

# 2022 Membership Survey Report

THE  
PORTAGE  
GROUP 

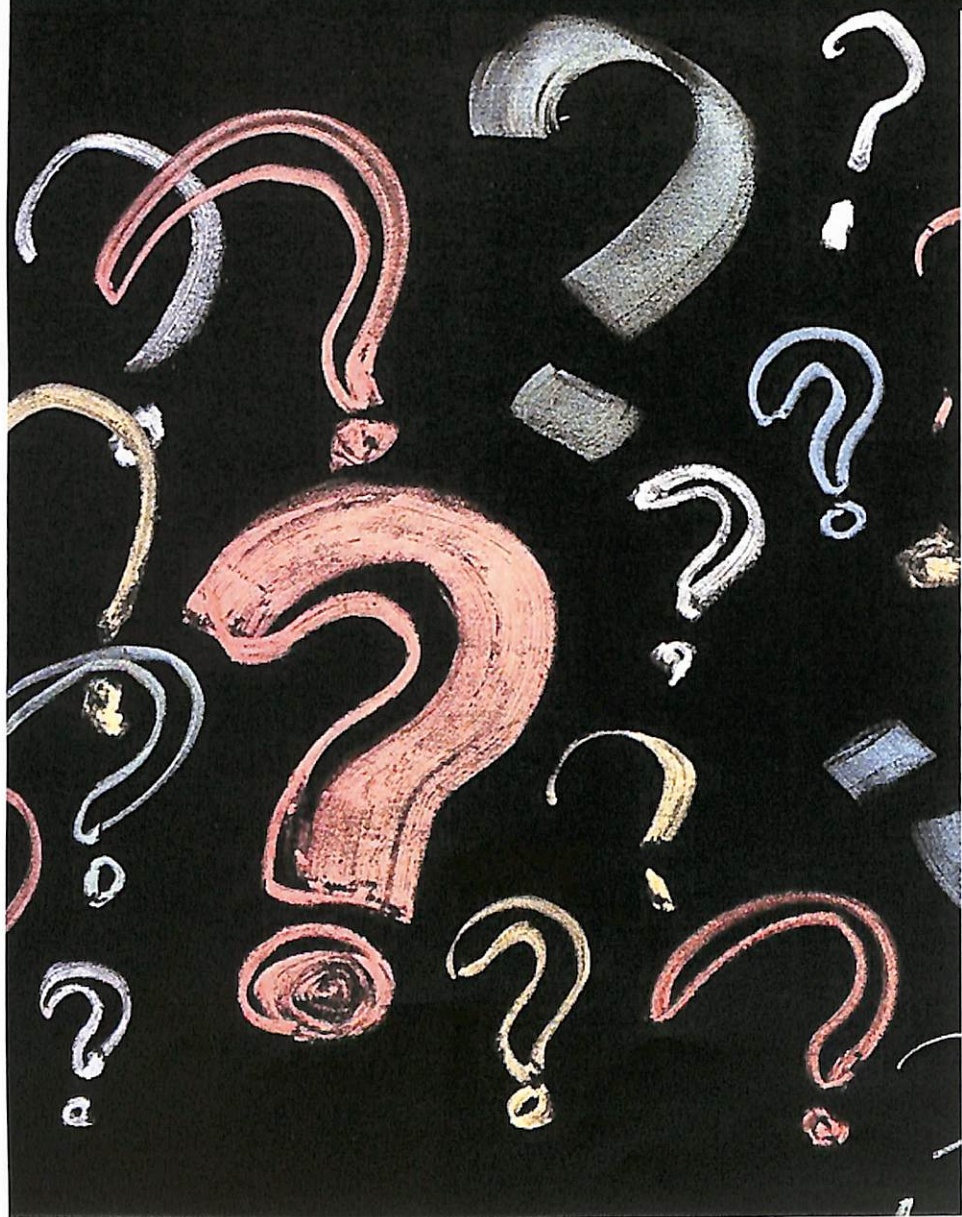
**Association of Canadian Archivists**

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June 2022

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## Introduction

- Study Background and Methodology

# Study Background and Methodology

- As part of its strategy review and its ongoing commitment to its members, the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) volunteers and staff wanted to make sure it was delivering the value expected from membership and concluded that an understanding of member satisfaction and needs was necessary. To gain this understanding, ACA undertook a survey of its members. This report summarizes the results of the survey.
- The purpose of the membership study was to gain insights into how members feel about ACA and what it has accomplished.
- The specific research objectives are as follows:
  - To determine how satisfied members are with ACA;
  - To assess performance compared to the benchmarks from other Canadian professional associations;
  - To assess performance compared to the last survey (2017);
  - To determine if members are aware of and are using ACA's services and activities;
  - To determine if members feel ACA has made progress on its strategic priorities; and,
  - To rank ACA priority areas.
- The Membership Survey was sent to 690 ACA members in May 2022. One hundred and twenty-nine (129) responses had been received by the cut-off date for an overall response rate of 19%.



## Description of the Sample

■ Respondent Characteristics

# Respondent Characteristics

■ Two demographic questions were captured in the survey, Member type and length of membership. The results are summarized in the tables below.

**MEMBER TYPE (N=129)**

Individual	77%
Institution	16%
Student	8%

**LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP (N=94)**

Less than one year	3%
1 to 2 Years	5%
3 to 5 Years	28%
6 to 10 Years	15%
11 to 20 Years	23%
More than 20 Years	26%



## Satisfaction Levels

- Overview of Satisfaction Research
- Overall Satisfaction with ACA
- Use of ACA Services by Members
- Satisfaction with ACA Services
- Ease of Having Voice Heard
- Members' Influence Over the Priorities of the Association
- ACA's Effectiveness at Communicating to its Members
- Benchmark Satisfaction Ratings (Summary)
- Benchmark Comparisons to Other Associations

# Overview of Satisfaction Research

- What satisfaction score needs to be achieved before an association can say its members are satisfied? The answer is, it depends on the association. For some associations, it is simply not possible to achieve over 70% no matter how well they perform, while for others, 70% may be considered low. For this reason, it is important to consider the nature and dynamics of the association when interpreting satisfaction scores.
- Another important point about member satisfaction is that it is nearly impossible to ever achieve a 100% satisfaction rating. The reason for this is two-fold: First, the association cannot be all things to all people which means that no matter what it does, there will always be some members who are dissatisfied; Second, from a psychological standpoint, members may not want to award a score of 100% as it means that there is no room to improve. In other words, while your association may be doing an excellent job, members want their association to continue progressing.
- To properly assess satisfaction requires tracking it over time to see how it changes while keeping in mind what the association has done to try to improve its performance. This is the second study ACA has conducted using the current satisfaction metrics.

- The Portage Group team has conducted over 90 studies similar to this one for more than 60 different associations. Based on that experience, we have developed a good sense of what different ratings mean in different organizations.
- The following table summarizes the terminology we use to describe different ratings in this report. The choice of terminology is based on our extensive experience in conducting satisfaction work in the not-for-profit sector.

