

Survey of Davidson College Major Donors

Anonymous Survey of 1,114 Major Davidson Donors

312 Responses (28% response rate)

Conducted Independently by Braun Research, Inc.

Report of Findings Prepared Independently by ACTA

(American Council of Trustees and Alumni)

Sponsored by Davidsonians for Freedom of Thought & Discourse

October, 2021



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Purpose of Davidson College Survey of Major Donors, 2021

To Assess Major Donors'

- Satisfaction with the direction the College is headed
- Views on ideological and political balance at Davidson
- Views on freedom of expression at Davidson
- Views on criteria and priorities for the selection of Davidson's next president
- Changes in donor giving to Davidson, plans for future giving, and reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction

To Provide Important Information on the State of the College and Donors' Concerns to the Presidential Search Committee

Survey Respondents

- Anonymous survey conducted online, September 23-October 15, 2021, by Braun Research, Inc.
- Davidson College donors surveyed were those listed in the College's 2021 published list of major cumulative donors, with email addresses obtained independently.
- 312 Responders; 28% Response Rate.
- 4.73% margin of error for question responses, at 95% confidence level.

Donors' Graduation Year

Question 36: Please check the decade from which you graduated from Davidson.

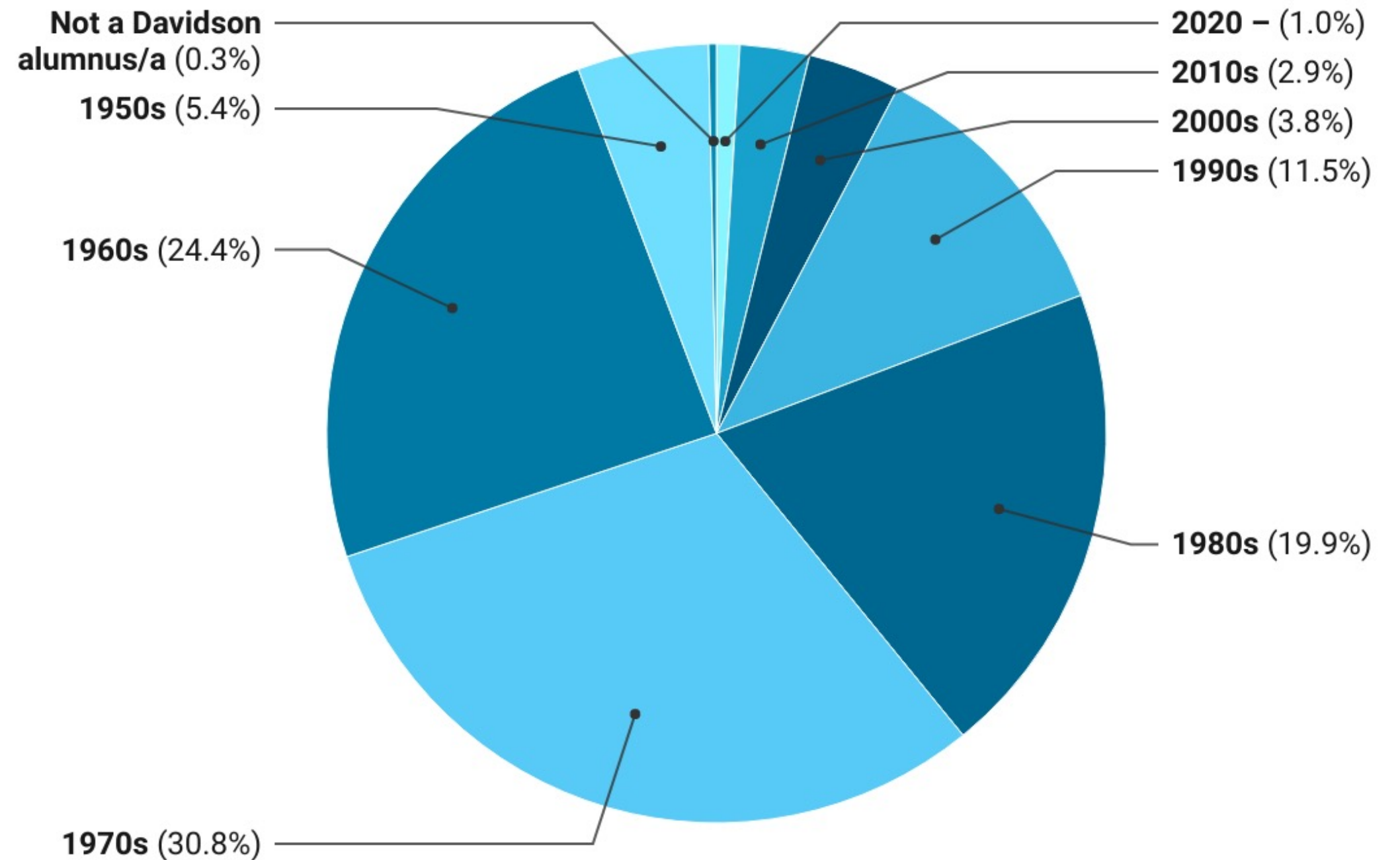


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Survey

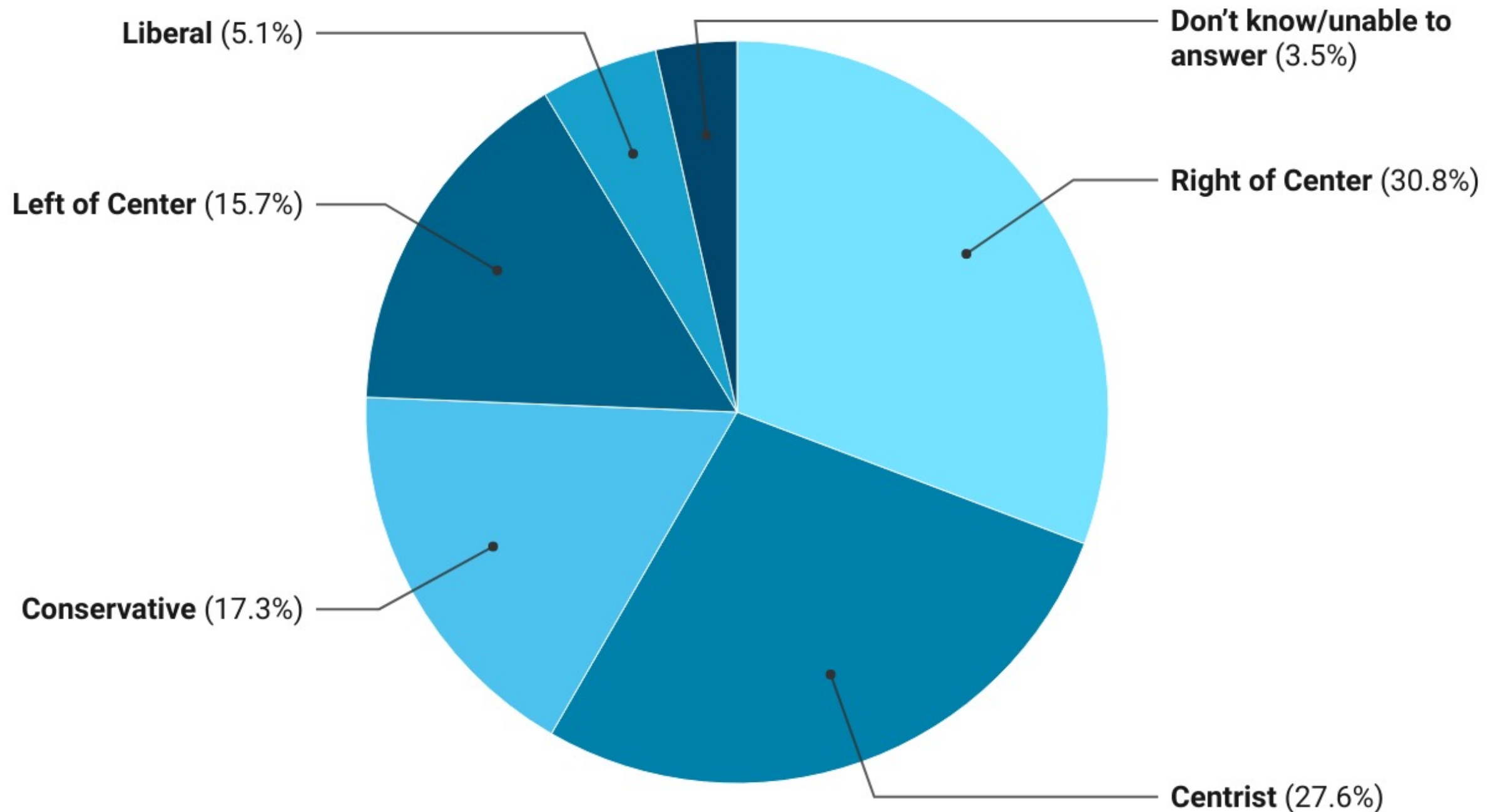
Respondents

Self-described political ideology of survey respondents

- 21% of respondents identified as liberal or left of center.
- 48% of respondents identified as conservative or right of center.
- 28% of respondents identified as centrist.

Self-described Political Ideology

Question 35: Using a five-point scale from liberal-point 1-to conservative-point 5-where would you place yourself on this ideological scale?



Views on Current Direction of Davidson College

Donor Satisfaction with College Direction

- 59% of donors are either “somewhat” or “very dissatisfied” with the direction Davidson is currently taking.
- 38% are either “somewhat” or “very satisfied.”

Donor Satisfaction with Direction of Davidson College

Question 1: Are you satisfied with the direction Davidson College has taken over the last decade?

