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**Preserving Cultural
Heritage**

Expectations and Realities: A 2024 Condition Report of Conservators

Survey Report, January 2025

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Executive Summary

At the AIC meeting in May 2024, we were thrilled to see a packed house for the session titled *Expectations and Realities: The State of Emerging Professionals in the Field*. This session was planned by a group of conservators who, over the last five years and in varying capacities, have served the Emerging Conservation Professionals Network (ECPN) of AIC. The topics and discussions held during this session represent the culmination of the work of more than 30 volunteers, each from a range of training backgrounds, employment circumstances, and career levels. As part of the initial planning for this session, the volunteers came together to hold discussions regarding their experiences and brainstorm actionable solutions to systemic issues in the field. These conversations led to the development of three surveys which aimed to assess the realities facing emerging conservators, educators, and established conservators. The survey data, which was shared during this session, was used by the organizers to inform and convene thoughtful panel conversations about current statistics and experiences in the professional landscape.

The surveys were written to directly target three themes: (1) the Emerging Conservation Professionals' (ECPs) experience, (2) current education and training practices, and (3) career stages, including pathways to the field and advancement within it. The first two surveys split into separate tracks of questions which focused on subsets of respondents with unique perspectives. For example, Survey 1 was open only to ECPs and split respondents into pre-training, current graduate students/trainees, and post-training tracks depending on their initial responses. Surveys 2 and 3 were open to conservators at all levels. There was a significant number of survey respondents (396 respondents to Survey 1, 338 to Survey 2, and 143 to Survey 3), which contributed greatly to these efforts in pushing for actionable change. (Note there are around 400 student members and less than 200 post-graduate members of AIC each year, though members beyond these categories are considered emerging professionals. Survey responses were not limited to members.) Survey questions were also designed to build upon and update previous work, such as the [2022 AIC/FAIC Conservation Compensation Research Report](#) and the [Accessibility in Conservation Report](#), capturing additional economic and emotional information to illustrate personal and community experiences.

Survey Data

Salaries

Data from the three surveys demonstrate multiple common points of frustration and trends in individual experiences throughout the field. Responses confirmed popular perceptions of the field, demonstrating that across the profession positions are not competitively compensated and do not allow for individual financial security and stability (Figure 1). When asked what they felt was discouraging about the field, respondents overwhelmingly wrote about low salaries and the lack of permanent positions, closely followed by the consistent need to move geographically for their next contract job, forcing them to navigate new states, cities, domiciles, support structures (family, friends, neighborhoods), healthcare (insurance, specific doctors, prescription rules), and so on. A positive trend noted across the board is that institutions are offering mostly paid internships (only 7% of the pre-program respondents to Survey 1 indicated they were unpaid) and some conservators in supervisory positions are advocating for living wages and salary increases overall. Another encouraging trend is unionization efforts led by individuals within institutions, though this currently

remains on a relatively small scale. We hope conservators in larger numbers consider unionization as an option to advocate for living wages extra-institutionally.

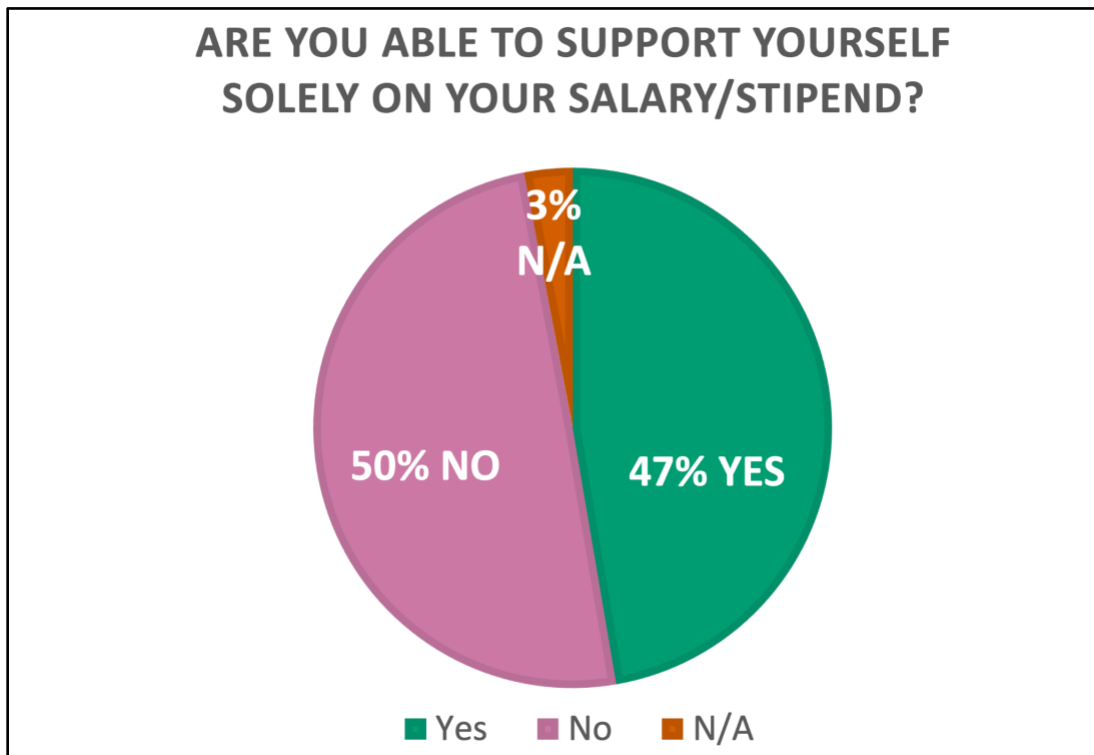


Figure 1. Answers to question from Survey 1: Are you able to support yourself solely on your salary/stipend? Data illustrated here is combined from responses from pre-program, training, and post-training respondents.

Training and barriers

Many respondents from a variety of self-identified career stages expressed dismay over barriers to becoming a conservator. With limited spaces in funded graduate programs and limited funding within those programs, getting to that “next step” is inaccessible. Apprenticeships, once considered an alternate pathway into the field, are not as prevalent in the United States in 2024 as in previous generations. Many lamented the bias against apprentice experience, citing perceived skepticism that such training is equal to graduate training programs, regardless of years spent in the profession. This is juxtaposed with data collected from current and recent graduate students reporting that they often experience highly effective supervision and wider opportunities for individualized learning while on internships. While the language in job posts typically points to these tracks as being equivalent, the reality, as seen in the data, is that there is a preference for graduates of a program associated with a college or university in the United States.

Mentorship

Responses emphasized a strong desire for mentorship/supervisor training, citing the mentor-mentee and supervisor-supervisee relationships as the most important aspect of a healthy work environment. When asked what mentees want most from a mentor, almost all respondents want mentors to accommodate their skill and experience level, and provide honest, non-judgmental, informative feedback. Mentors responded to this question with similar thoughts, emphasizing the importance of

mutual trust and respect. Many expressed that the mentor/mentee relationship is a two-way street and is most effective when both parties learn from each other. This finding is supported by the particularly high attendance at the 2024 Annual Meeting workshop “Cultivating Competencies: Conceptualizing Inclusive Mentorship.” Notably, only 48% of respondents who are now in supervisory roles claim they felt equipped when the time came (Figure 2), suggesting that additional opportunities to develop mentorship skills is a key area for growth within the field.

