INFORMATION LITERACY REPORT - 2018
University of San Francisco
Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support

The Process
Information literacy was assessed using the cohort test of Project SAILS. Developed by a team of librarians at Kent State University, the cohort test of Project SAILS is a 40-question test that investigates how students perform on the following four Association of College and Research Library (ACRL) standards:

1. Determines the nature and extent of the information needed
2. Accesses needed information effectively and efficiently
3. Evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into knowledge base and value system
4. Understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

In addition to the ACRL standards, SAILS assesses eight skills sets derived from those standards. These skill sets are:

1. Developing a research strategy
2. Selecting finding tools
3. Searching
4. Using finding tool features
5. Retrieving sources
6. Evaluating sources
7. Documenting sources
8. Understanding economic, legal, and social issues

Sample Size and Benchmarking
In spring 2018, a sample of 120 USF students (52 first years, 68 seniors) participated in SAILS. Students were incentivized to participate with a $25 gift card. Forty-three other institutions administered SAILS to a total of 48,642 students. Of the participating institutions, eight were doctoral granting institutions for a total of 10,407 students.
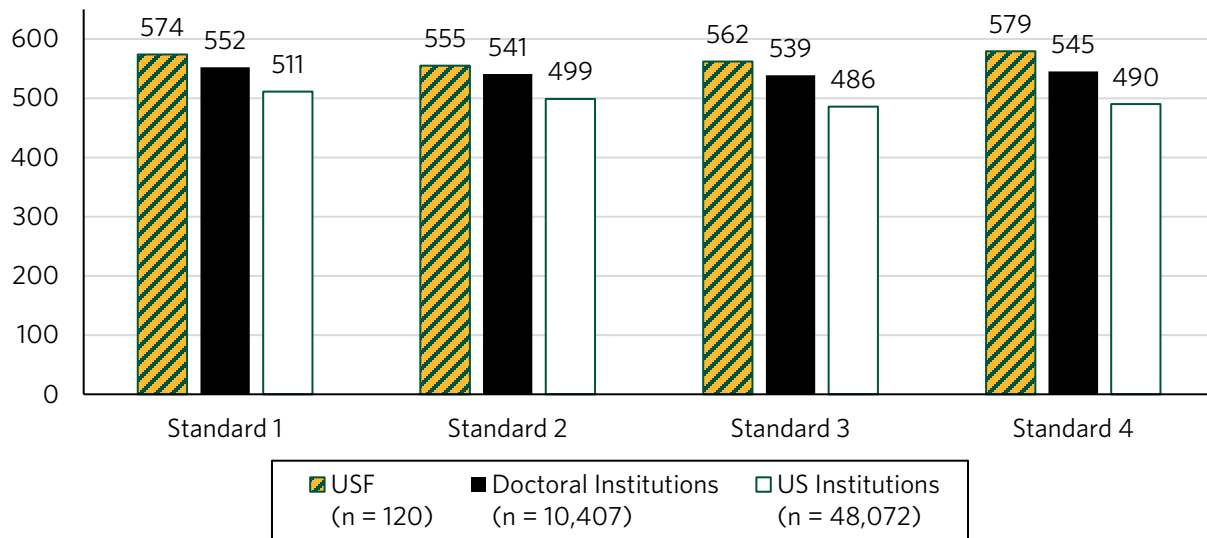
Scores range from 0 to 1,000.

ACRL STANDARDS

How Did Students Perform?
The figure below depicts the average score for USF on the four ACRL standards compared to other doctoral and US institutions.