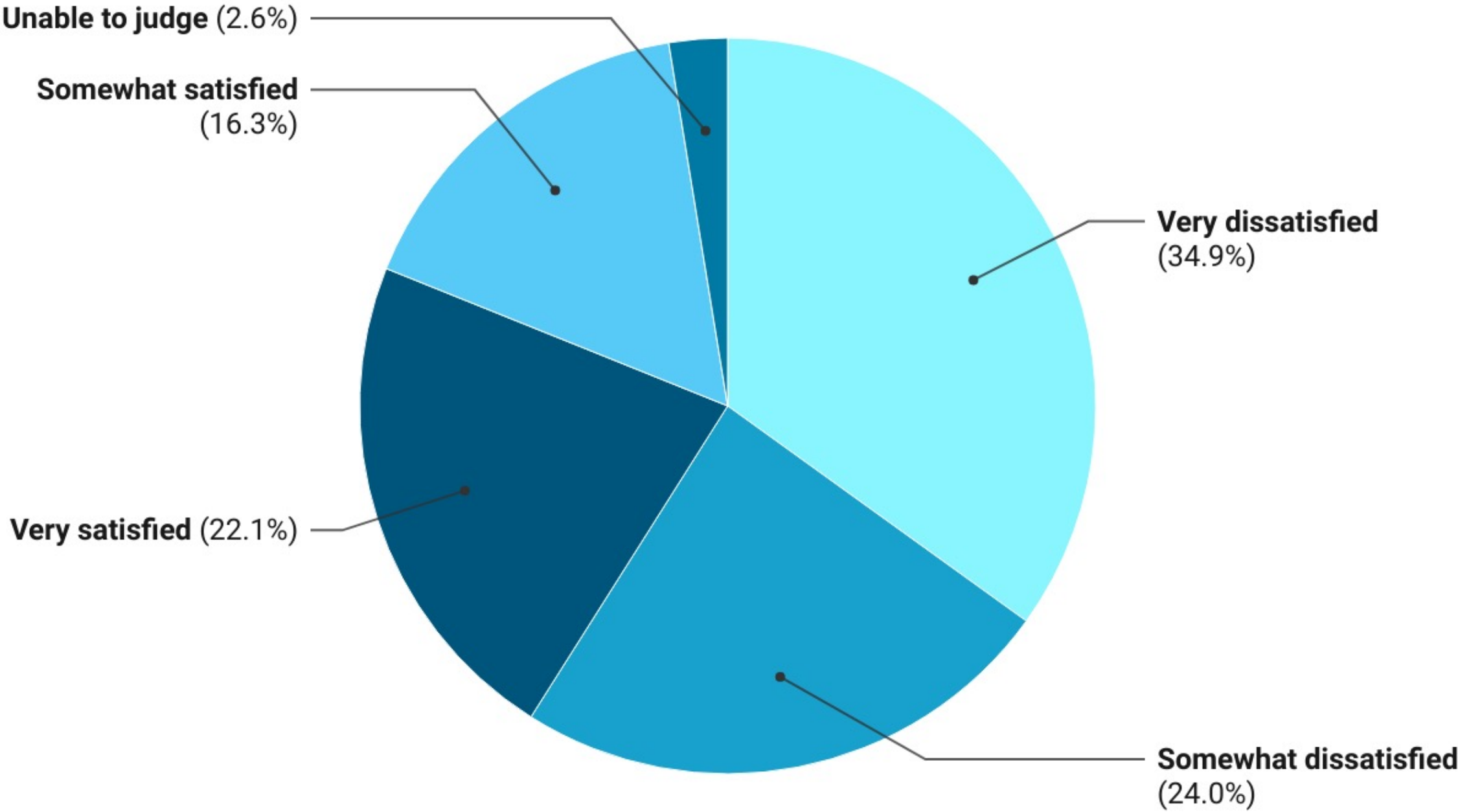


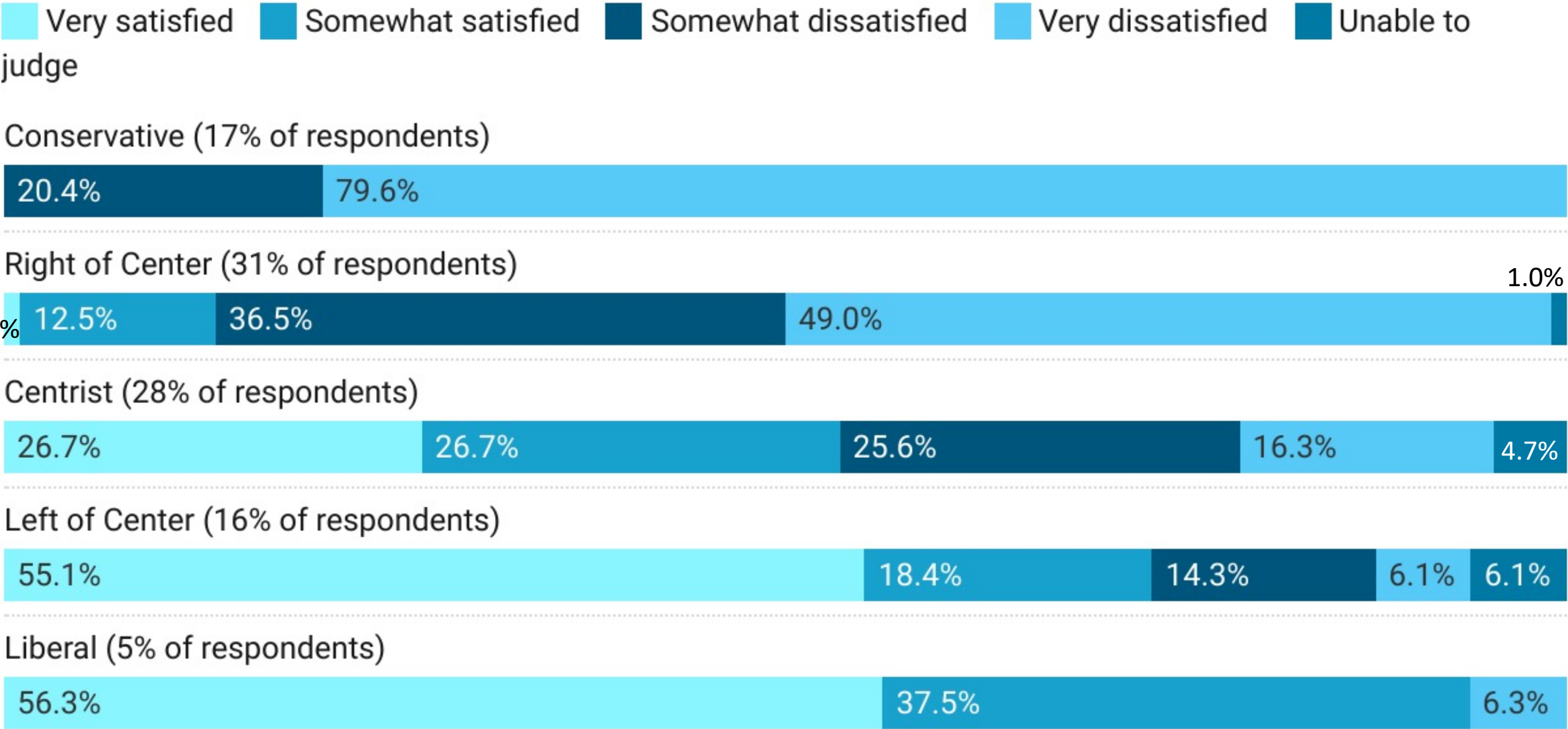
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The Ideological Divide

- Levels of dissatisfaction vary considerably across the ideological spectrum of major donors.
- Conservative & Right of Center donors are mainly “very/somewhat” dissatisfied, including 100% of conservatives.
- Liberals & Left of Center donors are mainly “very/somewhat” satisfied.
- A majority of centrists, over 53%, are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction According to Political Ideology

Question 1: Are you satisfied with the direction Davidson College has taken over the last decade?



3% of respondents did not indicate a political ideology

Donor Views on Ideological & Political Balance at Davidson



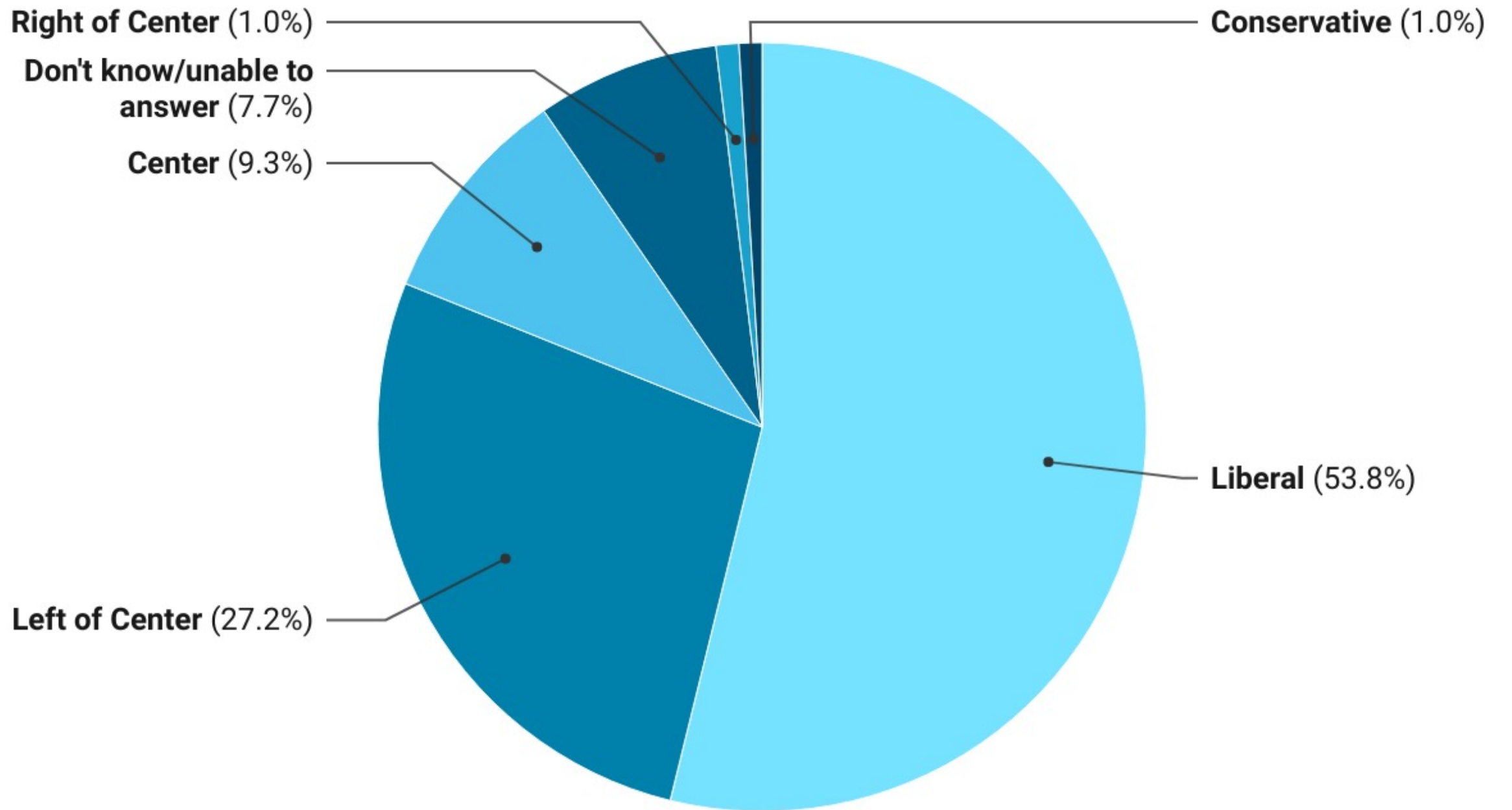
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Davidson's Campus Culture

- 81% of major donors view Davidson's culture as either Liberal or Left of Center.
- 2% of major donors view Davidson's culture as either Conservative or Right of Center.

Davidson College Donor Views on Campus Political Culture

Question 2: How would you describe Davidson's campus culture today on the ideological spectrum?

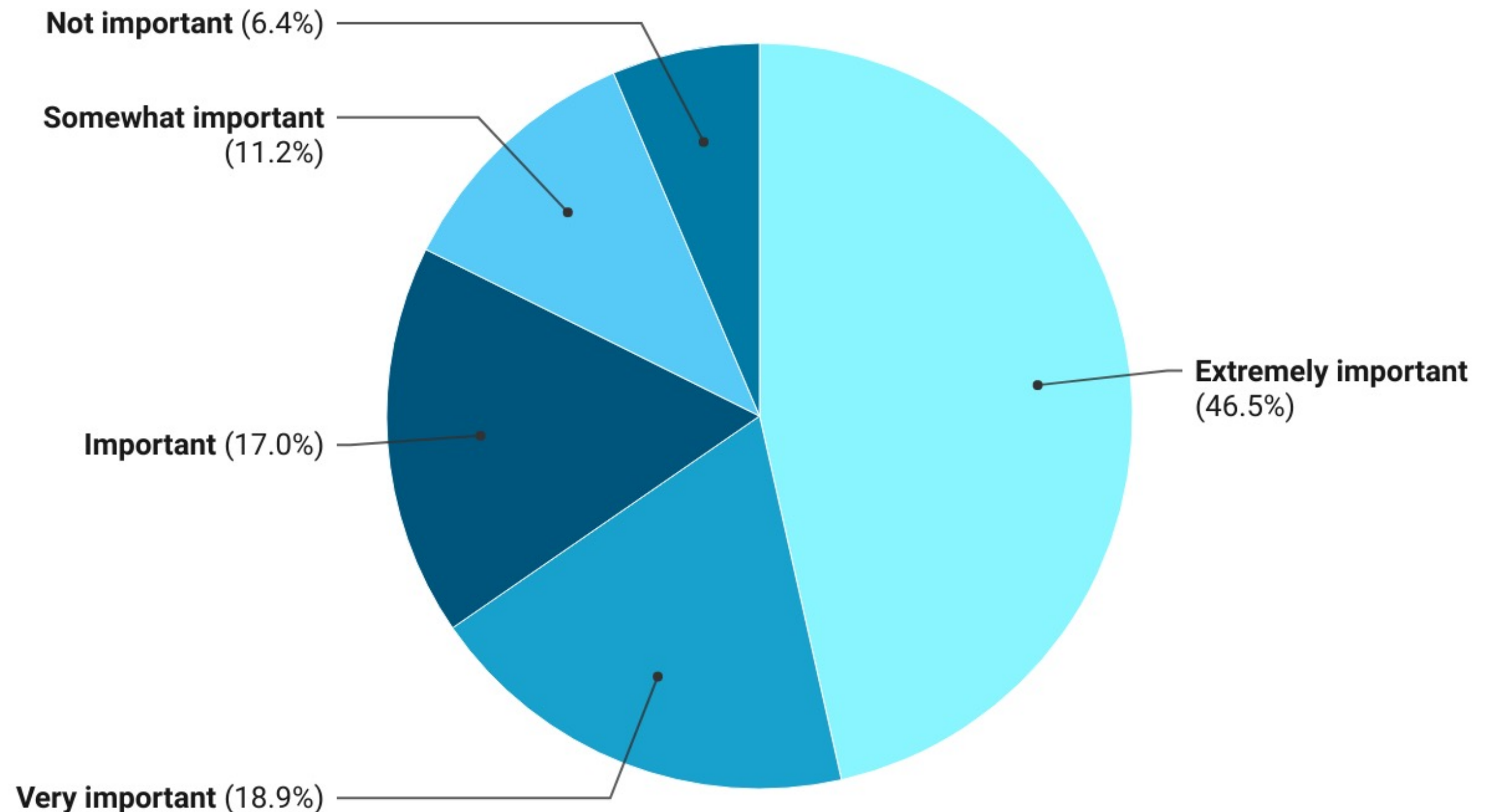


Donors Value Ideological Balance

- 82% of donors say ideological balance at Davidson is “important/very important/extremely important.”
- The largest proportion, 47%, said an ideologically balanced culture is “extremely” important.
- Only 6% said ideological balance is “not important.”

