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Library Residency Programs: Investing in the Future of Libraries

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Authors

Im, Suzanne

Boyd, Angela

Blue, Yolanda

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Library Residency Programs: Investing in the Future of Libraries

Suzanne Im, Angela Boyd, Yolanda Blue

sim@library.ucsb.edu, aboyd@library.ucsb.edu, blue@library.ucsb.edu

University of California Santa Barbara Library



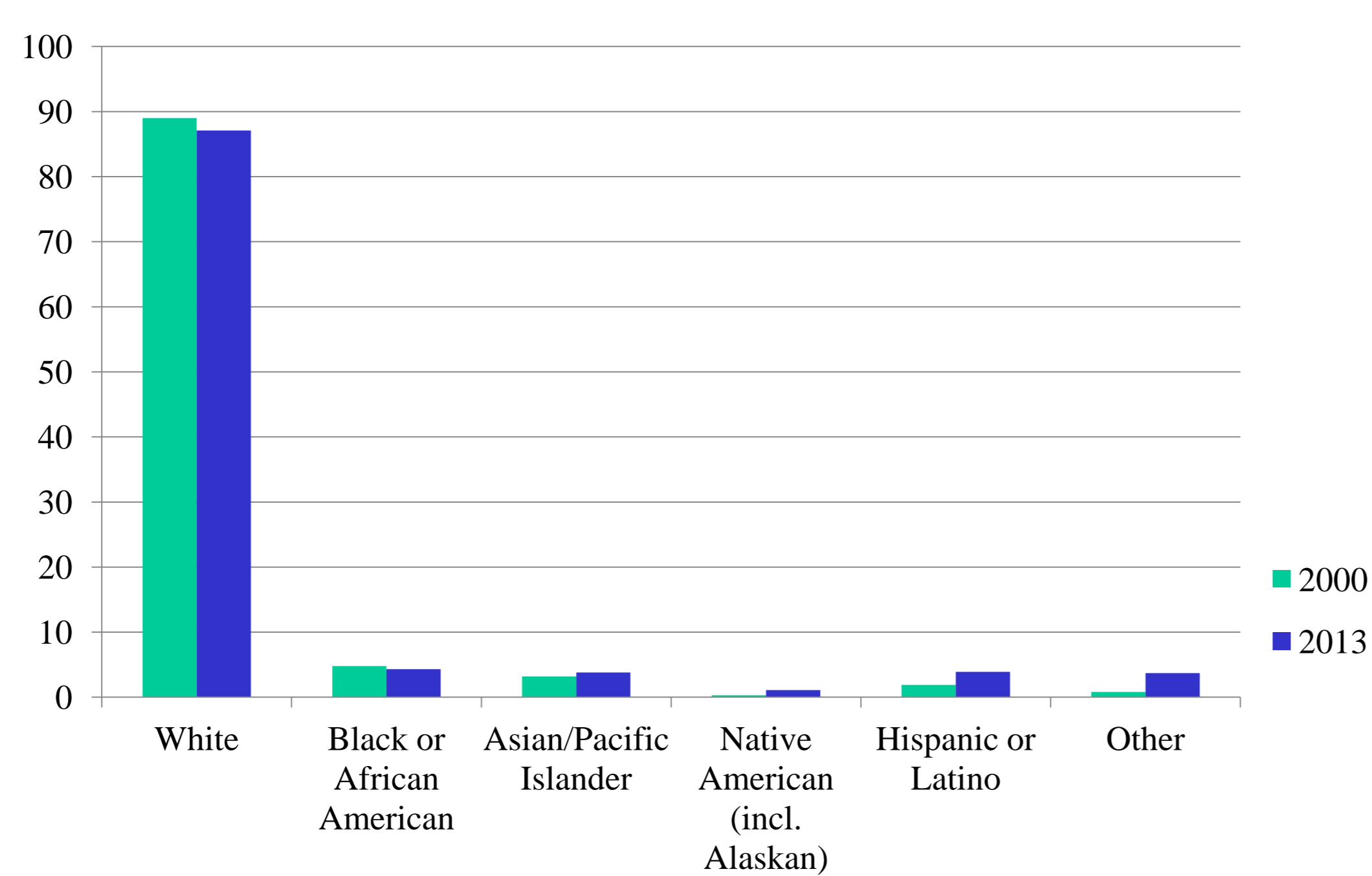
Introduction and Scope

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, will help librarians and library administrators determine what approaches will work best in improving or starting such a program.