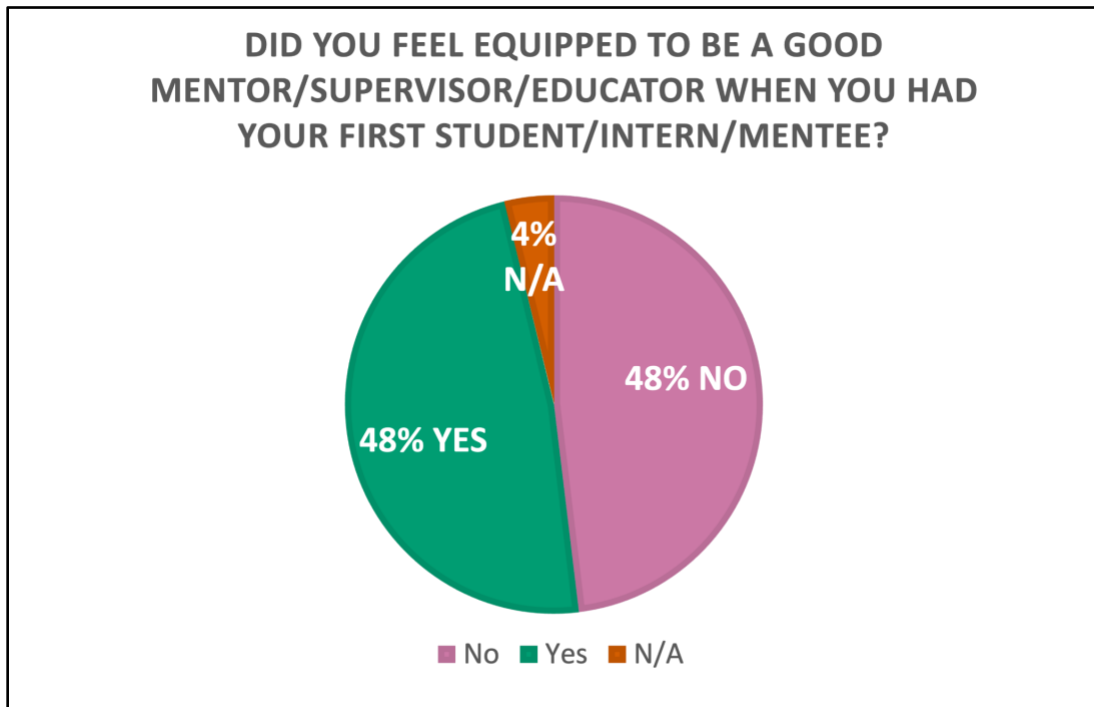


Figure 2. Answers to question from Survey 2: Did you feel equipped to be a good mentor/supervisor/educator when you had your first student/intern/mentee? Data illustrated is from the educator/mentor/supervisor track of the survey.

DEAI Implementation in Institutions

Many institutions pointed to internship programs in their preliminary Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) improvement procedures, with efforts to recruit those from more diverse backgrounds and work closer with local communities. Despite this, respondents to our surveys expressed frustrations with the lack of follow-through on DEAI policies in their institutions, citing minimal mechanisms to support new hires from underrepresented backgrounds and no changes in training and internship practices since the national call for DEAI (Figure 3). This incongruence may be a result of attempts to implement policies requiring significant infrastructure, time, and institutional buy-in, and suggests the necessity for these evolutions to be flexible and include elements that can have immediate implementation. Meaningful, systemic change takes time and these shifts are slowly being seen in the data; however, there are opportunities to implement smaller, quicker, and meaningful upgrades that will improve the lives of those working in this field.

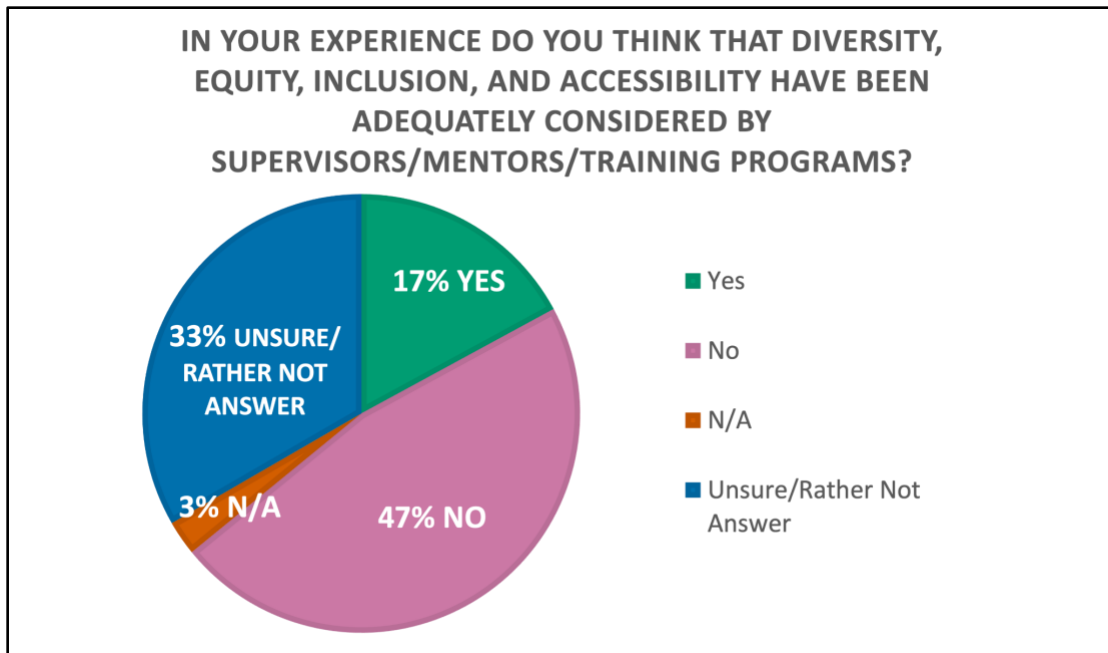


Figure 3. Answers to question from Survey 2: In your experience do you think that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility have been adequately considered by supervisors/mentors/training programs? Data illustrated is from the training/recently out of training track of the survey.

Work-Life Balance

The topic of work-life balance was mentioned frequently within the surveys, with 58% of respondents reporting satisfaction with theirs. This subject featured prominently in a panel at the Annual Meeting session, which made clear that everyone has different boundaries and their own acceptable ratio for an appropriate work-life balance. Some conservators, particularly those in private practice, reported happiness with their work-life balance *and* that they were consistently doing work-related activities after traditional work hours to maintain their businesses. Prioritizing flexibility in working hours over a more consistent pay schedule made them happier. Those working within institutions cited lack of staffing in their department/division as the main reason their work-life balance was skewed in a negative direction.

COVID-19

Finally, another major topic included changes to practices (in education, training, and work) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For mentors/educators/supervisors, this forced a restructuring of how information was delivered to the mentee/student and resulted in a reprioritization of what is necessary to teach, including individualized projects to fill in gaps in instruction due to COVID-19. For practicing conservators, particularly in institutions, this resulted in a positive shift to more flexible work schedules. Conservators' work encompasses much more than hands-on treatment, and much of the computer-based work can be performed well at home.

Positive Takeaways

Overwhelmingly all respondents expressed that they love what they do. Most frequently mentioned positive takeaways included collaboration with passionate colleagues in many fields, extensive knowledge sharing, opportunities for research, continuing education, and the quality and variety of the

collections themselves. ECPs are excited about the sense of community that conservation professionals foster and the positive forward movement they are seeing towards better pay, more diverse peers, environmental sustainability, and an equitable field.

Annual Meeting Session

During the Annual Meeting, Stephanie Guidera and Michaela Paulson introduced the session and gave an overview of these surveys and resulting data. Results were then used to spur conversations between panelists, who discussed combinations of predetermined and live questions, all submitted anonymously and handled by two moderators who had been heavily involved with the session planning. Three panels were assembled from volunteer submissions and grouped by the same themes and subsets as the surveys. The panelists explored the nuance in the survey data, elaborated on their personal experiences, and brainstormed solutions to some of the ubiquitous problems. Between each panel, three speakers or speaker pairs shared their own experiences to build on the discussions and transition the conversation. Kaeley Ferguson and Katharine Shulman co-presented their experiences as graduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic, outlining deficits and benefits caused by the forced flexibility in their education. Ellen Carrlee reflected on her career, personal and professional choices, and guiding principles as a mentor, and then shared her thoughts about the future. Ameya Grant and Fran Ritchie, a former supervisee-supervisor pair, closed out the session with a segment called “What We Were Wrong About,” during which they shared realizations about the field from emerging and established career perspectives.

