Seneca College's Degree and Credit Transfer Office:

A profile of users and an examination of outcomes

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Seneca

DEGREE AND CREDIT
TRANSFER OFFICE

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN · STUDENT MOBILITY · Seneca

Introduction

Seneca's Centralized, **Degree and Credit Transfer Office (DCTO):**

- Provides a variety of integrated services such as DT Advisement to prospective, current students and alumni on new and existing diploma to diploma, diploma to degree and degree to graduate studies program pathways and connects them with resources and information to support academic goals.

- Repository for Agreements; works closely with internal Academic departments to establish and develop partnerships with Universities and Colleges both locally and abroad

- Hub for incoming/outgoing pathways and transfer credit information and advocates for not only the student, but the academic area and partners at large

- Oversees and facilitates the Transfer Credit process across the College for students with previous Postsecondary Education

- Established in 2001 after some investigation pointed to a gap in the provision of information for students.
  - In 2001, nearly 44% of incoming students indicated that they planned on pursuing further education after completing their program at Seneca (36% at a university) and yet little services existed to support students interested in obtaining further education.

- One of the first of its kind in Ontario to not only act as the central repository for all agreements, but to also provide a high level of advisement on pathway options for incoming and outgoing students.
  - 1 staff member (p/t)
    - Part of **Career Services Coordinator** role in Student Services Department
      - **Degree and Credit Transfer Coordinator** (F/T)
        - Provincial Changes (CUCC to ONCAT) = Institutional Changes (Student Services to Academic)
          - **Manager** + **Degree Transfer Coordinator** + 2 **DT Officers** (p/t)
            - **Transfer Credit Assessment Coordinator** + 2 **TC Processors** (p/t)

Priorities: Building a Transfer Culture
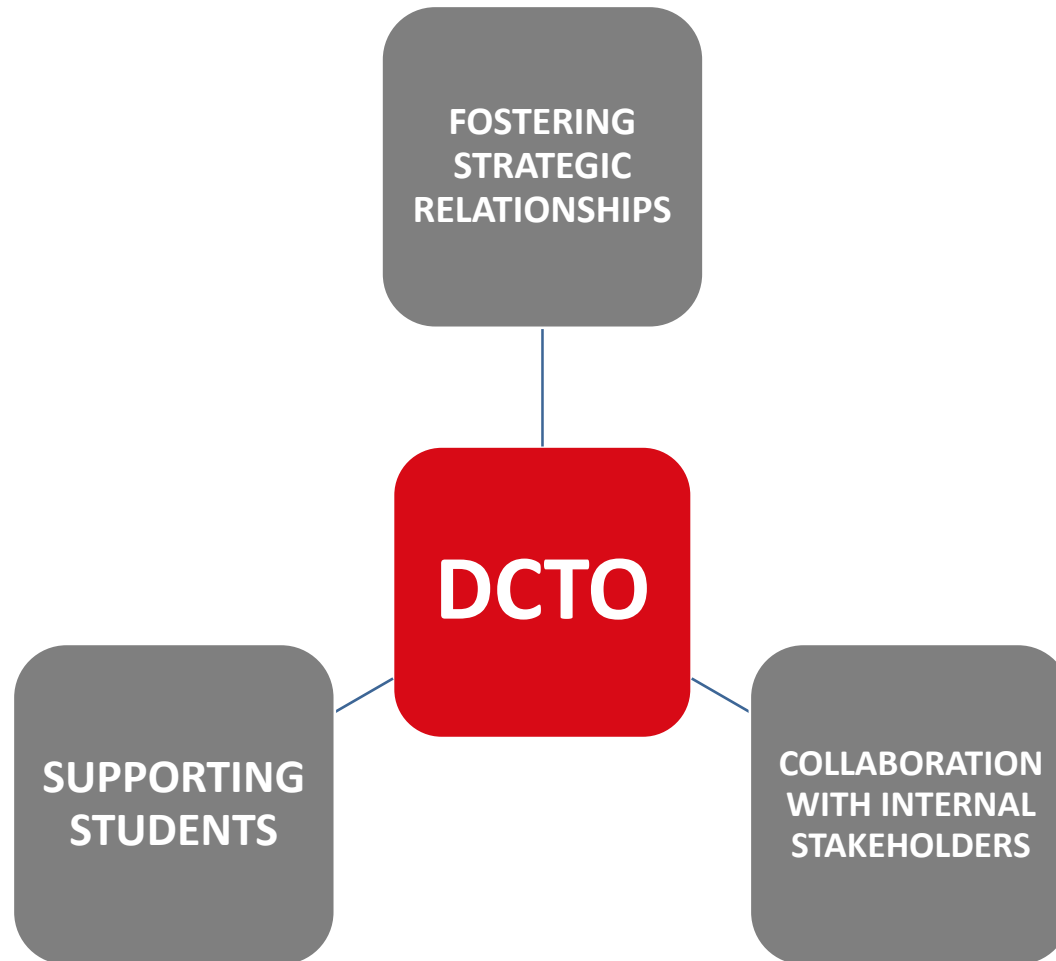
Role of advising

"Academic advising is a decision-making process during which students reach their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchange with an academic advisor."

-Thomas J. Grites

"Providing assistance in the mediation of dissonance between student expectations and the actualities of the educational experience."

-Habley, 1983

"Advising should be at the core of the institution's educational mission rather than layered on as a service."

-Robert Berdahl

New Directions for Teaching and Learning

Source: "Why Bother with Academic Advising?", Habley, W., 2005

Research Questions

Part 1. What is the profile of students who use the DCTO transfer advising services?

- How does the sociodemographic and academic backgrounds upon college entry differ?

- How many students who aspire to university use the service?

- How do the academic outcomes differ between users and non-users (graduation rates and grades)?

Part 2. Transfer rate to university and transfer experiences

- What is the transfer rate to university for those who used the DCTO versus those who did not? Did it differ by program areas?

- For graduates who transferred to university, did DCTO users differ in terms of reasons for transfer, sources of information, or their reported satisfaction with the transition experience?

- For transfers, does the choice of university program differ for those who used the DCTO?

Methodology

STUDY DESIGN AND SAMPLE SELECTION

Study population

Part 1: Student Profile. Included those who:

- first entered Seneca between summer, 2007 and fall, 2014
- entered a program that was not a degree or graduate certificate
- completed the entering student survey
  - ➤ 59,942 students fit this criteria

Part 2: Transfer outcomes, those who graduated from the Part 1 (student profile) population but excluded those who:

- graduated from a graduate certificate or degree
- did not respond to the graduate satisfaction survey (72% response rate)
- first visited the DCTO more than two months after graduation
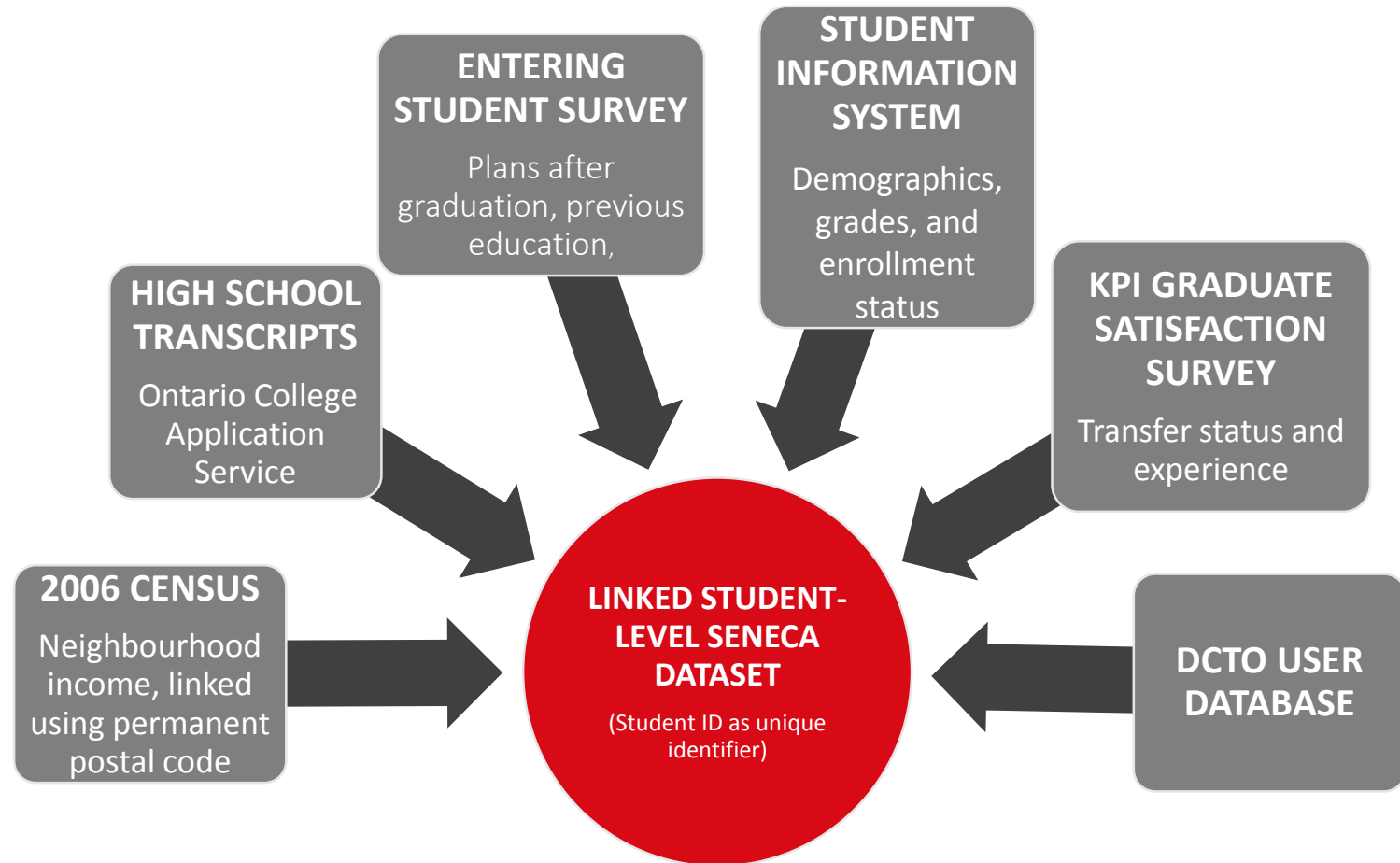 - ➤ 13,607 graduates fit this criteria

Degree Transfer Advisement

- DCTO user definition: those who attended a one on one advisement appointment. At each appointment students complete a card that contains their student ID, demographic, academic, and further education interest and plans.

- Since 2003, all student appointments are tracked and housed within an internal database (currently contains over 5000 students).

- For the current study, (with ethics approval) the DCTO user database was linked via student ID to the existing CRSM research database. Visits to the DCTO were captured up until October 13, 2016.

APPOINTMENT CARD

CRSM linked dataset

ENTERING STUDENT SURVEY

Plans after graduation, previous education,

STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Demographics, grades, and enrollment status

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

Ontario College Application Service

KPI GRADUATE SATISFACTION SURVEY

Transfer status and experience

2006 CENSUS

Neighbourhood income, linked using permanent postal code

LINKED STUDENT-LEVEL SENECA DATASET

(Student ID as unique identifier)

DCTO USER DATABASE

Ethics approval granted in January, 2015, for accessing and linking the datasets. Seneca's Privacy Office also was notified.

Part 1: Profile of DCTO users

RESULTS BY UNIVERSITY ASPIRATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT USE OF DCTO

# Seneca student's use of DCTO and aspirations for university at entry

PLANS FOR UNIVERSITY

N=22,756 (38%)

USED DCTO

N=1406 (6%)

DID NOT USE DCTO
N=21,350 (94%)

**59,942
ENTRANTS, 2007-14**

NO PLANS FOR UNIVERSITY

N=37,079 (62%)

USED DCTO

N=746 (2%)

DID NOT USE DCTO
N=36,333 (98%)
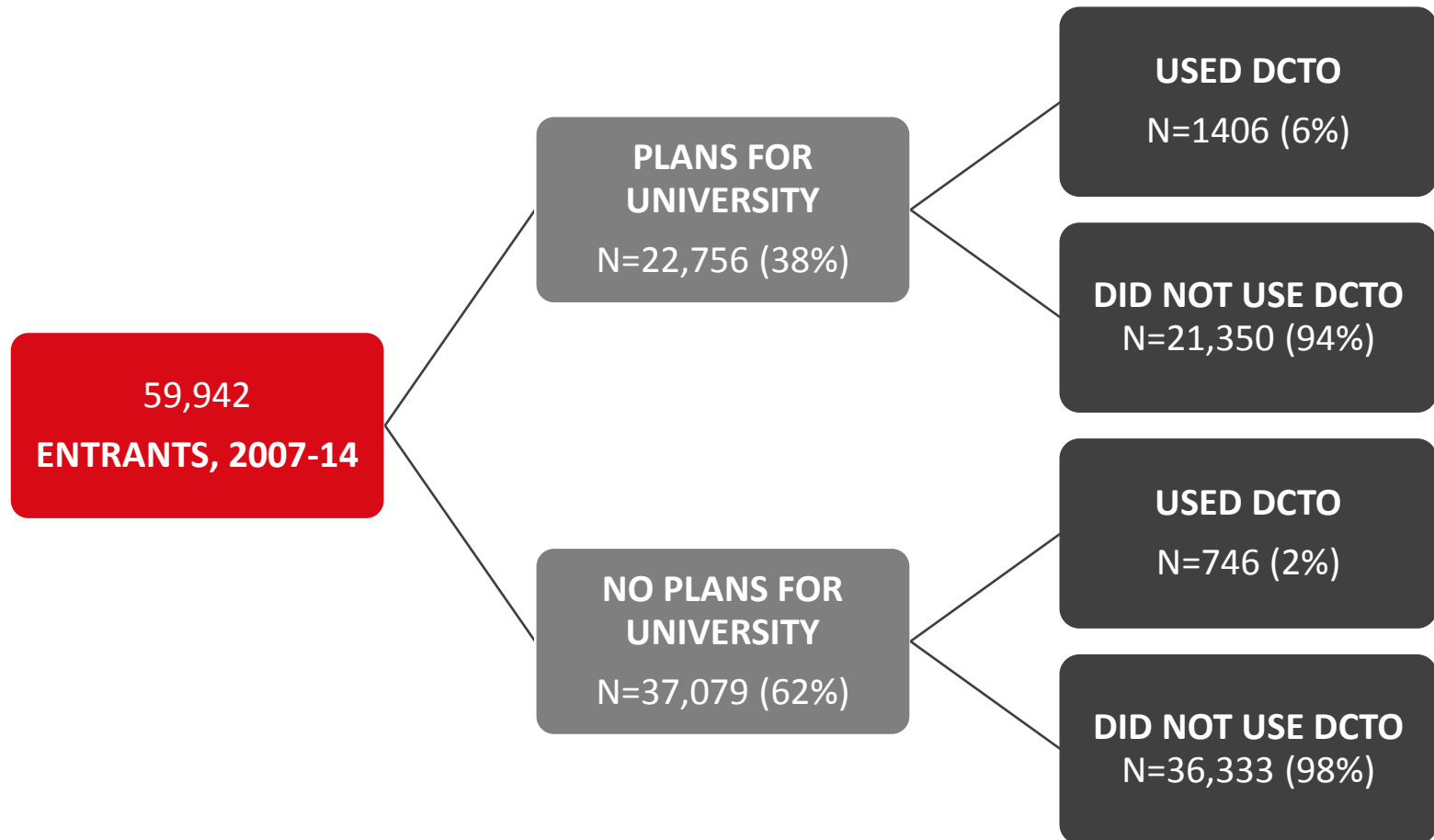
65% of DCTO users had plans to attend university vs 37% of non users

