

NAACLS Data and a Stronger Laboratory Workforce

Workforce Action Alliance

May 2026



Chief Executive Officer



Marisa James

CAE, MA, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

- **CEO**, NAACLS (since July 2022)
- Former NAACLS Board Member, Secretary, and **Vice President** (ASCP Representative)
- Spent 22 years as a hospital-based Medical Laboratory Science **Program Director**



Section 2

NAACLS Organizational Overview

NAACLS Purpose



Mission

The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) is committed to being the **premier accreditation agency** for ensuring the advancement of education in clinical laboratory sciences and related health care disciplines provided by **domestic and international programs**.

What We Aspire To

Vision

Medical laboratories **preferentially** seek graduates of NAACLS programs to assure **quality**, value, innovation and safety for healthcare consumers.

What We Represent

Values

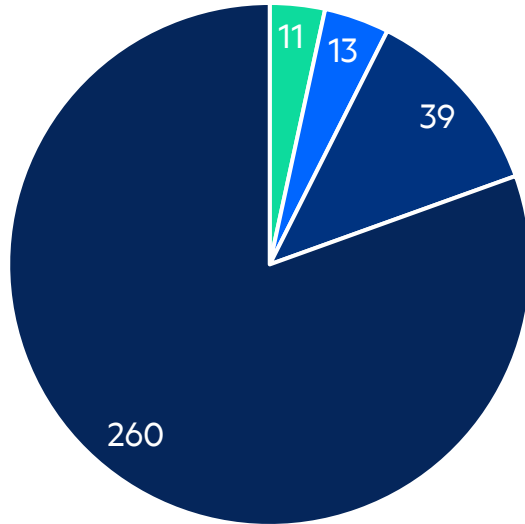
Quality
Education
Innovation

Collaboration
Peer Review
Global
Accreditation

Board of Directors



NAACLS Community



- Staff
- Board
- Committees
- Volunteer Content Experts

Collaboration

NAACLS is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

We have five professional agencies with representation on our board of directors:

ASCLS
ASCP

AGT
NSH
AAPA

Pathways

Over 600 Laboratory Programs Worldwide

- Biomedical Sciences (**BMS**)
- Cytogenetic Technologist (CG)
- Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS)
- Diagnostic Molecular Scientist (DMS)
- Histotechnician (HT)
- Histotechnologist (HTL)
- Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA)
- Medical Laboratory Blood Bank Scientist (**MLBBS**)
- Medical Laboratory Microbiologist (**MLM**)
- Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS)
- Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT)
- Pathologists' Assistant (Path A)
- Phlebotomist (PBT)
- Public Health Microbiologist (**PHM**)

Quality



Expertise Matters

Accreditation places responsibility for the quality of laboratory education on **content experts**. NAACLS Standards and accreditation decisions are determined by a laboratory program's peers, giving the profession an **integral voice** in laboratory education. Accreditation is shaped by **experts in the field, not elected officials**.

Disruption



New Spotlight

Currently, US post-secondary education operates under a system of **checks and balances** among the federal government, the states, and accreditors. Over the past two years, the states and the federal **government** have taken unprecedented steps to exert **more control** over education.

Champions



Maintaining Balance

NAACLS needs **advocates** outside of its volunteers. At both the federal and state levels, legislation has been introduced to limit or **eliminate** the profession's input. The proposed changes to our system's checks and balances would shift quality assurance authority to the government and **away** from accreditors and the professions.



Section 3

NAACLS Annual Survey of Programs

Annual Survey



What Data We Collect and Why

Each year, NAACLS administers a survey to all NAACLS Accredited programs. This survey is required and requests contact information from programs as well as **outcomes and benchmarks**. NAACLS has an **outcome-based philosophy** and programs that fall below benchmarks are required to complete an Action Plan. Over the past few years, we have developed new questions for the Annual Survey of Programs after hearing concerns from our **community** about how additional program data could help them advocate for more resources. We made sure our programs understood these new questions would not trigger action plans.