Real-time feedback from the audience was collected through the live-stream chat and a QR code that directed to an online form. The QR code was made accessible via projection on screen throughout the presentations and was physically printed out and placed on tables in the meeting room. Questions not answered during the session were answered later by panelists and speakers and can be found in Appendix D. The questions and comments clearly show that many professionals want to know more about how to truly address issues in our field including:

- unstable work-life balance (both at institutions and in private practice);
- access to curricular and extra-curricular content by current graduate students that is more fluid between the graduate programs;
- relationship building between students, faculty, and advisors in traditional training programs and connections to those in non-program training pathways;
- continued improvement upon and learning about the differences in structure between mentor and supervisor roles;
- ways to encourage and support hiring and training locally as a way to diversify the field and make it more sustainable.

As AIC leaders, board members, group officers, volunteers, and members continue efforts to support individuals and the profession, the content of this session and its feeder survey data suggest actionable steps that the organization, institutions, and individuals can take. The session organizers and participants hope that this conversation continues broadly to work towards a more transparent, supportive, and equitable profession.

Background and Objectives

Development

Throughout the 51st AIC Annual Meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, outgoing ECPN Chair, Michaela Paulson, and incoming ECPN Chair, Stephanie Guidera, received significant feedback from emerging conservators about their struggles, frustrations, hopes, and wishes for their careers and the role of AIC within their career. It is widely acknowledged that the contemporary issues that individuals are faced with upon joining and navigating the field largely have not changed from those that previous generations faced. There remains a lack of understanding and transparency, inadequate financial support, and unbalanced, sometimes toxic, power dynamics that have previously been expressed throughout the history of the field. However, additional recent issues have exacerbated these experiences: a global pandemic, stagnant wages that lack benefits, and the soaring cost of living are a few. ECPN leaders are often the repository for honest feedback and calls for help from individuals; this feedback often stays within the community due to individuals' fear of retribution. Upon receiving the open call for submissions under the theme "Expect the Unexpected" for the 52nd Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, the idea for a general session was formed as an opportunity to share the current ECP experience. Paulson and Guidera sent an open call to current and past members of the ECPN Officer Group to help steer and shape this program that would not only honestly express the experiences of current ECPs in a safe, anonymous, and productive way, but would inform the field at large in order to work towards awareness and provide actionable steps individuals at all stages of the field can take to enact positive change.

Organizing Group and Participants

Responding to the call for participation in the session, the Organizing Group (OG) consisted of: Annabelle Camp, Kaeley Ferguson, Caitlin Gozo Richeson, Kacey Green, Caroline Shaver, Ashley Stanford, Keara Teeter, and Céline Wachsmuth. Additionally, Katelin Lee and Beth Edelstein, as AIC ECPN Staff Liaison and Board Liaison respectively, assisted with big picture questions, community collaboration, and secure data collection.

In addition to the OG, Bianca Garcia and Devon Lee volunteered as moderators and the following volunteers made up the speaker and panelist groups: Ella Andrews, Greg Bailey, Nora Bloch, Elena Bowen, Nylah Byrd, Ellen Carrlee, Angie Elliott, Lauren Fair, Kaeley Ferguson, Sarah Freshnock, Stephanie Hornbeck, Minyoung Kim, Casey Mallinckrodt, Jen Munch, Rebecca Rosen, Katharine Shulman, and Samantha Springer.

Stated Objectives

The goal of this session was to have a productive conversation about the current state of the field, driven by real data and with a focus on finding solutions instead of continued acceptance and resignation. The surveys were instrumental in pulling out common themes and receiving anonymous, honest experiences, while the panel discussions humanized the data and propelled the conversation past commiseration and into next step, solution-focused territory. In publishing the survey data and this report, the OG hopes that these conversations will build momentum from this moment towards a more equitable, inclusive, and supportive field.

Methodology

3.1. Surveys

Three surveys were designed to capture data from conservators at self-identified career stages within the field of conservation. The survey questions were compiled by the Organizing Group. Feedback on accessibility and wording of questions was also provided through collaboration with Bianca Garcia, Kayla Henry-Griffin, and members from the AIC Equity and Inclusion Committee.

After the abstract for this session was accepted, Paulson and Guidera worked with Annual Meeting organizers to secure the format decided on by the Organizing Group (OG): a general session with no competition for attendance, data-driven content from surveys written and distributed by the group, and a panel discussion format with effort to include wide representation. Over the nine months between inception until the annual meeting, the OG met biweekly via video conference. Surveys were written and distributed broadly in the last quarter of 2023 with all data compiled in early 2024.

The first survey was geared towards early emerging professionals (defined in this survey as anyone working in or pursuing a career in conservation, from pre-program through those who completed their training in 2020). This survey contained questions regarding the financial, professional, and emotional well-being of emerging professionals. More “emerged” professionals were asked not to respond to this initial survey in order to capture data specific to conservators’ training in the present state of the world. There were three separate tracks of questions: pre-program, graduate student or equivalent, and post-graduate or equivalent. ‘Equivalent’ was used to encourage participation from those who are not in or did not go through a graduate program. Participation was encouraged with a raffle style drawing for a complimentary Annual Meeting registration.

The second survey was open to anyone interested in participating regardless of career level, however, there were two different sets of questions based on one’s role: In Training/Recently out of Training or Educator/Mentor/Supervisor. The questions in both sets of this survey were focused on education and training in conservation to understand how conservators experience being trained and train others. Determining the current practices in conservation training should help guide ways to advocate for change that better benefit ECPs in the present and future. The survey also included questions about DEAI initiatives and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. This group recommends continuing to collect data on these topics to best evaluate changing, real world conditions faced by those in the field.

The third and final survey was also open to anyone interested in participating. This survey was structured by career stages within the field of conservation. The questions were designed to better understand career pathways, career mobility, and available support within the field; informing ideas on how to support conservators beyond their training.

All three surveys were built using SurveyMonkey and contained multiple choice, choose multiple, and open-ended questions. All questions were optional and anonymity of responses was emphasized throughout each survey.

3.2. General Session

To assemble speakers and panelists for this session, an open call for participation was posted through the AIC community boards in October of 2023, asking for brief abstracts and statements from interested individuals. The OG decided on participants, format, and moderation scheme, then had meetings and ongoing conversations with the three panel and speaker groupings to ensure cohesion of the session. Resume-style information displayed on screens during the presentations and panel discussions included the participants' names, pronouns, chosen specialty(ies), self-proclaimed number of years in the field (which included how many years spent in training/education roles), and self-identified career stage. The OG aimed to highlight lived experience and self-reflectance rather than job title or workplace.

3.3. Survey Distribution and Accessibility

The surveys were released on a staggered timeline. Survey 1 was released September 18, 2023; Survey 2 was released November 11, 2023; and Survey 3 was released December 6, 2023. All three surveys closed to responses on Monday, January 15, 2024. The surveys were distributed via the AIC Member Community, the Global Conservation Forum (ConsDistList), and the Emerging Professionals Network (ECPN) AIC forum, as well as the ECPN Facebook Page, with periodic reminders published after the initial posting.

3.4. Representativeness of the Surveyed Sample

To understand who was providing this data, a number of broad demographic questions were asked. The demographic questions were structured to be similar to other surveys recently conducted by AIC and FAIC, allowing comparison to demographics within AIC membership. Nationality and location were not required questions and the three surveys were written to capture trends and commonalities unique to career stages.

3.5. Recognized Weaknesses of the Survey and General Session

A desire for clean, quantifiable data was the initial goal. However, the OG recognized that there is a great amount of nuance in individual experiences that, depending on wording or interpretation of the question, could skew the data or be misleading. The group decided to write the multiple-choice questions in a way that addressed the impossibility of capturing nuance, asking participants to choose the closest applicable answer and allowing space for explanation and expansion if desired. This led to a number of open ended and multiple select questions, and many addenda to definitive multiple-choice questions. One area of particular weakness to this was found in our demographic questions that asked the gender of the participant. While many options were offered and a "write-in" option made available, the participants were still asked to select a single response that allowed for data to be displayed and processed cleanly, rather than reflect the true identity of the participant.