SATISFACTION TERMINOLOGY USED	PERCENT RATING	SCORE ON 7 POINT SCALE
FAIL	0% TO 47%	1 TO 3.8
BORDERLINE	48% TO 55%	3.9 TO 4.3
MARGINAL SATISFACTION	56% TO 65%	4.4 TO 4.9
REASONABLY SATISFIED	66% TO 70%	5.0 TO 5.2
VERY SATISFIED	71% TO 75%	5.3 TO 5.5
EXTREMELY SATISFIED OR EXCELLENCE	76% TO 100%	5.6 TO 7

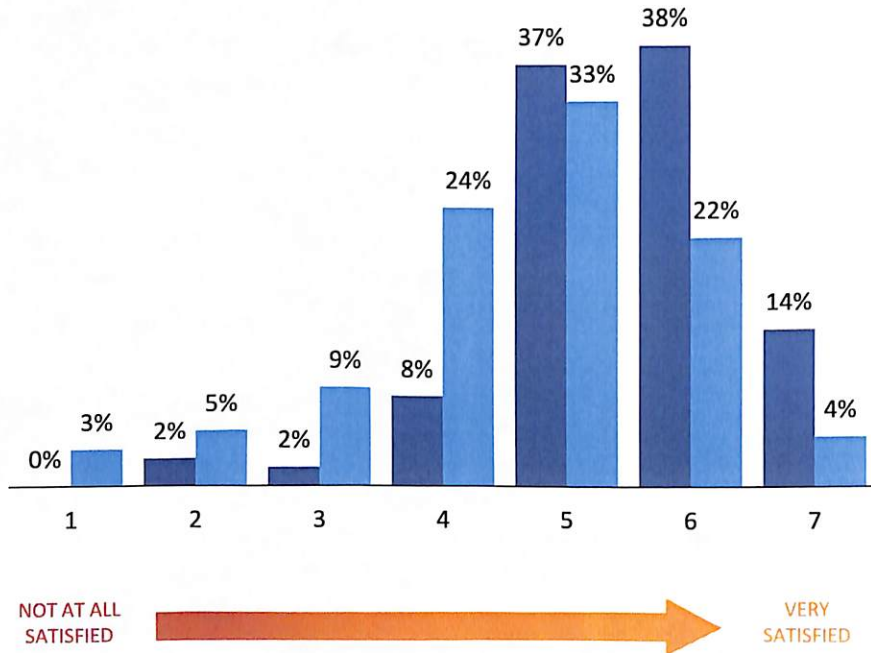


# Overall Satisfaction with ACA

## Overall Satisfaction

■ 2022 (N=126; Mean 5.5; Benchmark 75%)

■ 2017 (N=186; Mean 4.6; Benchmark 60%)



- When asked how satisfied they are with ACA, nine in ten (89%) ACA members rated the association at five or higher on a 1 to 7 scale. The most common ratings were 6 (38%) and 5 (37%).
- The mean rating of 5.5 out of 7 translates into a benchmark satisfaction score of 75%. Based on our experience with other member-based organizations, this benchmark suggests that members are 'very' satisfied with ACA overall.
- Importantly, the 75% represents a significant improvement on the 60% achieved in 2017. While members feel ACA is doing a great job, the score does leave some room for improvement.
- Overall satisfaction with ACA is well above the average for professional associations. The average rating in 55 studies with professional associations is 66%.
- A look at the subgroup breakdowns reveals that:
  - Satisfaction is higher among individual members than institutional members.
  - Satisfaction increases with the length of membership.

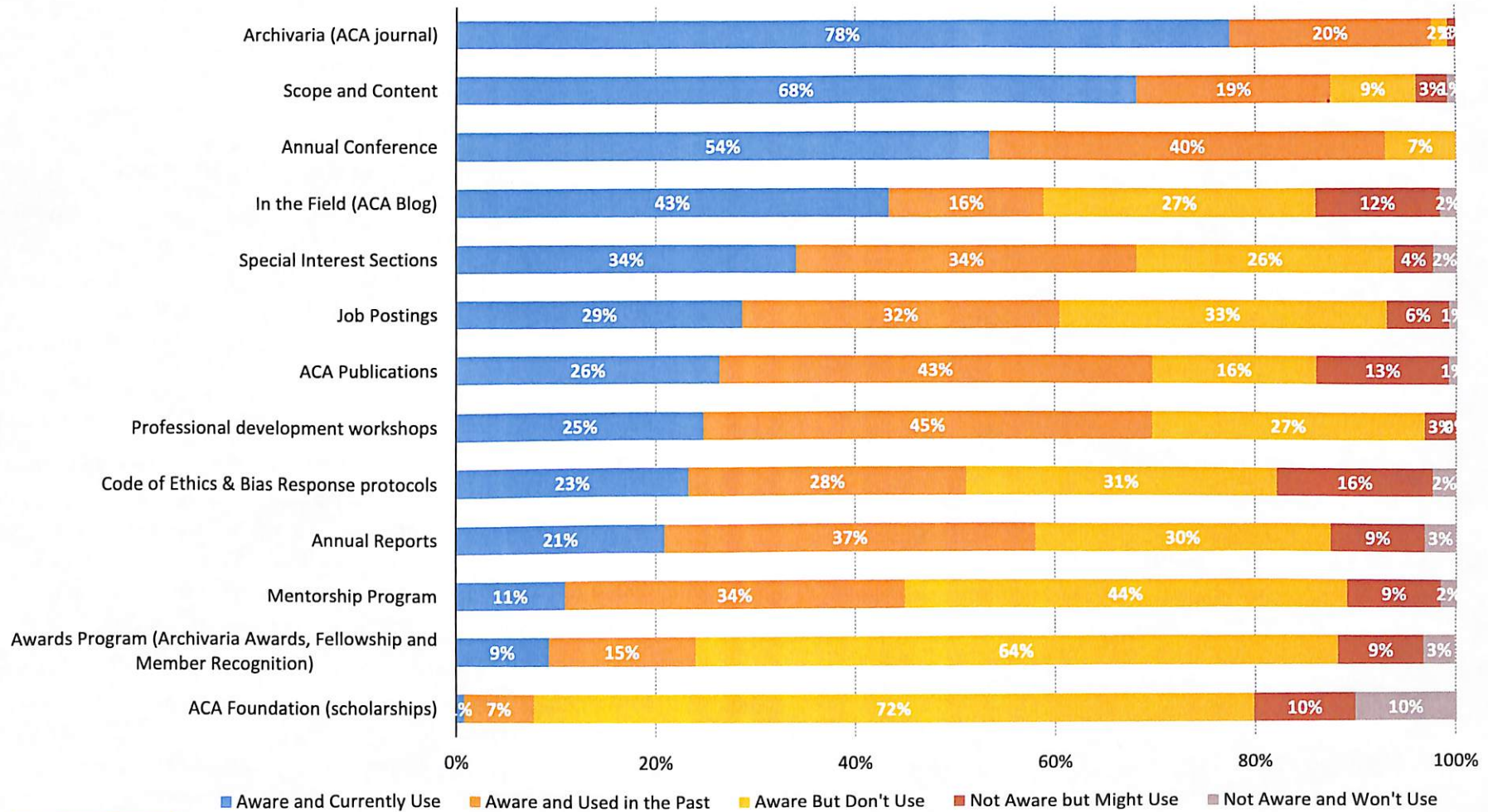
# Use of ACA Services by Members

- Members were asked to indicate whether or not they were aware of thirteen services/programs offered by ACA. Based on their level of awareness, members were asked to indicate whether they have used the program/service in the past, currently use the program/service, or if they might use the program/service in the future. The results are illustrated on the next page.
- Looking at the results overall, “current” penetration continues to be quite robust for Archivaria (the ACA Journal) at 78% with a further 20% indicating they have used it in the past. This offering continues to be a strength for ACA that it should continue to leverage going forward. Scope and content also has strong current penetration with over two-thirds (68%) indicating they currently use it. The only other service currently used by more than half of respondents is the Annual Conference (54%).
- The next closest penetration level is for the In the Field blog which is used by 43% of members. All other services are currently used by one-third of members or fewer. Importantly, when combining current and past penetration, ten of thirteen services have been used at some point by more than half of respondents.
- For the remaining services, ACA may want to look to improve penetration levels, particularly those that have only been used by less than one-third of members.
- When evaluating services, it is important to consider whether there is a possible value issue (i.e., members may not see the value in the services), or if the low penetration is justifiable (i.e., members may have no need for the service, or the service may only be relevant to a

select group of members). For example, the high awareness with low usage of the ACA Foundation (scholarships) may be justified as it is only applicable to those in need of scholarships. The mentorship program and Awards Program are other areas with lower usage, but high awareness. These are the same services that were at the bottom of the list in 2017.

