Title

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Publication Date

2013-06-06

Supplemental Material

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0zg2m0cd#supplemental

Evaluating the Need for Library Diversity Residency Programs in the 21st Century

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Introduction and Scope

Residency programs provide valuable mentoring and professional development opportunities for new library school graduates. This is important in light of concerns in the academic library community regarding recruitment and retention. Across the board, researchers have found that the majority of residents believed their residency programs were positive experiences. We conducted a nationwide survey of current and former library residents, as well as residency coordinators in the United States. Our comprehensive assessment of programs across the nation, combined with the random sampling of current and former library residents, we hope will help librarians and library administrators determine what approaches will work best in starting and improving such a program.
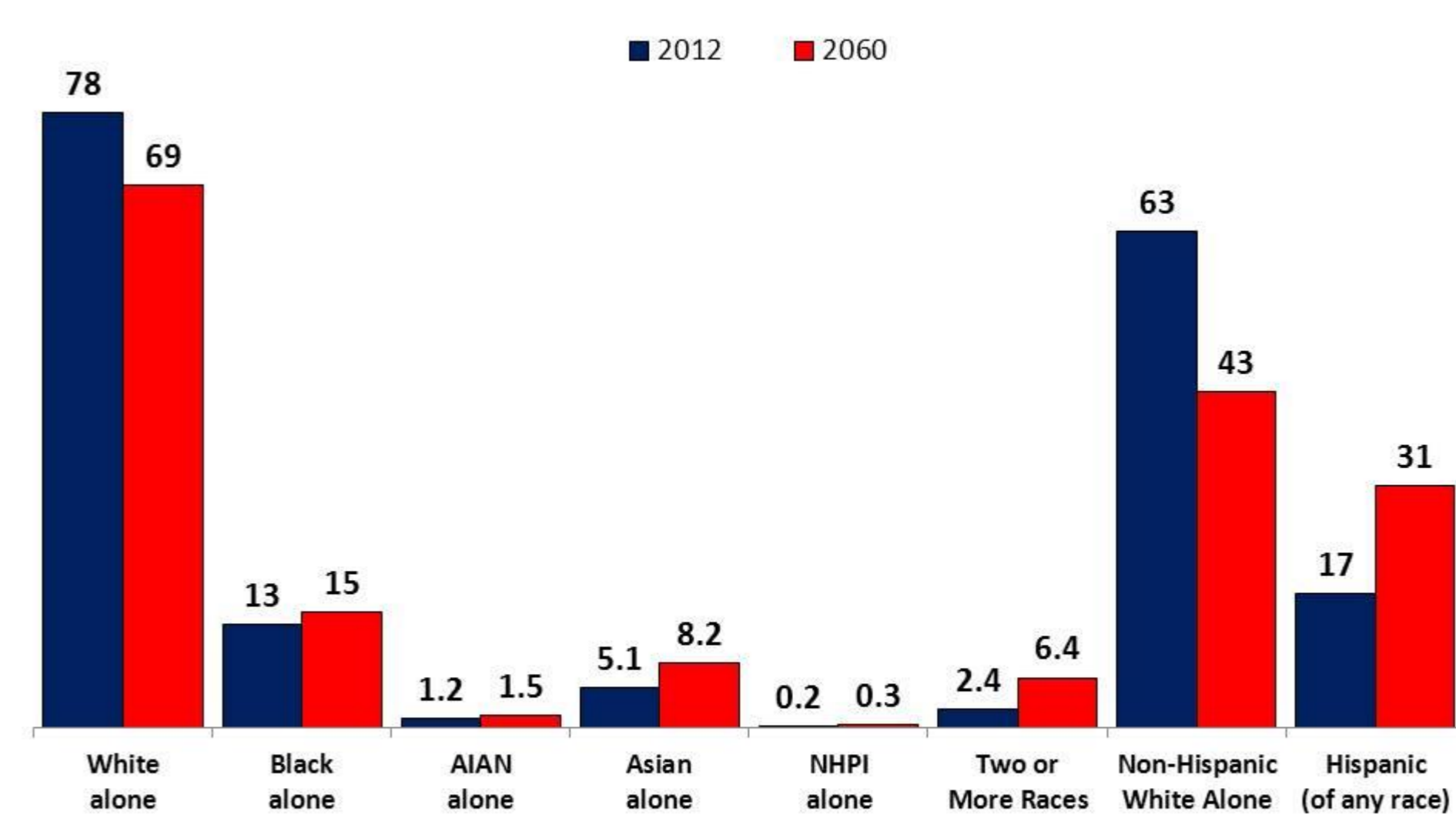
Rationale

Between 2000 and 2013, the number of librarians of color in the United States increased by only 2.9% .