Seneca

Student's Background

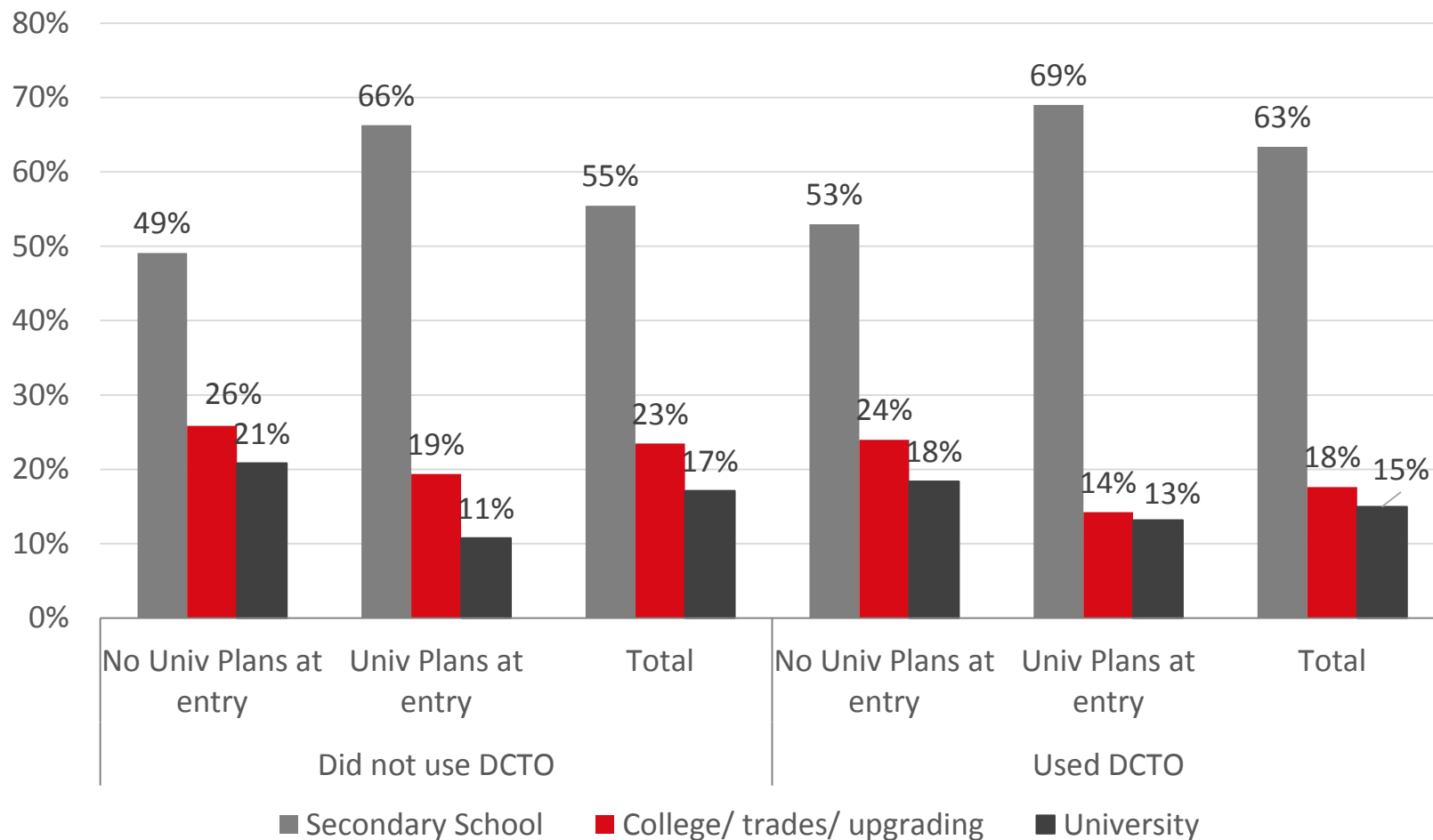**SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND ACADEMIC BACKGROUND**