- Of most concern are those services that members are aware of but don't use, namely:
  - ACA Foundation (scholarships) (72% aware but don't use);
  - Awards Program (Archivaria Awards, Fellowship and Member Recognition) (64%);
  - Mentorship Program (44%);
  - Job Postings (33%);
  - Code of Ethics & Bias Response protocols (31%); and,
  - Annual Reports (30%).
- On the whole, awareness of ACA's service/program offering is quite strong. In fact, eight in ten respondents or more indicated that they were aware of each service/program offering. While awareness does not appear to be a significant issue for ACA, it is worth noting that the services/programs where lack of awareness is highest include:
  - ACA Foundation (scholarships) (20% not aware);
  - Code of Ethics & Bias Response protocols (18%);
  - ACA Publications (14%); and,
  - In the Field (ACA Blog) (14%).

# Use of ACA Services by Members (cont'd)

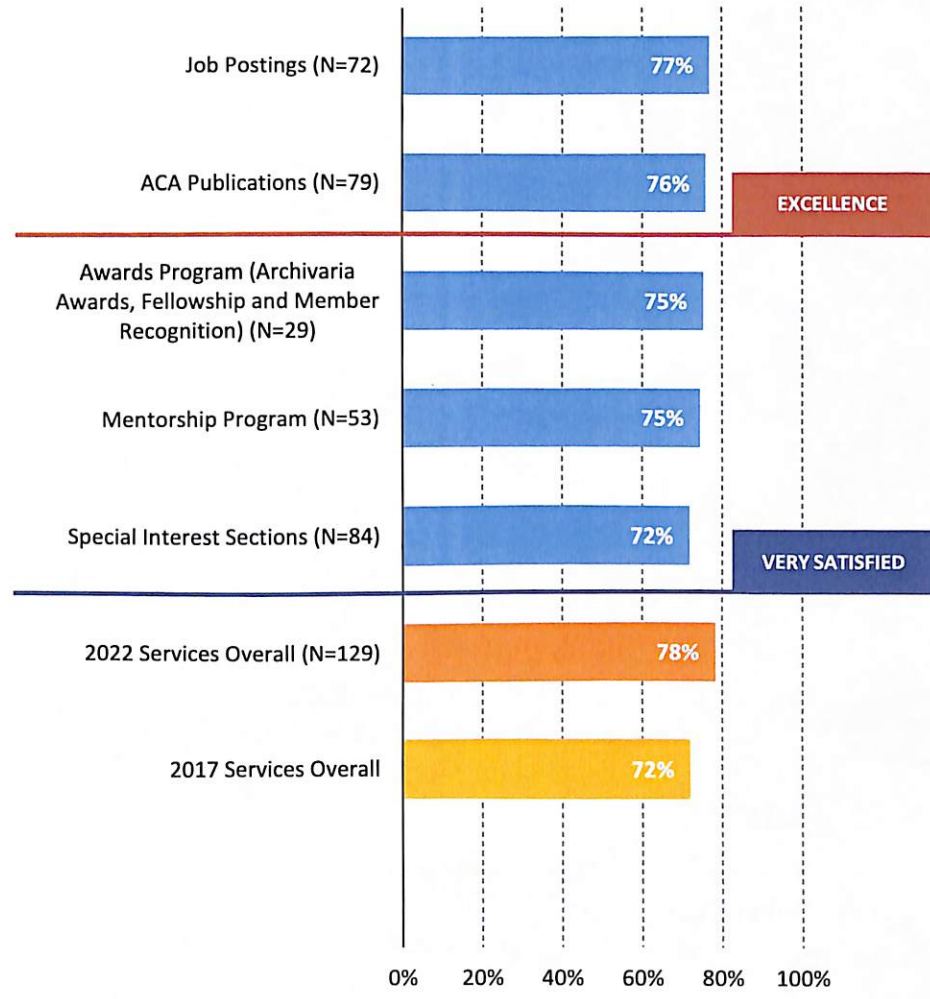
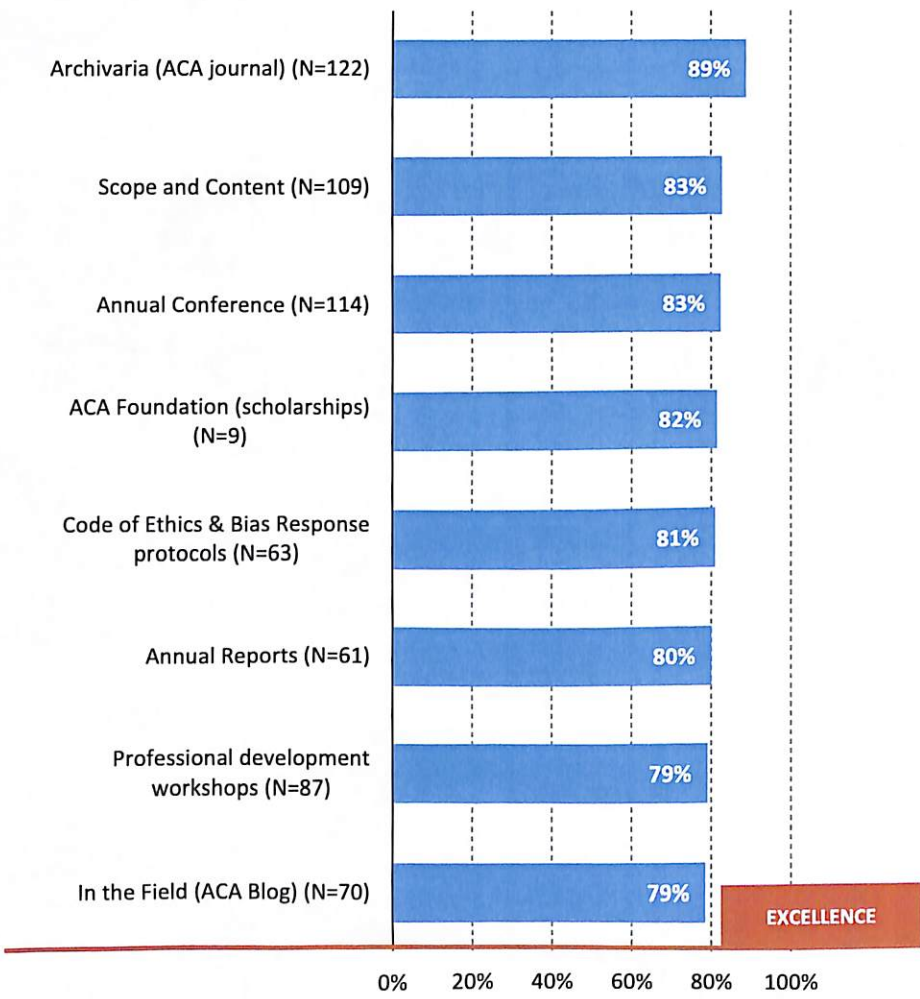