An additional area of nuance surrounded apprentice trained conservators, or those who did not attend a conservation graduate program. There were multiple opportunities for those individuals to make this distinction for themselves, however the survey asked that they identify with the group that was *closest* to true for them, acknowledging that it was not semantically accurate, again for ease of processing data. Despite this, a bias was unintentionally set within the survey form and there is a need to

acknowledge that, as a field, the assumption should be avoided that all conservators follow the path of graduate school training.

The [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) was used as a universal, geographically-specific rubric for survey questions regarding living wage (Glasmeier 2024). Through personal experiences, the amounts indicated on this website are not updated frequently enough and do not take into account moving expenses, deposits, broker fees, etc., and are therefore not fully accurate. However, it was decided to keep this tool as a reference to keep the data consistent. An attempt to rectify this was made in asking a follow up question about respondents' ability to support themselves with their conservation wages alone.

Attempts were made to discover how many conservators have left the profession due to frustrations or lack of career viability, but this was not possible to verify. Graduate programs and individuals could point to estimated numbers, but their data is not all-encompassing, nor could it be reported as accurate, so this aspect of our research was omitted.

The survey data set is limited to the number of and variety of people who saw the advertisements, were willing and able to respond, and fully understood the questions. It was written and distributed only in English and required both time and internet access to participate.

Those who served as speakers and panelists at the session were limited also to those individuals who saw the advertisements, were willing to participate, and had the time (and support) to contribute during the live in-person session. The lack of diversity in this group directly reflects the lack of diversity in the field and largely represents repeat volunteers and active AIC members.

3.6. Data Synthesis

As indicated above, there are issues with direct interpretation of data from an imperfect sample set based on volunteer labor and implicit biases. To maximize anonymity while still providing respondents with the ability to be identified, per their wishes to be contacted or potentially receive a complimentary registration, when the data was analyzed, the respondents' email address was not included; instead each response was assigned a random number. A question in the survey specifically asked for permission to share anonymous quotes in this report and the General Session and only those who gave permission to share are/were used. Members of the OG read every response, summarized the answers to each question, and selected especially illustrative or representative responses that they had permission to share. Data points were transformed into graphs using Microsoft Excel.

The choice to make every question optional in each survey allowed respondents to submit incomplete surveys. While some may look at this as fragmentary data, the OG decided to include all, even sparsely answered submissions, as these responses were still valid and representative. Someone's unwillingness to give demographic information or remark on their personal experiences may reflect a lack of trust in the survey or fear of exposure, while other questions may have been left blank because they were not applicable or not understood. All percentages reported here are calculated based on real responses to the specific question; in cases where someone skipped a question, they are not represented in that specific data point.

Data Interpretation

As outlined in the Executive Summary, the questions of all surveys were built upon previous AIC member surveys, recent experiences, and feedback. Major themes explored were: wages and benefits, support and mentorship, opportunity and mobility, balance and satisfaction, presence and importance of DEAI initiatives, and the role of AIC. The following section presents multiple graphs and quick summaries of many of the questions asked. All questions to the three surveys can be accessed in Appendix A, with all remaining responses, summaries, and additional data reported in Appendices B and C. Additionally, the percentages represented in the more complex graphs of Survey 3 data are reported in Appendix D.

Aside from a select few who identified as having left the field recently, every participant in the surveys was either a practicing conservator, working in a conservation-related field, or taking steps to become a conservator (pre-training, in training, internships, etc.). Most participants indicated they were working/training in the United States; however, there were a number of internationally based respondents.

4.1. Survey 1 Data

Participants in this survey were asked to identify as an Emerging Conservation Professional (ECP) as defined by this statement: *In general, and historically, an Emerging Conservation Professional (or ECP) has been a self-identifying designation. It helps to identify those who are in need of support, guidance, and additional training. AIC extends discounted rates for current students and those who are one year out of formal training, and does not allow for Professional status until three years after graduation. We are trying to collect data for current ECPs with the goal of sharing the actuality of life for ECPs in 2023/24 and taking substantive steps to improve it. Therefore, for the purposes of this survey, an Emerging Conservation Professional is defined as anyone working in or pursuing a career in conservation, from pre-program through three years post formal training.*

Under a quarter (21%) of respondents selected “no” or “no, but I still self-identify as emerging” and were routed to a page thanking them for their participation and encouraging them to look out for subsequent surveys.

The remaining 79% of participants responded “yes,” and were then asked to choose the most relevant track of questions based on their current location in their conservation journey. The options were listed as pre-program, graduate student or equivalent, and post graduate or equivalent (post-“training”). Each track had similar but different questions geared to each level and responses/data are separated as such. For ease of data interpretation, the three tracks are defined in this report as “pre-program,” “grad student,” and “post-training,” but includes those who are not attending or did not attend a formal graduate program.

Demographic data from Survey 1 can be found in figures 4-9 below. Each set of responses is organized by track, going from pre-program to grad student to post-training to illustrate the slight demographic shifts toward a more diverse and inclusive field.

Almost 80% of pre-program respondents are female and almost 70% are white. Three quarters (75%) of graduate student respondents are female and over 64% are white. Almost 88% of post-graduate respondents are female and 75% are white. See a distribution of responses in figures 4 and 5.

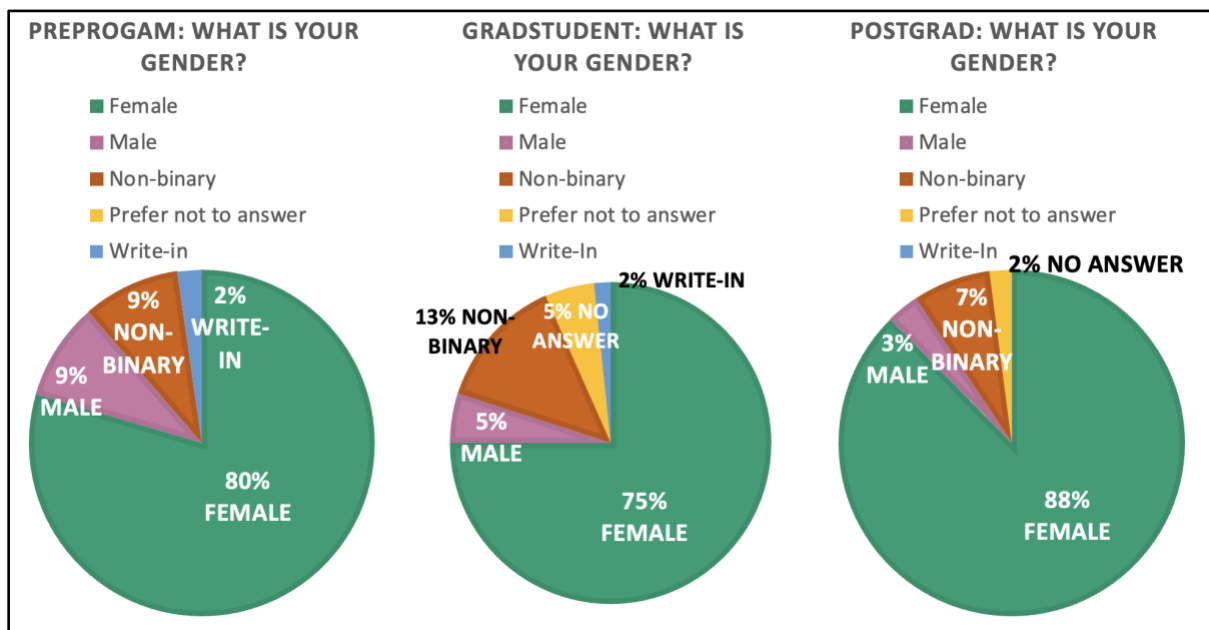


Figure 4. Distribution of responses to the question “What is your gender?” including all participants in Survey 1, organized by track. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