Sociodemographics by DCTO use
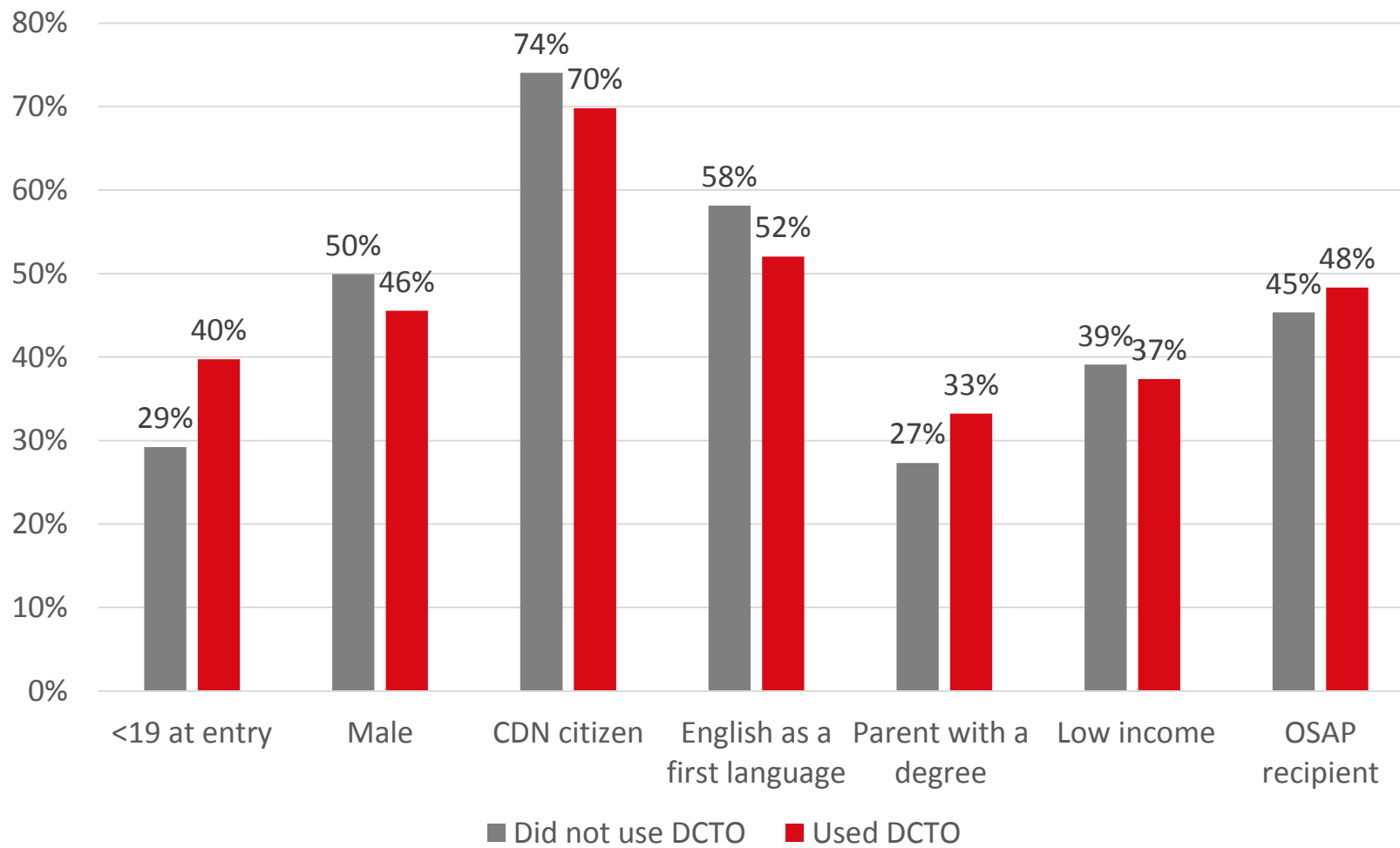
High school background by DCTO use
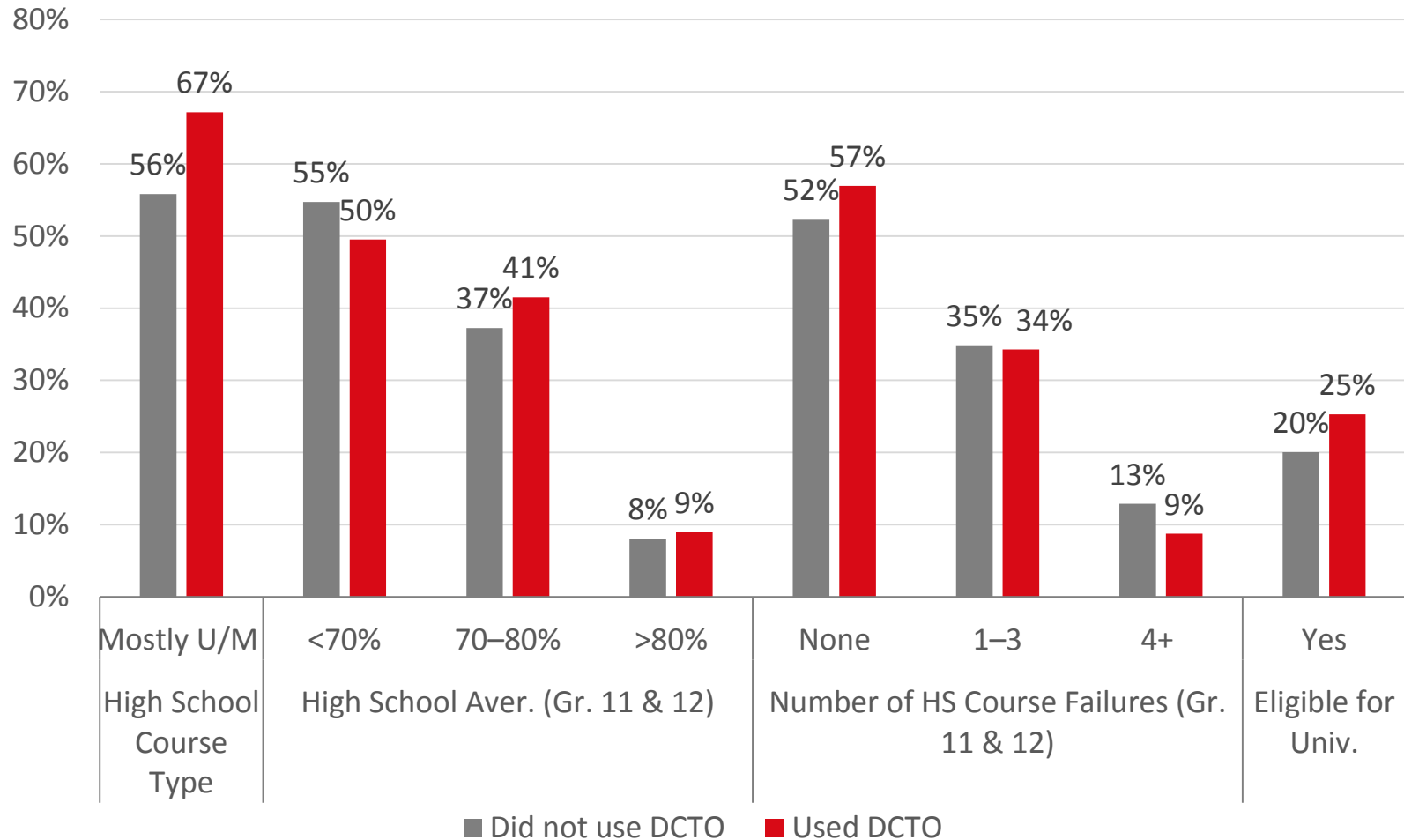
DCTO users less likely to have previous PSE

Use of DCTO by program and credential area

|		Did not use DCTO	Used DCTO
Credential Type	Certificate 1-yr	12%	7%
	Diploma 2-yr	57%	46%
	Advanced Diploma 3-yr	30%	47%
Program Area	Business	35%	53%
	Community Services	16%	19%
	Creative and Applied Arts	13%	4%
	Health	5%	2%
	Hospitality	4%	2%
	Preparatory/ Upgrading	12%	9%
	Engineering/ Technology	16%	12%