N=129

## Satisfaction with ACA Services

- Members were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with thirteen services/programs offered by ACA. Members were only able to provide ratings for services/programs they have used.
- The results show that those who use the services are extremely satisfied with them, awarding an average benchmark rating of 78% across all services. In fact, ten of thirteen services were rated in the “excellence” category, with two sitting just below the cutoff.
- The 78% average represents considerable improvement over the 72% rating from 2017. Of the nine services measured in both years, eight saw an improvement in the level of satisfaction with the biggest change being for the code of ethics (+11 percentage points). The only program where satisfaction decreased was the Awards Program (-9 percentage points).
- Looking at the ratings of the individual services reveals some variation in satisfaction levels.
- The top-rated ACA service continues to be Archivaria (ACA journal) at 89%, followed Scope and Content (83%), the Annual Conference (83%), ACA Foundation (scholarships) (82%) and the Code of Ethics & Bias Response protocols (81%) to round out the top five.
- While all services are well rated, there is always room for improvement. The services of greatest focus should be those rated at 75% or less.
- ACA' benchmark rating for services is above average compared to other professional associations. The average among other professional associations we have worked with is 74%.
- Differences in subgroups include:
  - Satisfaction is higher among individual members compared to institutional members for the Annual Conference, Scope and Content and Special Interest Sections. Conversely, satisfaction is higher for institutional members for job postings.
  - Members of more than 20 years are less satisfied than others with professional development workshops and ACA Publications. The indicated higher satisfaction than others with the Annual Report.
  - Satisfaction with the Annual Conference is higher among those who have been members for five years of less.

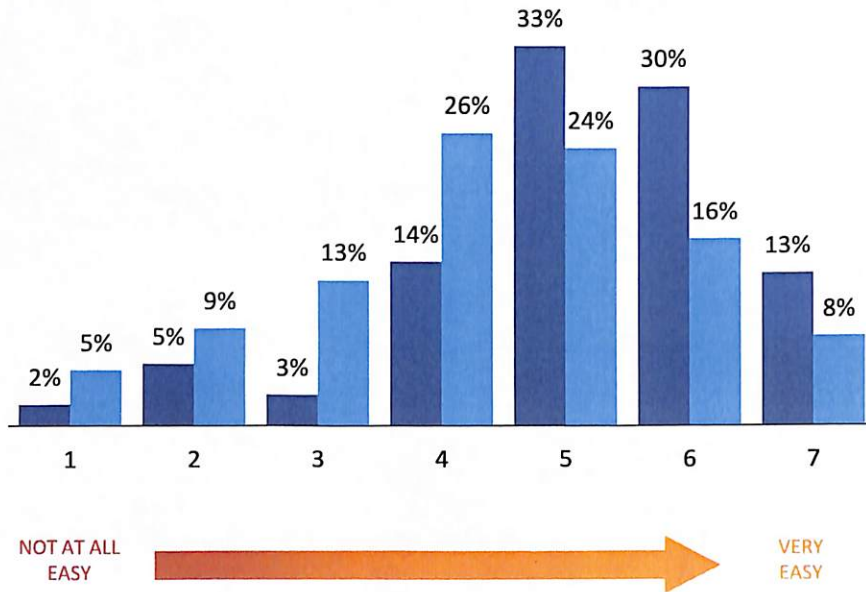
# Satisfaction with ACA Services (cont'd)



# Ease of Having Voice Heard

## Ease of Having Voice Heard

- 2022 (N=112; Mean 5.1; Benchmark 69%)
- 2017 (N=165; Mean 4.4; Benchmark 56%)

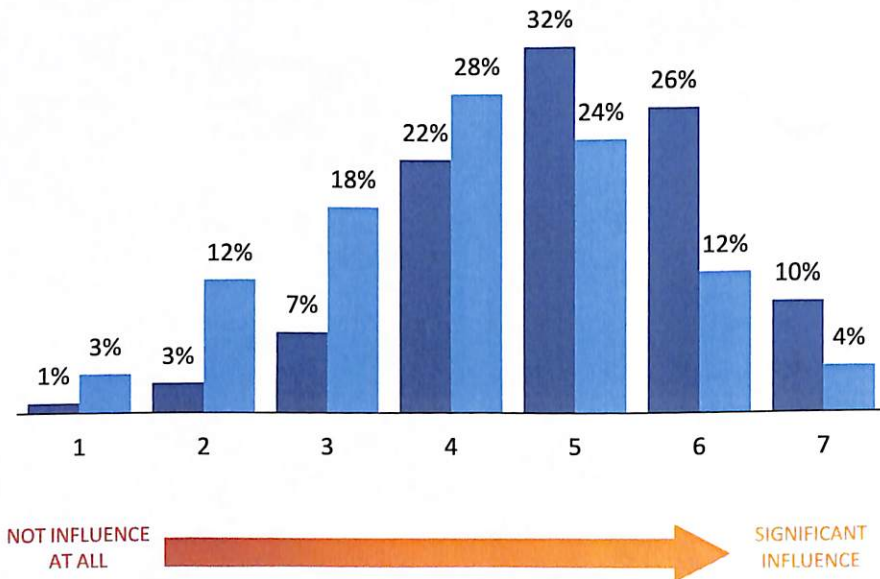


- Members were asked how easy it is to have one's voice heard by ACA. With a benchmark rating of 69%, members are "reasonably" satisfied with ACA in this area. The result is acceptable but shows that there is still room for improvement.
- ACA is clearly doing a better job at giving members the opportunity to be heard. The 69% rating represents a significant improvement over the 56% achieved in 2017.
- The majority (63%) of respondents awarded ratings of 5 or 6 out of 7.
- ACA's benchmark in this area is significantly higher than the average of 61% for professional associations overall.
- Subgroup differences include:
  - Ratings increase with the length of membership.
  - Satisfaction is higher among individual members compared to others.

# Members' Influence Over the Priorities of the Association

## Member Influence

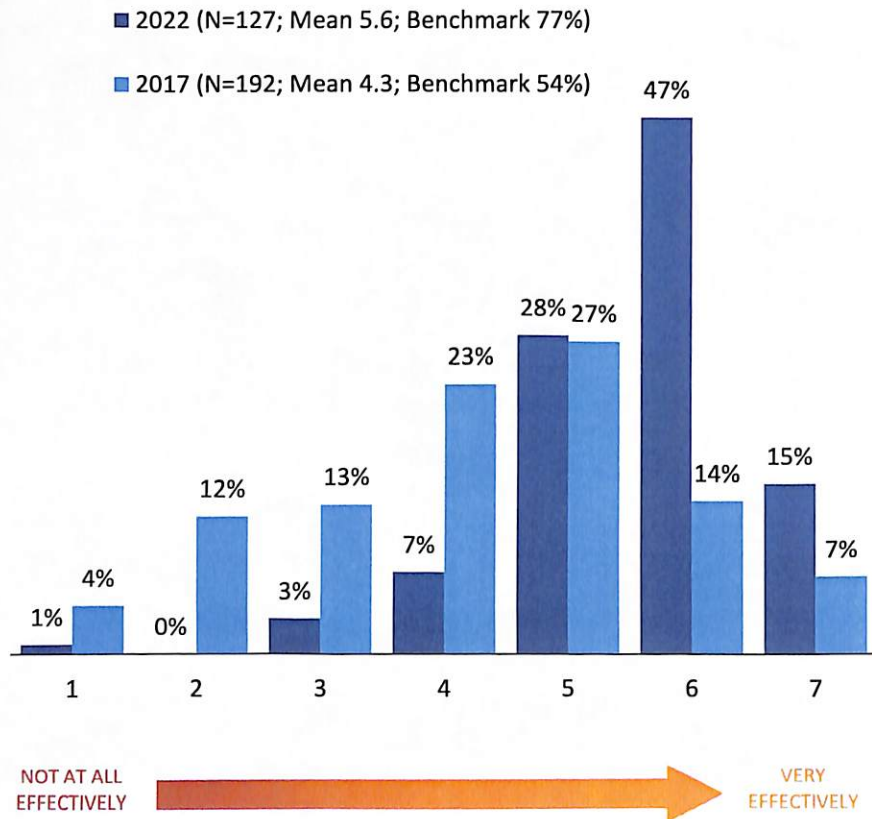
- 2022 (N=114; Mean 5.0; Benchmark 66%)
- 2017 (N=174; Mean 4.1; Benchmark 51%)