Collaboration



Task Force Appointed

Additionally, our Board of Directors developed a **Data Governance** Task Force. A needs **assessment survey** is in development to determine the types of data that would be helpful. This survey will be sent to the following stakeholders with a cascading ability to **forward the survey**:

- NAACLS Program Directors list
- Workforce Action Alliance contact list
- Medical and Public Health Laboratory Workforce (MPHLW) Coalition members
- Wisconsin Diagnostic Laboratory (WDL) Education Collaborative contact list
- Leaders from laboratory professional organizations

Soft Launch



Disbursement Survey

The Data Governance Task Force **invites** WAA attendees to **participate** in a soft launch of our data disbursement survey. Your feedback will help us **refine** the survey and preview the results and insights.

Data



The 2024 Annual Survey Article Highlighted

- Accredited program numbers and graduates by type, including graphs with **trendlines** from the past 15 years.
- Average number of cohorts, qualified applicants, and vacancies in programs by discipline.
- Total number of qualified applicants, enrollment **capacity**, and student vacancies in programs by discipline.
- Institutional breakdown of programs by discipline.
- Program name variations.
- Program outcomes averages.
- Number of programs seeking initial accreditation and serious applicant status/DCLS candidacy status.
- Action plan data.
- Student accessibility to program outcomes.
- Change in class size, **budget**, clinical placements, and faculty by discipline.
- Program director turnover.

[Source - CEO'S Corner: Findings from the 2024 Annual Survey \(NAACLS News\)](#)

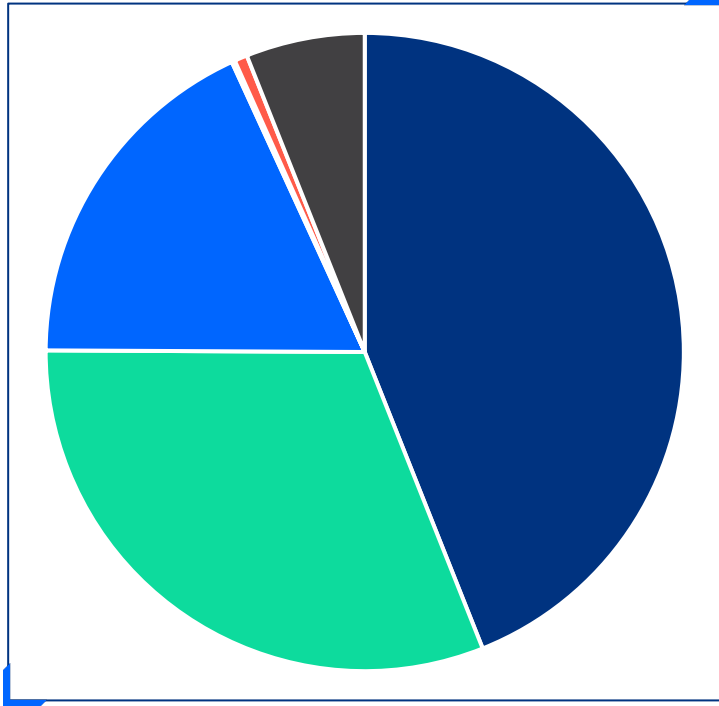
NAACLS News



Newer Data

- Average program length and tuition by discipline.
- **Heatmap** of US graduates by program location .
- Heatmap of US graduates by zip code.
- Voluntary withdrawal survey results.
- Program **expansion** barriers to include more options.
- Distribution of programs offering asynchronous, online, weekend, evening or part-time options.
- Average estimated percentage of time spent in various clinical/applied learning experiences.
- Length of time students spend in a hospital laboratory for their clinical/**applied learning** (formerly known as clinical rotation) by discipline.
- Coming soon in the 2025 report: Number of graduates in **categorical** areas.