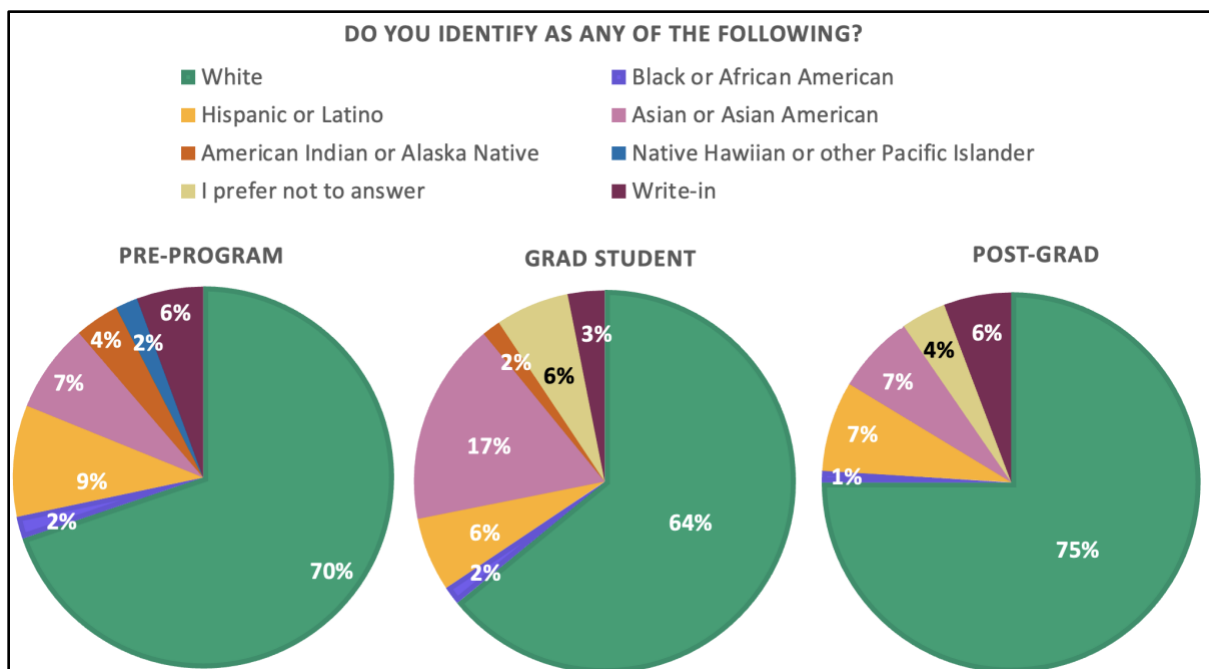


Figure 5. Distribution of responses to the question “Do you identify as any of the following?” including all participants in Survey 1, organized by track. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

Over 77% of pre-program track respondents are between the ages of 23 and 32 (45.5% between 23-27, almost 32% between 28-32), with an equal 9.1% between 18-22 and over 43. Over 78% of graduate student track respondents are between the ages of 23 and 32 (almost 42% between 23-27, almost 37% between 28-32), with an additional 18% between 33-37. Over 72% of post-graduate track respondents are between the ages of 23 and 32 (almost 25% between 23-27, over 47% between 28-32), with an additional almost 23% between 33-37. See figure 6 for a distribution of total responses.

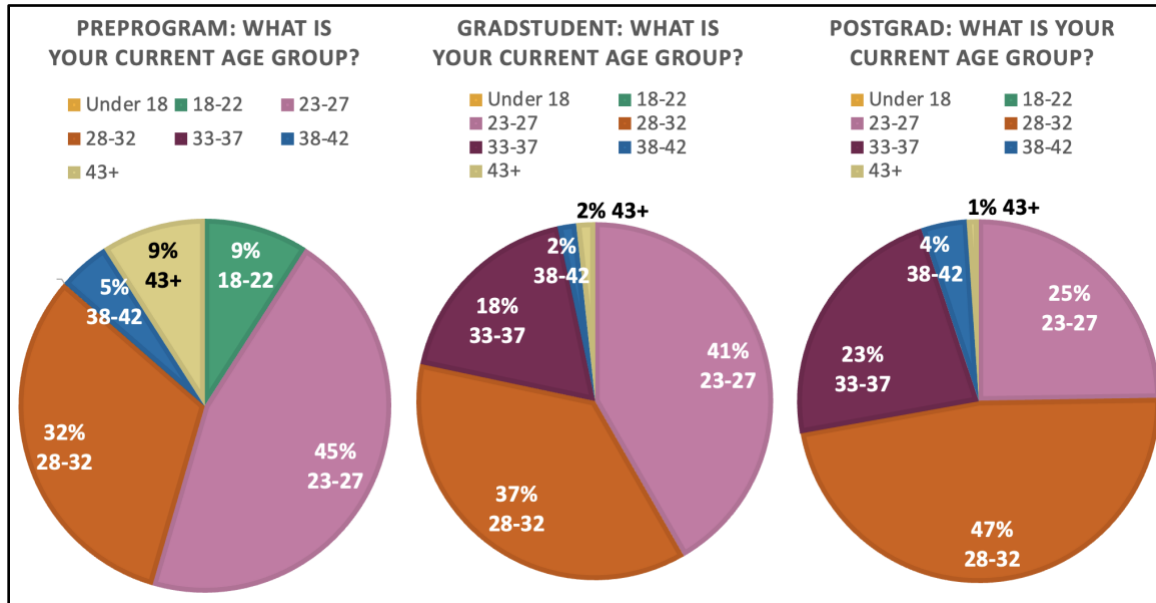


Figure 6. Distribution of responses to the question “What is your current age group?” including all participants in Survey 1, organized by track.

Over 45% of pre-program respondents, 30% of graduate student respondents, and almost 28% of post-graduate respondents have a disability or chronic illness. See figure 7 for a distribution of all responses.

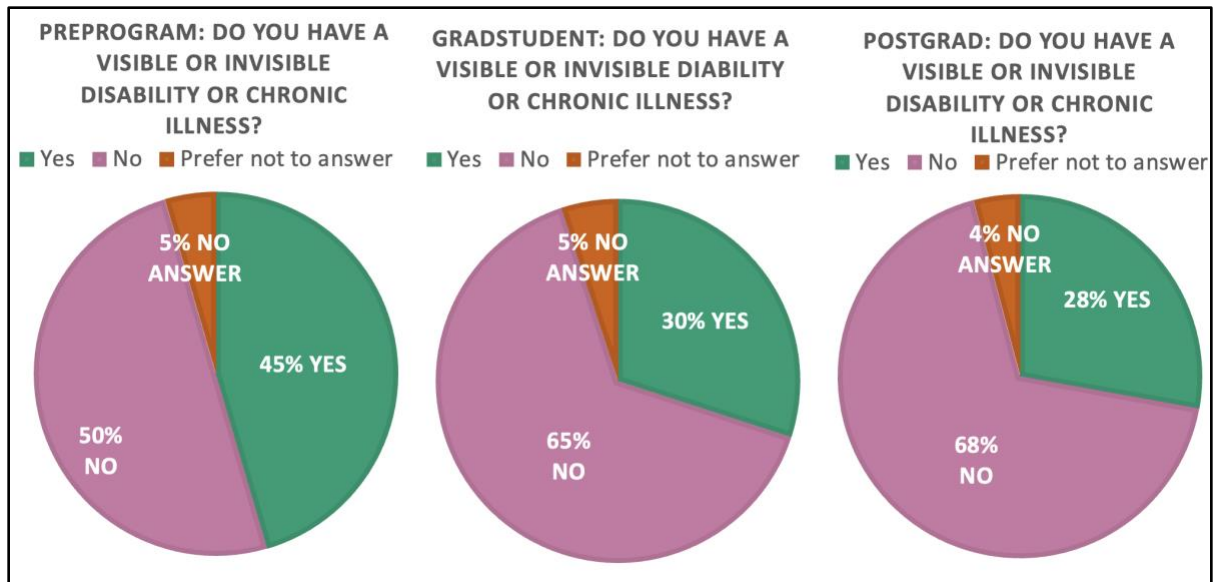


Figure 7. Distribution of responses to the question “Do you have a visible or invisible disability or chronic illness?” including all participants in Survey 1, organized by track.

Fourteen percent of pre-program respondents have dependents. Almost 46% live in a dual income household or have a source of additional support. Only 5% of graduate student respondents have dependents. Almost 43% live in a dual income household or have a source of additional support. Only 5.2% of post-grad respondents have dependents. Almost 46% live in a dual income household or have a source of additional support. See figures 8 and 9 for a distribution of all responses.

