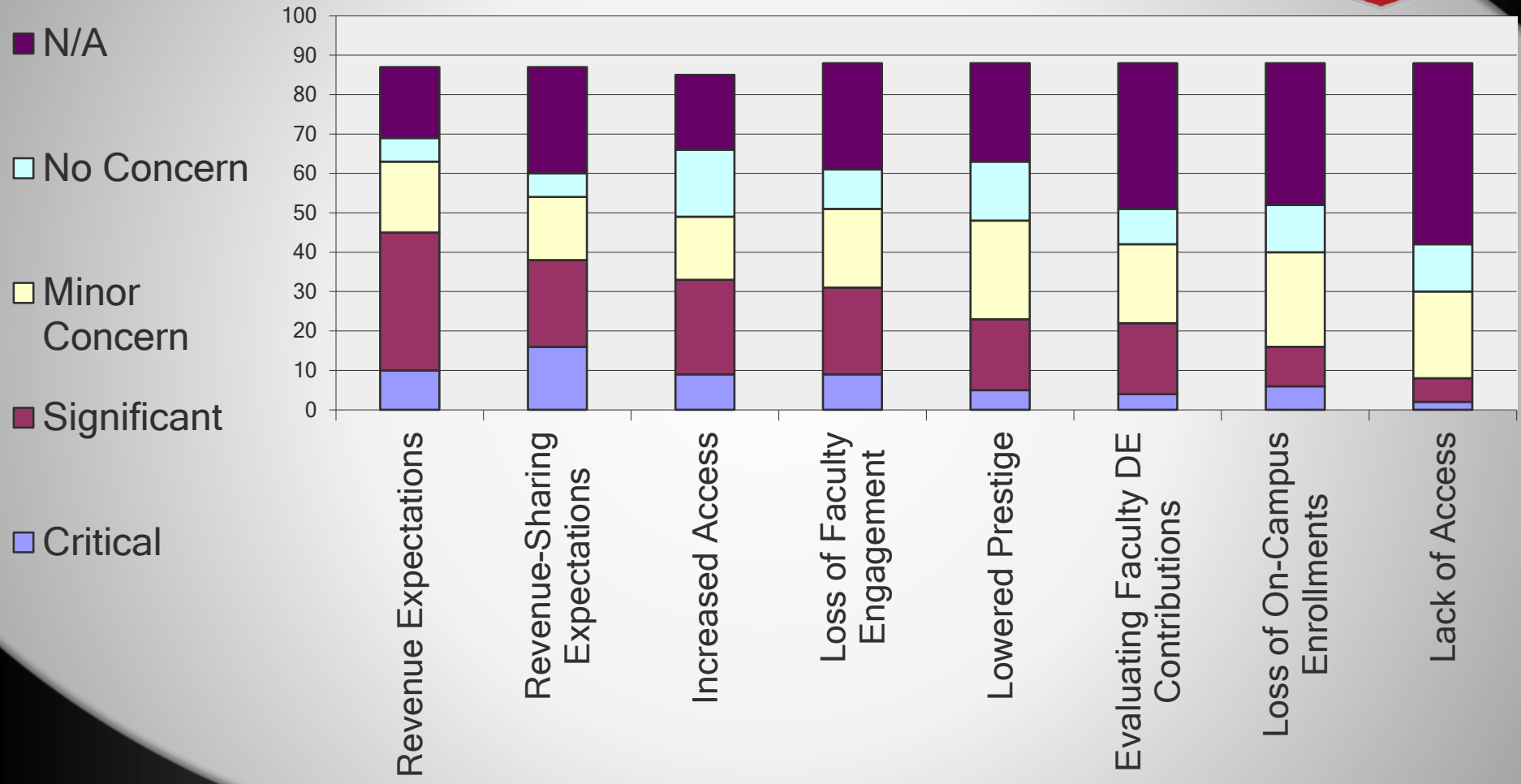
## Quality Assurance

- (x 2) Determining the quality of the online courses
- DE courses and accreditation
- Outside disciplinary organizations noting recommended capacities for on-line course offerings



# Consequences

# Consequences: Those w/ DE Programs



# Additional Concerns



## Existential Dread

- Heightened anxiety and confusion by faculty and chairs about direction of DE in Higher Ed.
- Confusion over the benefits of moving courses online
- Competing priorities to hold Carnegie research status and become a Top 50 institution

## Organizational Issues

- Duplication of services and lack of uniform policies across campus
- centralization of on-line learning--we are part of a large system

## Funding Model

- Making the commitment worth departmental involvement
- more pay incentives for development needed
- No increase in instruction budget to meet increased enrollment
- Differential tuition structure for DE vs On Campus courses

# Additional Concerns



## Faculty Issues

- Keeping track of faculty work load
- (x 3) Faculty workload

## Curricular Issues

- Whether or not to limit the number of hours taken online that can be applied toward a degree;
- the proportion of courses taken online take define a degree as a DE degree