Institution Type



By the Numbers

270 - Two Year College or University

191 - Four Year College or University

111 - Hospital or Medical Center

37 - Academic Health Center/Medical Center

4 - Military Facility

1 - Independent Laboratory

Nomenclature



Clinical Laboratory Science

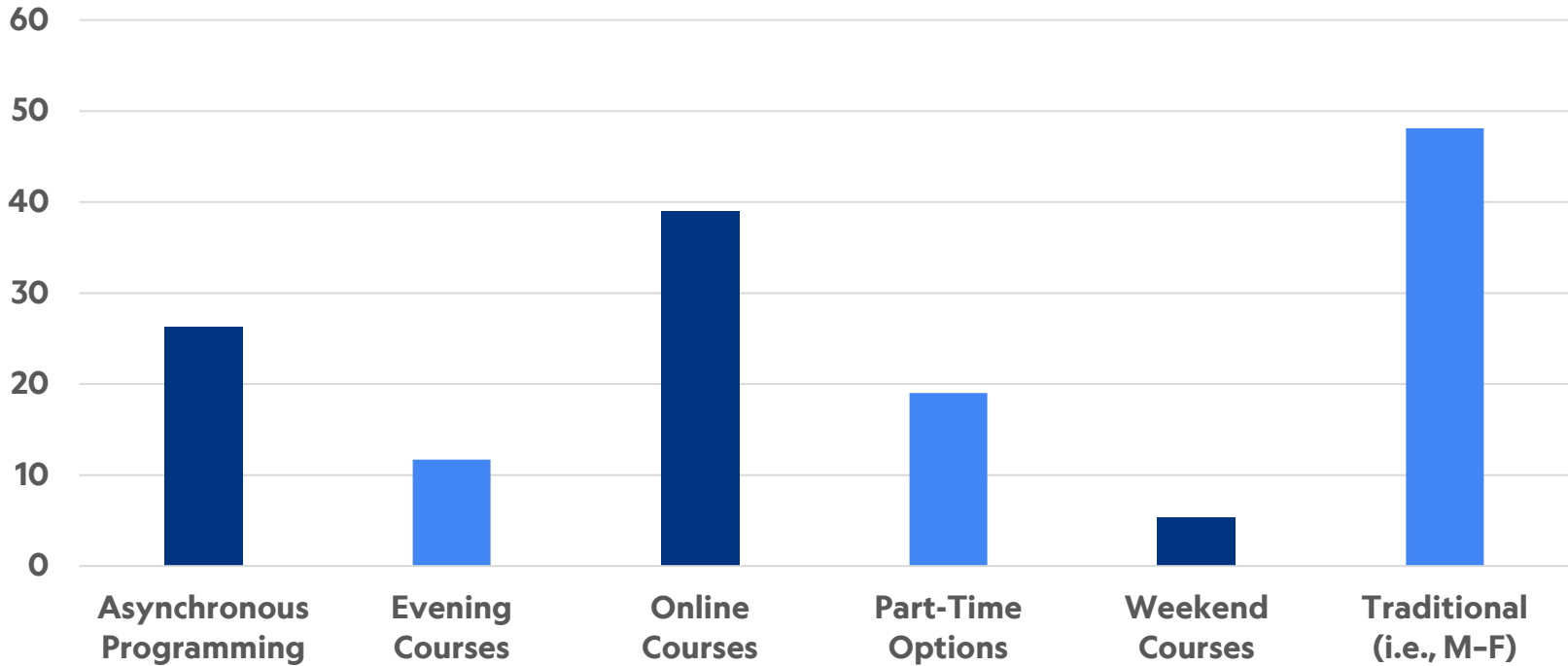
Of the **251** Medical Laboratory Science programs:

- 86% are named Medical Laboratory Scientist (**MLS**).
- 12.5% are Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS).
- 1.5% are Medical Technologist (MT).

Of the 234 Medical Laboratory Technician programs:

- 58% are named Medical Laboratory Technician (**MLT**).
- 37% are named Medical Laboratory Technologist (MLT).
- 5% Clinical Laboratory Technician/Technologist/Scientist (CLT or CLS).