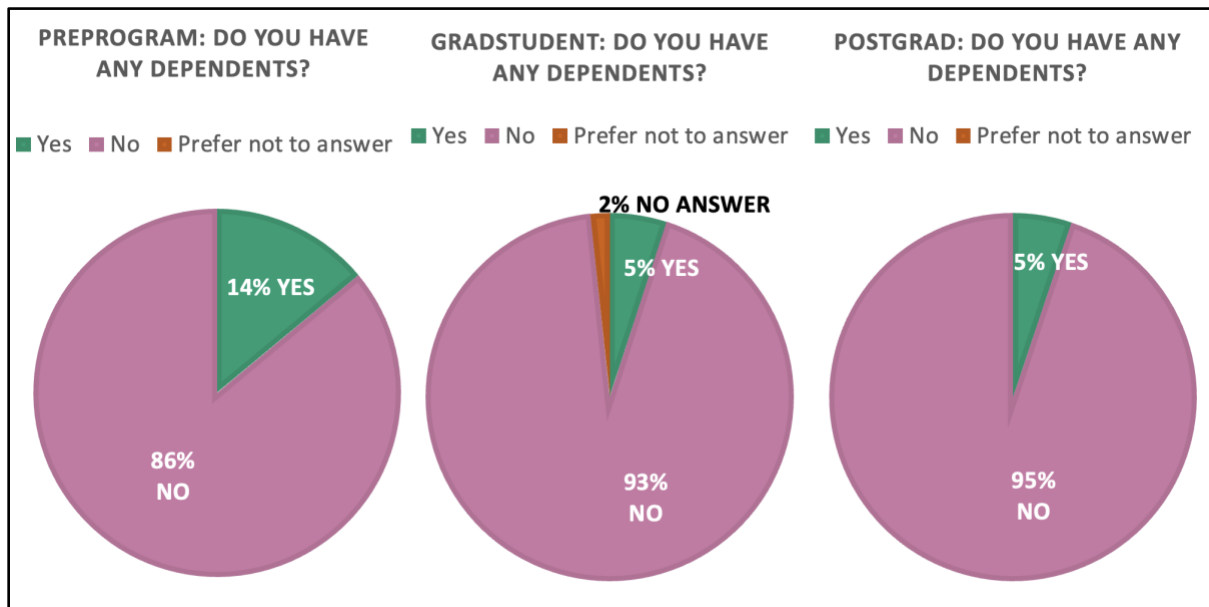


Figure 8. Distribution of responses to the question “Do you have any dependents?” including all participants in Survey 1, organized by track.

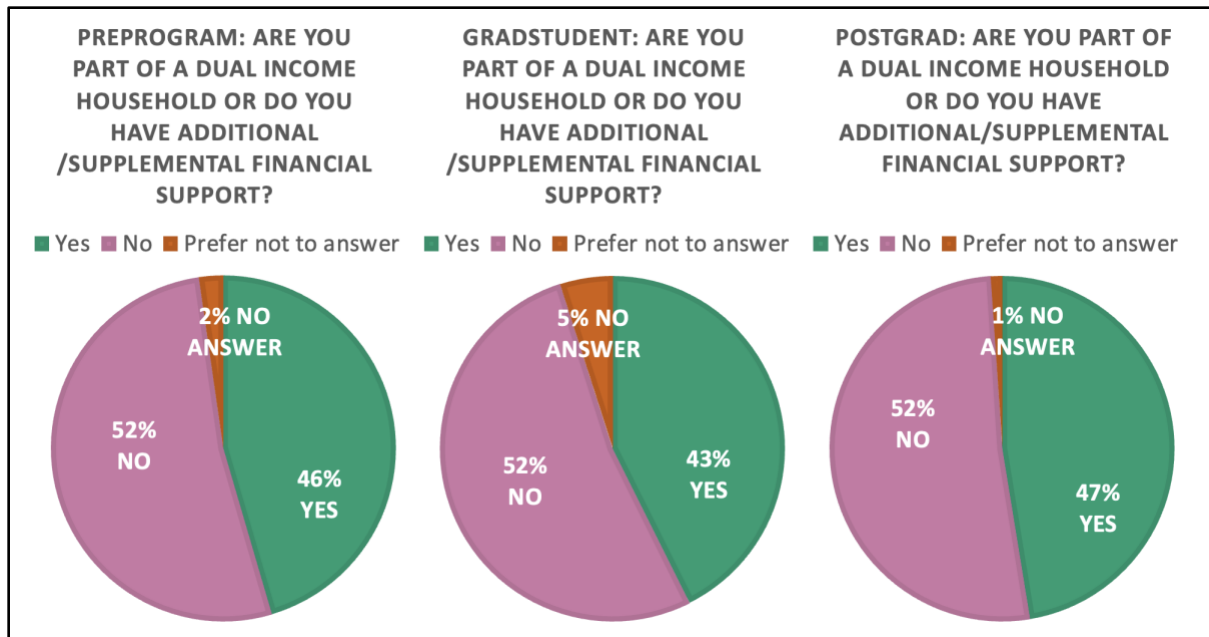


Figure 9. Distribution of responses to the question “Are you part of a dual income household or do you have additional/supplemental financial support?” including all participants in Survey 1, organized by track.

4.1.1 Pre-Program or Equivalent Track

Of those who responded to questions in the pre-program track of this survey, 69.5% reported being currently employed in the field of conservation. An overwhelming majority of those who are employed reported they are getting paid in pre-program positions and a majority are paid a livable wage according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator. A little over half (51%) of respondents support themselves with one job. See figure 10 for total distribution of these statistics.

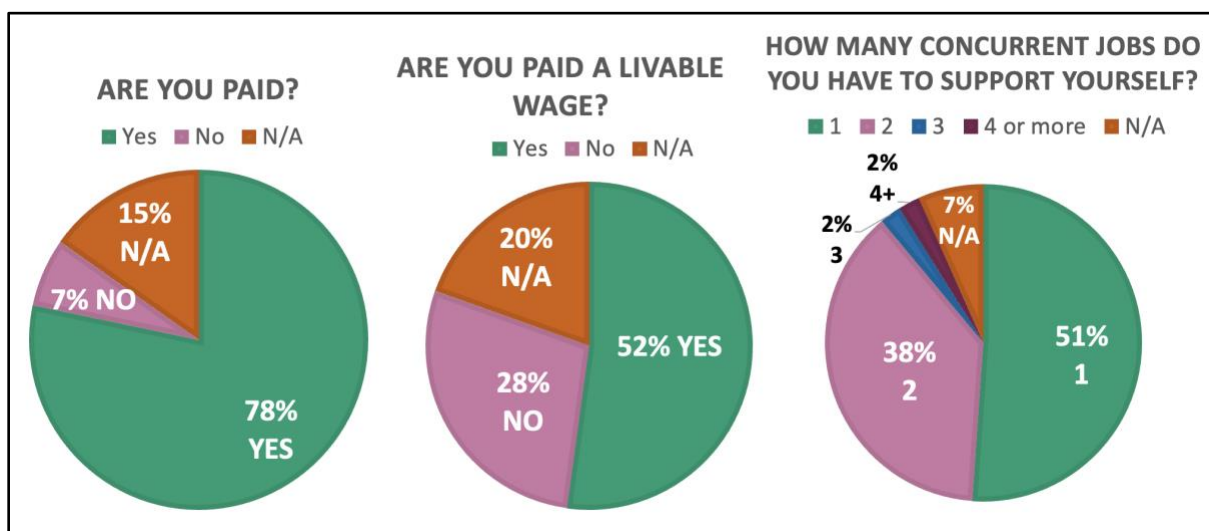


Figure 10. Distribution of responses from three questions relating to compensation in Survey 1, pre-program track.

When asked about healthcare, 54% of respondents indicated that they are not insured through their job but pay for insurance out of pocket. Nine percent of respondents are uninsured entirely. Despite

this, 50% of respondents believe they are adequately compensated for the work they're completing, and 63% believe their responsibilities are appropriate for their job title. See figure 11 for total distribution of these responses.