- Overall, USF students scored higher than students from other doctoral and US institutions on all four standards.
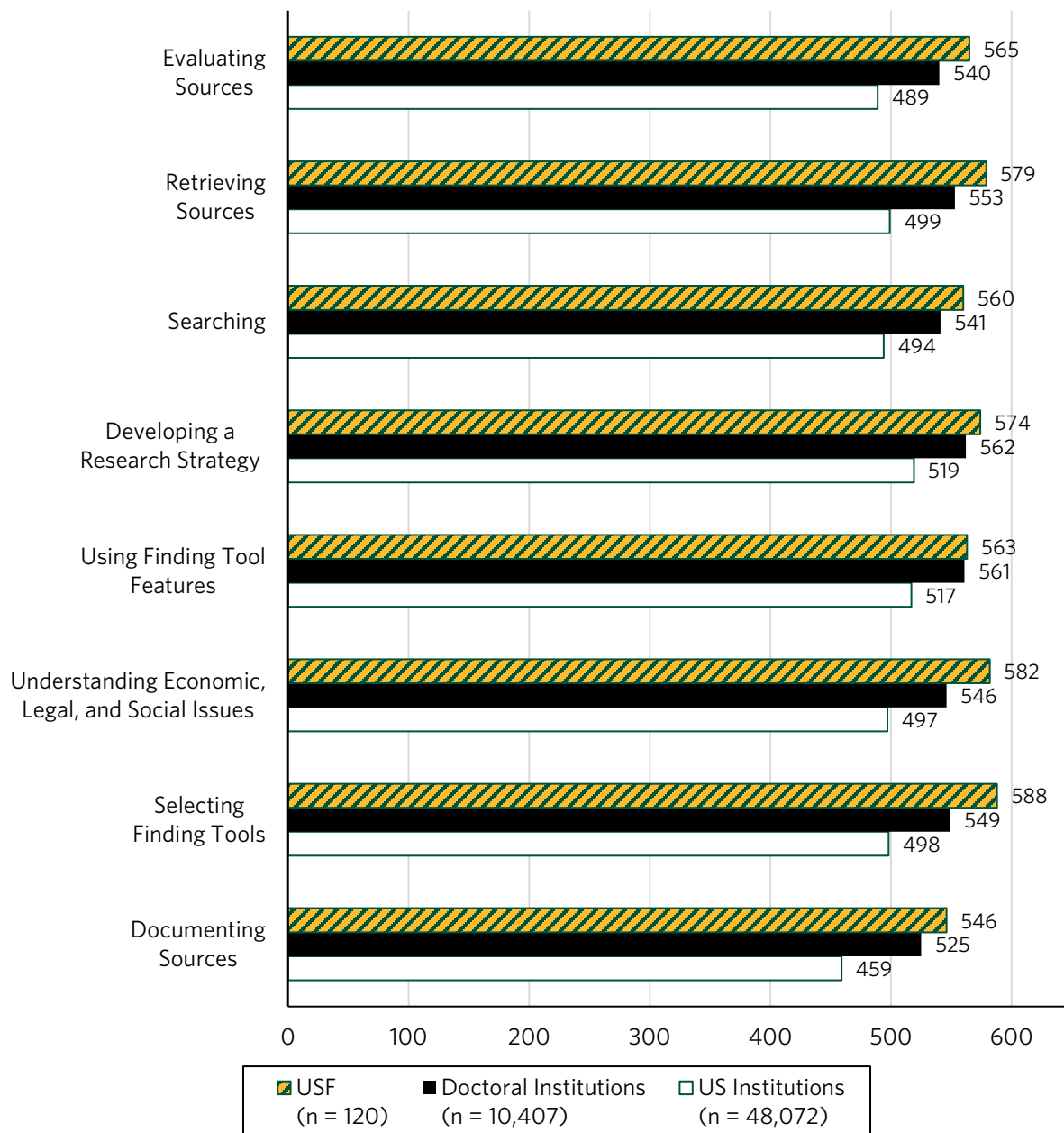
SKILL SETS

How Did Students Perform?
The figure below depicts the average score for USF on the eight skill sets compared to other doctoral and US institutions.