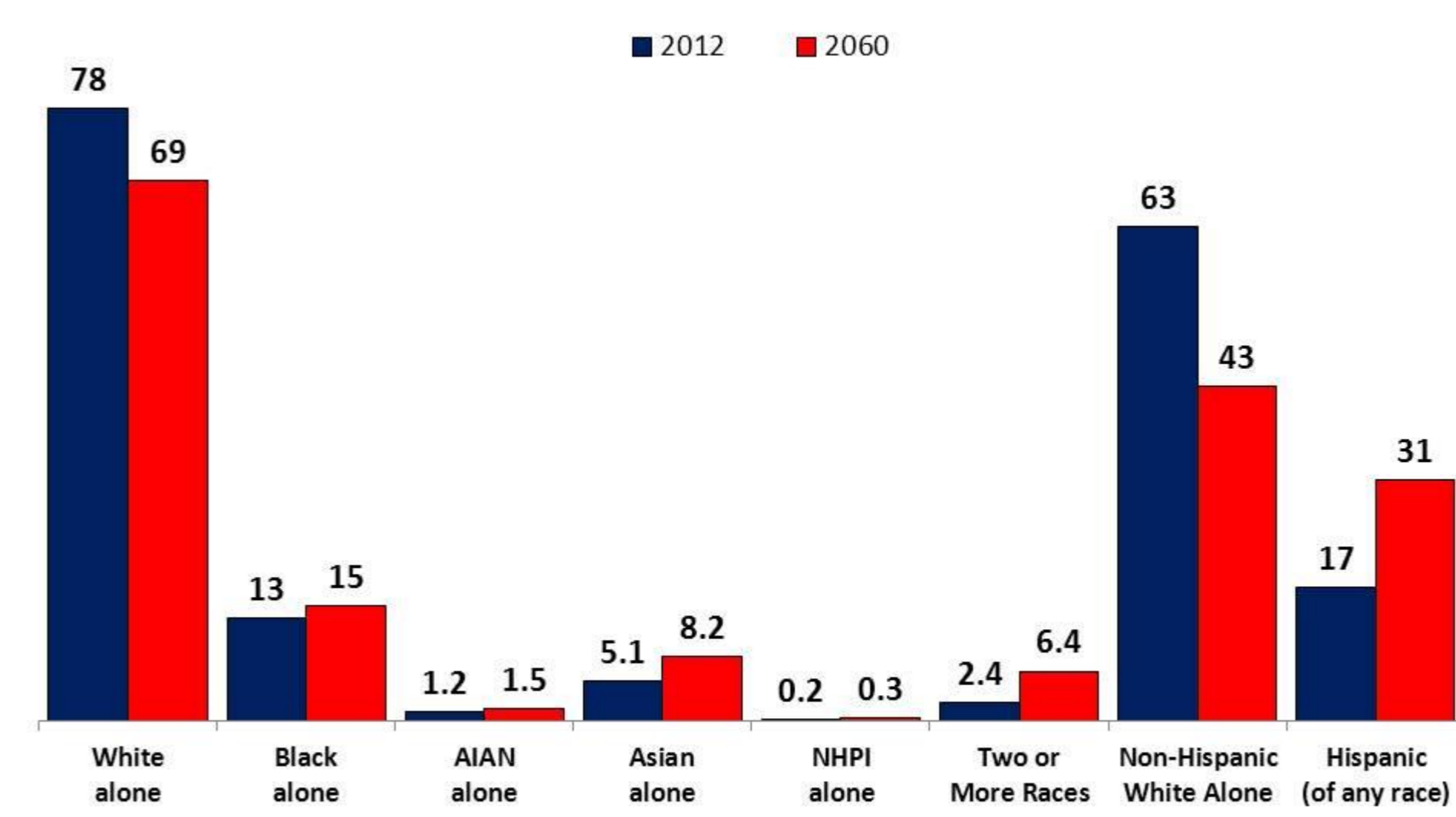
Rationale

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)