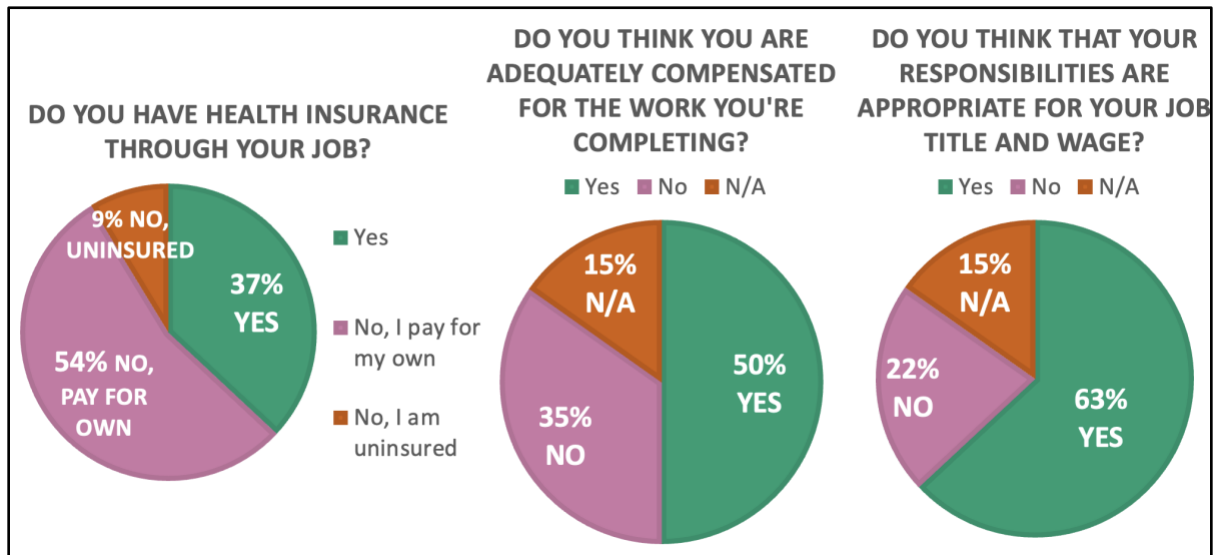


Figure 11. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding health insurance and adequate compensation in Survey 1, pre-program track.

Finally, pre-program respondents were asked if they feel supported and mentored by their supervisors; 72% do feel supported, while a concerning high 15% are not receiving the support they want and/or need. See figure 12 for total distribution of these responses.

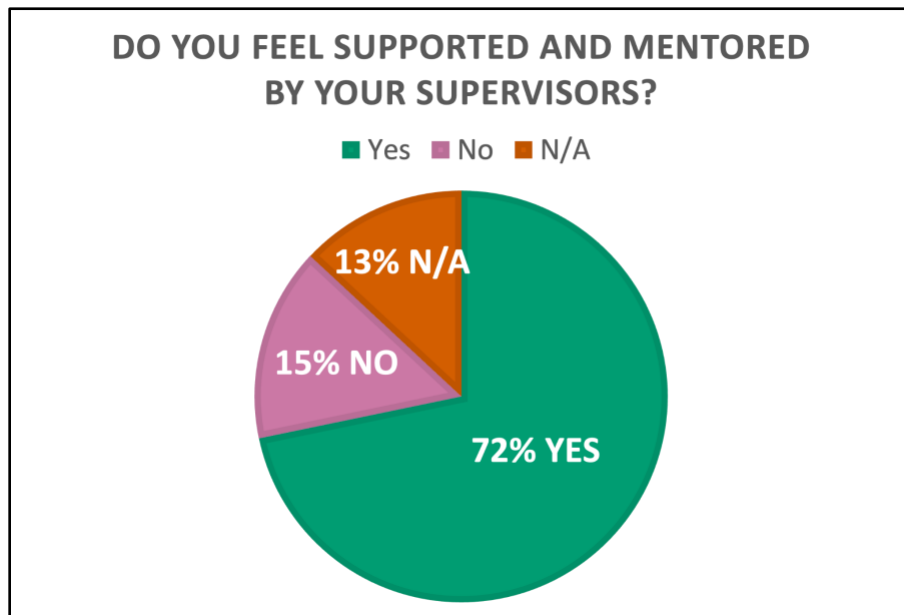


Figure 12. Distribution of responses from one question regarding support from supervisors and mentors in Survey 1, pre-program track.

Open ended responses (see more in Appendix C)

Pre-program conservators love and are energized by the work and sense of community, are hopeful for an increase in financial compensation, and see great value in being inclusive for a more diverse field. It is understood by respondents that graduate programs are a critical access point to conservation, even though the field still claims to accept non-traditional paths, such as apprenticeship or so-called “bench training.” A number of respondents are choosing to leave the field entirely or side-step into a different profession, citing multiple cycles of rejection from a program, unpaid or impossible to find training opportunities, feeling undervalued in an undercompensated training or technician role, and the fear, uncertainty, and instability associated with all of this.

4.1.2. Graduate Student or Equivalent Track

In the graduate student or equivalent track of this survey, under half (47%) of those who responded said they have a living stipend based on the MIT Living Wage Calculator. Unsurprisingly, as a reflection of this, only 26% of respondents can support themselves on the graduate school stipend alone, and an overwhelming 73% of respondents are taking on a personal debt or receiving additional external support (from family, spouse, etc.) to attend their graduate programs. See figure 13 below for the total distribution of these responses.

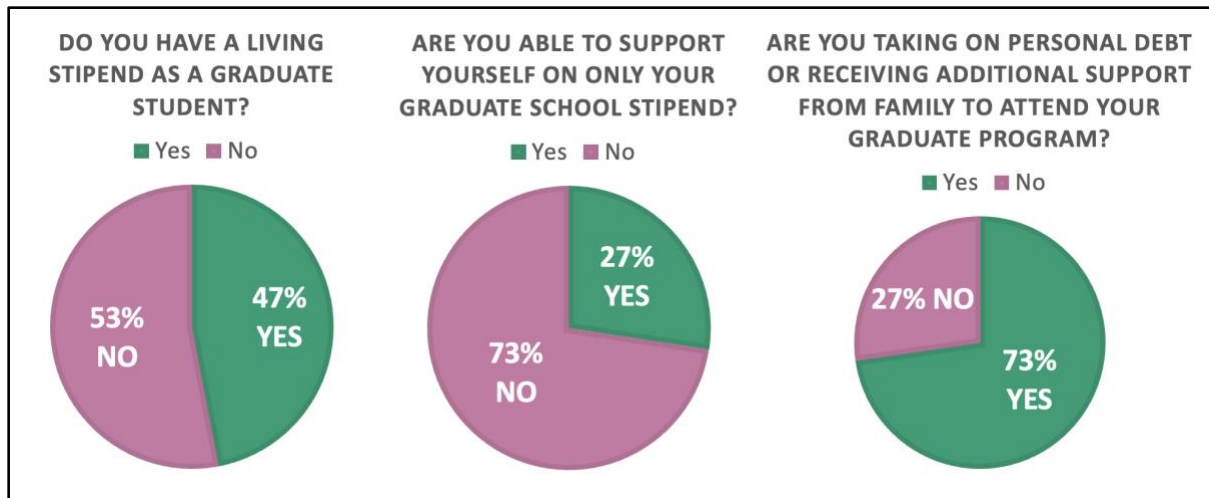


Figure 13. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding compensation in Survey 1, grad student track.

Regarding internships during graduate education/training, including summer internships and final-year internships, 58% of respondents said their internships were funded, and 26% said “it’s complicated.” When asked what source of funding they received, 36% said they were funded both through the graduate program and the interning institution. See figure 14 for the total distribution of these responses.