Davidson College Donor Views on Importance of Ideological Balance

Question 3: What value do you place on Davidson's culture being ideologically balanced?



Ideological Balance & Political Identification

- Across the ideological spectrum, donors value ideological balance at Davidson College.
- More than 80% said ideological balance is at least “somewhat important” in every ideological group.

Importance of Ideologically Balanced Campus According to Political Ideology

Question 3: What value do you place on Davidson's culture being ideologically balanced?

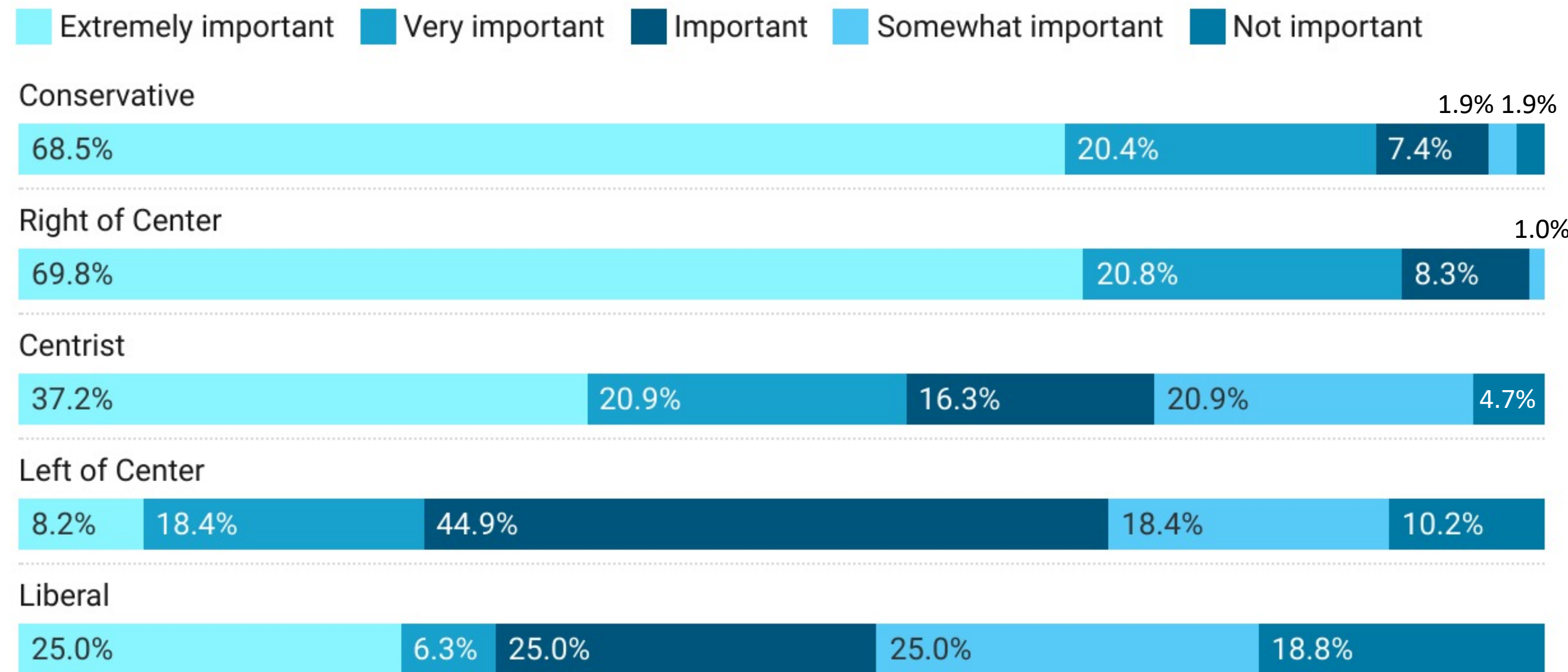


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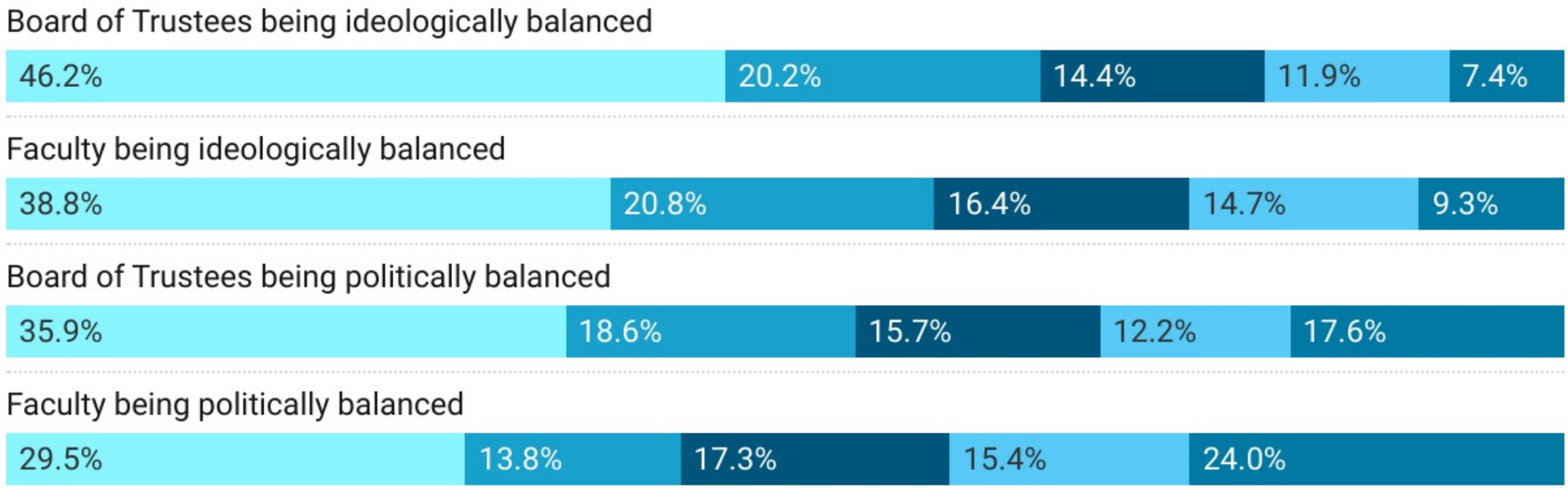
Ideological & Political Balance on Board & Faculty

- Donors highly value ideological & political balance on the Faculty & Board of Trustees.
- 81% answered that ideological balance on the board of trustees is important and 76% said ideological on the faculty is important.
- 70% said political balance is important on the board of trustees and 61% said it is important on the faculty.

Davidson College Donor Views on Ideological & Political Balance on the Faculty & Board of Trustees

"What value do you place on Davidson's. . ."

Extremely important Very important Important Somewhat important Not important



Donor Views on Freedom of Expression at Davidson College



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Acceptability of Student Self-Censorship

- 87% of donors said it is “never” or “rarely” acceptable for students to fear disagreeing on a written assignment.
- 86% of donors said it is “never” or “rarely” acceptable for students to fear disagreeing with faculty in class.

Davidson College Donor Views on Acceptability of Student Self-Censorship on Campus

"How acceptable would you say it is for a Davidson student to fear. . ." expressing viewpoints "about a controversial topic" in various campus situations?

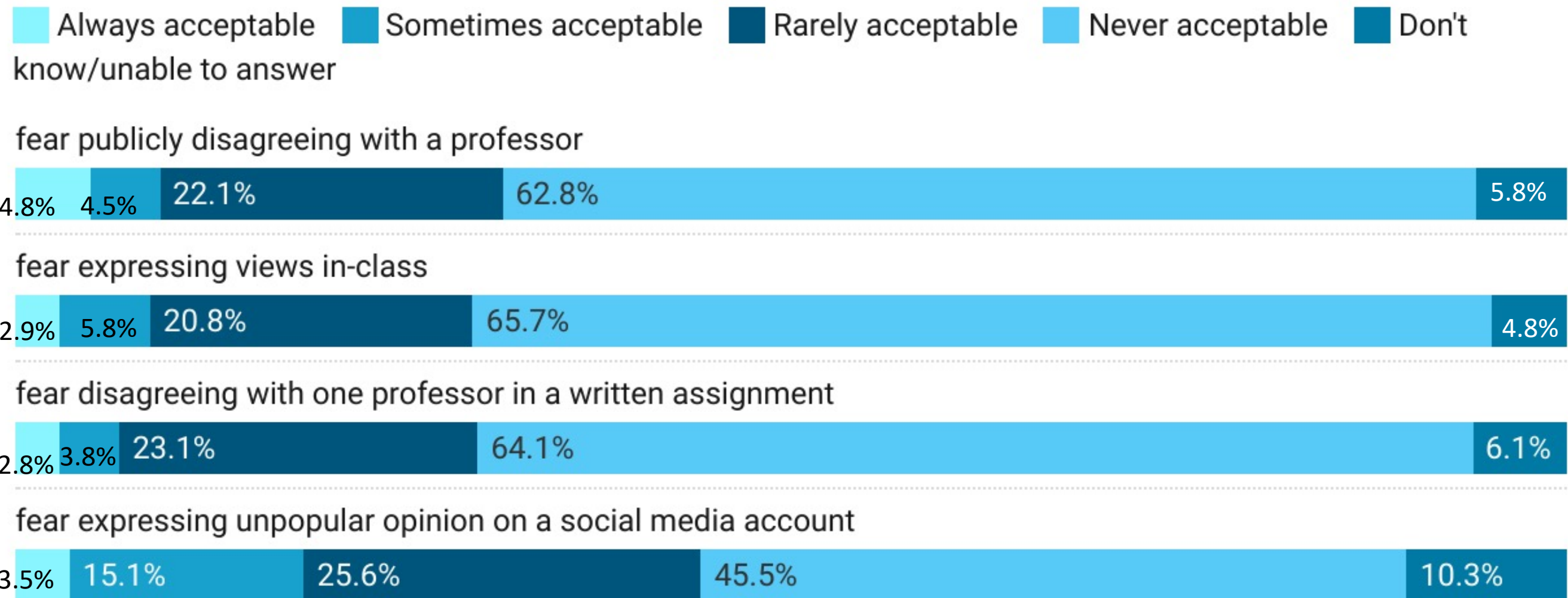


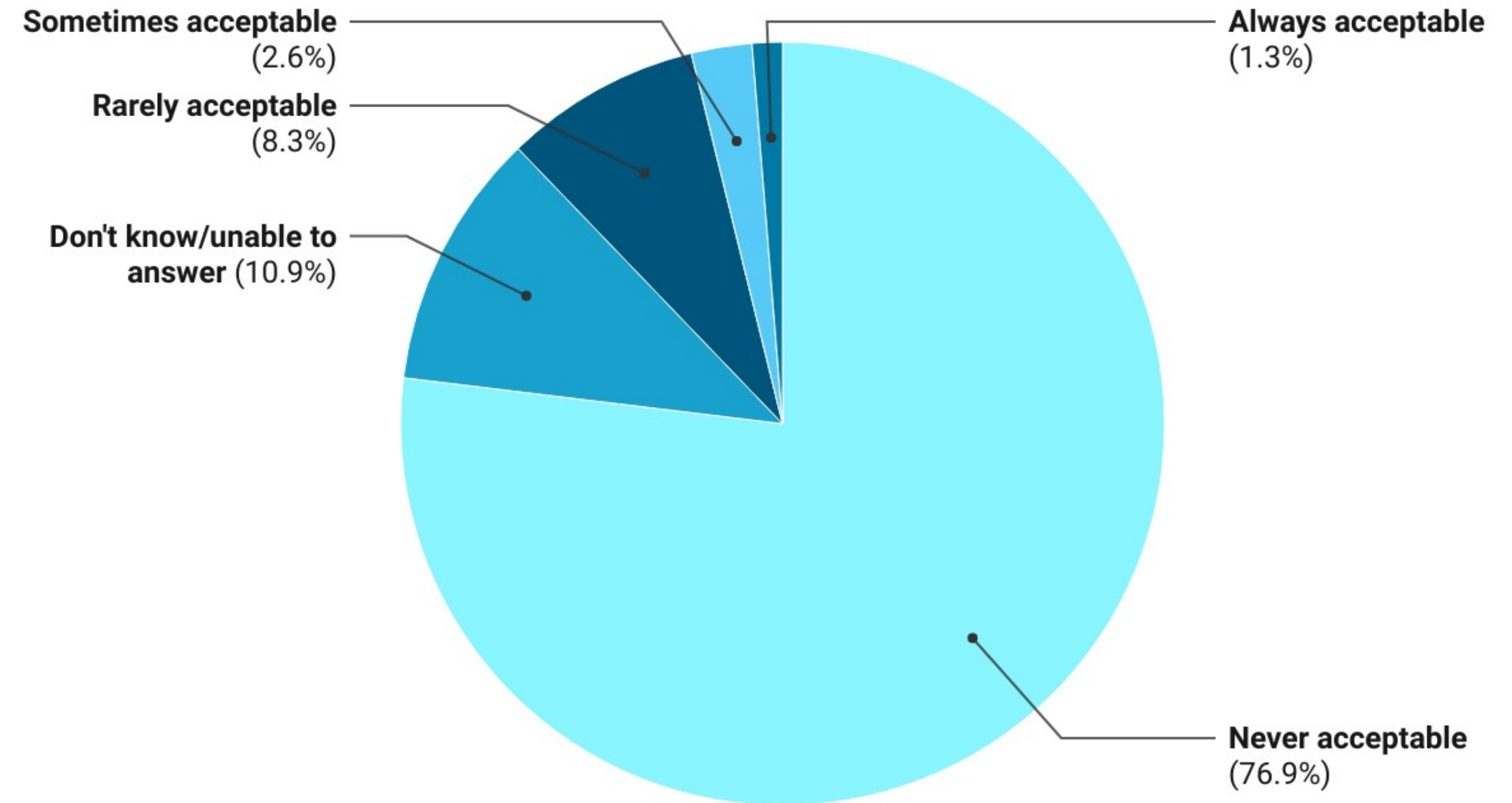
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Pressuring Student-Athletes to Kneel