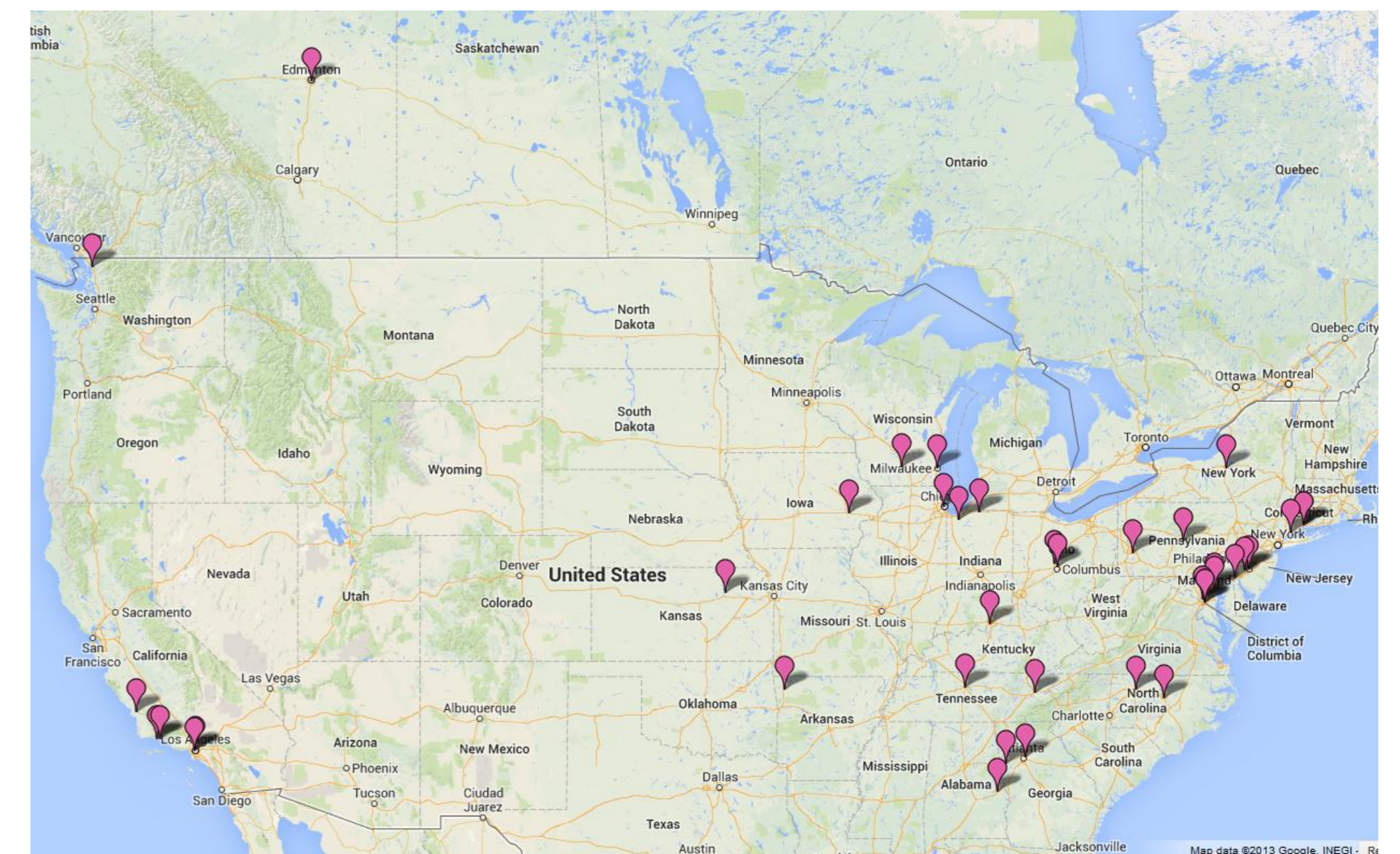
AIAN=American Indian and Alaska Native; NHPH=Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

United States Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

"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"

There are only 30 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.