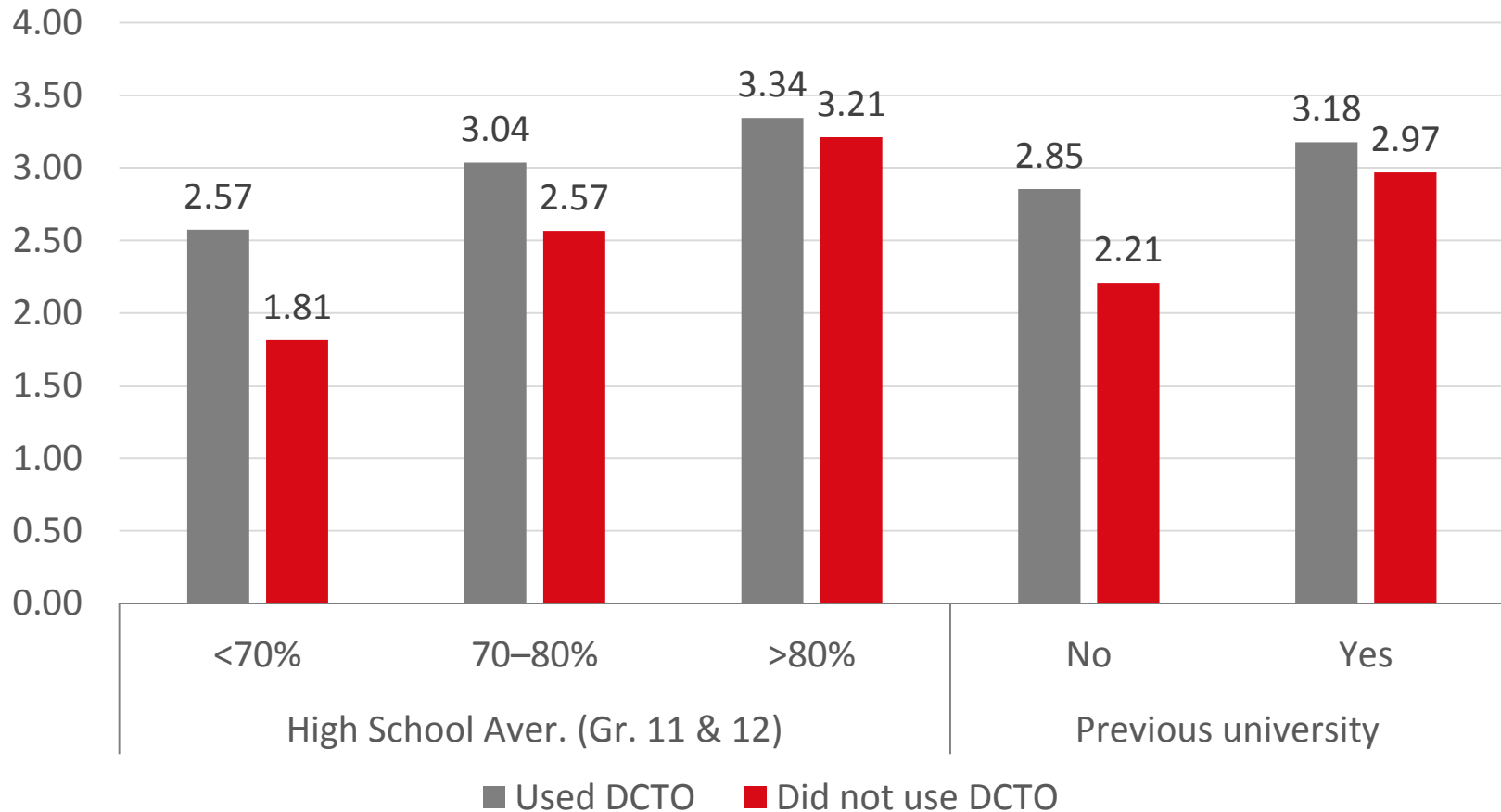# Academic outcomes by DCTO use

GRADES AND GRADUATION RATE

College GPA by DCTO use
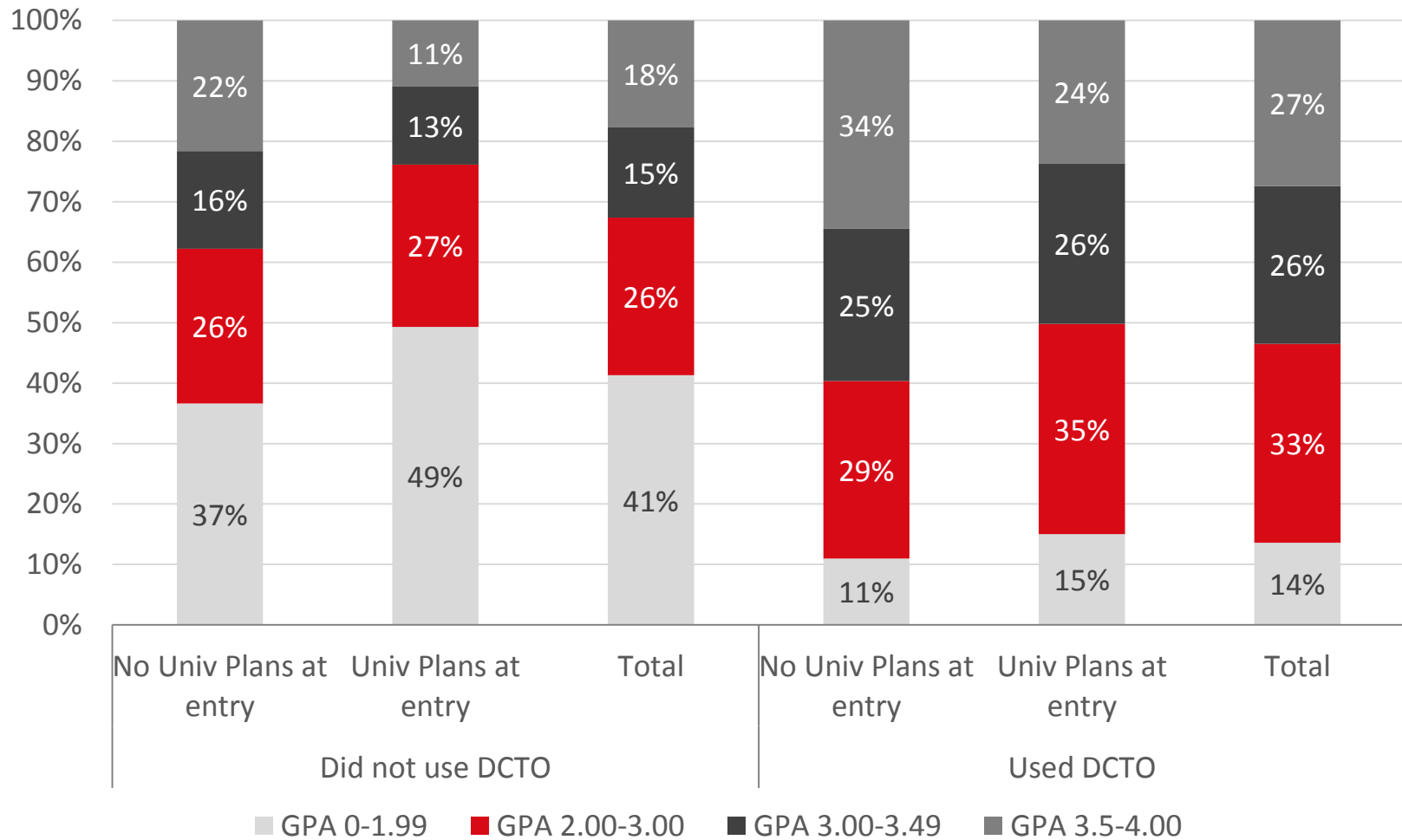