- 85% of donors say it is “never” (77%) or “rarely” (8%) acceptable for student athletes to be pressured to engage in political messaging at sports events.
- 4% answered “always” or “sometimes.”

Davidson College Donor Views on Appropriateness of Pressuring Student-Athletes to Kneel During Anthem

Question 12: How acceptable would you say it is for Davidson athletes to be pressured by college authorities to kneel during the singing of the National Anthem at sports events, as an act of political messaging?



Acceptability of Faculty Self-Censorship

- Donors overwhelmingly support faculty free expression and oppose faculty self-censorship for ideological reasons.
- 83% said faculty fear of negative repercussions in promotion/tenure decisions based on political viewpoints is never/rarely acceptable.
- 88% said faculty having to self-censor in faculty meetings is never/rarely acceptable.

Davidson College Donor Views on Acceptability of Political & Ideological Pressure on Faculty

"How acceptable would you say it is for a Davidson faculty member to fear. . ."

Always acceptable Sometimes acceptable Rarely acceptable Never acceptable Don't know/ unable to answer

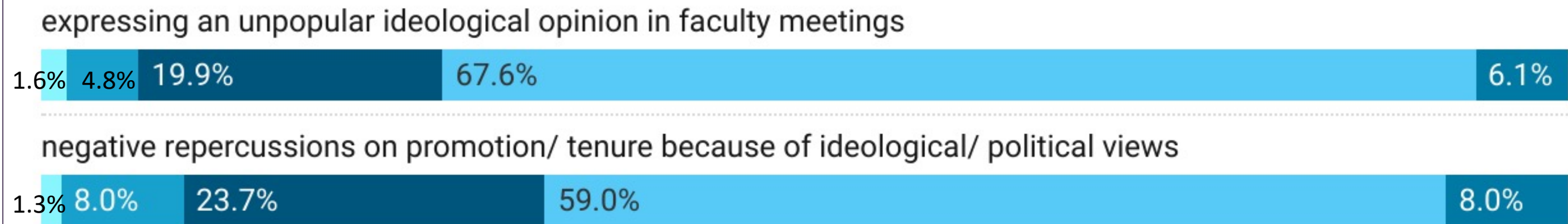


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Administrative Commitment to Protecting Free Speech

- Only 20% of donors say it is “very” or “extremely” clear to them that the Davidson administration protects free speech.
- 51% say it is “not clear,” and an additional 18% “don’t know.”

Davidson College Donor Perception of Administration's Commitment to Protecting Free Speech on Campus

Question 15: How clear is it to you that Davidson College administration protects free speech on campus?

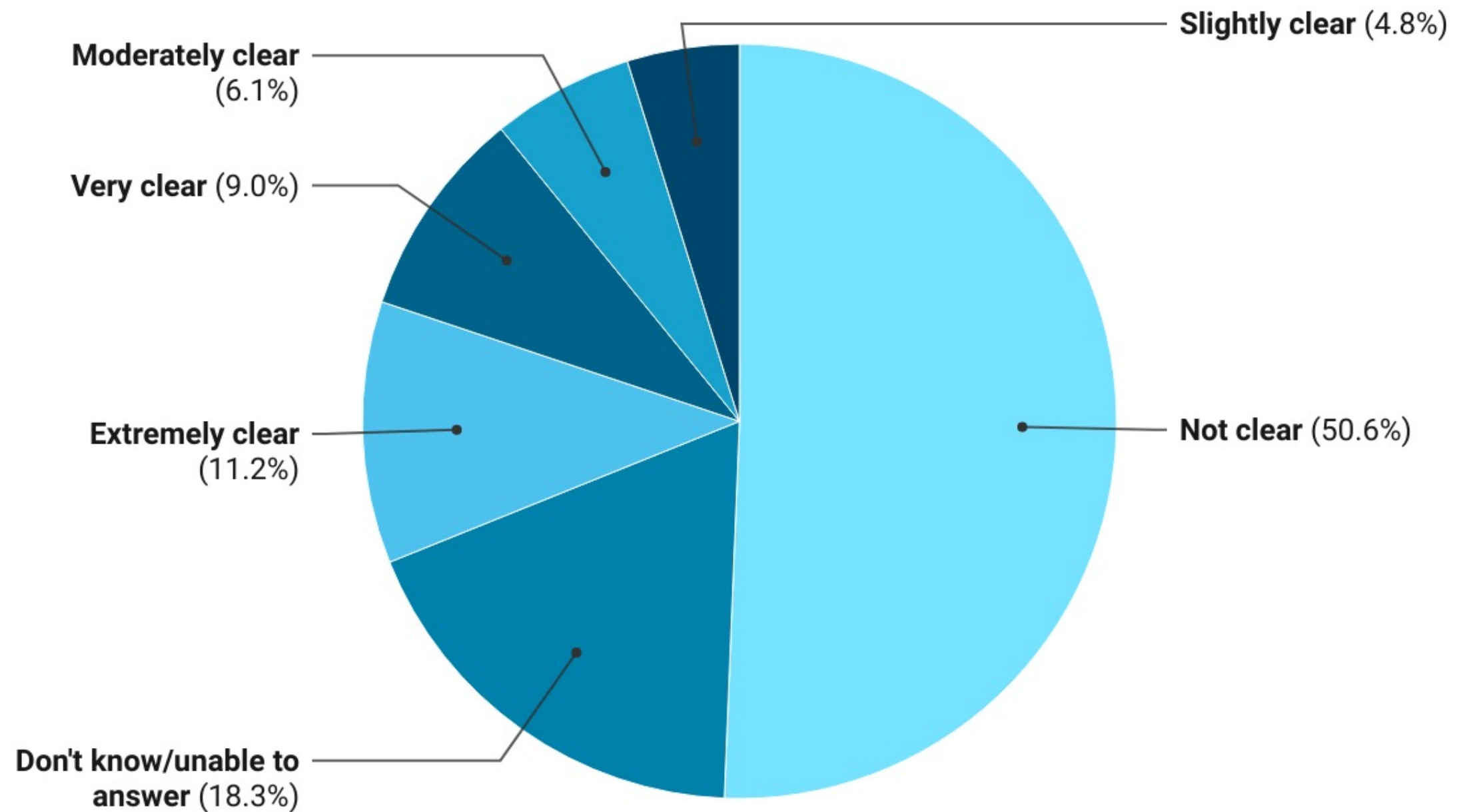


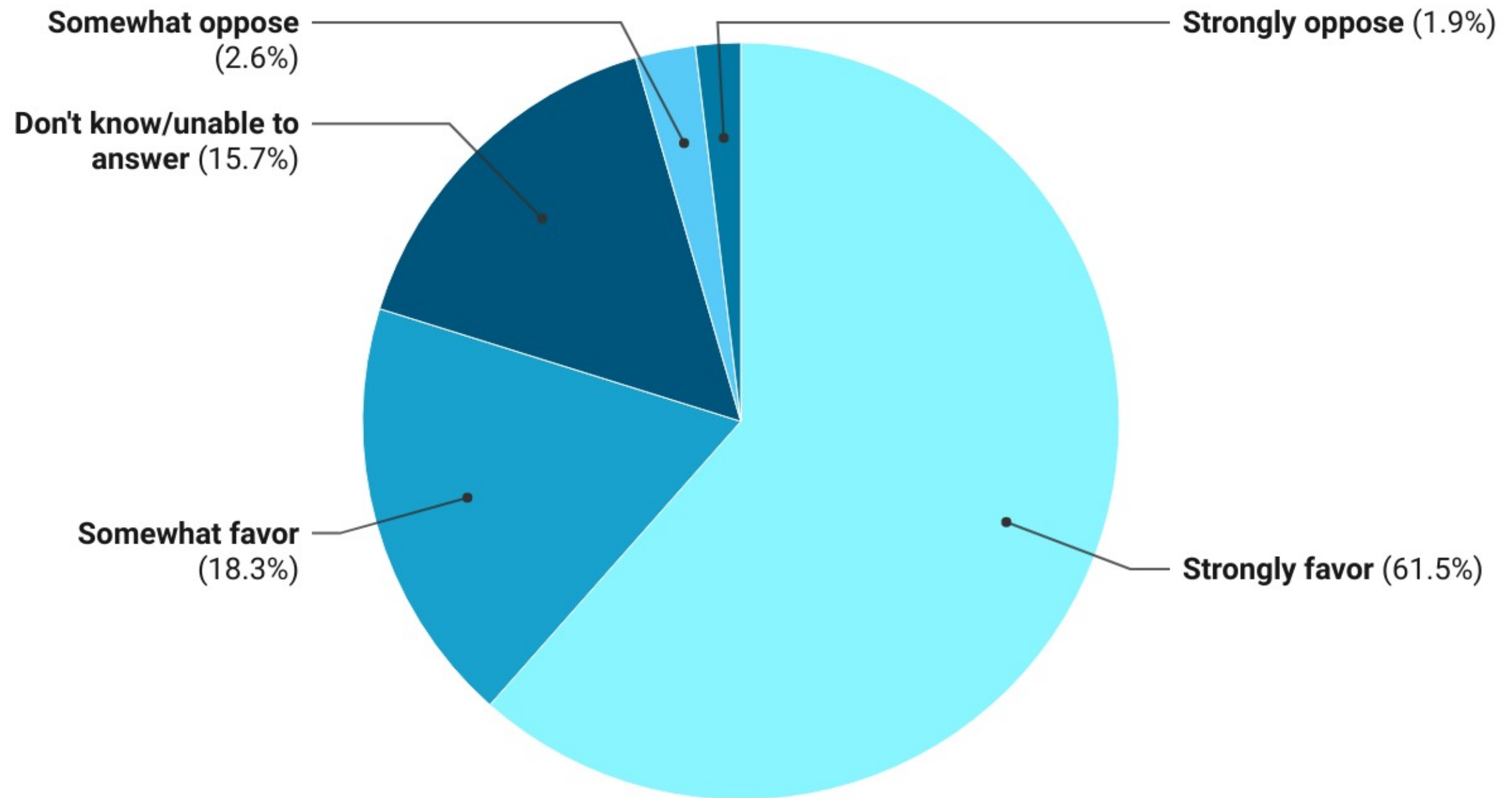
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Support for the Chicago Principles

- 80% of donors “strongly” or “somewhat” favor that the College adopt the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression.
- 61% strongly favor the adoption of the Chicago Principles.
- Under 5% oppose the adoption of the Chicago Principles.

Davidson College Donor Views on Adoption of the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression

Question 16: Do you believe Davidson College should adopt the Chicago Principles on Freedom of Expression?