- In our experience, there are two key contributors to members' perceived level of influence. One of these is obviously the degree to which the association actually allows member input to drive its agenda. The second is the degree to which the association communicates to the members about how the agenda reflects their input.
- ACA has made considerable strides in this area since 2017. The benchmark rating has improved from a borderline 51% to "reasonably" satisfied at 66%.
- Compared to 2017, ACA received more ratings of 5, 6 or 7 (68% vs. 40%) and fewer ratings of 1 or 2 (4% vs. 15%).
- ACA' rating in this area is significantly better than the 58% average for member influence for professional associations overall.
- In our experience, associations that are truly driven by members tend to receive better ratings in all areas.
- The only notable subgroup difference is that satisfaction is slightly lower among institutional members.

# ACA's Effectiveness at Communicating to its Members

## Effectiveness at Communicating



- Communicating to members is a key element of member satisfaction. Moreover, communicating the association's goals, objectives and successes may help raise satisfaction in other areas; failure to do so will almost certainly result in lower ratings across the board.
- The results show that ACA has improved dramatically in this area and is now in "excellence" territory. ACA's rating for effectiveness of communications sits at 77% with a majority of ratings (62%) at 6 or 7. There was an incredible 23 percentage point gain in the rating over 2017. The improvement in effectiveness of communications is undoubtedly a key driver in improvements in other ratings.
- While there is always room for improvement, the benchmark rating of 77% shows that members are "extremely" satisfied with ACA in this area. The rating is considerably higher than the 70% average for all professional associations we have worked with.
- While these ratings are very good, it is important to remember that it does not indicate whether the association is communicating the right; only that when it communicates, it does so effectively. This is explored later in the report.
- There are no notable subgroup differences.



# Benchmark Satisfaction Ratings (Summary)

- The overall benchmark satisfaction rating is calculated by taking the average of the benchmark scores on each of the key satisfaction ratings. For the services and representation satisfaction ratings, the benchmark is the weighted average for all items measured.
- When first asked how satisfied they are with ACA, the satisfaction score was 75%, which is in the ‘very satisfied’ category. When the responses to the other member satisfaction questions are factored in, the overall benchmark satisfaction rating is slightly lower at 73%. Given all the ratings are up in 2022, it is not surprising that this represents a significant improvement over 2017 when the average benchmark was 59%.
- Unlike 2017, there are no red flag areas for ACA in 2022. Services and effectiveness of communications are areas of particular strength.
- While significantly improved, the degree of member influence is an area that could be further improved.

- Members provided a number of suggestions for improvement. Their verbatim responses can be found in the Appendix.

Benchmark	2022		2017	
	Score	Category	Score	Category
Overall Satisfaction with ACA	75%	*****	60%	***
Overall Services	78%	*****	72%	*****
Ease of Having Voice Heard	69%	****	56%	***
Member Influence	66%	****	51%	**
Effectiveness of Communications	77%	*****	54%	**
<b>Overall Benchmark Satisfaction Rating</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>*****</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>***</b>

Category Legend			
Extremely Satisfied or Excellence	*****	Very Satisfied	*****
Marginal Satisfaction	***	Borderline	**
		Reasonably Satisfied	****
		Fail	*

# Benchmark Comparisons to Other Associations

	ACA Benchmark	91 Study Average	Professional Associations					Number of Benchmarks
			Average	Maximum	Minimum	ACA RANK		
Overall Satisfaction	75%	68%	66%	86%	44%	6	out of	55
Overall Services	78%	74%	74%	84%	63%	12	out of	52
Ease of Having Voice Heard	69%	65%	61%	83%	38%	9	out of	52
Member Influence	66%	61%	58%	76%	41%	5	out of	49
Effectiveness of Communications	77%	72%	70%	87%	54%	9	out of	52
<b>Overall Benchmark Satisfaction Rating</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>out of</b>	<b>54</b>

- On its overall benchmark, ACA ranks 5<sup>th</sup> out of 54 studies with professional associations. ACA’s 2022 benchmarks are all in the top quarter of professional associations TPG has worked with.
- The strongest rankings are for member influence a 5<sup>th</sup> out of 49 and overall satisfaction at 6<sup>th</sup> out of 55.
- Despite its very strong score, ACA only ranks 12<sup>th</sup> (out of 52) for services. This is typically a strong area for associations.
- The remaining two benchmarks, ease of having voice heard and effectiveness of communications both rank 9<sup>th</sup> out 52.



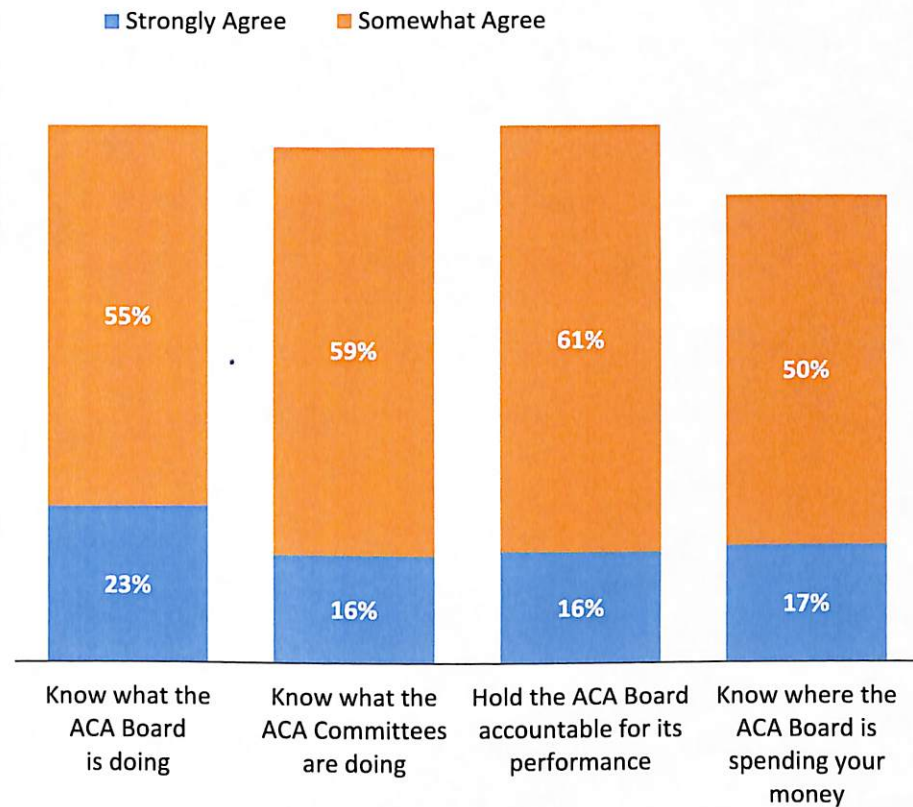
## Member Attitudes Towards ACA

- Level of Member Knowledge About ACA
- Attitudes About Performance and Governance