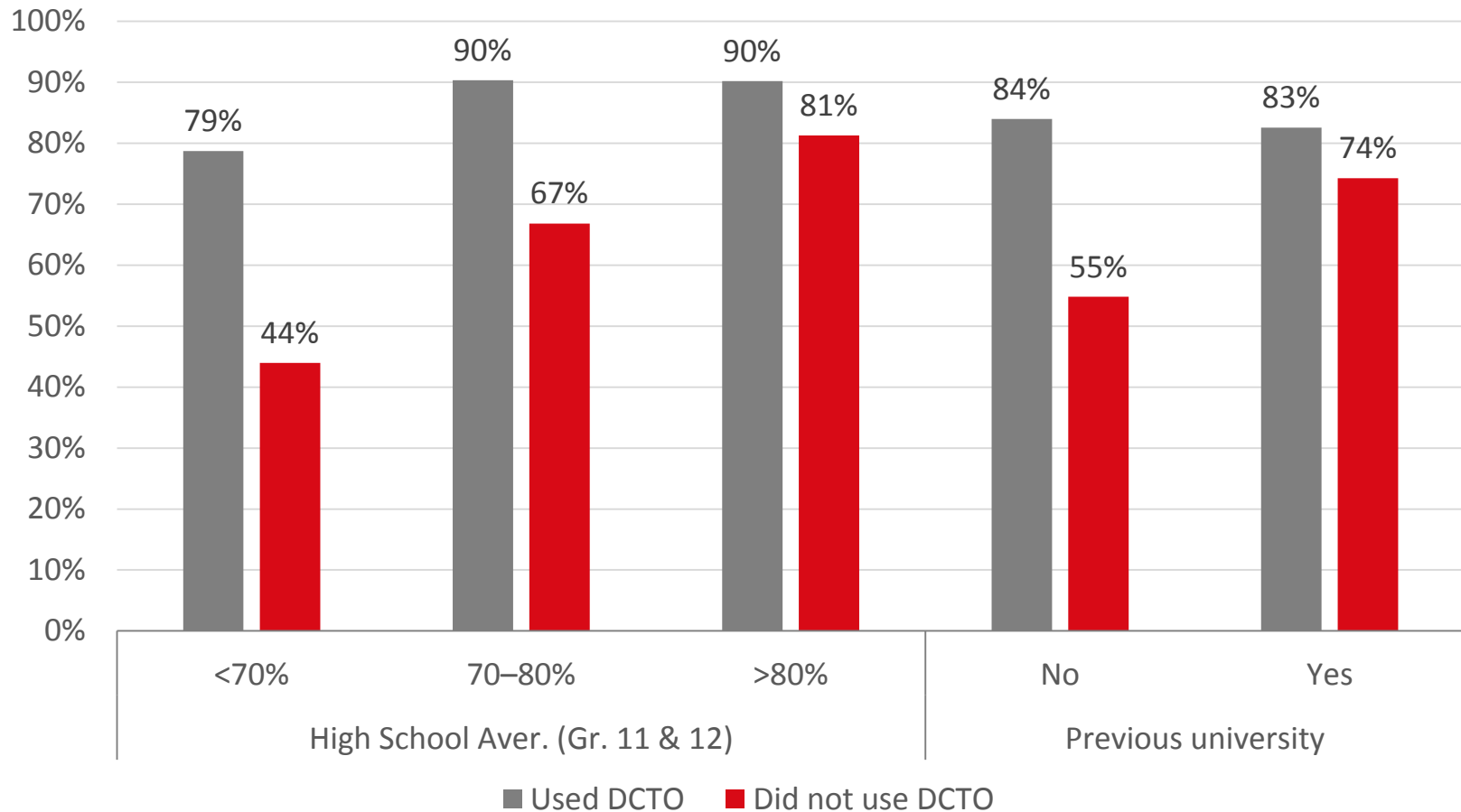
Graduation rate by DCTO use
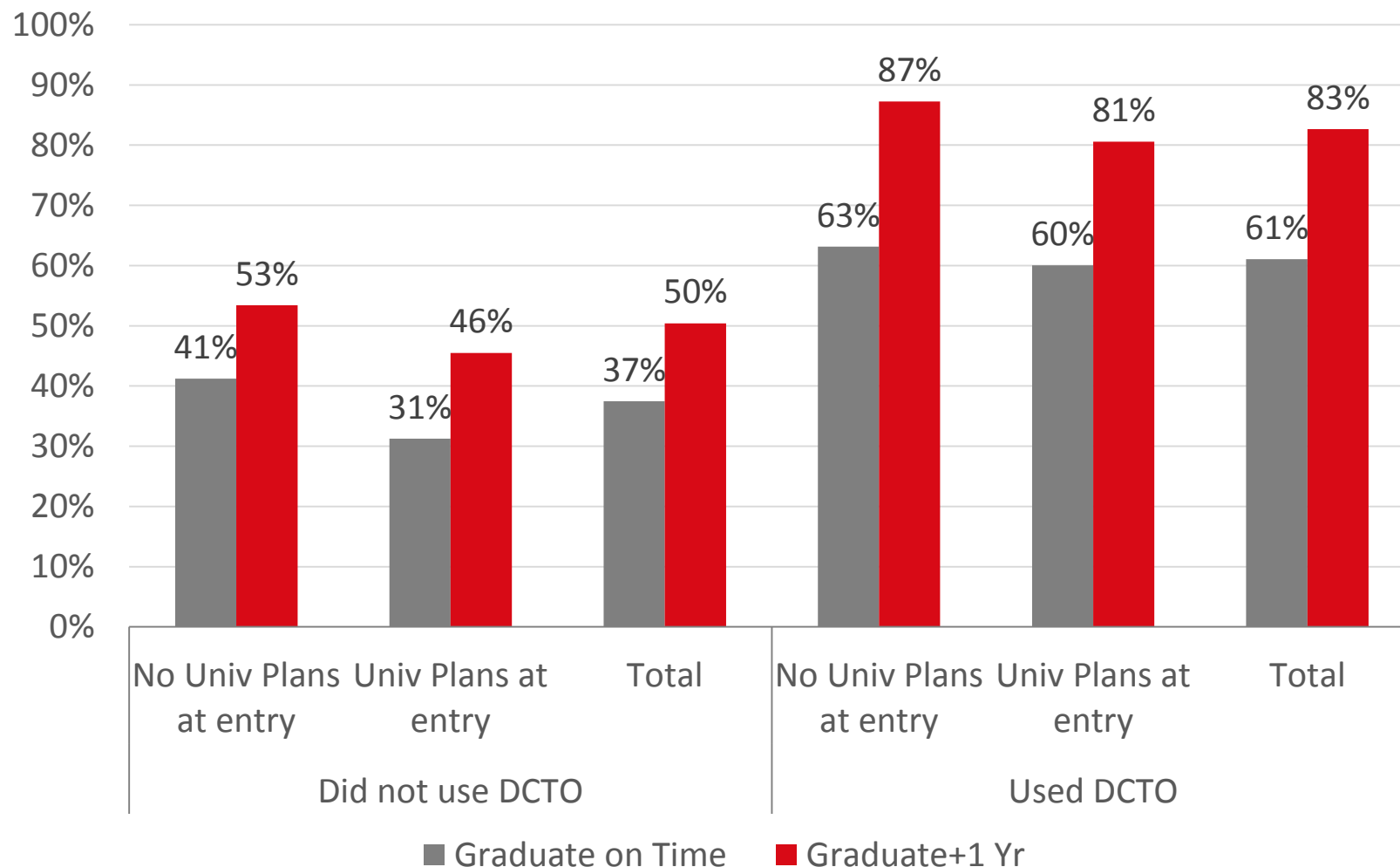
College GPA by academic background and DCTO use