Views on Criteria for Selection of Next Davidson College President & Their Priorities



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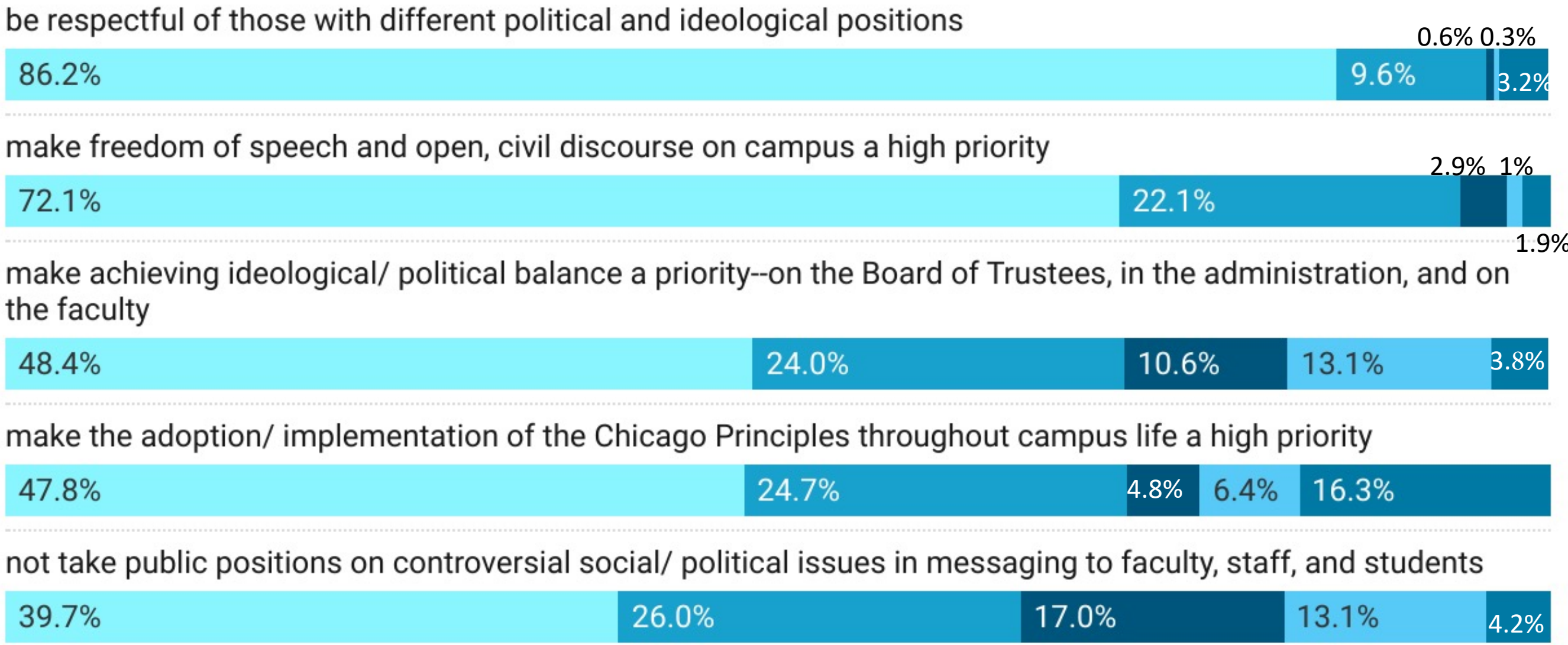
Views on the Next President's Priorities

- 94% said the next president should make free speech and open, civil, discourse a priority.
- 72% of donors answered that making ideological/political balance on the board, in the admin, and on the faculty is a priority.
- 66% said that the next president should refrain from taking public positions on controversial social/political issues.

Davidson College Donor Views on Priorities for Next President and Search Process

"Davidson's next president should. . ."

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know/ unable to answer

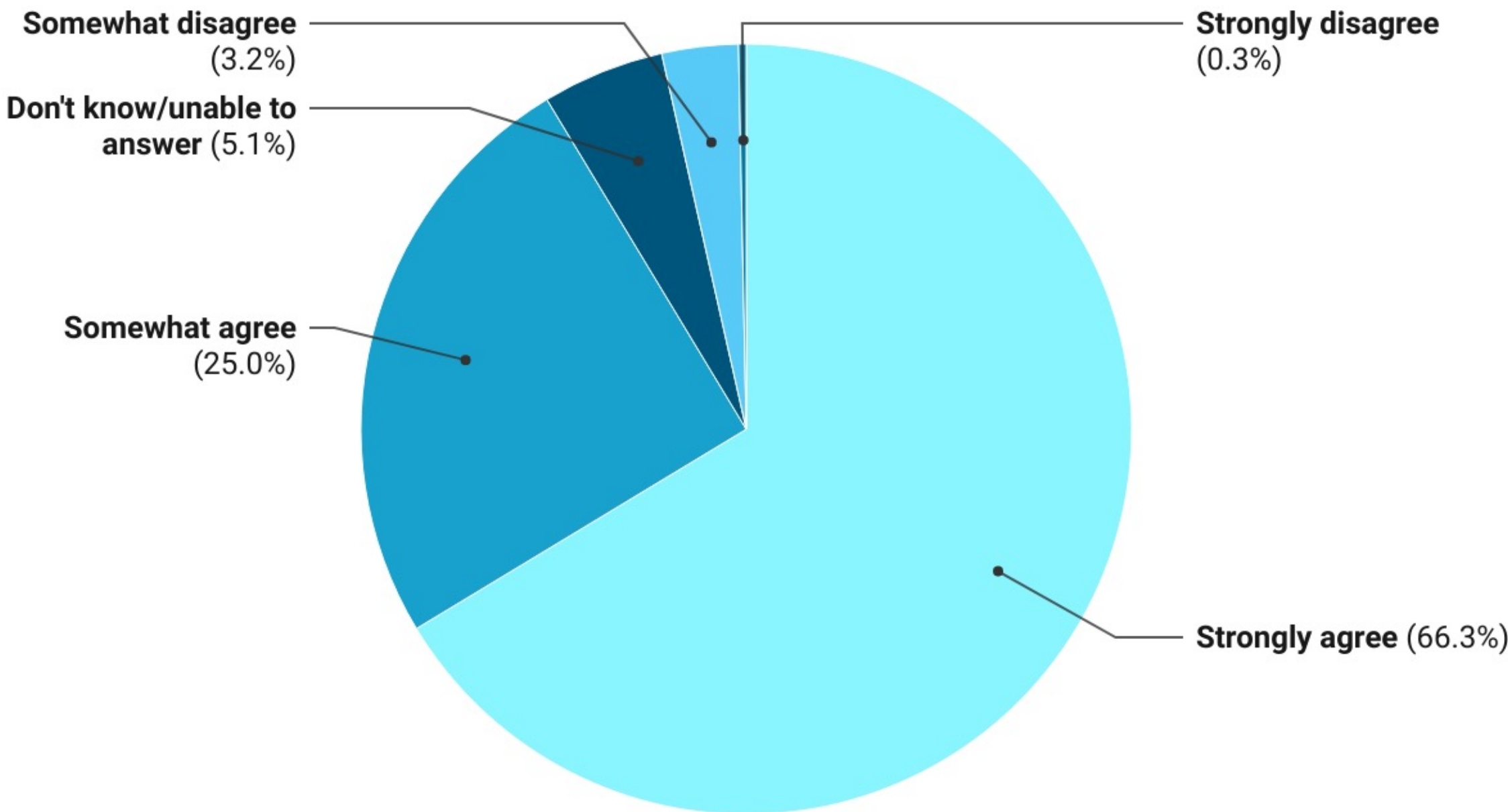


Importance of Restraining the Rising Cost of College

- 91% of donors believe that the College's next president should make slowing down the rate of increase in college costs and tuition a high priority.
- Under 4% disagree.

Davidson College Donor Views on Importance of Restraining Rising College Costs

Question 22: Davidson's next president should make slowing down the rate of increase in college costs and tuition a priority

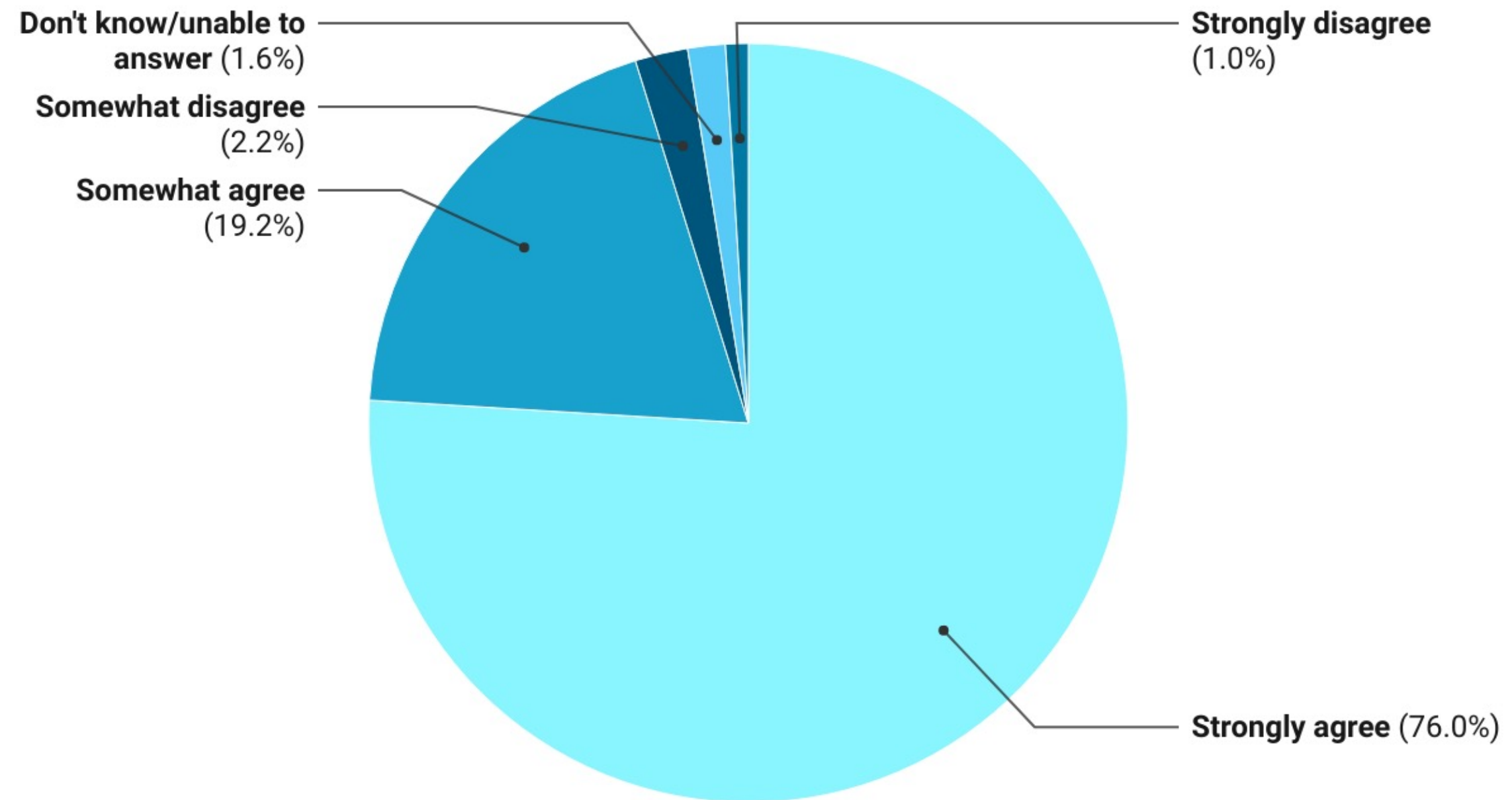


Importance of Preparing Graduates for Productive Lives

- 95% of donors believe that the College's next president should give close attention to how well the College is preparing graduates for productive work lives.
- 3% disagree.