Data taken from American Library Association Member Demographics Studies, 2000 and 2013
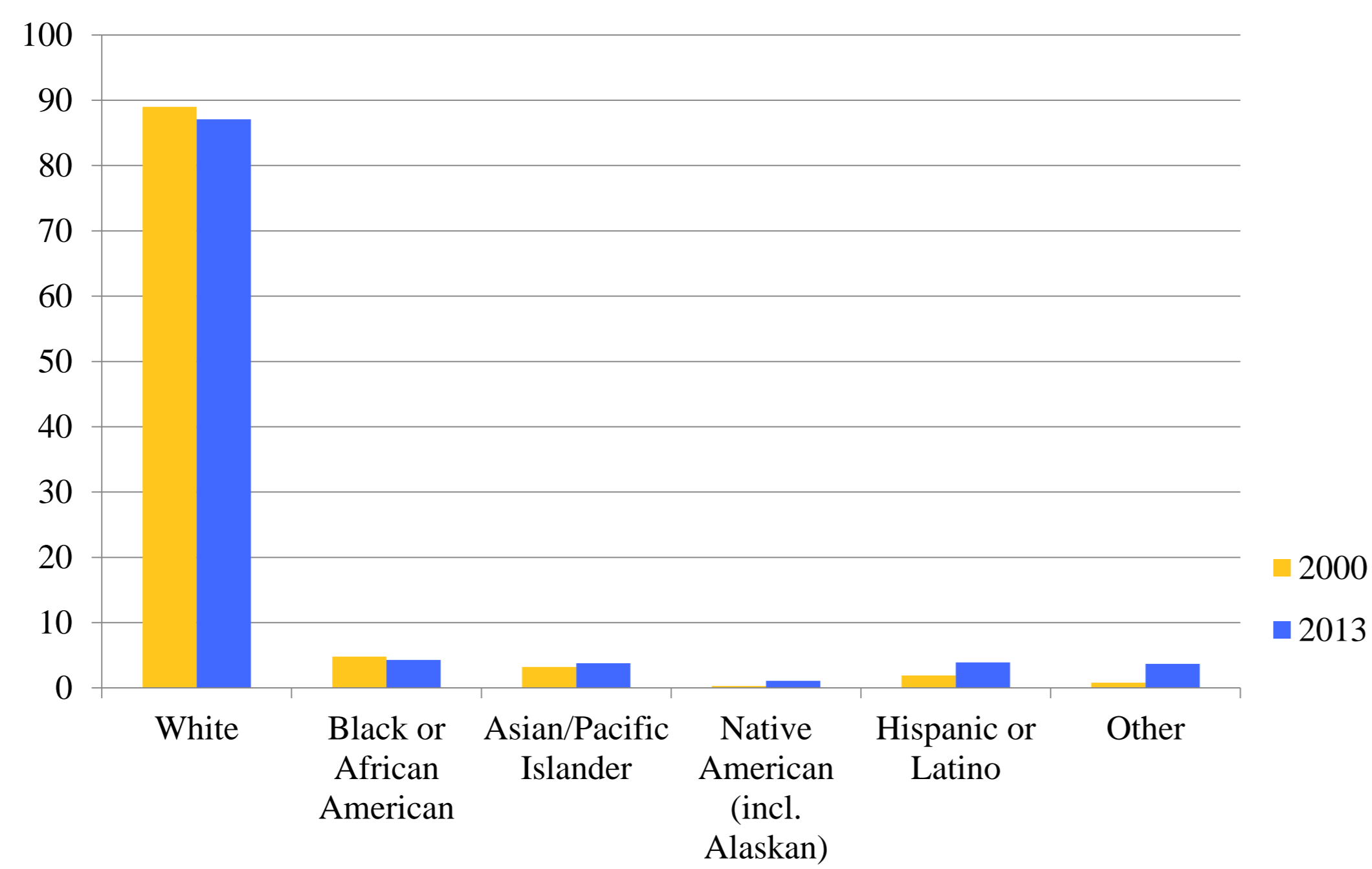
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2012 and 2060
(Percent of total population)

AIAN=American Indian and Alaska Native; NHPI=Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

"When the profession's lack of diversity record demonstrates a dissimilarity and disconnect from the nation's general population, there is a professional and emotional impact on U.S. communities and librarians of color. Our profession loses relevance for many citizens."

— Denise Adkins and Isabel Espinal, "The Diversity Mandate"

As of 2014, there are 34 active Academic Residency Programs in the United States compared to over 3,000 Academic Libraries in the United States.