Programmatic Options



Program Numbers

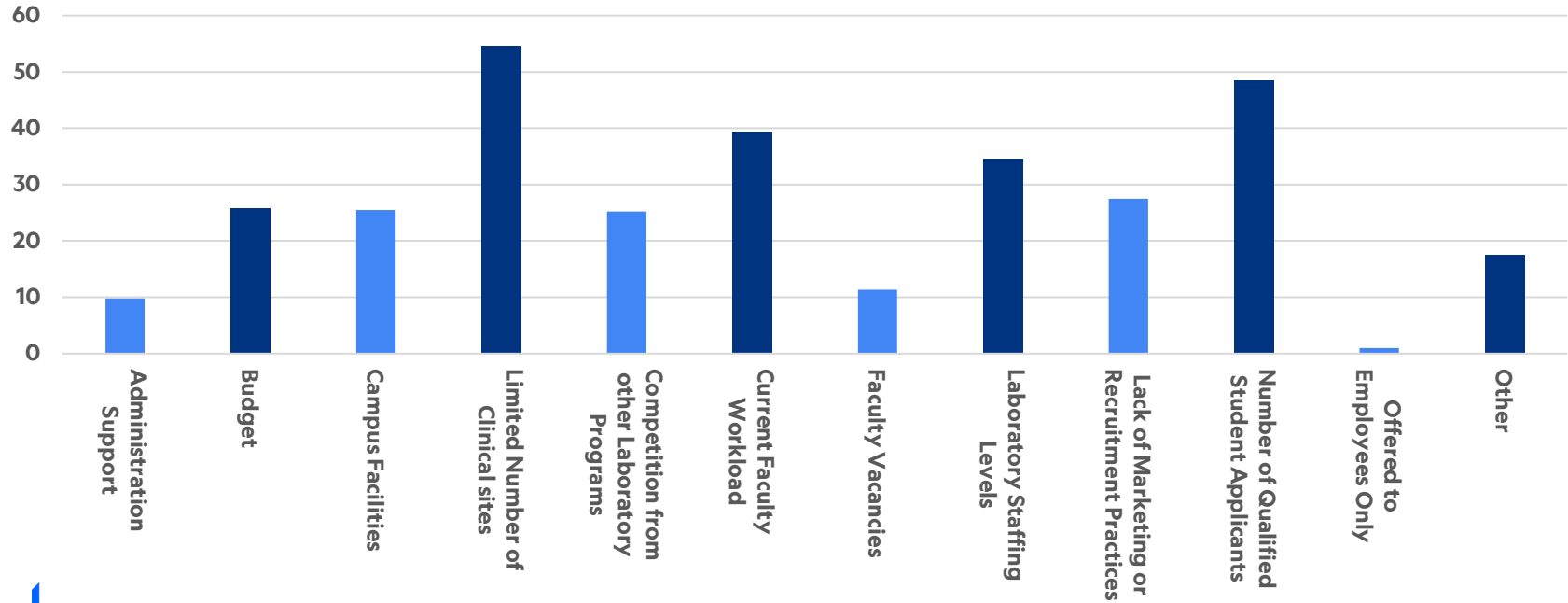


Program Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
CG	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	1
DMS	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	7
HT	37	34	36	32	33	36	36	37	39	38
HTL	9	8	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	12
MLA	7	6	6	5	5	4	4	2	3	3
MLS	232	229	235	235	232	240	245	247	251	251
MLT	235	241	239	237	240	238	239	237	238	239
Path A	10	10	11	13	13	12	15	16	16	17
PBT	64	60	61	53	53	51	49	48	47	44
Total	606	600	609	596	598	602	609	607	614	612