# Level of Member Knowledge About ACA

- As noted earlier, ACA does a good job at effectively communicating to members, but that does not necessarily mean it is providing the right information. As discussed in the previous chapter, good communications and letting your members know what ACA is doing are keys to achieving high satisfaction ratings.
- While a significant majority of members generally agree that ACA provides them with enough information to know what the ACA Board is doing (78% somewhat or strongly agree), to hold the ACA Board ACA accountable (77%) and to know what ACA committees are doing (75%), there is considerable room to improve given the large portion of members only 'somewhat' agree with these statements.
- Agreement is slightly lower for having enough knowledge to know where the ACA spends members' money (67%). Again, a significant group only 'somewhat' agree.
- While not directly comparable to 2017 due to wording changes, the results indicate that ACA is doing a better job at keep their members informed. Agreement with similar statements ranged from 51% to 68% in 2017.
- While improved, the results still point to a modest level of knowledge about what ACA is up to. Past research has shown strong links between knowledge, satisfaction and perceived value.
- Agreement with all statements increases with the length of membership from less than 5 years to over 5 years.

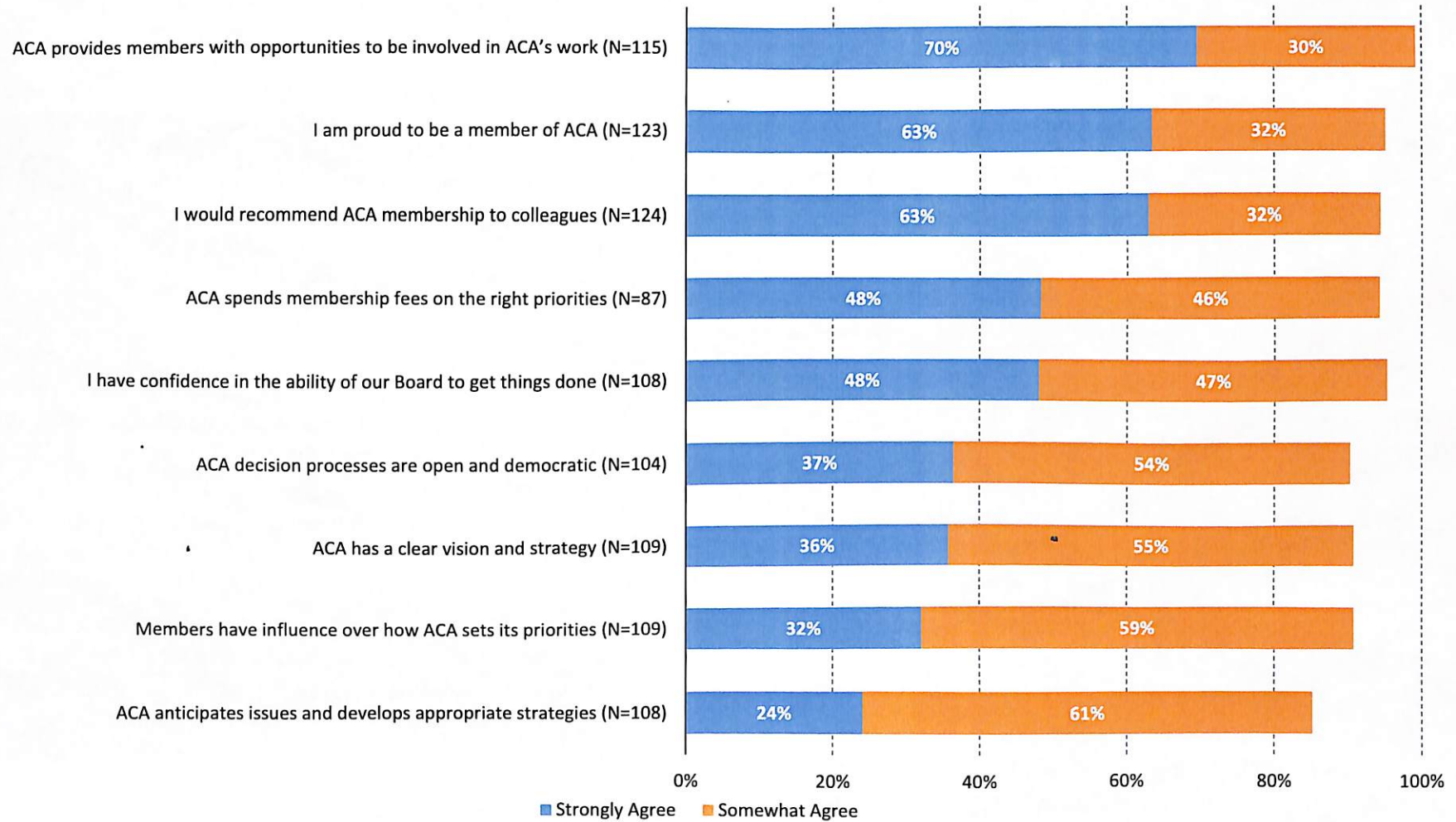
## Have Enough Knowledge To... (N=129)



# Attitudes About Performance and Governance

- Members were given a series of nine statements regarding ACA's performance and governance and asked to indicate the extent to which they agree. Results are presented on the next page.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of members or more indicated that they at least 'somewhat' agreed with all the statements indicating that they generally feel that ACA is performing at strong level. Looking at only those who 'strongly' agree shows more variation.
- Allowing members to get involved and creating pride in the organization are areas of particular strength for ACA. Specifically, seven in ten (70%) members 'strongly' agreed that ACA provide members with opportunities to be involved in ACA's work making this the top-rated attribute. Just under two-thirds (63%) of members 'strongly' agreed that they are proud to be members and that they would recommend membership to colleagues. This is important as it shows that members care about ACA.
- Confidence in the Board to get things done and feeling ACA spends on the right priorities are more modestly rated with just under half (48%) 'strongly' agreeing with each statement. While acceptable, the results do show considerable room to improve. With only 36% 'strongly' agreeing, members feel ACA could do better when it comes to having a clear vision and strategy.
- While members feel they can get involved, they are not convinced that they can influence the priorities of ACA (32%) or that decision making in open and democratic (37%). While these ratings could stand to be higher, earlier results show that ACA has made significant strides in improving satisfaction with members feeling that they can be heard and have influence.
- The lowest rated area is ACA's ability to anticipate issues and develop appropriate positioning strategies. Only one-quarter (24%) of members agreed with this statement.
- Differences among subgroups include:
  - Agreement increases with the length of membership from under 5 years to over 5 years for spending money on the right priorities.
  - Agreement increases with the length of membership for recommending membership to colleagues.