- Overall, USF scored higher on six of the eight skill sets than other doctoral and US institutions (Selecting Finding Tools, Searching, Retrieving Sources, Evaluating Sources, Documenting Sources, Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues), and about the same as those institutions on the remaining two skill sets (Developing a Research Strategy, Using Finding Tool Features).
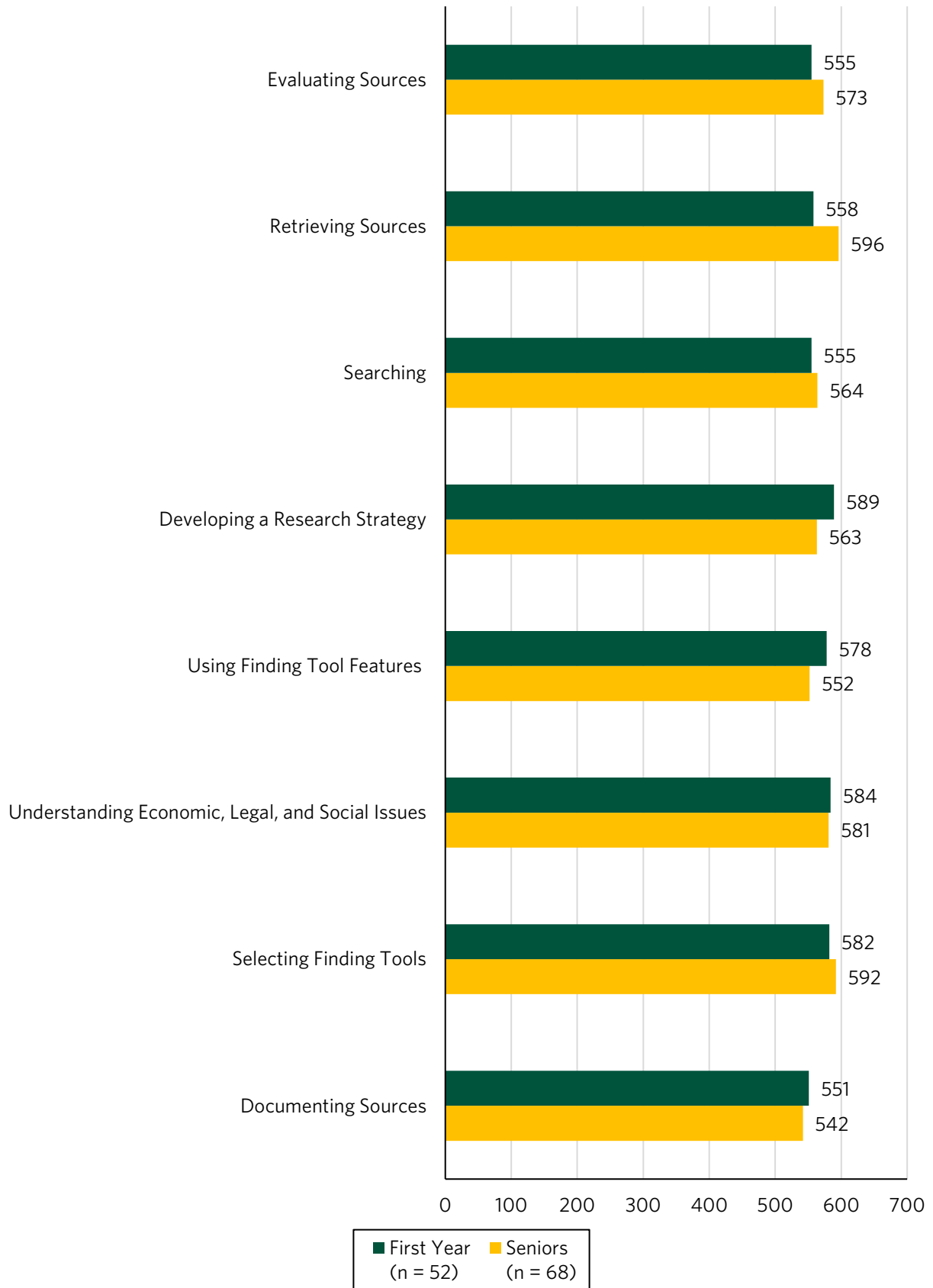
Results by Year and Field of Study

A new addition to the SAILS report for 2018 is the inclusion of results by year and field of study for how students performed across the eight skill sets.

By Year

For 2018, both first year students and seniors were invited to participate in SAILS, which allowed us to investigate similarities and differences between the two class standings. The figure on the following page details how first year students and seniors performed on each of the eight skill sets.

- In general, first year students scored higher than seniors on four of the eight skill sets: Developing a Research Strategy, Using Finding Tool Features, Documenting Sources, and Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues.
- In general, seniors scored higher than first year students on the remaining four skill sets: Selecting Finding Tools, Searching, Retrieving Sources, and Evaluating Sources.
- The magnitude of difference between first year students and seniors is small.

	First Year (n = 52)	Seniors (n = 68)
Evaluating Sources	555	573
Retrieving Sources	558	596
Searching	555	564
Developing a Research Strategy	589	563
Using Finding Tool Features	578	552
Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	584	581
Selecting Finding Tools	582	592
Documenting Sources	551	542

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By Field of Study

Due to the small number of students in many majors, SAILS provided results for the following four fields of study only: Nursing/Health Sciences (n = 30), Business/Management (n = 25), Social Science/Psychology (n = 23), and Science/Math (n = 12). The figure on the following page details how students from these fields of study performed on each of the eight skill sets.