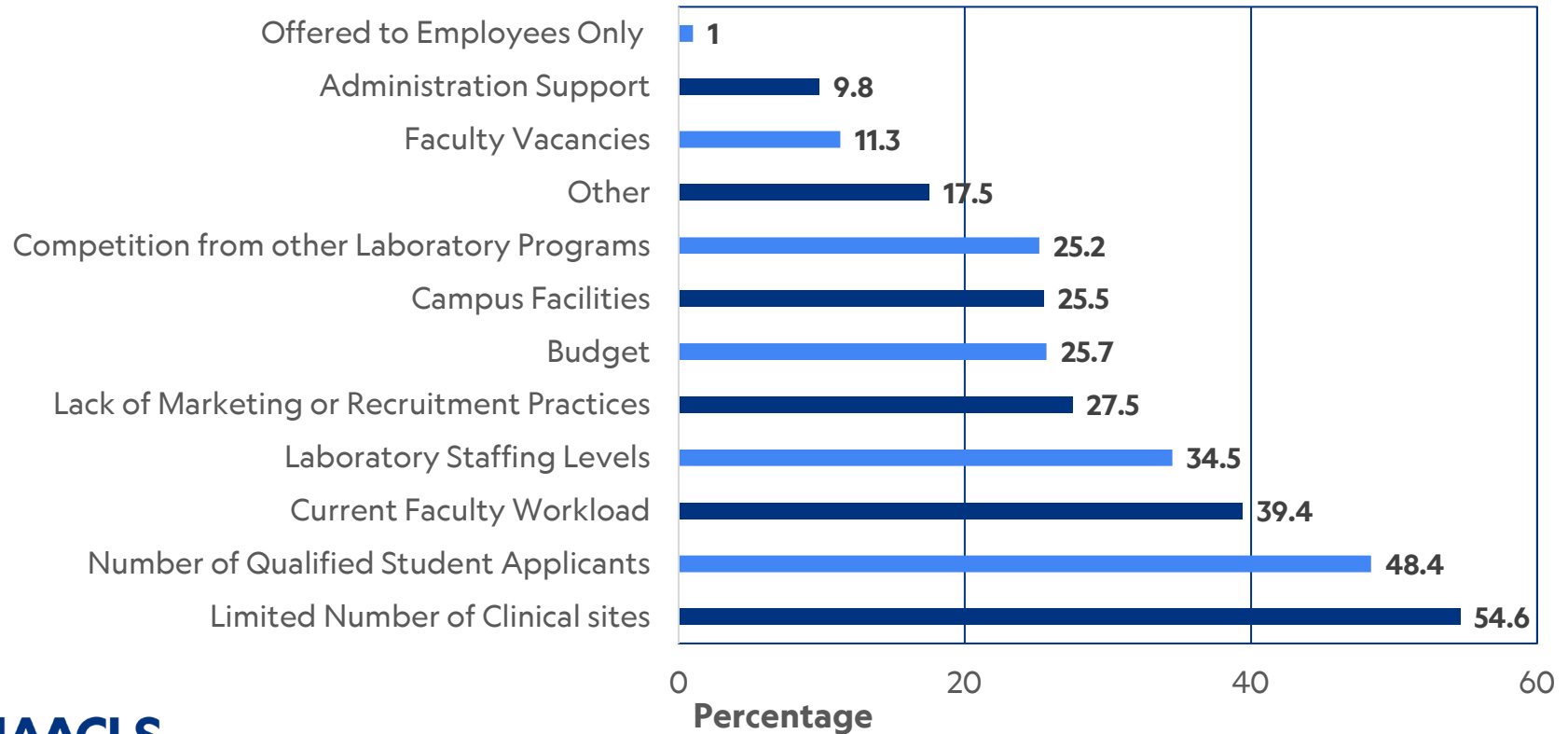
Graduate Numbers

Program Type	Grads 2011	Grads 2012	Grads 2013	Grads 2014	Grads 2015	Grads 2016	Grads 2017	Grads 2018	Grads 2019	Grads 2020	Grads 2021	Grads 2022	Grads 2023	Grads 2024	Grads 2025
CG	38	48	43	32	29	16	16	30	23	30	15	17	15	15	NA
DMS	78	83	66	72	61	67	67	163	88	89	77	73	73	71	66
HT	585	636	552	457	467	362	357	363	365	294	314	360	344	351	322
HTL	60	47	48	46	77	75	60	63	57	52	59	62	48	47	66
MLA	108	90	99	68	75	45	45	33	47	38	12	10	5	7	8
MLS	3,226	3,293	3,757	3,561	3,932	3,997	3,894	3,772	3,899	3,964	4,114	4,162	4,189	4,231	4,446
MLT	3,262	3,029	3,410	3218	2,886	2,903	2,453	3,159	2,932	2,848	2,844	2,663	2,638	2,709	2,766
Path A	108	110	112	125	151	137	132	134	151	154	153	204	204	184	196
PBT	1,689	2,195	2,311	1,833	1,808	1,624	1,615	1,783	1,421	1,158	1,120	1,208	1,146	1,208	1,163
Total	9,154	9,531	10,398	9,412	9,486	9,226	8,639	9,500	8,983	8,627	8,708	8,759	8,662	8,823	9,040