Map of Post-Master's Programs in the USA provided by the ACRL Residency Interest Group.
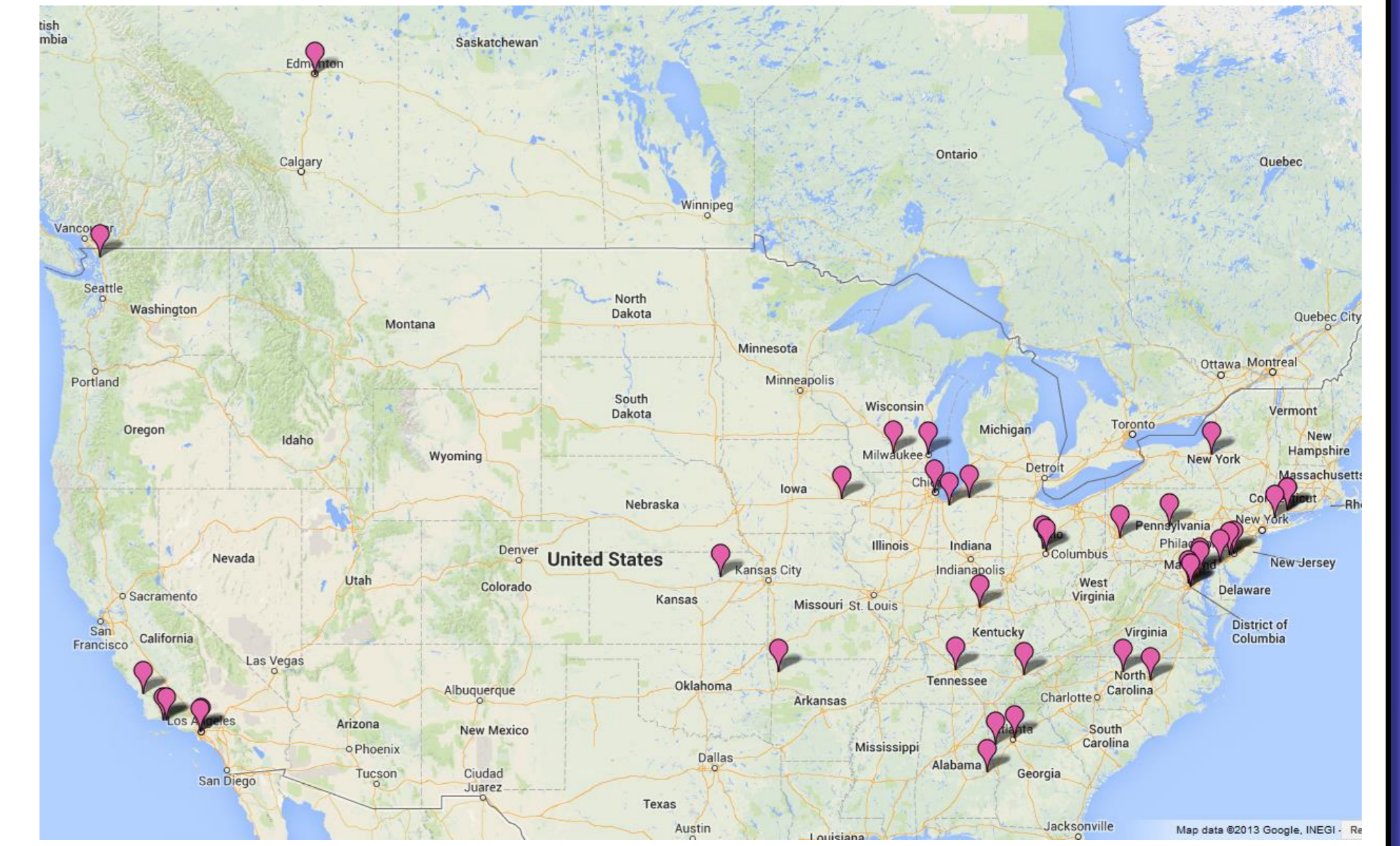
Research Objectives

- Paint a picture of the landscape of library residency programs in the USA as they exist today.
- Determine what program elements effectively acclimate early career librarians to a career in academic librarianship.
- Discover potential improvement opportunities for programs.

Selected Recommendations

Based on findings and literature review:

- Determine organizational objectives or needs, and concrete ways a residency program will help achieve them
- Set at least a 2 year, full-time placement
- Offer structured mentoring to provide scaffolding for residents
- Encourage and facilitate collaborations between residents and other academic units on campus
- Require a capstone project to provide experience in project management and leadership skills that will make residents more marketable by the end of their terms
- Recruit with diversity in mind in order to match the professional library workforce with the changing population
- Assess residency programs regularly

Selected Findings:

29 current and former coordinators and 118 current and former residents responded to the surveys.