# Attitudes About Performance and Governance (cont'd)





## ACA Priorities

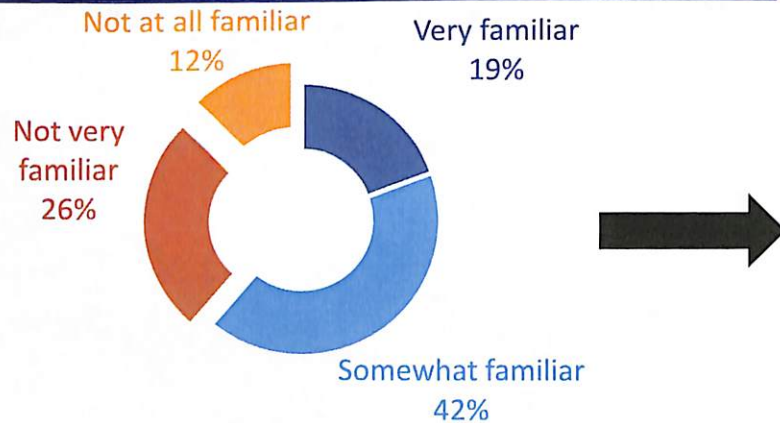
- ACA's Equity Commitments
- Perceived Progress on ACA Strategic Priorities
- Ranking of ACA Strategic Priorities



# ACA's Equity Commitments

- Familiarity with ACA's Equity Commitments has a ways to go. While three in five (61%) of members indicated that they had some level of familiarity, only one in five (19%) are 'very' familiar.
- Respondents who were at least somewhat familiar with ACA's Equity Commitments were given a series of three statements regarding them and were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each.
- Importantly, there is strong agreement that ACA's Equity Commitments align with my own views on diversity, equity and inclusion. Most (95%) respondents at least somewhat agreed with 71% 'strongly' agreeing.
- Respondents were less convinced when it comes to the impact of ACA's Equity Commitments. While nine in ten respondents or more at least

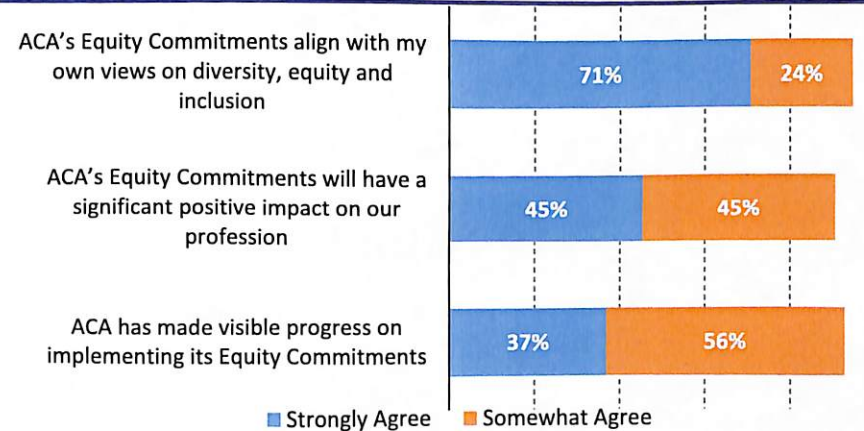
## Familiarity (N=129)



somewhat agreed with each statement, only 45% 'strongly' agreed the Equity Commitments would have a significant positive impact on the profession and only 37% 'strongly' agreed that ACA has made visible progress on implementing its Equity Commitment.

- Following are the notable subgroup differences:
  - Institutional members less likely to be familiar with ACA's Equity Commitments.
  - Agreement that ACA's Equity Commitments align with personal views decreases with the length of membership.

## Agreement (N=75)

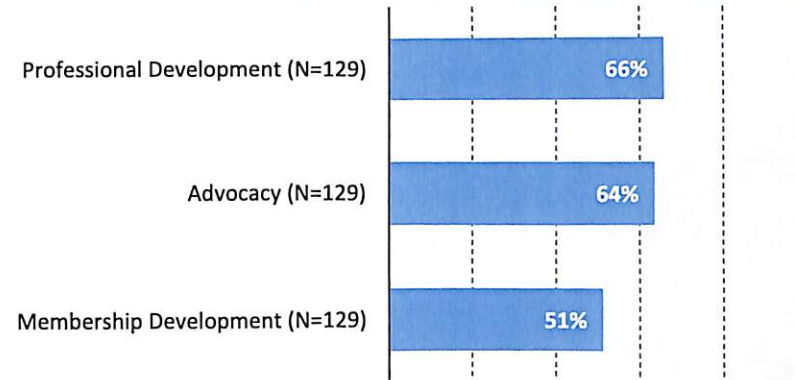




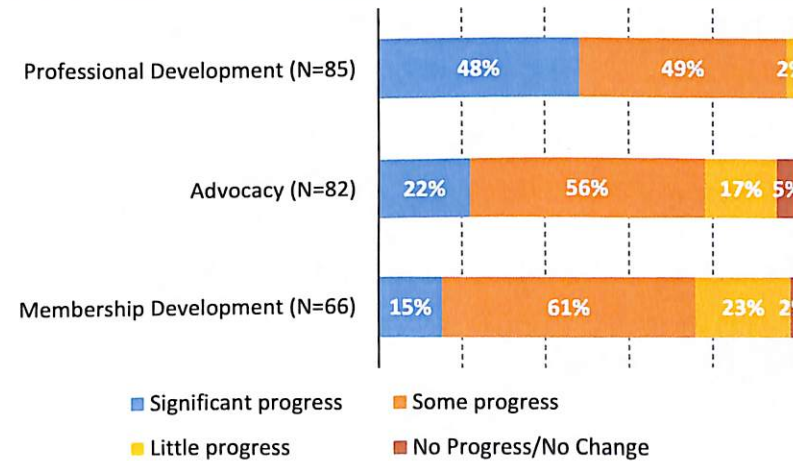
# Perceived Progress on ACA Strategic Priorities

- In its 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, ACA three areas as strategic priorities. Respondents were asked to indicate how much progress they felt ACA had made on each in the last three years.
- Importantly, only two-thirds of respondents had enough information to evaluate ACA on its professional development (66%) and advocacy (64%) priorities. For membership development, only half (51%) had enough information to evaluate.
- Among those with enough information to evaluate, ratings were highest for professional development where almost all (97%) reported at least 'some progress', with half (48%) reporting that they have seen significant progress in the last three years. In the eyes of members, ACA is progressing well in this area.
- The results were more modest for advocacy and membership development. While the portion that feel the organization has at least made 'some progress' in each area is strong at 77% and 76%, respectively, only a small portion (22% and 15%, respectively) feel significant progress has been made.
- These results are member perceptions and may or may not reflect reality. If they are an accurate reflection, then they indicate that ACA still has considerable work to do in advancing these areas. If it is not an accurate reflection, then more needs to be done to communicate what ACA has achieved in these areas.