## Scheduling/Course Delivery Issues

- conflict with face-to-face courses causing the FTF courses to be cancelled;
- Resistance on the part of non-traditional programs (such as degree completion) to open their online courses to traditional (on-campus) students
- Studio based learning not easily ported to DE

## Student Issues

- Advising issues;
- retention in DE courses
- (x 2) cheating

# Unexpected Consequences - Positive



## Enrollment Growth

- (x 3) Increased revenue; positive
- The revenue generated and shared with the colleges has had a significant positive impact on the face-to-face undergrad and grad programs
- The willingness of students to pay more for the convenience of online courses.
- Large summer enrollments in DE courses (positive--fewer students taking courses from other institutions near their homes while at home for summer)
- Greatly expanded our nursing program. This is a positive outcome.
- The potential financial gains for programs with professional certifications; more negative because our college has few
- A few faculty members have made significant increases in their earnings. More positive - it has been faculty who have worked hard on their DE offerings.
- positive consequence of having a 100% winter online session between fall and spring terms--very popular!

# Unexpected Consequences - Positive



## Acceptance

- How quickly the presence of online programs and courses has been favorably received. I expected more resistance, especially from faculty.

## Improved Intellectual Environment

- New thinking about pedagogy -- positive!
- low quality, less rigorous courses used to meet FTES goals
- Positive - DE courses have sometimes been a vehicle for successful grant proposals because they make courses available to in-service teachers in remote locations following their workday

# Unexpected Consequences - Negative



## Difficulties of Managing New Environment

- Negative: complexities of training and overseeing faculty who teach courses
- Exploding enrollments in some courses, shrinking enrollments in others, and a lack of understanding of causalities

## Perceived Impact on Quality

- very negative -- view of DE courses as 'cash cows'
- The concern from the central administration that online courses don't meet the president's ideas about what constitutes a quality education (he prefers lecture classes taught by star teachers).
- Getting past the argument that DE courses are necessarily poor quality. We are almost there but the process has really been wearing.

## Campus Climate

- Some faculty have essentially vacated the campus. Very negative. We need policy about maximum allowable DE instruction per faculty member.
- A shadow university emerges
- (x 2) faculty overload, a negative

# Unexpected Consequences - Negative



## Disincentives for Participation

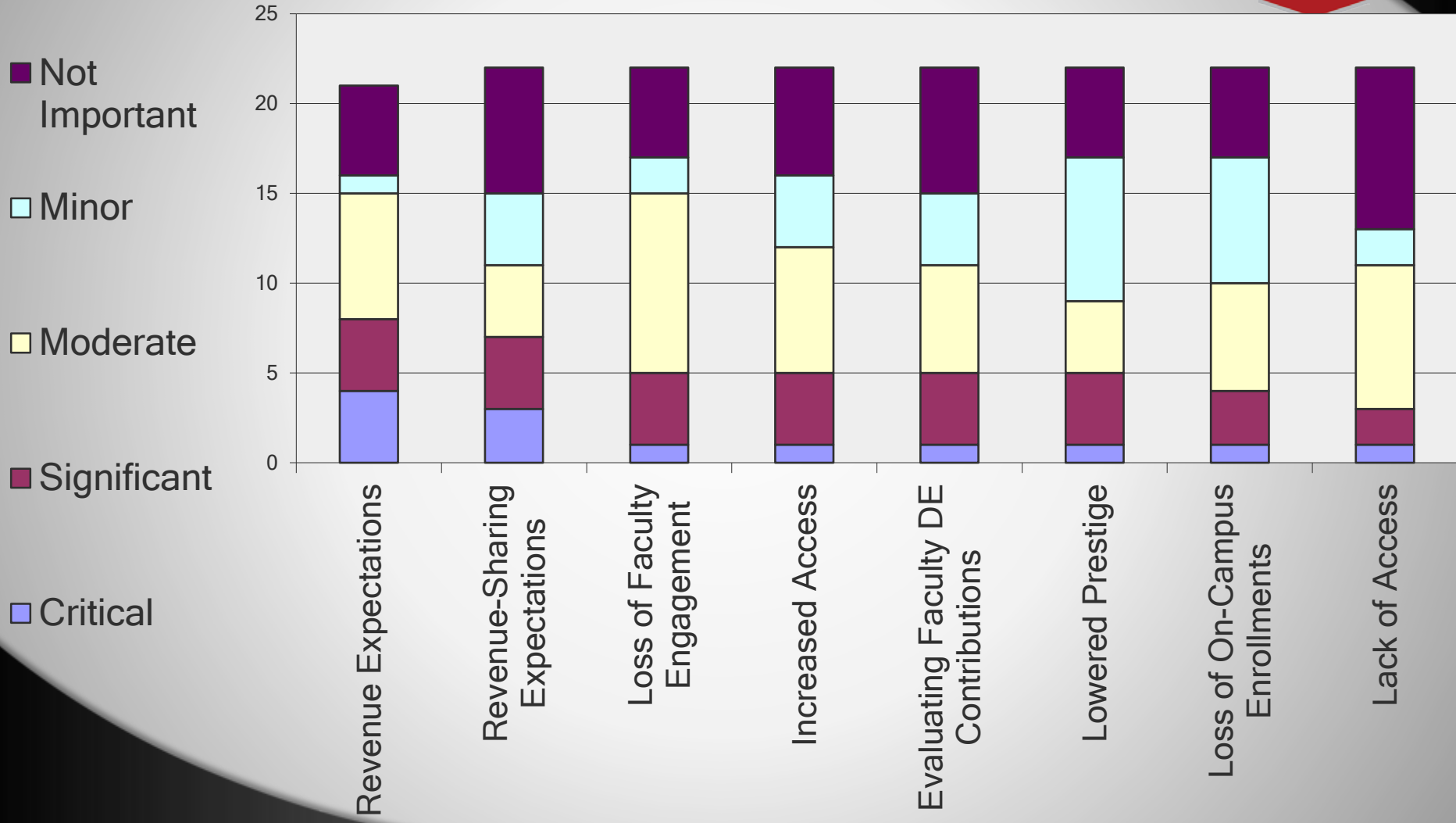
- Compensation is a problem in the environment of no merit/col raises
- Expense of offering DE courses
- Provost wants these courses but doesn't understand the resources needed.
- Initially the revenue was captured by Extended Education--lots of money was tied up in that unit but the schools and college were paying the expenses of offering those courses. That has been somewhat corrected but not entirely.
- We have very little incentive for faculty to development on-line courses, and we have found that other institutions can develop and deliver such courses more cost effectively than we could; the cost for us to develop DE courses prices us out of the market; development of DE programs is seen as a revenue drain rather than a revenue draw at this institution.
- Not enough significant institutional support to take up all the surrounding issues in a timely way. So far, hasn't been a hugely negative problem but has the potential to become one.