Students leaving in first semester removed

Graduation rate by academic background and DCTO use

Students leaving in first semester removed
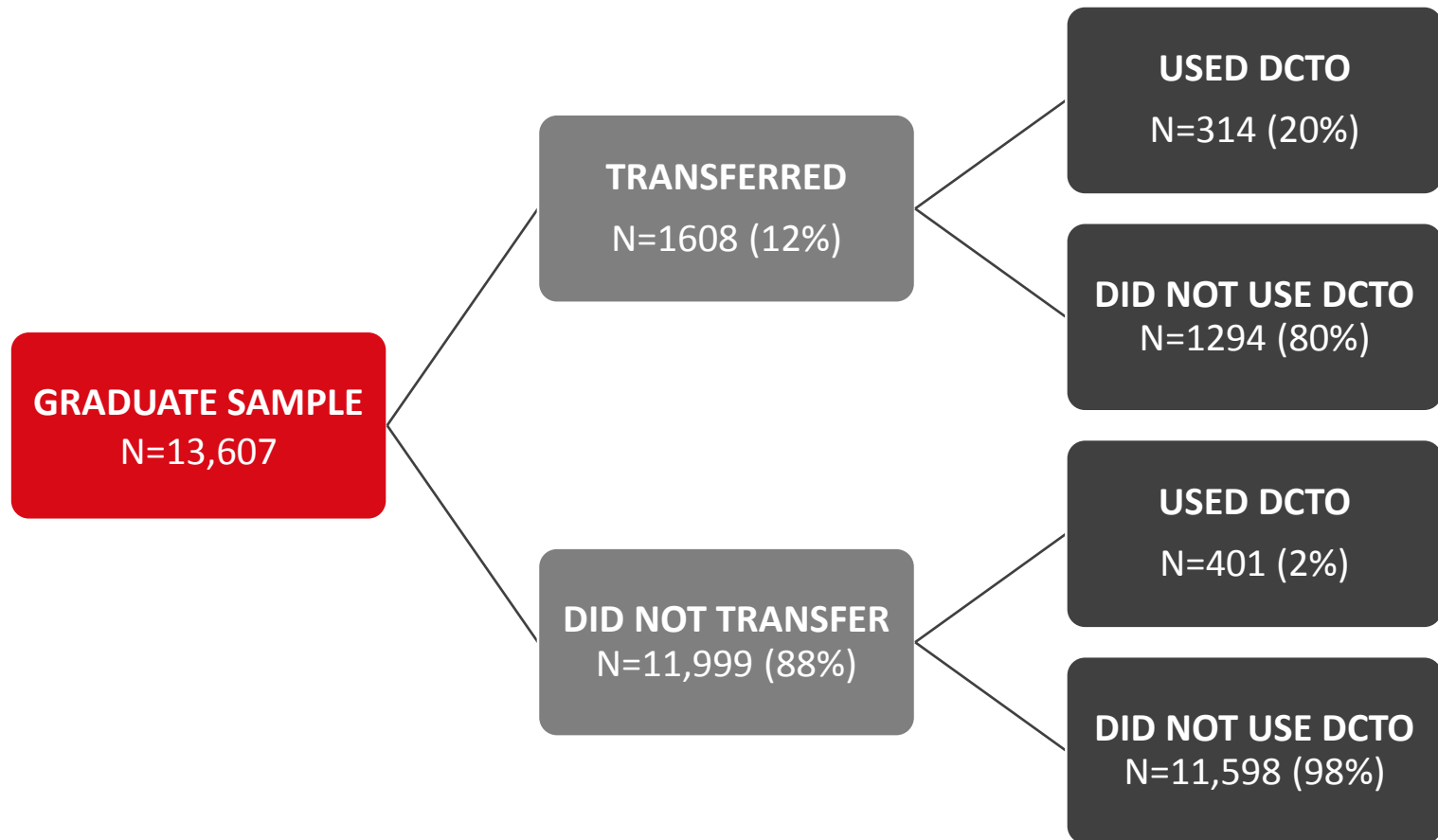
Why did DCTO users perform so well academically?

Three hypothesized populations of users:

1) Highly motivated to transfer and therefore performed well academically.

2) Students who entered college without plans for transfer but as a result of doing well academically, realized university was an option; and subsequently went for transfer advising.

3) Motivated students who may have not been doing well at the time of the DCTO visit, but received academic advising either from the DCTO or by referral and as a result of the advising, improved academically.

- The importance of graduating from college and achieving the required GPA to maximize transfer credit and acceptance at university are emphasized in DCTO advising

Transfer outcomes

TRANSFER RATE AND EXPERIENCE 6 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION

Transfer rate to university by DCTO use

GRADUATE SAMPLE
N=13,607

TRANSFERRED
N=1608 (12%)

DID NOT TRANSFER
N=11,999 (88%)

USED DCTO
N=314 (20%)

DID NOT USE DCTO
N=1294 (80%)

USED DCTO
N=401 (2%)

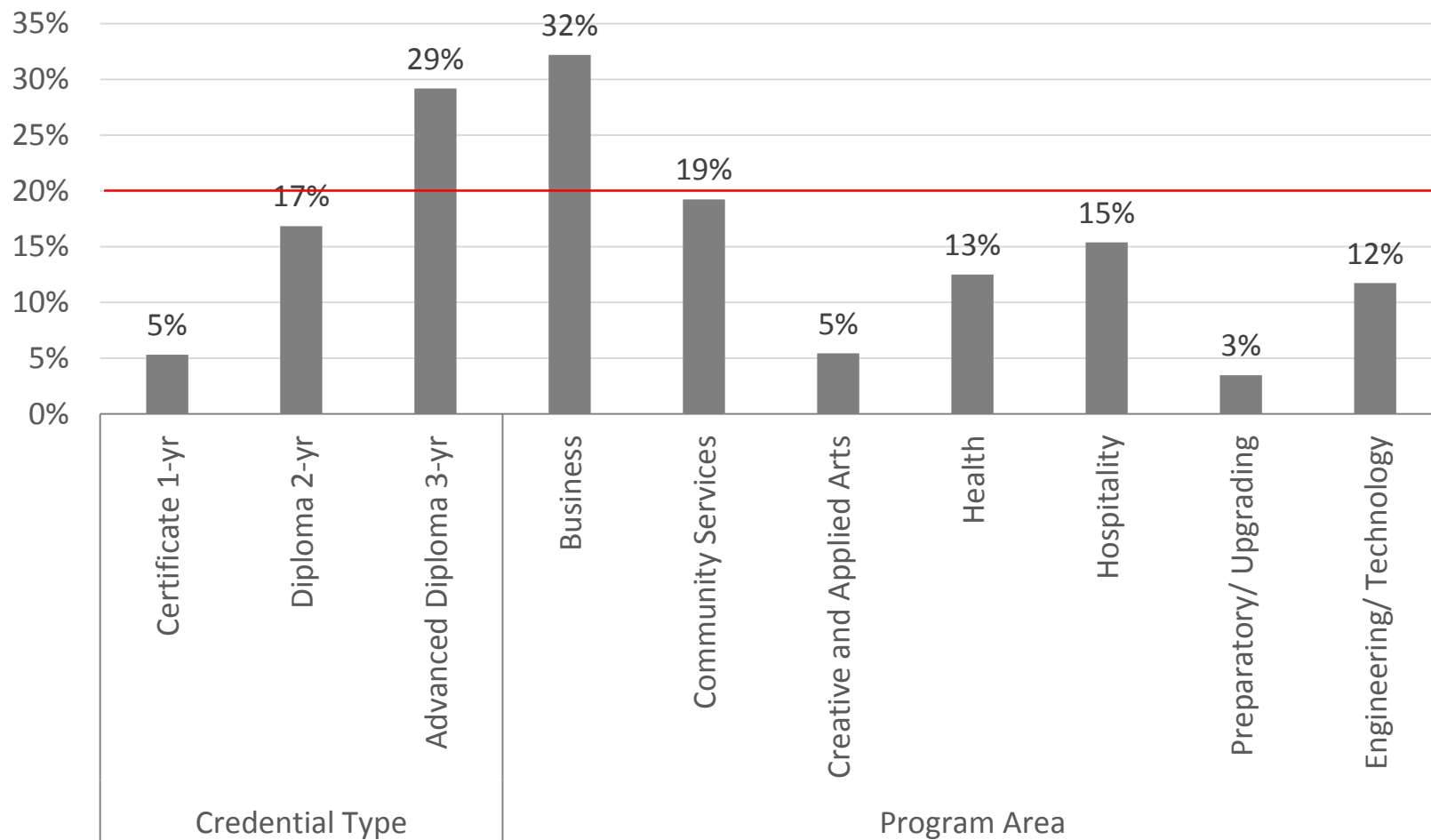**DID NOT USE DCTO**
N=11,598 (98%)