- Nursing/Health Sciences generally performed about the same as students from other fields of study, with the exception of Documenting Sources, in which students scored *below* benchmark.
- Business/Management students generally performed about the same as students from other fields of study, with the exception of Retrieving Sources, Documenting Sources, and Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues, in which students scored *below* benchmark.
- Social Science/Psychology students generally performed about the same as students from other fields of study.
- Science/Math students generally performed about the same as students from other fields of study, with the exception of Developing a Research Strategy, in which students performed *above* benchmark.

	Evaluating Sources	Retrieving Sources	Searching	Developing a Research Strategy	Using Finding Tool Features	Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	Selecting Finding Tools	Documenting Sources
Nursing/Health Sciences (n = 30)	567	603	554	563	587	592	592	493
Business/Management (n = 25)	532	518	548	585	546	525	554	488
Social Science/Psychology (n = 23)	563	602	592	553	535	560	578	594
Science/Math (n = 12)	617	634	559	627	581	566	618	597

Nursing/Health Sciences (n = 30)   **Business/Management (n = 25)**   **Social Science/Psychology (n = 23)**   **Science/Math (n = 12)**

Participation in Information Literacy Sessions

An additional way of understanding if students are developing information literacy competency is by disaggregating the data by the number of information literacy sessions in which they have participated. Students self-reported the number of information literacy sessions in which they participated using the following response options: *0*, *1*, *2*, or *3 or more*. There was insufficient data for students who participated in *3 or more* sessions to be included in the analyses. The figure on the following page details how students performed on each of the eight skill sets based on the number of information literacy sessions they completed.

- Students who self-reported not participating in any information literacy sessions scored about the same as other students on Documenting Sources, Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues, Selecting Finding Tools, Using Finding Tool Features, Developing a Research Strategy, and Evaluating Sources, and worse than other students on Searching and Retrieving Sources.
- Students who self-reported participating in one information literacy session scored better on Selecting Finding Tool Features and Developing a Research Strategy, worse on Using Finding Tool Features, and about the same as other students on Documenting Sources, Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues, Searching, Retrieving Sources, and Evaluating Sources.
- Students who self-reported participating in two information literacy sessions, scored worse on Documenting Sources, Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues, and Evaluating Sources, and about the same as other students on Selecting Finding Tool Features, Using Finding Tool Features, Developing a Research Strategy, Searching, and Retrieving Sources.