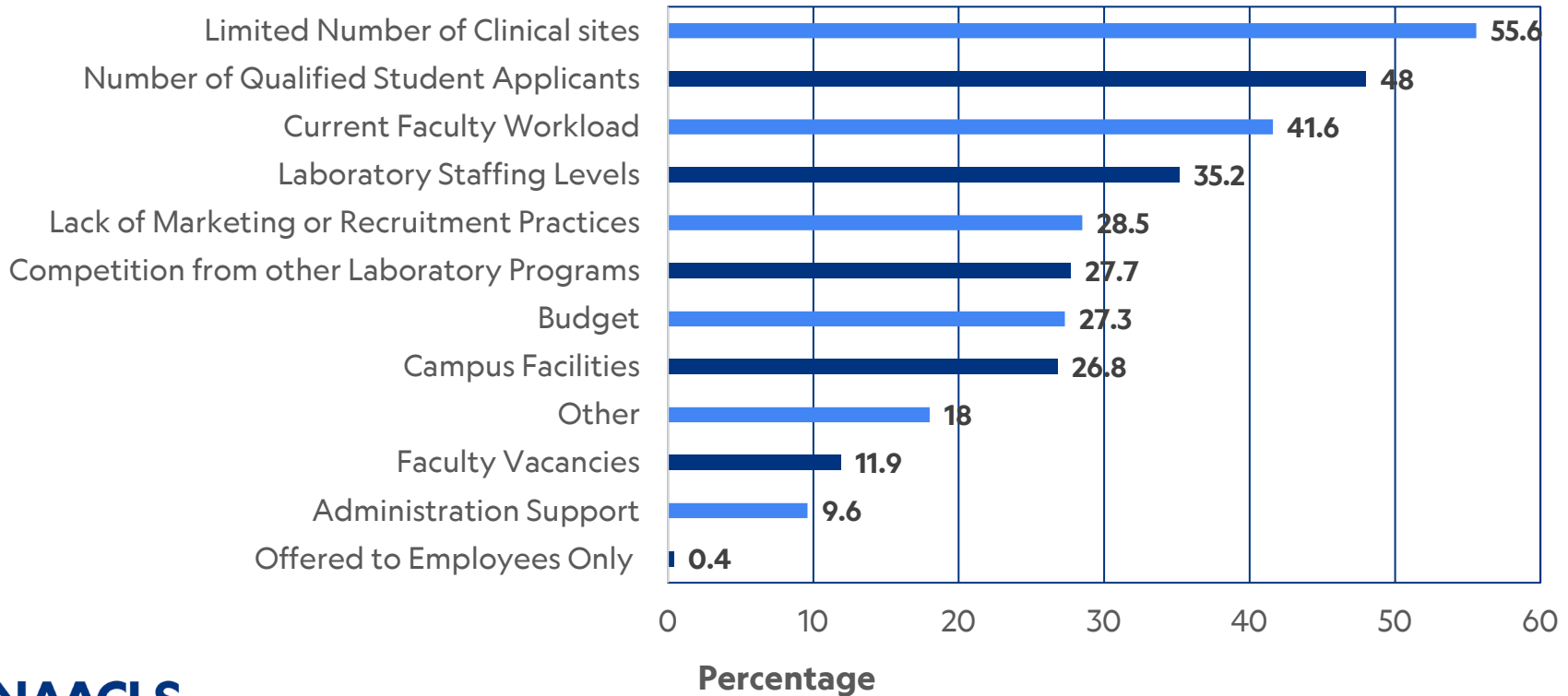
Expansion Barriers



Expansion Barriers



MLT & MLS Barriers

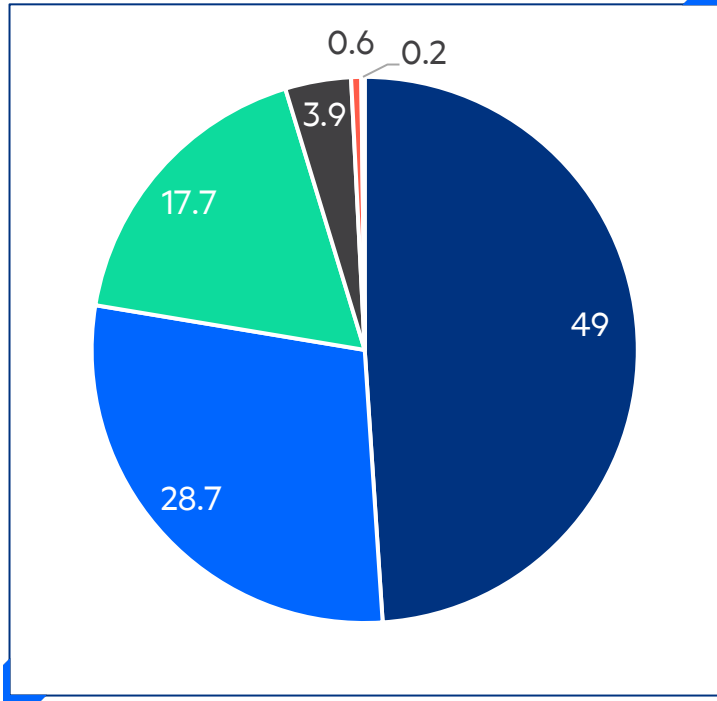


Applicants and Capacity



Program Type	Cohorts	Applicants	Capacity	Graduates	Vacancies
DMS	9	145	178	79	68
HT	59	485	593	317	202
HTL	21	83	105	40	47
MLA	6	17	28	10	20
MLS	426	9,916	8,580	4,025	2,002
MLT	337	5,691	6,999	2,600	2,237
Path A	17	2,052	434	209	16
PBT	124	2,073	1,876	1,132	568
Total	1,000	20,475	18,818	8,419	5,176

Applied Experience Time



In Rotation

49% - Three to Six Months

28.7% - Six to Twelve Months

17.7% - Six to Twelve Weeks

3.9% - Three to Six Weeks

0.6% - Less than Three Weeks

0.2% - More than Twelve Months

Note - Phlebotomy and Medical Laboratory Assistant have been omitted.

NAACLS Advocacy Efforts



Outreach and Projects

- Expansion of NAACLS Annual Survey of Programs.
- Exploring enhanced data visualizations.
- Partnering with professional organizations on advocacy for **H.R. 5444**.
- Mobilized board members to prevent closure of MLS program.
- Assist with development of the MLS Nomenclature Guide.
- Advocacy series on NAACLS News.
- ASCP KnowledgeLab Panel Session: Innovation in Laboratory Professional Education Programs.
- Exploring **categorical** routes.
- Medical and Public Health Laboratory **Workforce Coalition**.

Keep in Touch!

Stay on top of all NAACLS related **developments** by subscribing to the NAACLS News and following us on LinkedIn.

Visit our website at naacsl.org

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