# Unexpected Consequences - Neutral



- (x 2) Students gravitate to on-line courses over face-to-face. I cannot assess whether this is positive, negative, or neither. The chief lesson pedagogically is that mixed-mode courses work better than either on-line or face-to-face.
- (x 2) rapid enrollment growth--this is both positive and negative
- High percentage of these courses taught by part-time/adjunct faculty. Impact varies -- in some cases I worry about the lack of engaged oversight; elsewhere, we've hired really good people to teach them.
- faculty wishing to reduce on-campus office hours
- On this campus, DE generates a significant portion of total SCH. If the DE SCH drops, there could be negative budget consequences.

# Concerns: Those w/out DE Programs



# Additional Concerns



## Curricular Concerns

- Biggest issue is how to have excellent online courses, not just talking heads
- whether students learn as well, not as well or better than in face to face courses
- The need for more thoughtful and coordinated planning about how to blend the variety of instructional modes now possible into a coherent high quality curriculum
- Concern about lack of rigor in DE courses taken elsewhere at the upper division or graduate level.
- The consequences of not offering labs by DE.

# Additional Concerns



## Control

- The state system has a system-wide DE program. My faculty fear being compelled to participate, being taken over by the state system, and for control to be given to the outside provider that the state system has contracted with.
- Determining the right faculty/administrative body to set campus policies on best practices for distance courses

## Workload

- Faculty load is a continuing problem. How do we "count" online courses in a faculty member's overall teaching load?
- Effective allocation of resources to adequately promote all institutional goals, including DE, during this period of unprecedented enrollment growth.
- Demand for DE courses exceeding our current capacity to provide



## **Conclusions**

- **Extent and Organization of DE Engagement**
- **Policy Issues**
- **Consequences of DE Engagement**

# Extent and Organization of DE Effort



- Most CCAS institutions have some DE presence in Arts & Sciences, but Arts & Sciences is not the focal point of their institution's DE presence.
- Arts & Sciences' engagement is dominated by individual course offerings, rather than complete programs
- Very few CCAS colleges use outside providers; most handle advising and course development locally; rely on an central university source for faculty training; the greatest variability lies in course development (although there's the least sharing there)

# Policies



- The greatest perceived gaps between needing a policy and having a policy were in
  - Compensation for course development and delivery
  - Ensuring instructional proficiency in DE environment
  - Setting course capacities
- The highest levels of importance assigned to assessing student outcomes and instructional proficiency; lowest to compensation and use of online credits
- The greatest dissatisfaction with revenue
  - distribution and ensuring DE instructional
  - proficiency

# Policies



- There does not appear to be a strong correlation between policy status and satisfaction with the policy, except at the extremes.
- There is some weak correlation between the size of the DE program and satisfaction, with larger programs reporting greater satisfaction.

# Consequences



- Those with and those without DE programs had almost identical patterns of concerns: the greatest concerns were over revenue; the least over loss of prestige, loss of on-campus students and lack of access.
- Among those who commented on unexpected consequences, the most frequently noted positive was revenue and/or enrollment growth; the most frequent negative was lack of faculty incentives.
- Very little commentary on tactical/logistical issues; much more about morale, buy-in and funding.