Category	Zero Sessions (n = 45)	One Session (n = 32)	Two Sessions (n = 36)
Evaluating Sources	574	594	536
Retrieving Sources	572	580	583
Searching	546	574	574
Developing a Research Strategy	567	595	568
Using Finding Tool Features	575	534	582
Selecting Finding Tools	578	664	551
Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues	596	583	566
Documenting Sources	582	572	487
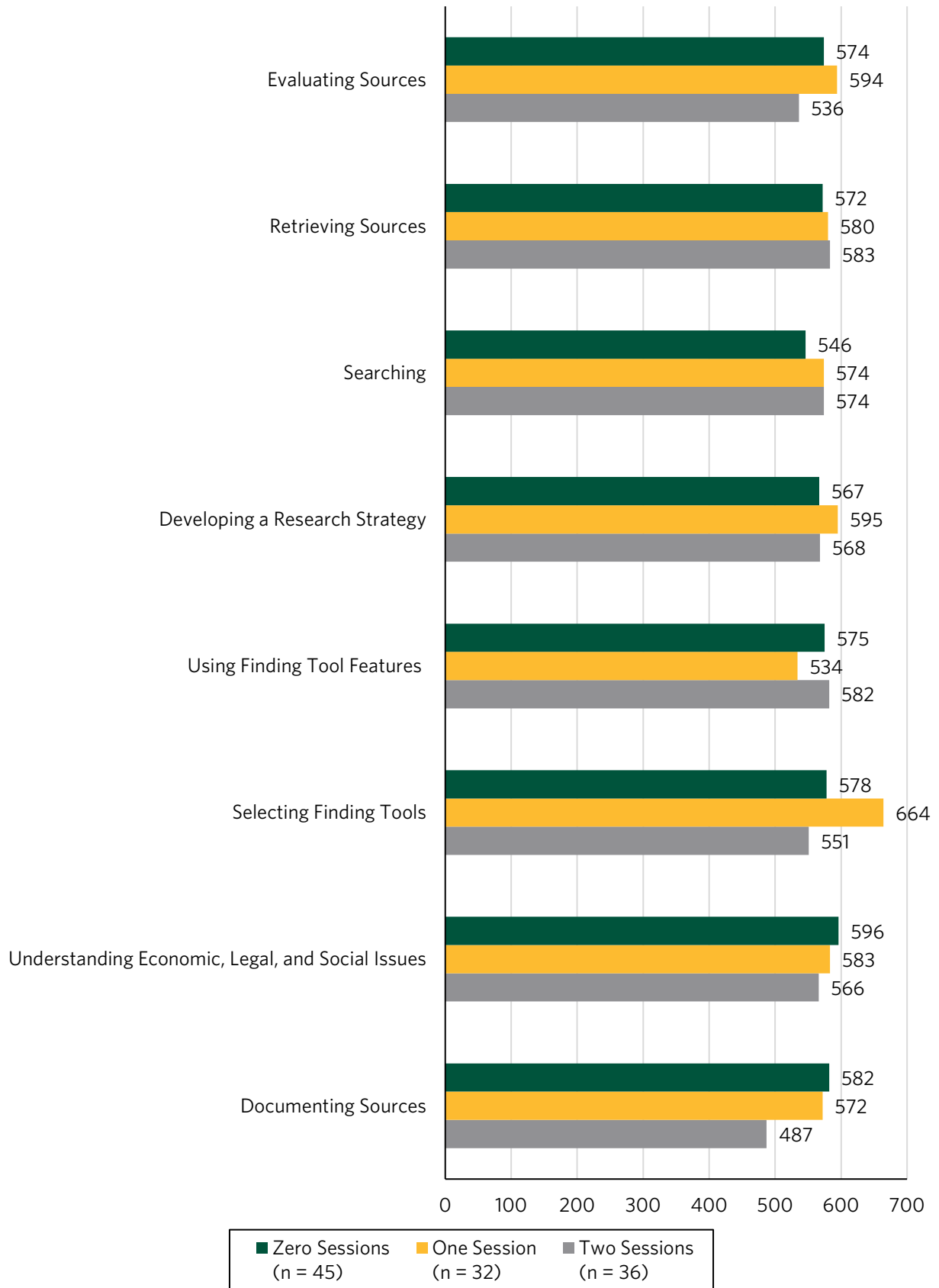
SUMMARY

- Replicating the 2017 administration of SAILS, USF students performed better than students from other doctoral and US institutions on the four ACRL standards, affirming the positive impact of USF on students' information literacy skills.
- USF students performed better than students from other doctoral and US institutions on six of the eight skill sets: Selecting Finding Tools, Searching, Retrieving Sources, Evaluating Sources, Documenting Sources, and Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues. USF students performed as well as other doctoral-granting and US institutions on the remaining two skill sets: Developing a Research Strategy and Using Finding Tool Features.
- Although some differences emerged between first year students and seniors on the eight skill sets, the magnitude of these differences were small and relatively negligible.
- Some notable differences emerged by field of study. In particular, Nursing/Health Studies students performed below benchmark on Documenting Sources, Business/Management students performed below benchmark on Retrieving Sources, Documenting Sources, and Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues, and Science/Math students performed above benchmark on Developing a Research Strategy. Social Science/ Psychology students performed about the same as students from other fields of study on all eight skill sets.
- The number of self-reported information literacy sessions may play a role in information literacy competency, with the most notable impact being participating in one information literacy session.

REFLECTION

Strengths
- USF students who participated in the spring 2018 SAILS administration demonstrated competency in information literacy.
- Including both first-year students and graduating seniors allowed us to make comparisons between the two class years.
- Opening participation up to all first-year students and graduating seniors, instead of relying on a stratified random sample only, had the potential to increase the sample size.

Limitations
- The small sample size continues to be a limitation in assessing information literacy among USF students. Although a larger number of students were invited to participate, the sample size doubled due to the inclusion of first-year students, and not due to opening the assessment up to all seniors.

Moving Forward
- The Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support and Gleeson Library | Geschke Center will administer SAILS for at least one more academic year. We are interested with the breadth of information gained by including first year students and hope to continue gaining their participation for future assessments.
- Implementing new strategies to increase sample size will allow for a more robust interpretation of the results.
- We plan to work with the Office of Marketing Communications to promote the next administration of SAILS, which will likely lead to larger samples.