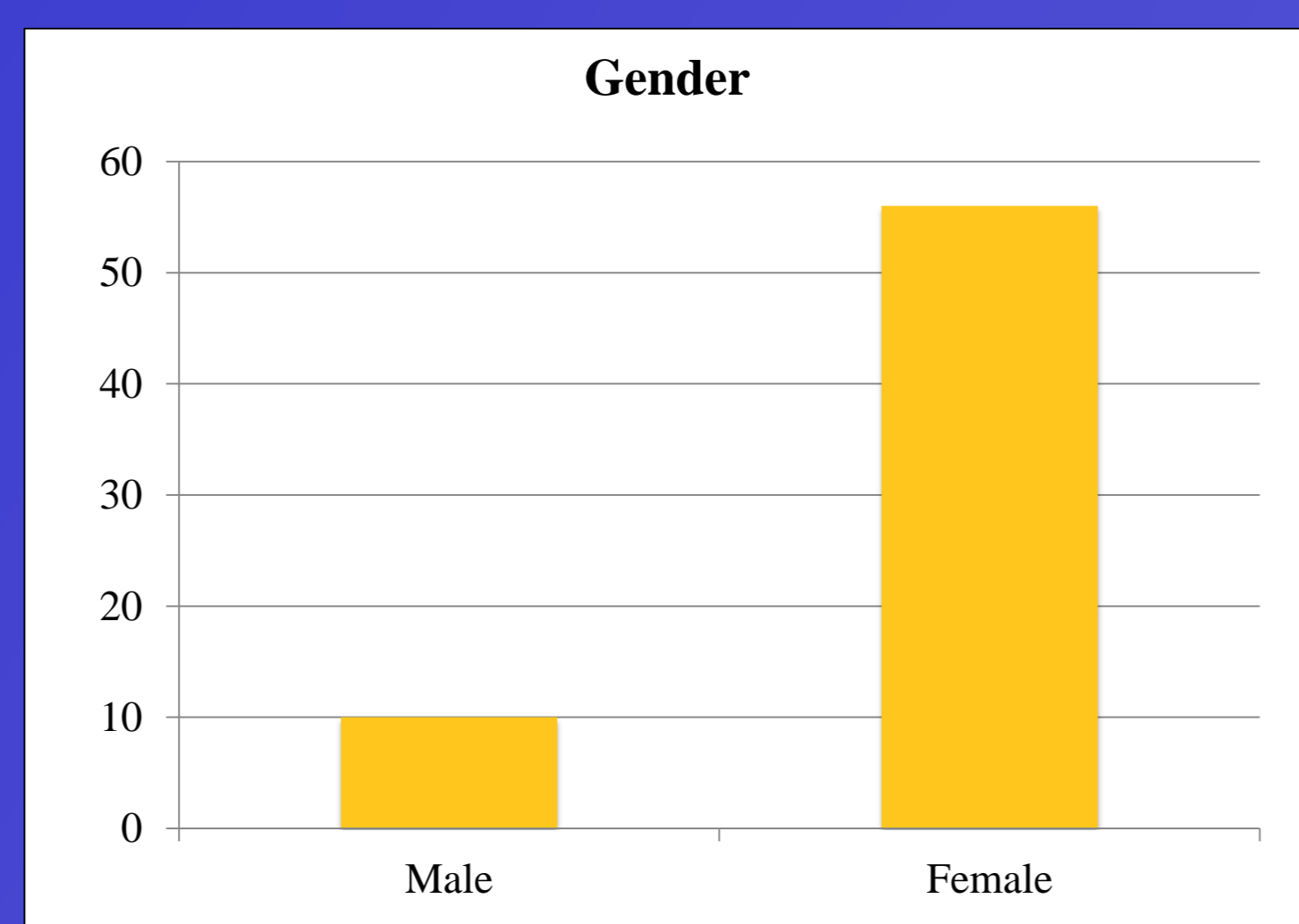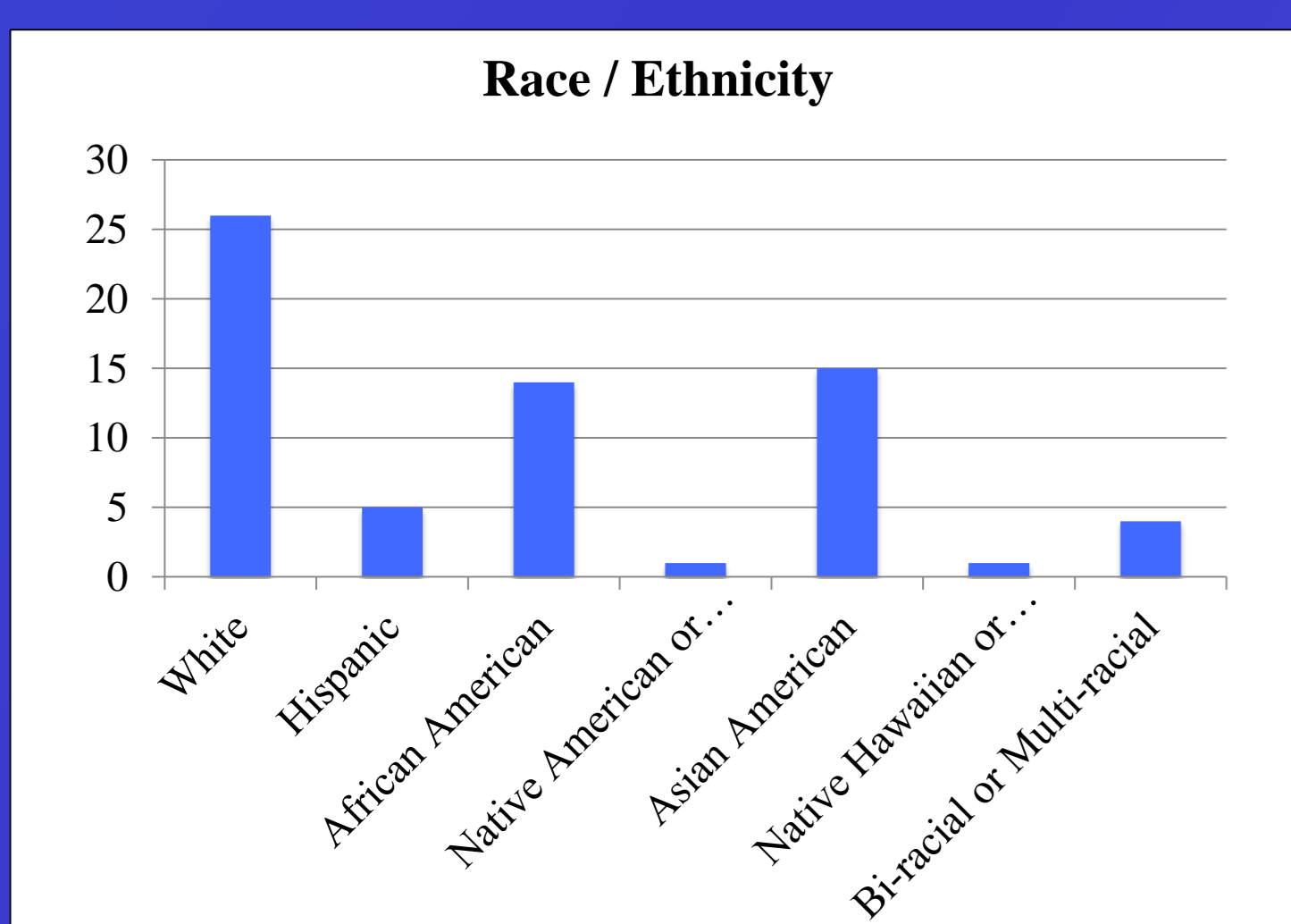|	COORDINATORS				RESIDENTS			
Program Structure	Rotations		Focused Standing		Rotations		Focused Standing	
	18.5%		51.9%		29.5%		57.4%	
Program Mission & Goals	Increase Diversity	Mentor New Librarians	Recruit Subject Specialists	Leadership Development	Increase Diversity	Mentor New Librarians	Recruit Subject Specialists	Leadership Development
	73.3%	80%	23.3%	40%	52.2%	76.8%	10.1%	46.4%
Program Length	< 1 Year	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	< 1 Year	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
	3.3%	10%	86.7%	0%	11.8%	22.1%	61.8%	4.4%
Mentoring	Formal		Informal		Formal	Informal		None
	64%		36%		65.7%	26.9%		7.5%
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Program has a residency cohort	59.3%		40.7%		64.6%		35.4%	
Program encourages / facilitates collaborations with other academic units	77.8%		22.2%		67.5%		32.5%	
Program requires a capstone project	32%		68%		37.8%		62.2%	
Institution collects feedback to improve program	90.9%		9.1%		46%		16%	
Program prepares residents for ongoing changes in library profession					68.9%		31.1%	