44% of DCTO users transferred vs 10% of non users

Transfer rate to university by aspirations and use of DCTO
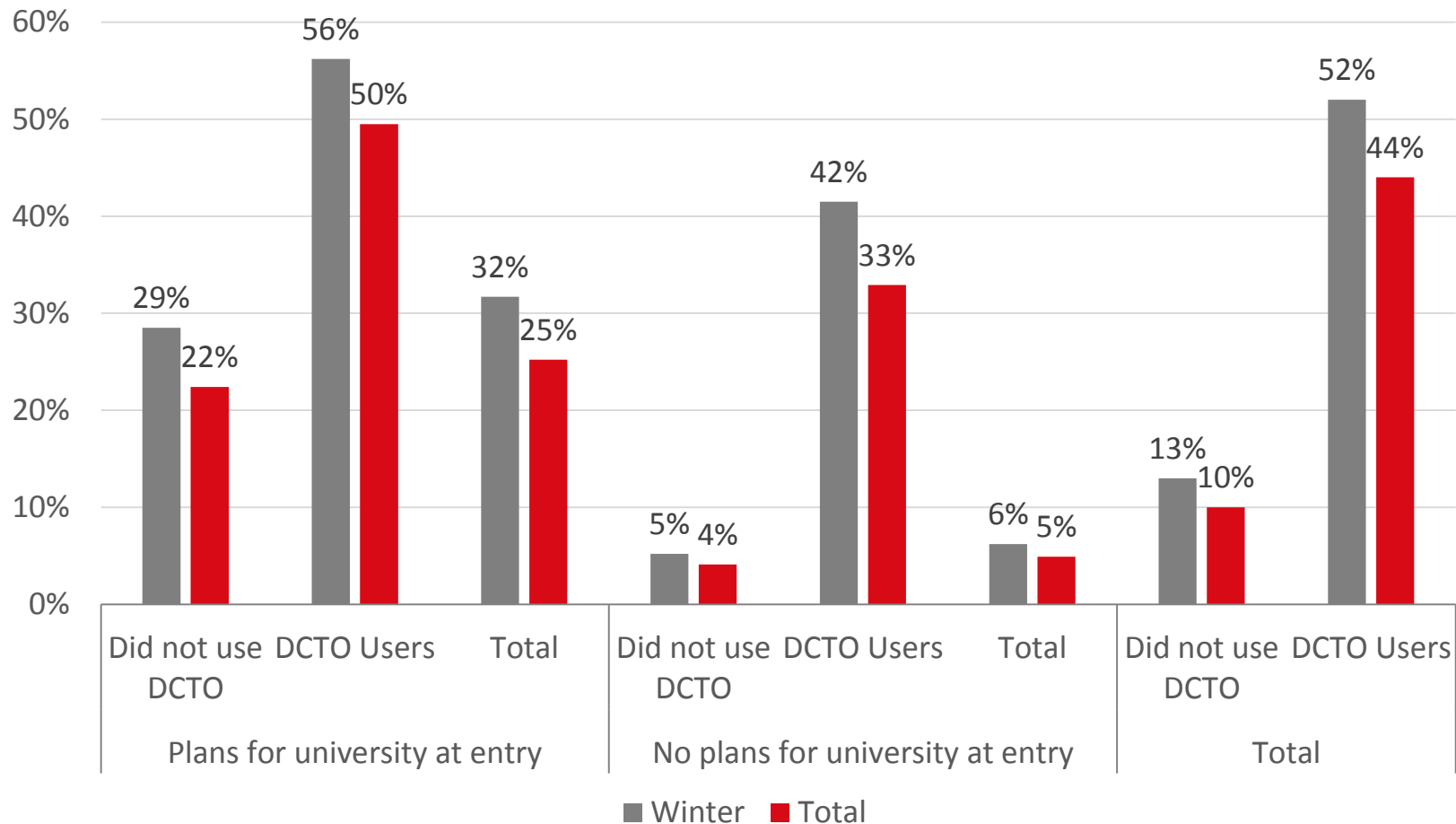
% graduates enrolled in university, 6 months after graduation

Percentage of transfers who used DCTO by credential and program area

Top ten college to university program transfer pathways, by DCTO use

Program graduated from-university program enrolled	Used DCTO	Did not use DCTO	Total
Business- Commerce	49.0%	22.0%	27.4%
Community Service- Social Sciences	22.5%	23.4%	23.2%
Preparatory/ Upgrading- Social Sciences	1.3%	9.3%	7.7%
Business- Social Science	7.2%	6.0%	6.3%
Preparatory/ Upgrading- Humanities	1.0%	6.2%	5.1%
Engineering-Engineering & Applied Sciences	2.6%	4.2%	3.8%
Creative and Applied Arts-Humanities	0.0%	2.4%	2.0%
Engineering-Math & Physical Sciences	0.3%	2.2%	1.8%
Creative and Applied Arts-Fine arts	0.0%	2.1%	1.7%
Community Service- Humanities	2.0%	1.1%	1.2%
% of all college –university pathways	85.8%	78.8%	80.3%

Transfer experience

- The reasons for transferring to university were similar between users and non-users, with career advancement and obtaining a credential cited for almost nine in ten transfers.

- DCTO users are more likely to make use of a variety of information, particularly college sources, transfer guides and hard copy publications. They were slightly more likely, or as likely, to use university and personal sources.

- Graduates satisfaction with the transition experience (83%) and their academic preparation (87%) for transfer is high for both DCTO users and non-users with little difference between the two groups.

Conclusions

- Students who used the advising services at Seneca's DCTO differ little upon entry to Seneca in terms of their academic backgrounds and sociodemographic factors. However, the majority had plans for university at entry, and they were less likely to have previous PSE.

- DCTO users are more likely to have enrolled in business and advanced diploma programs
  - **likely related to a higher number of transfer agreements in these areas.**

- DCTO users obtained much higher grades and graduation rates than non users, even when controlling for HS grades and previous education.

- Of those who ultimately transferred, three year diploma and business graduates were much more likely to have used the DCTO.
  - **DCTO users seem to be concentrated in programs with a larger number of agreements.**

- The most significant and positive finding of this study is the high transfer rates to university for users of the DCTO advising services.

Recommendations

Expanding the services to reach more students would therefore be of benefit.

1)   *Reaching out to students early* in their program.

2)   *Targeting program areas* in which students, despite an interest in transferring, *utilize the DCTO to a lesser degree*.

3)   Enhance *focus on career opportunities* associated with transfer pathways.

4)   Continuing to *emphasize the value of our department and advisement service* to faculty, staff and service areas across the institution.

5)   Providing *more opportunities for advisement* at other campuses

Thank you!

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