Davidson College Donor Views on Importance of Preparing Graduates for Productive Work Lives

Question 23: Davidson's next president should give close attention to how well the College is preparing graduates for productive work lives

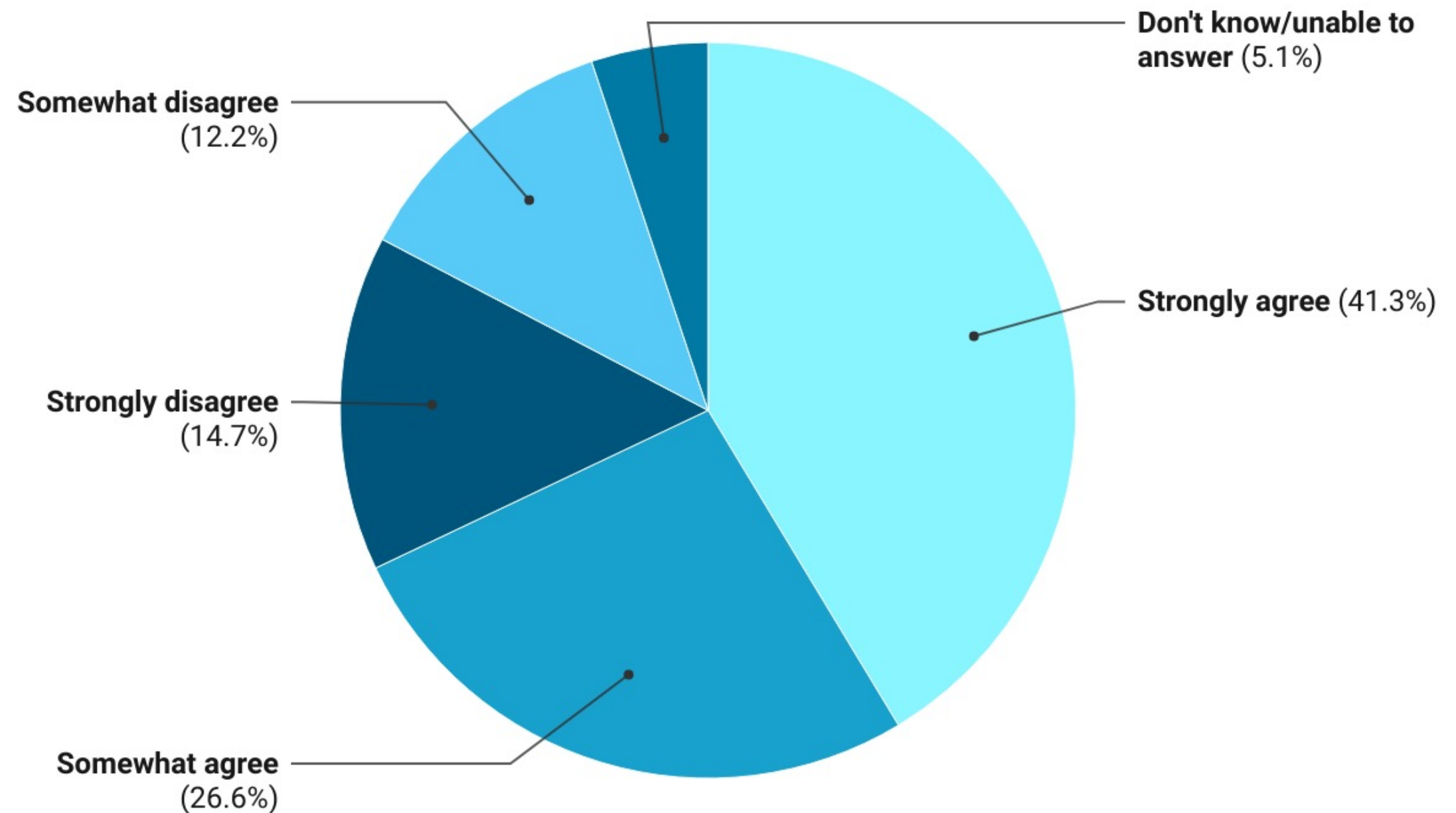


Importance of Choosing a President with a Strong Christian Faith

- 68% of donors believe that the College's next president should be an individual whose life evidences a strong Christian faith.
- 27% disagree.

Davidson College Donor Views on Importance of Selecting a President Whose Life Shows Evidence of a Strong Christian Faith

Question 24: Davidson's next president should be an individual whose life evidences a strong Christian faith

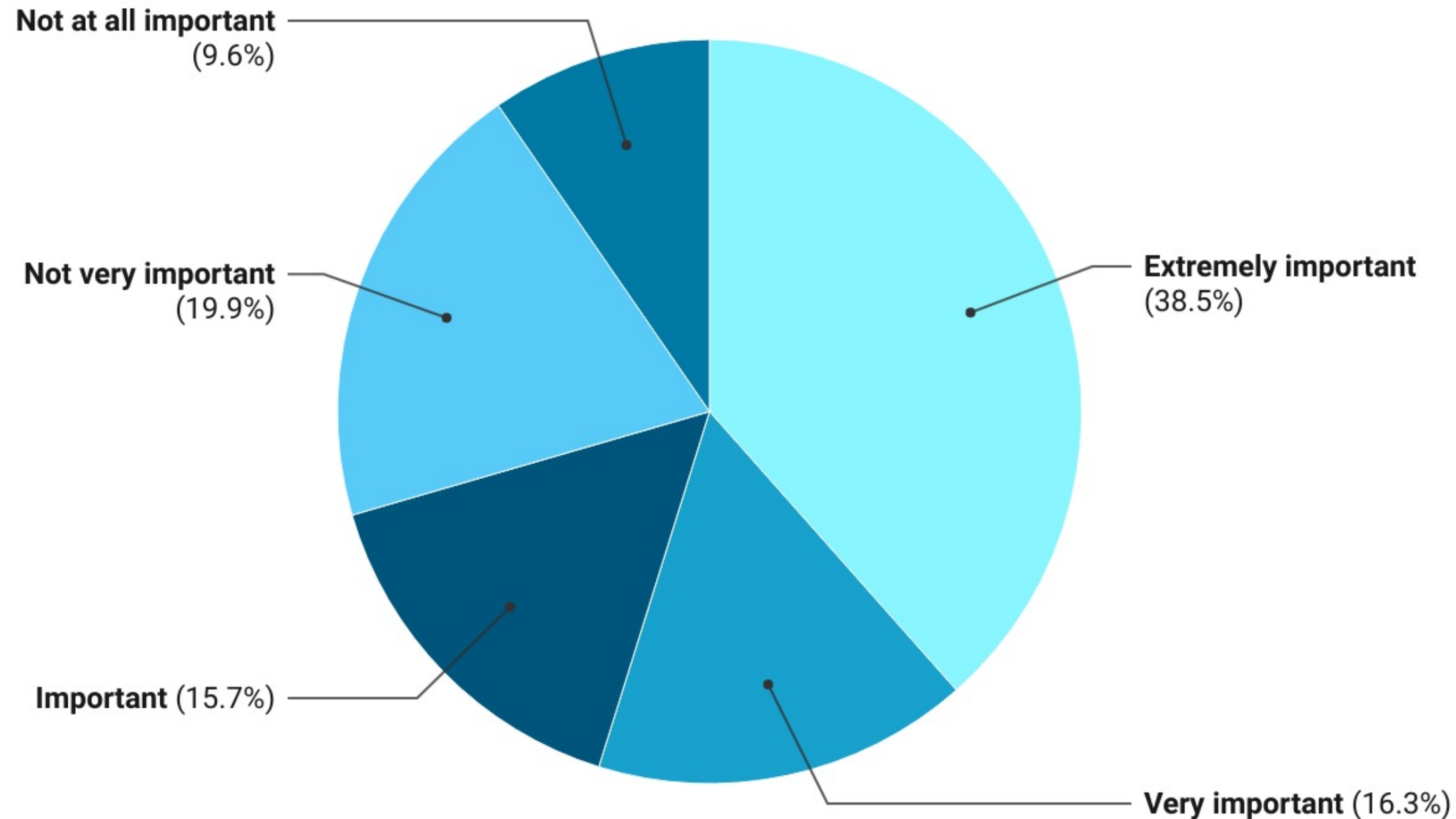


Importance of Including Donor/Alumni Representatives on Search Committee

- 70.5% of donors believe that it is important that donors & alumni be represented on the presidential search Committee.
- 29.5% disagreed.

Davidson College Donor Views on Importance of Including Donor/Alumni Representatives on Presidential Search Committee

Question 26: How important do you think it is that benefactors and alumni/ae representatives... be members of the [Presidential Search] Committee?



Donor Giving to Davidson College & Giving Plans Going Forward



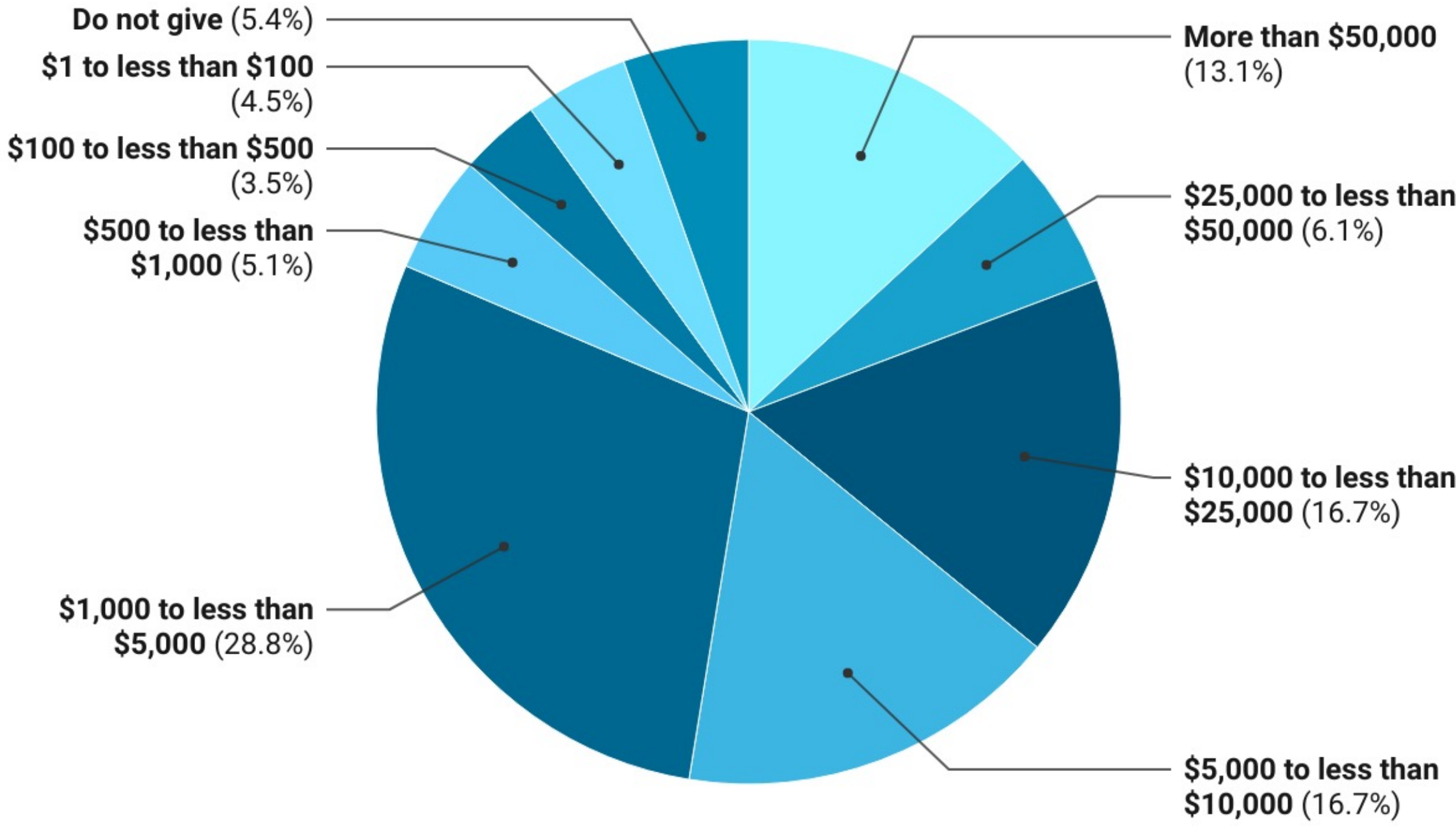
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Respondents' Typical Level of Annual Giving

- Respondents' giving levels to Davidson varied widely, reflecting the universe of benefactors.
- 13% reported making a typical annual gift of \$50,000 or more.
- A majority, 64%, reported a typical annual gift of less than \$10,000.
- Including 5% said they do not give annually.

Respondents Typical Annual Level of Giving to Davidson College over the last Decade

Question 27: How would you describe your average or typical annual level of financial giving to Davidson College over the last decade?



Major Gifts of \$100,000 or More

- Almost one-quarter of respondents have made large gifts for buildings, professorships, scholarships, etc. over the last decade.

Survey Respondents' Major Gifts to Davidson College of \$100,000 or More

Question 28: Confidentially, indicate if you have made major one-time gifts of \$100,000 or more for endowed professorships, buildings, scholarships, centers, etc.?