Selected Comments by Coordinators

- "We don't have the funding for more than one resident. If I could carve out the funding, I would like to have two at a time, probably with overlapping terms."
- "The library faculty rotation supervisor introduces the resident to campus faculty and staff who are important to the department's work. The Diversity Officer mentors the resident to be successful in academic librarianship vis a vis scholarship and professional development."
- "The program has been structured primarily as series of 3-4 assignments. In very recent years, we have experimented with a 2-year focused assignment."
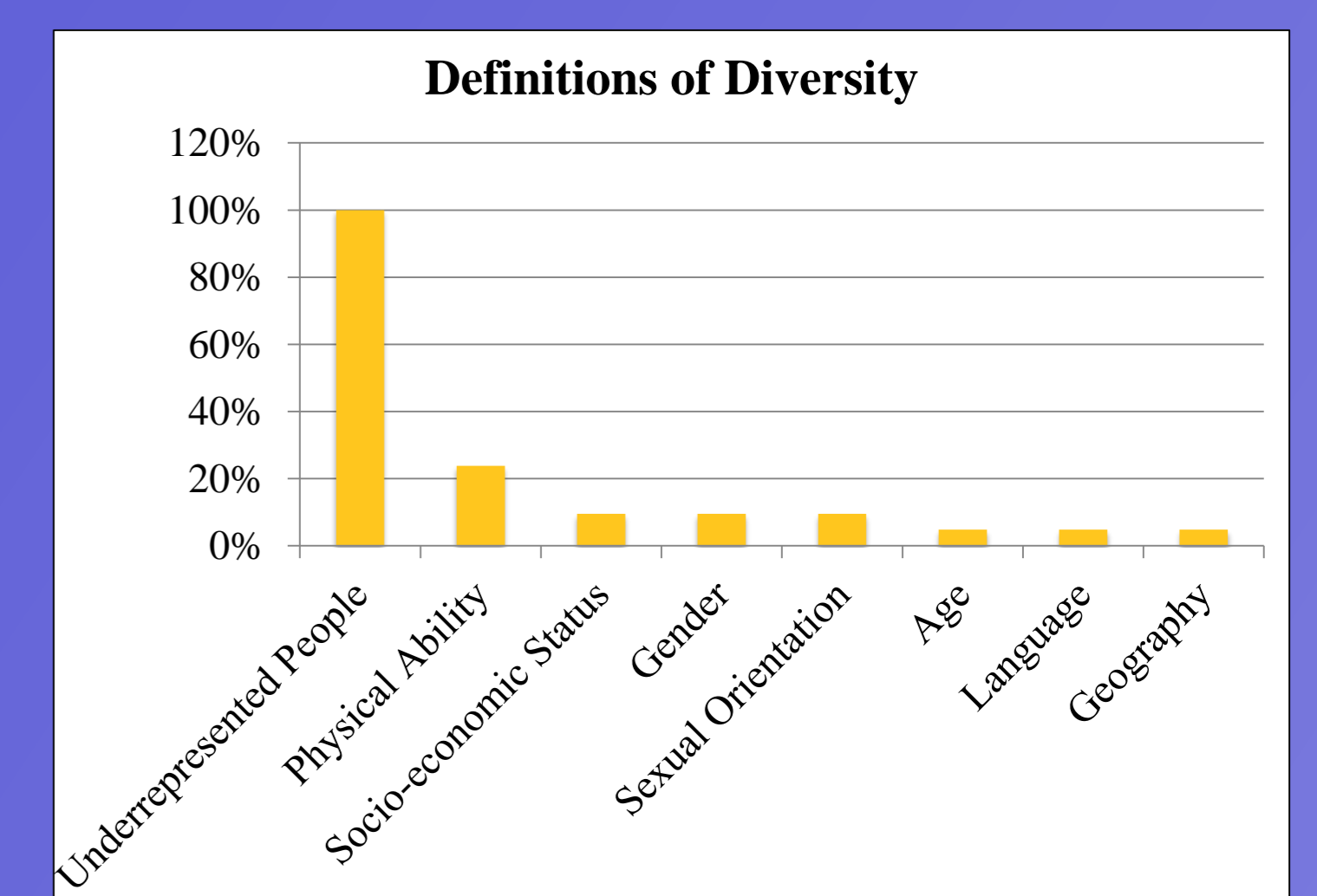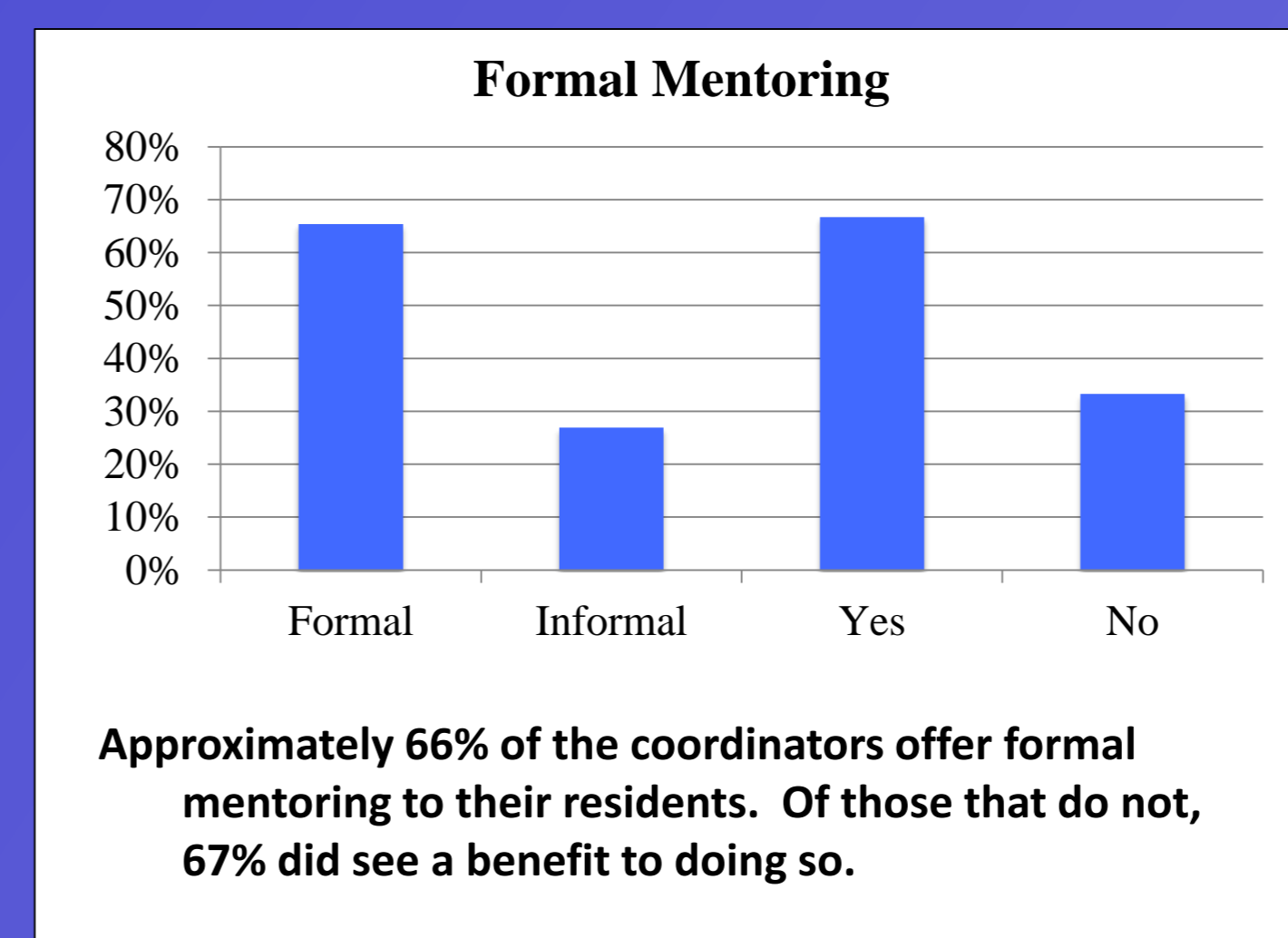
Selected Comments by Residents