Method

- Investigators identified a total of 51 current and former library residency programs and coordinators.
- Emailed 2 electronic survey instruments to target populations; one for coordinators, and another for current and former residents
- Recruited current and former residents on various professional library listservs

Selected Comments by Participants

- "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 was convinced that the program paid dividends because it helped us attract outstanding students [and graduates] from schools we normally couldn't compete with."
- "I wish [the program] existed still. I use my discretionary funding to create quasi-residency opportunities and try to influence my colleagues to recreate the program."
- "We have staggered terms for our residents, so we always have one first-year and one second-year."
- "[Staggered] terms helps with training and mentoring as well as camaraderie."
- "[I would have liked to have had] a mentor who was actually interested in helping me adjust to the culture."

Selected Findings:

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

Program Structure	COORDINATORS				RESIDENTS				
	Rotations		Focused standing		Rotations		Focused standing assignment		
	18.5%		51.9%		29.5%		57.4%		
Program mission and goals	Increase diversity	Mentor new librarians	Recruit subject specialist	Leadership development	Increase diversity	Mentor new librarians	Recruit subject specialist	Leadership development	
	73.3%	80.0%	23.3%	40.0%	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%	10.0%	86.7%	0.0%	11.8%	22.1%	61.8%	4.4%	
Mentoring	Formal		Informal		Formal		Informal		None
	64.0%		36.0%		65.7%		26.9%		7.5%
Program has a residency cohort	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	59.3%	40.7%	64.6%	35.4%	64.6%	35.4%	64.6%	35.4%	
Program encourages/ facilitates collaborations with other academic units on campus:	Yes		No		Yes		No		
	77.8%		22.2%		67.5%		32.5%		
Program requires a capstone project	32.0%		68.0%		37.8%		62.2%		
Institution collects feedback to improve program	90.9%		9.1%		68.9%		31.1%		
Program prepares residents for ongoing changes in library profession	68.9%		31.1%		68.9%		31.1%		

Recommendations

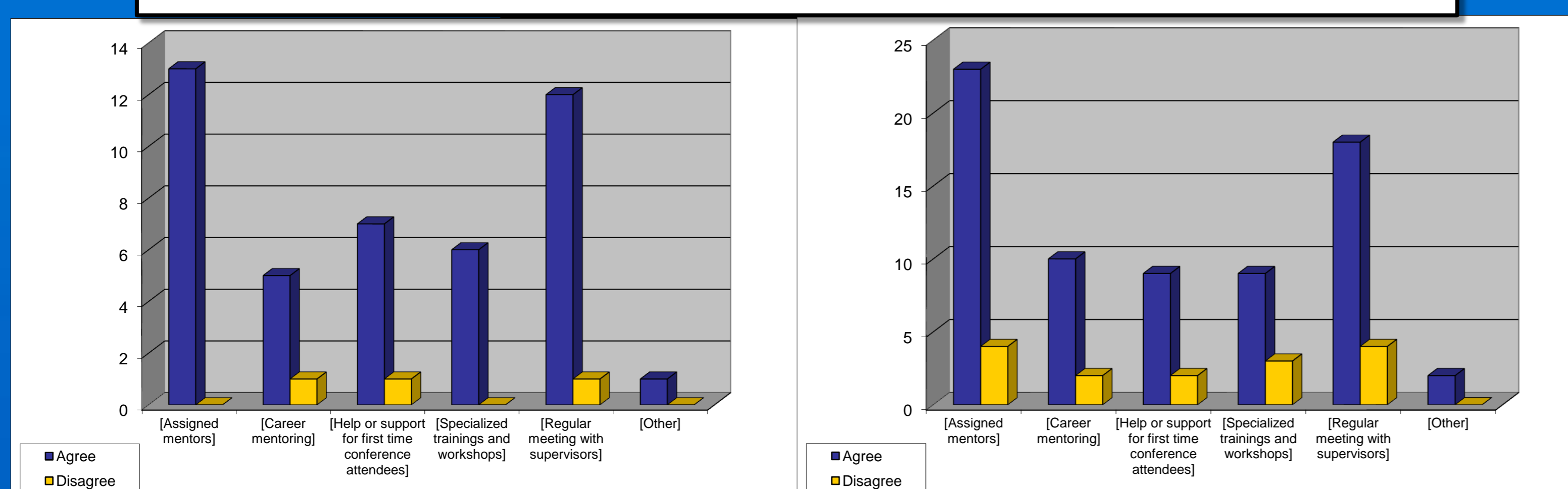
Based on findings and literature review:

- 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

Residents

Coordinators

By the end of the program, would you say residents were more well versed in faculty engagement?

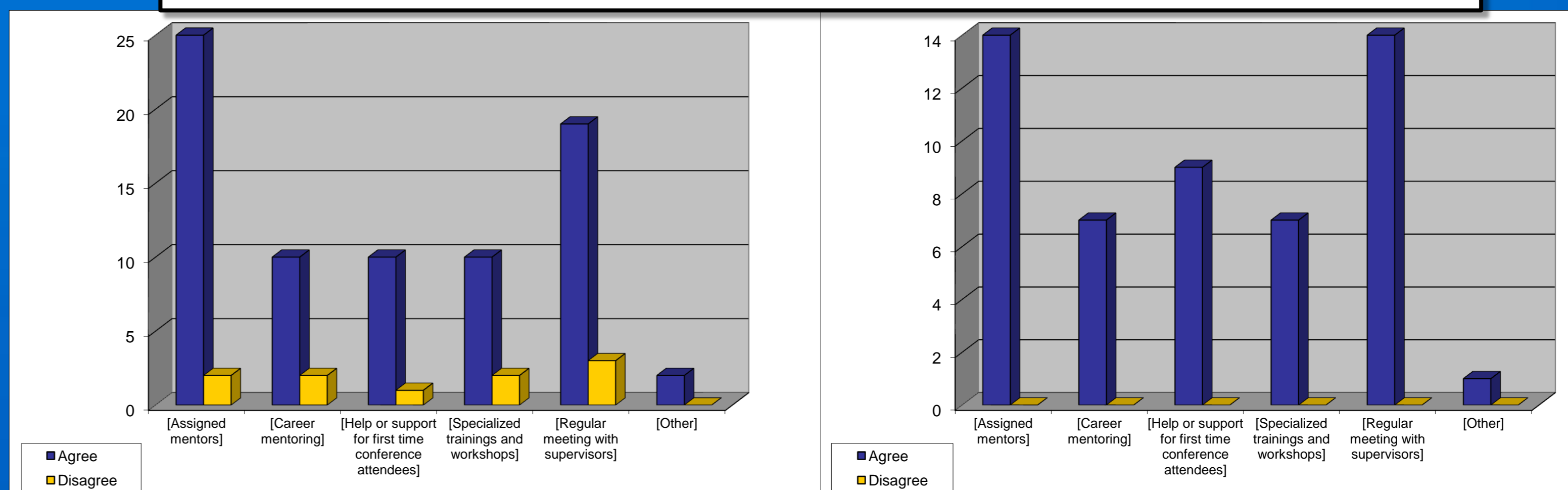


Mentoring Program Structure

Residents

Coordinators

By the end of the program, would you say residents were better leaders?



Mentoring Program Structure