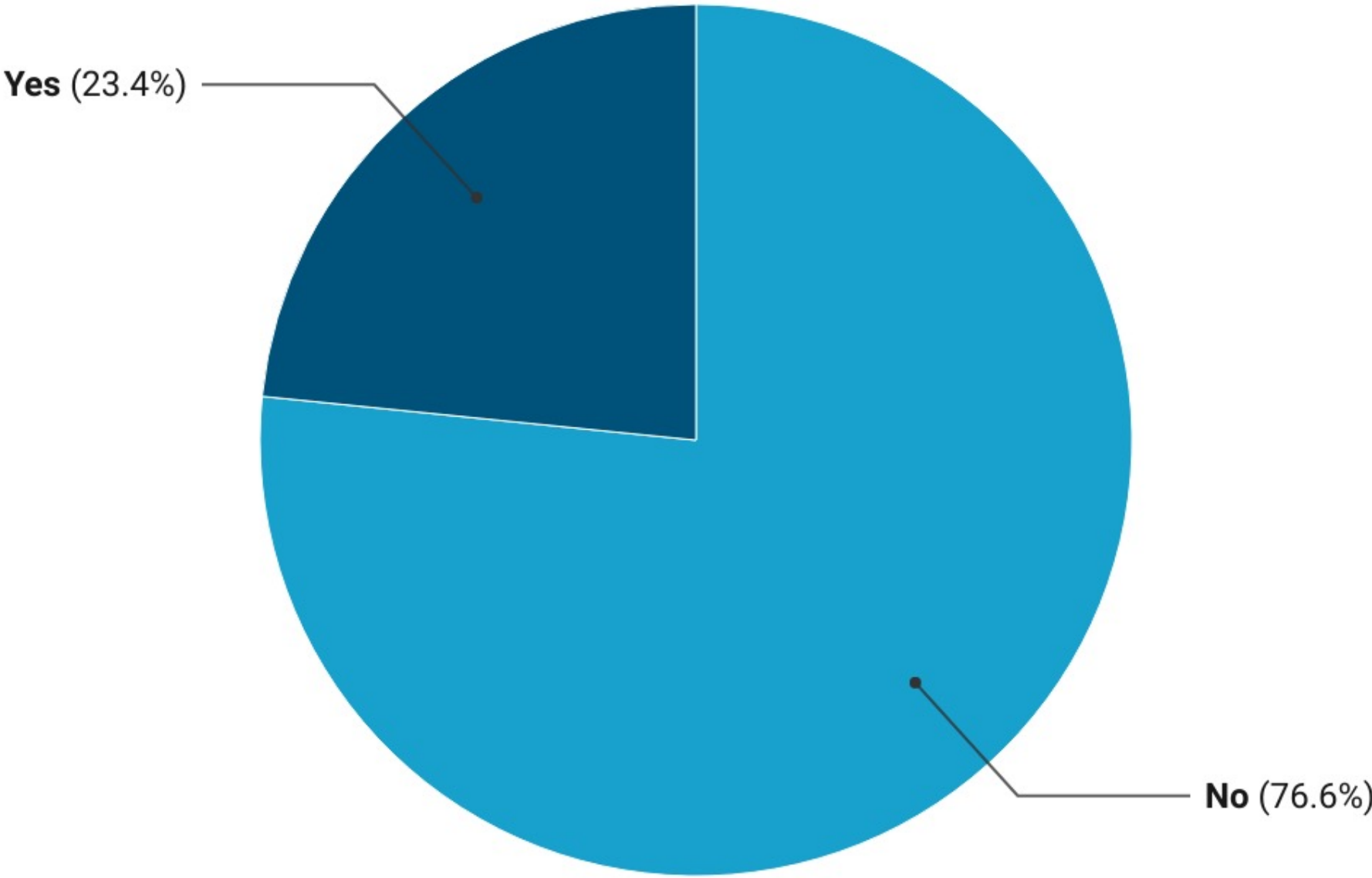


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Major Gift Donors' Priorities for the Next President

- Over 90% of major-gift donors agree that the next president should make freedom of speech on campus a high priority.
- Over 67% agree that the adoption/implementation of the Chicago Principles is a high priority.

Major-Gift Donors (\$100,000+) Priorities for the Next President of Davidson College

"Davidson's next president should. . ."



Changes in Giving Habits

- Equal shares (37%) of donor respondents have either increased or decreased/ceased their giving to Davidson in recent years.
- Almost 30% have either ceased or significantly reduced annual giving.
- 17% have increased their giving significantly.

Recent Changes in Respondents' Level of Annual Giving

Question 29: Has your level of Davidson giving changed in recent years?

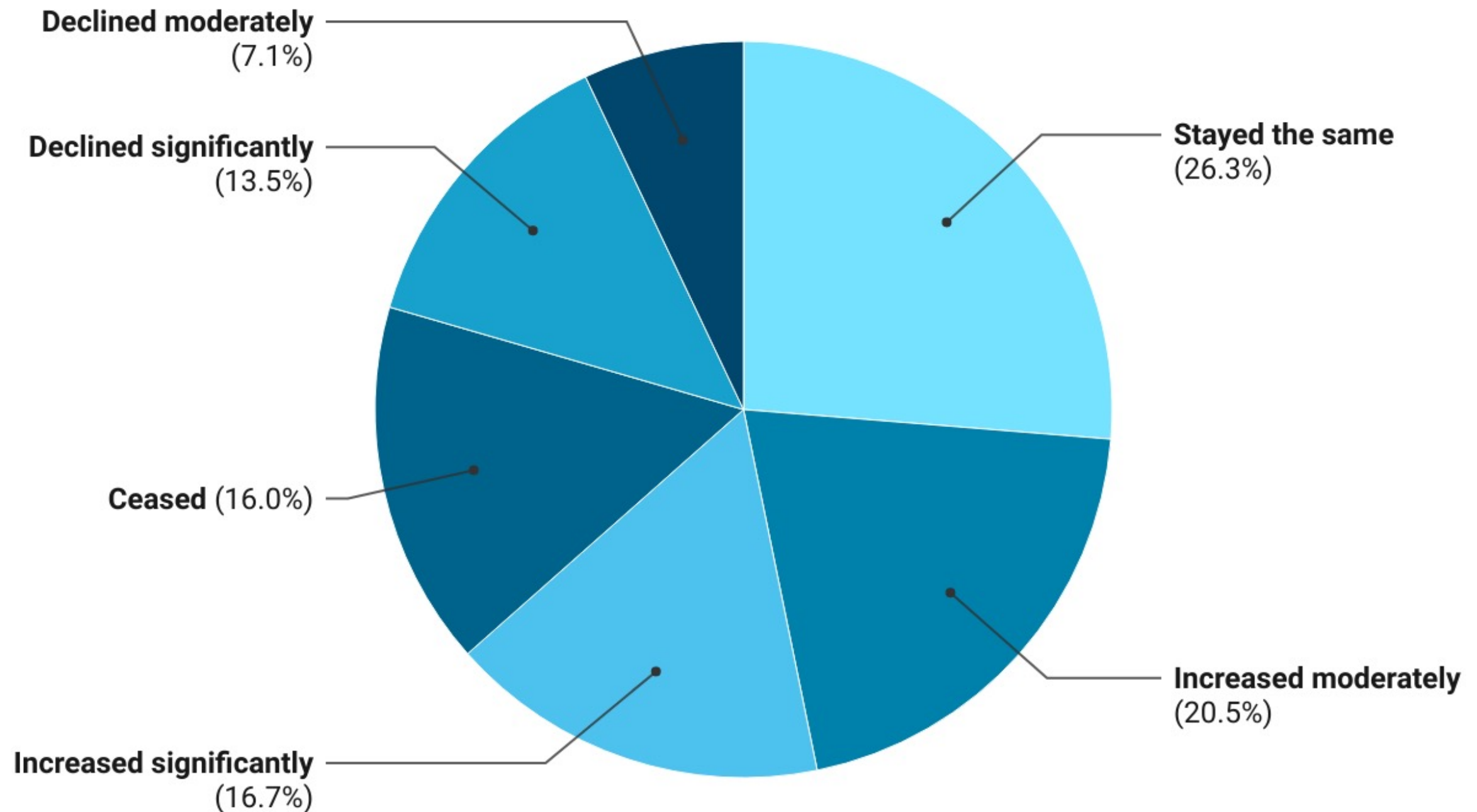


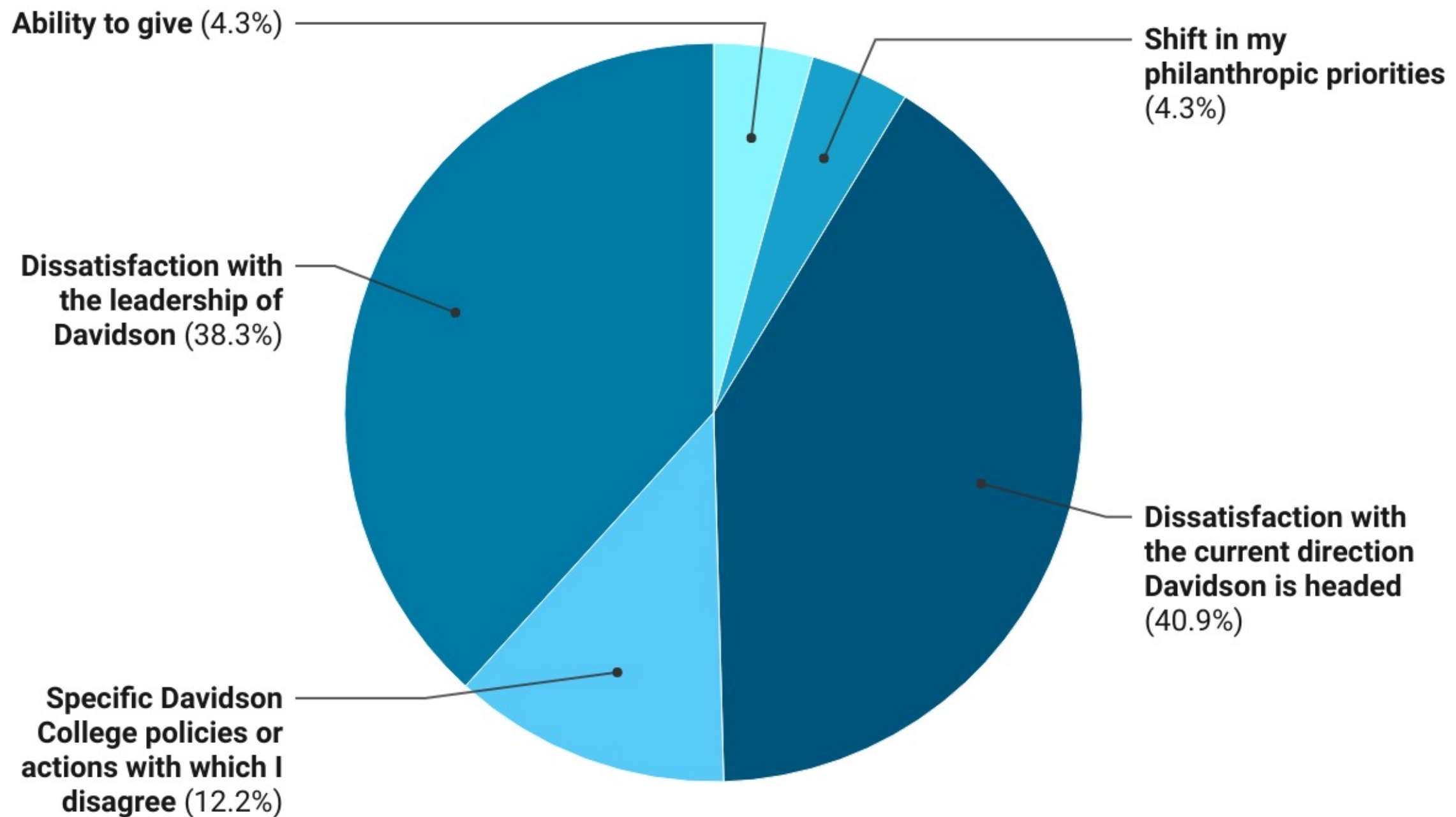
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Principal Reason for Reducing or Ceasing Giving

- 91% of those who ceased or reduced giving cited dissatisfaction with Davidson's current direction, current leadership, or specific administration policies/actions.
- 9% cited shifting philanthropic priorities or ability to give as the principal reason.

Davidson College Donors' Principal Reason for Reducing/Ceasing Annual Giving

Question 30: Please indicate the principal reasons your giving to Davidson has declined or ceased in recent years.



Principal Reason for Increasing Giving

- 51% of those increased their level of giving cited “ability to give” as their principal reason.
- 46% of donors who increased their annual giving to Davidson cited “satisfaction with... leadership,” satisfaction with specific policies/actions, or satisfaction with the “current direction Davidson is headed.”

Davidson College Donors' Principal Reason for Increasing Annual Giving

Question 31: Please indicate the principal reasons your giving to Davidson has increased in recent years.