- "It was a unique experience at one of the top research libraries in the country. We had a cohort of 4 each year, so at any time, 8 were in the program. It was the perfect number to allow us to develop as leaders and to engage in stimulating learning."
- "I also applied to get a mentor through the ACRL Dr. E.J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Program and she was EXCELLENT. We still regularly talk."
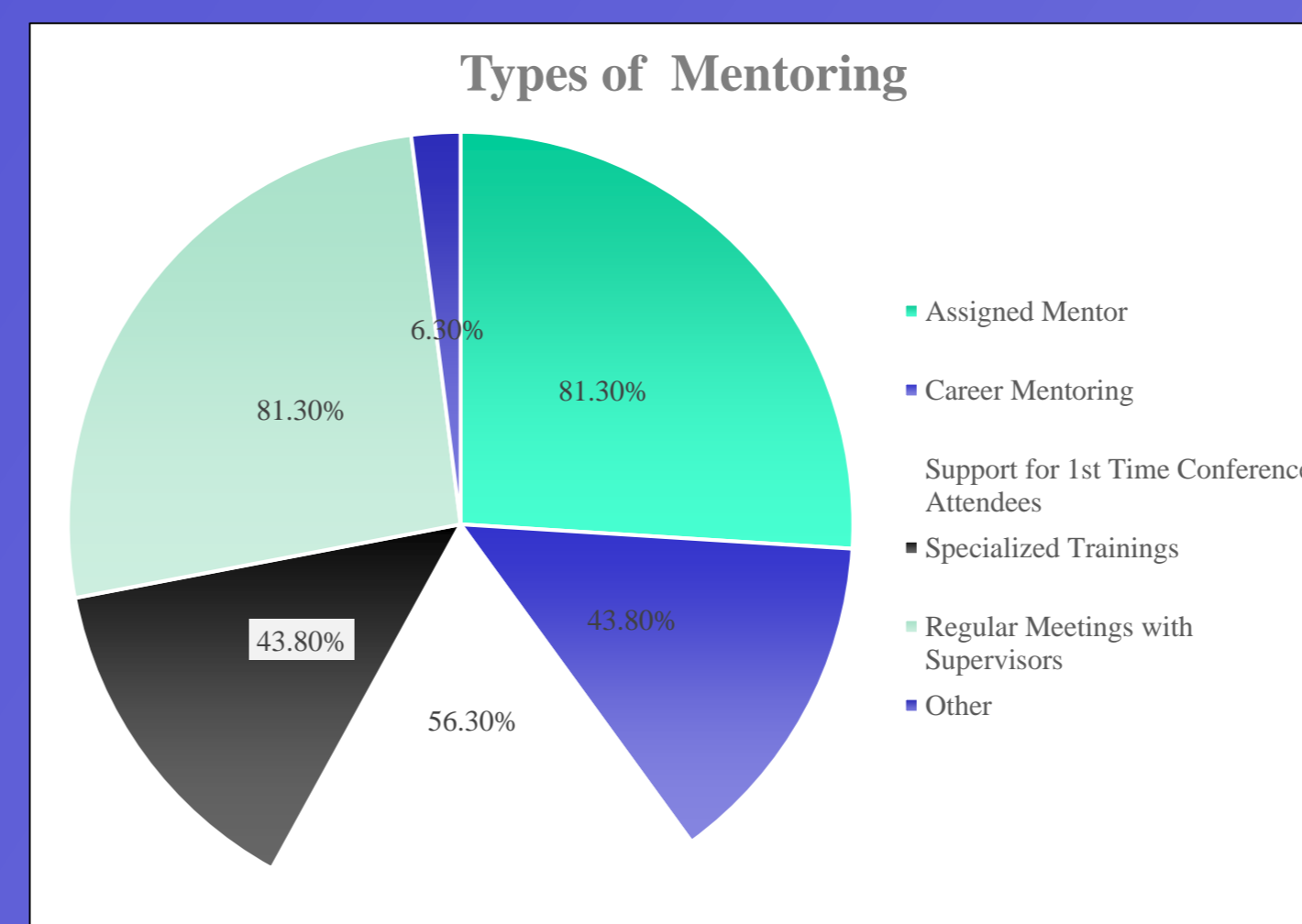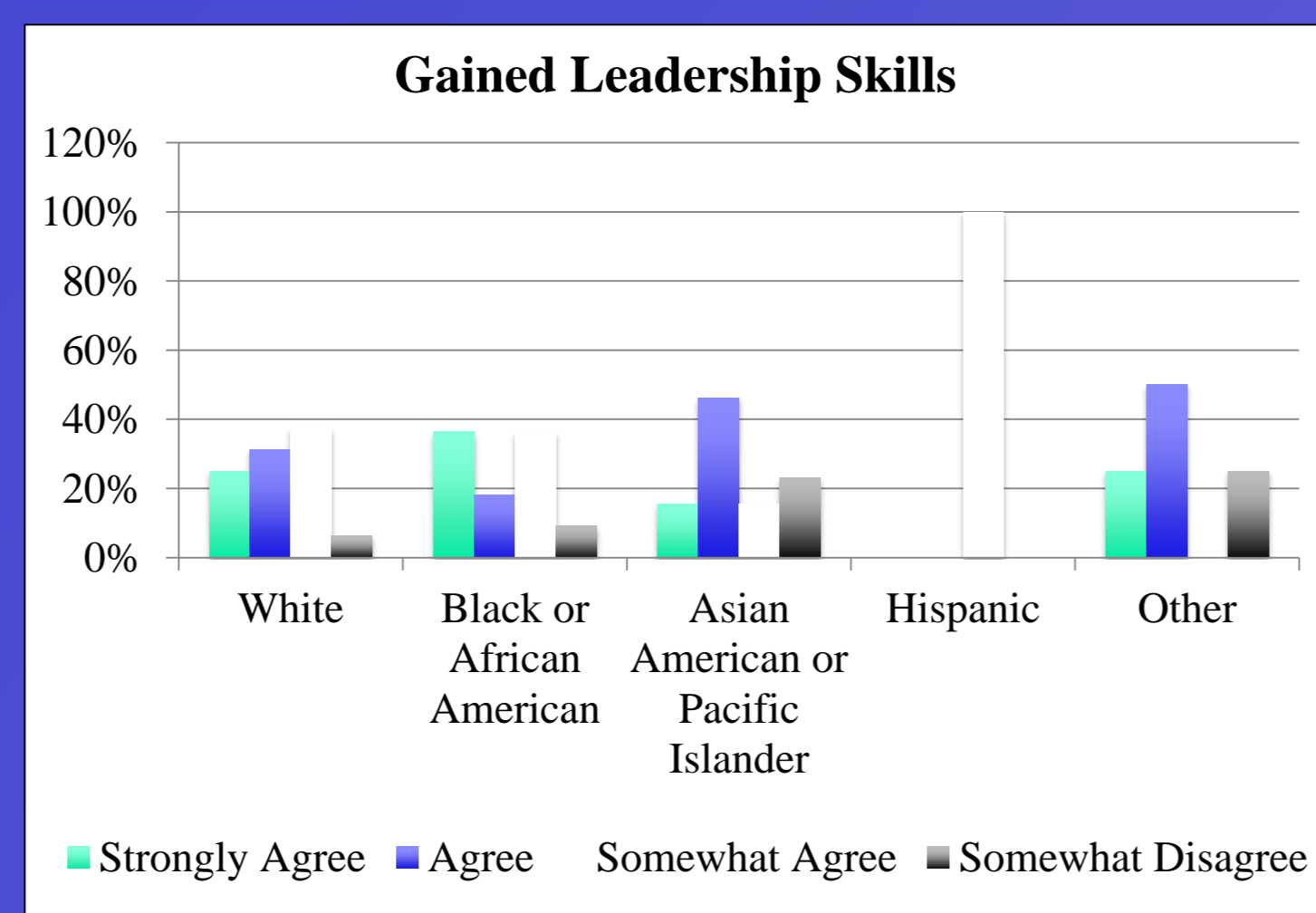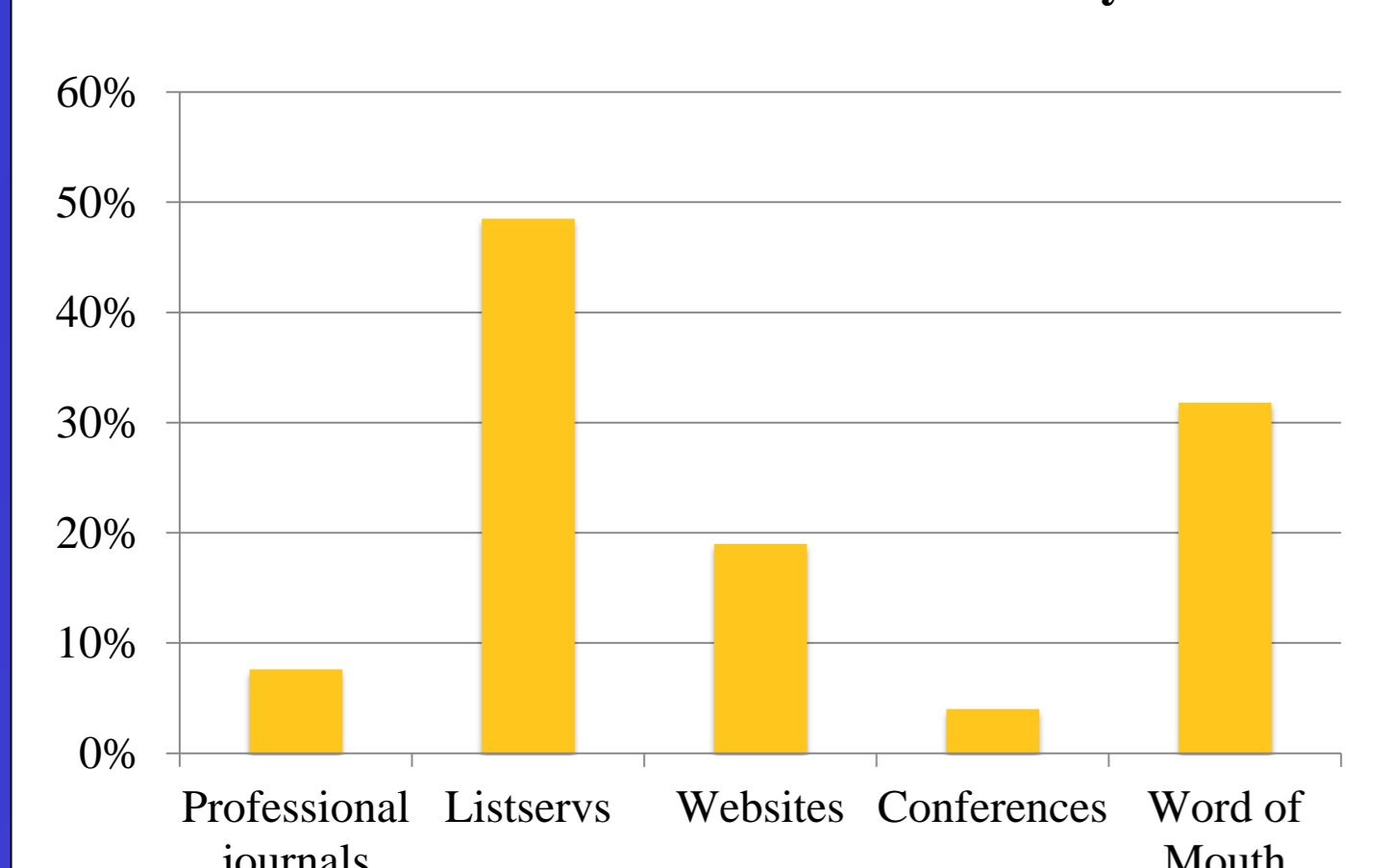- "Learning to navigate a large organization is hard to do, and the mentoring I received was invaluable."

The Residents

Race / Ethnicity

Gender

Where Did You Find Your Residency?

Gained Leadership Skills

The Coordinators

Formal Mentoring

Approximately 66% of the coordinators offer formal mentoring to their residents. Of those that do not, 67% did see a benefit to doing so.

Definitions of Diversity

Types of Mentoring

Acknowledgements