## Aware of ACA Strategic Priorities

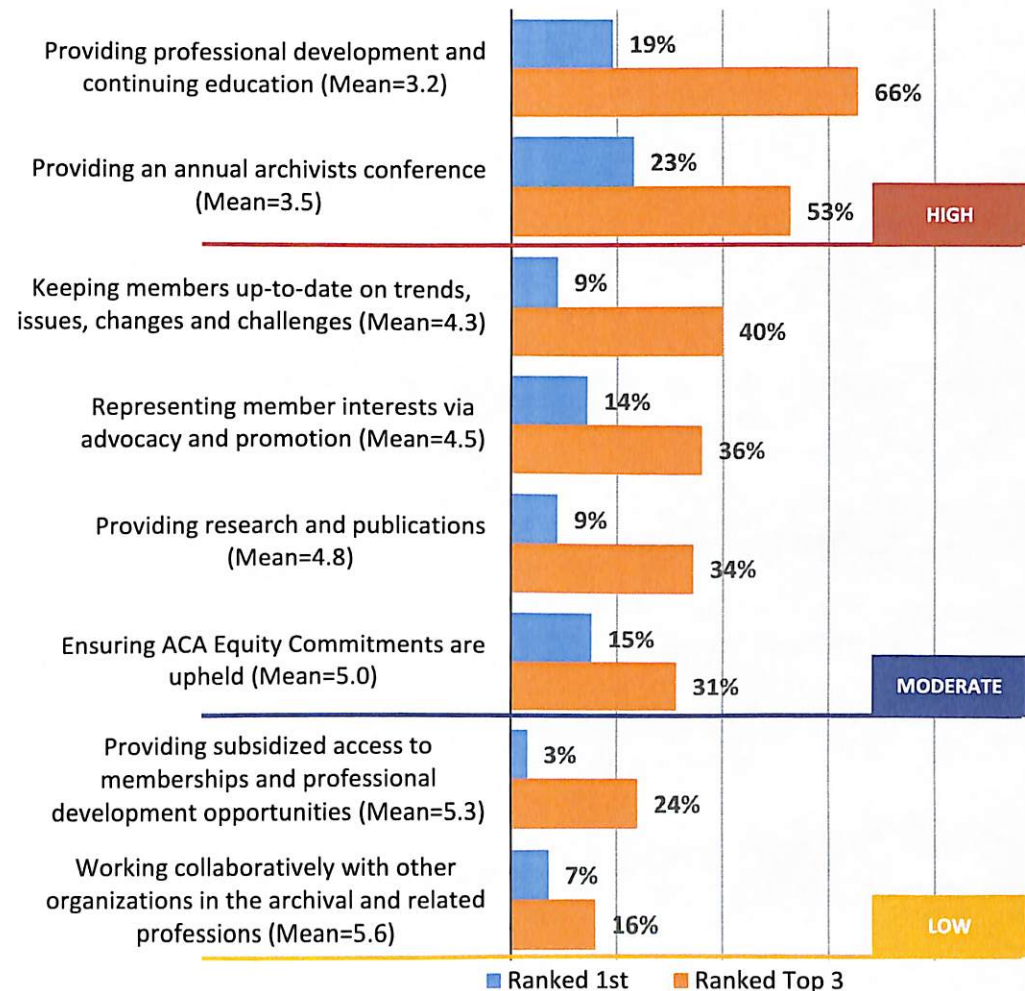


## Perceived Progress (base is those aware)



# Ranking of ACA Priorities

- Survey respondents were given a list of ACA's eight possible priority areas and were asked to rate them in order of importance.
- Whether looking at the average rankings or the portion ranking each priority in the top three, the results tell the same story. Based on both measures, the priorities can be divided into three tiers.
- High Priority:** Top tier priorities are those that are 'critical' to members. These are priorities that should be front and centre for ACA. Priorities in this group were selected in the top three by over half of members and the average ranking is better than 4 (where 1 is best). The two initiatives in this category are providing professional development and continuing education and providing an annual archivists conference. These were also the two priorities most likely to be ranked first.
- Moderate Priority:** While important, these are priorities that take a back seat to those in the top tier. They should be a focus if resources allow. The average ranking is between 4 and 5 while between one-third and half of members ranked them in the top three. The areas in this category include keeping members up-to-date on trends, issues, changes and challenges, representing member interests via advocacy and promotion and providing research and publications. Ensuring ACA Equity Commitments are upheld is on the border between moderate priority and low priority. It has been included in the moderate priority group because it was the third most likely to be ranked first.
- Low Priority:** These are priorities where less than 30% of members ranked them in the top three and the average ranking is 5.1 or worse. For ACA, low priority areas include providing subsidized access to memberships and professional development opportunities and working collaboratively with other organizations in the archival and related professions.





## Conclusions

# Conclusions

## General Observations

- The 2017 results were not strong and served as a wakeup call for ACA. The staff and volunteers clearly received the message and the changes that have been made have led to a significant improvement. ACA's overall benchmark satisfaction rating in 2022 is 73%, indicating that members are very satisfied with the organization overall. This is up from 59% in 2017.
- While ratings are up across the board, the most significant gain was for effectiveness of communications. ACA's score in this area rose by 23 percentage points from 54% to 77%. In other words, the rating went from borderline to excellent. In our experience, good communication is foundational to high satisfaction in other areas, and this appears to be the case for ACA as all the ratings are up.
- Member influence and ease of having one's voice heard were also areas of concern in 2017 that have seen significant improvements in 2022. At 66% and 69%, respectively, satisfaction with both areas has improved to a reasonable level. The ratings show that there is still considerable room for improvement in these areas, but ACA is on the right track.
- On the whole, ACA is performing well in the eyes of members. While the results are not directly comparable to 2017, the 2022 results point to much improved perceptions about ACA. The perception that there are opportunities to be involved, pride in membership and willingness to recommend membership are all areas that were scored reasonably well in 2017, and this continues to be the case in 2022. These attitudes bode well for the association.
- Other areas, while improved, still have room to grow. While there were a number of open-end comments praising ACA's 2018-21 strategic plan, only one-third of member strongly agreed that ACA has

a clear vision and strategy while only one-quarter strongly believe ACA anticipates issues and develops appropriate positioning strategies.

- As noted earlier, satisfaction with the ability to influence ACA's agenda is much improved, but there is still work to be done. The modest perceptions of ACA in the area of member influence and openness of decision making affirm that there is more to do.

## Services

- ACA's services continue to be a high point – Those who use them are extremely satisfied with them. In fact, ten of the thirteen services were rated in the 'excellence' category as very strong offerings for ACA that should continue to be leveraged going forward. The remaining serves rank in the 'very' satisfied category.
- Penetration levels (current and past combined) are up compared to 2017 and no services registered as having a major awareness issue. At least four in five members indicated that they were aware of each service. While not major, it is worth noting that the four services with the biggest awareness issues are ACA Foundation (scholarships), Code of Ethics & Bias Response protocols, ACA Publications and In the Field (ACA Blog). Continued promotion may be warranted for these services.
- For some services where penetration is low, the findings may be warranted as they may not have broad appeal but are important to a niche group of members. These include the ACA Foundation (scholarships), Awards Program (Archivaria Awards, Fellowship and Member Recognition) and Mentorship Program.

# Conclusions (cont'd)

## ACA Priorities

- With only one in five members indicating high familiarity, the majority of members are not highly knowledgeable about ACA's Equity Commitments. Another 42% are somewhat familiar. While the majority of members feel ACA's Equity Commitments align with their own views, the results suggest that members believe there is more to be done in terms of progress and impact.
- When it comes to ACA's strategic priorities from 2018-21, there is a bit of a knowledge gap with one-third to half of members not being aware of them. Those who are aware feel there is more to do. While almost half feel significant progress has been made in the area of professional development, only one in five or less feel the same way about advocacy and membership development.
- The top two priority areas for ACA in the eyes of members are providing professional development and continuing education and providing an annual archivists conference. These two areas stand out compared to others suggesting they should be a focus.

## Conclusion

- Members have used this survey to articulate that ACA has made significant strides since 2017. While there are still improvements to be made, ACA's efforts have been rewarded

with a vastly improved report card. While ACA should be proud of its achievements, it must not rest on its laurels.