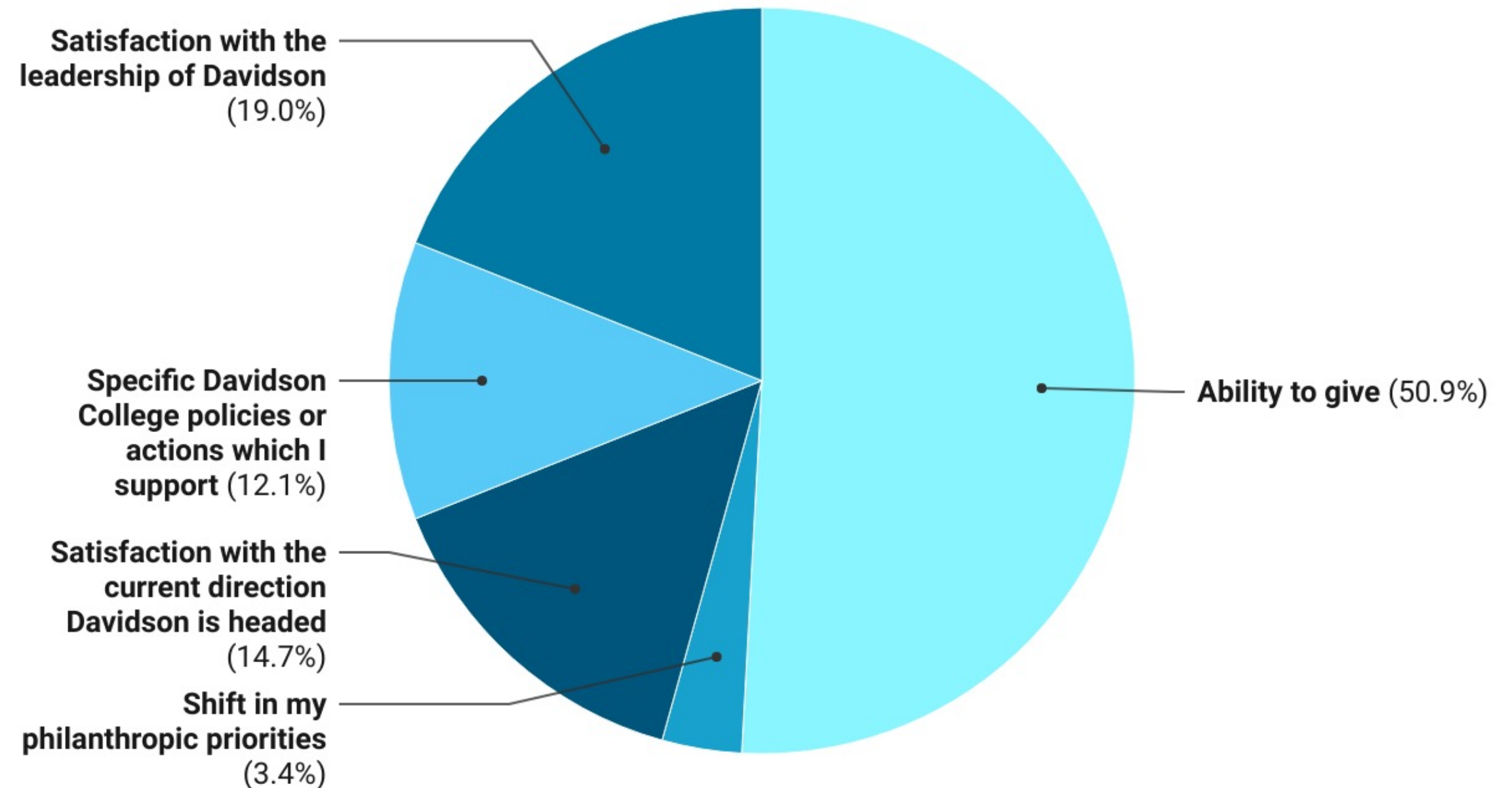


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Donors' Plans for Future Giving

- 41% of donors plan to either to cease or reduce giving.
- 8.0% plan to increase giving “significantly” compared to 31% who plan to cease or reduce giving “significantly.”

Davidson College Donors' Plans for Future Giving

Question 32: Do you plan to change your level of giving going forward?

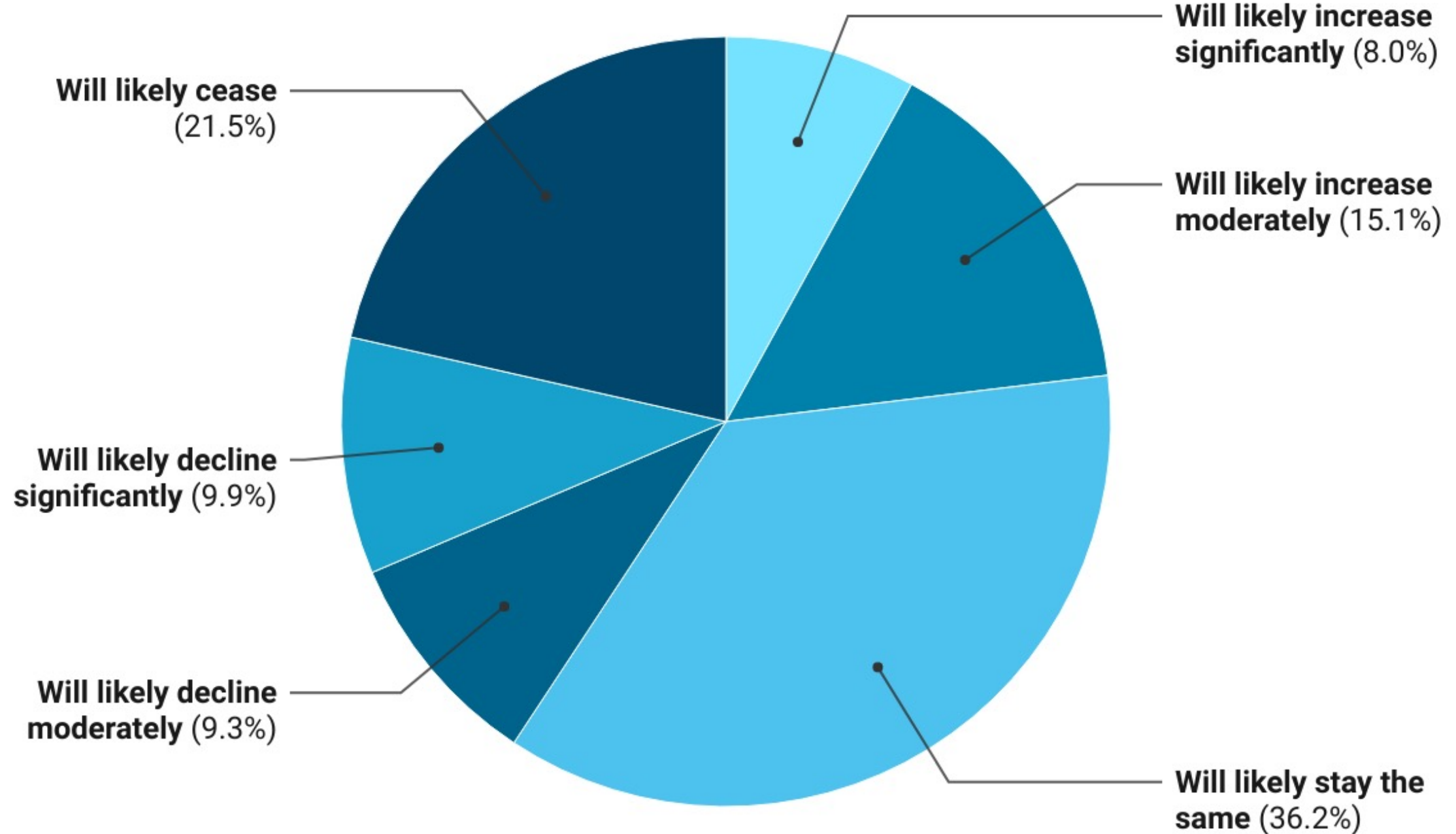


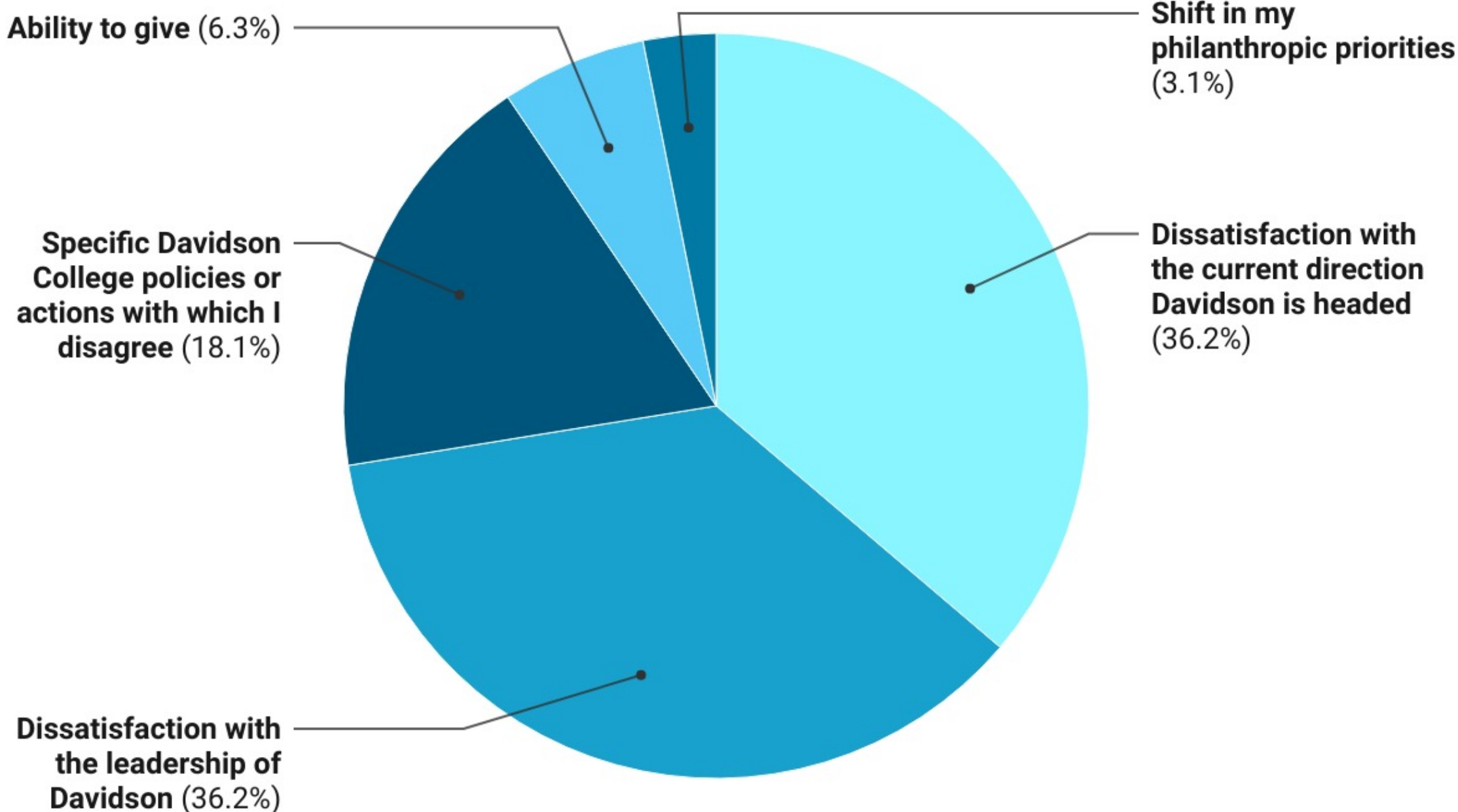
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Principal Reason for Reducing or Ceasing Future Giving

- 91% of donors who plan to cease or reduce giving to Davidson cite dissatisfaction with the current direction of the college, dissatisfaction with its leadership, or specific administration policies/actions as the principal reason.

Davidson College Donors' Principal Reason for Planning to Reduce or Cease Future Giving

Question 33: If you plan to decrease your level of giving or stop giving to Davidson going forward, what would you name as the principal causes?



Summary

Davidson College Survey of Major Donors, 2021

- There is a very high level of major donor dissatisfaction with the direction in which Davidson College is headed, its current leadership, and specific policies and actions.
- Davidson's strong tradition of alumni and benefactor giving is threatened by current donor dissatisfaction.
- Campus ideological balance and freedom of expression are very important to major donors.
- Yet it is not clear to the majority of donors that the administration protects free speech on campus.
- Almost two-thirds of donors would prefer that the president refrain from taking public positions on controversial social and political issues.

Summary, Cont'd

Davidson College Survey of Major Donors, 2021

- 94% of donors want Davidson's next president to prioritize on-campus freedom of speech & open, civil discourse.
- Two-thirds of donors want the next president to be a person whose life shows evidence of a strong Christian faith.
- Donors' views should be taken very seriously into consideration in the selection of Davidson's next president.
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