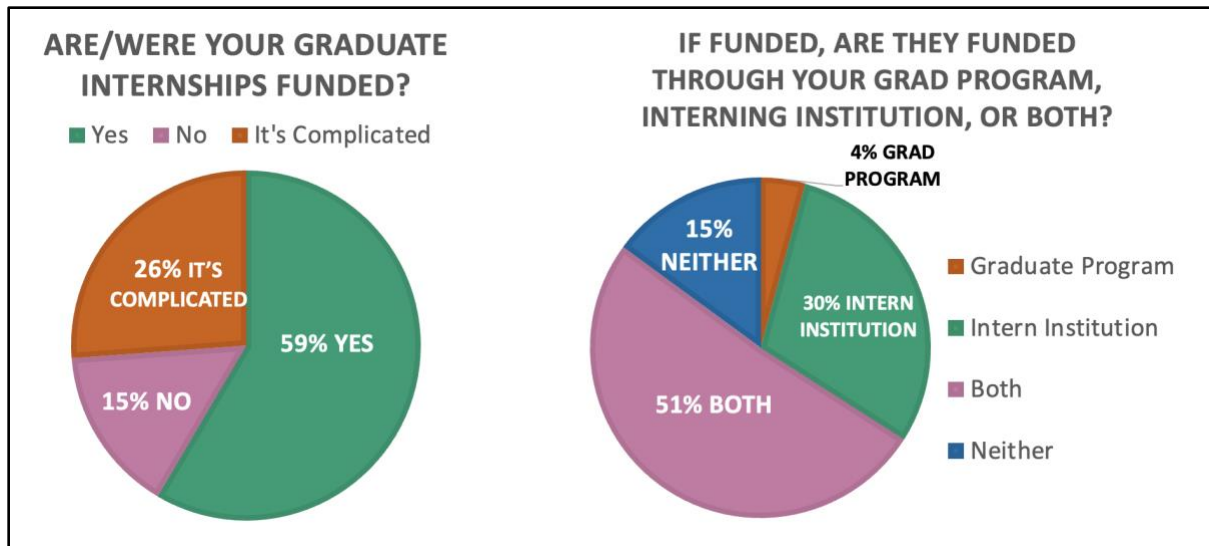


Figure 14. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding graduate internship funding in Survey 1, grad student track. "It's complicated" responses can be found in Appendix B.

When asked if they feel supported and mentored by their graduate supervisors, a majority 88% of respondents said they did. Sixty-four percent of respondents believe that the training they are receiving in their respective graduate program or equivalent is what they expected, and 62% of respondents say they are optimistic about their future prospects in the field. See figure 15 for the total distribution of these responses.

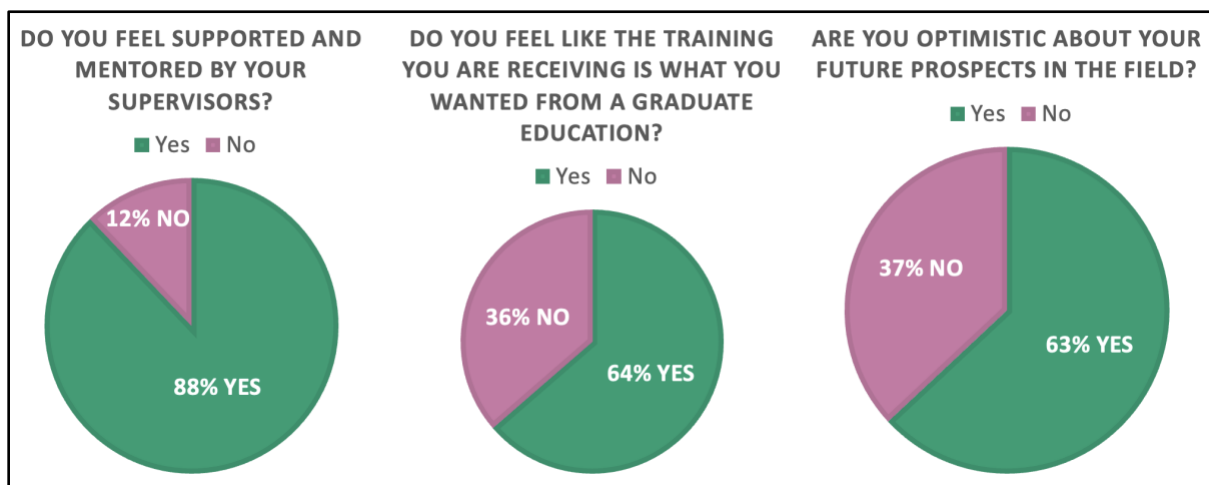


Figure 15. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding support/mentorship, training received, and future prospects in Survey 1, grad student track.

Open ended responses (see Appendix C)

Respondents in the graduate student track generally responded that they love the work and community that conservation fosters. They are encouraged by the changes they see being made in the field right now, specifically the unionizing efforts across the country. All respondents are hopeful for increased wages, more job opportunities, more diversity, and a more welcoming environment in the field. They expressed excitement regarding finding long-term stability both in a position and a location, and anxiety towards the transient, low paid post-graduate job market. They are discouraged

by their years of pre-program work not being counted towards professional experience and disappointed by stagnant attitudes, elitism, and eccentricity that is prevalent in the field.

4.1.3. Post-Training Track

In the post-training, graduate, or equivalent track of this survey, 94% of respondents trained at an accredited program. Elaborations included international training, diploma programs, and the lack of accreditation for heritage science. Eighty-five percent of respondents indicate that they are currently employed. See figure 16 for the total distribution of these responses.

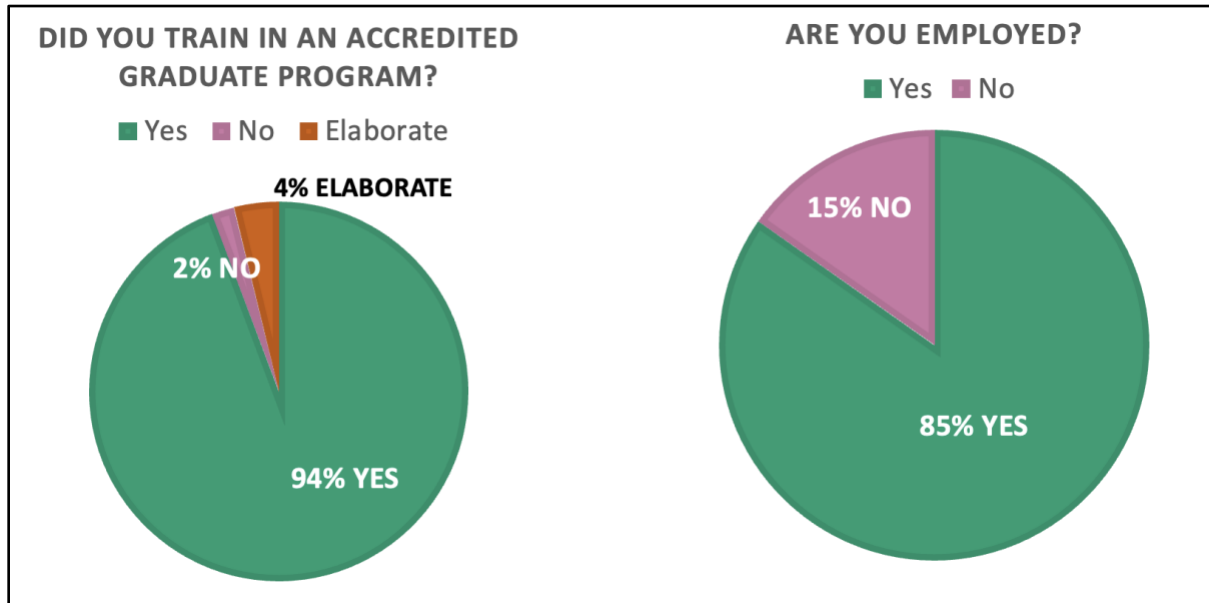


Figure 16. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding graduate training and employment in Survey 1, post-training track. “Elaborate” responses can be found in Appendix B.

The distribution of positions entered directly out of training vary: 39% indicate they entered fellowships, 24% entered a contract/termed position, 10% entered private practice, 9% entered an assistant level position, and 18% selected “other.” Additionally, 71% of respondents said they felt prepared for the position they entered into post-training. Likely, due to a variety of positions, only 57% of respondents have health insurance through their positions. See figure 17 for the total distribution of these responses.

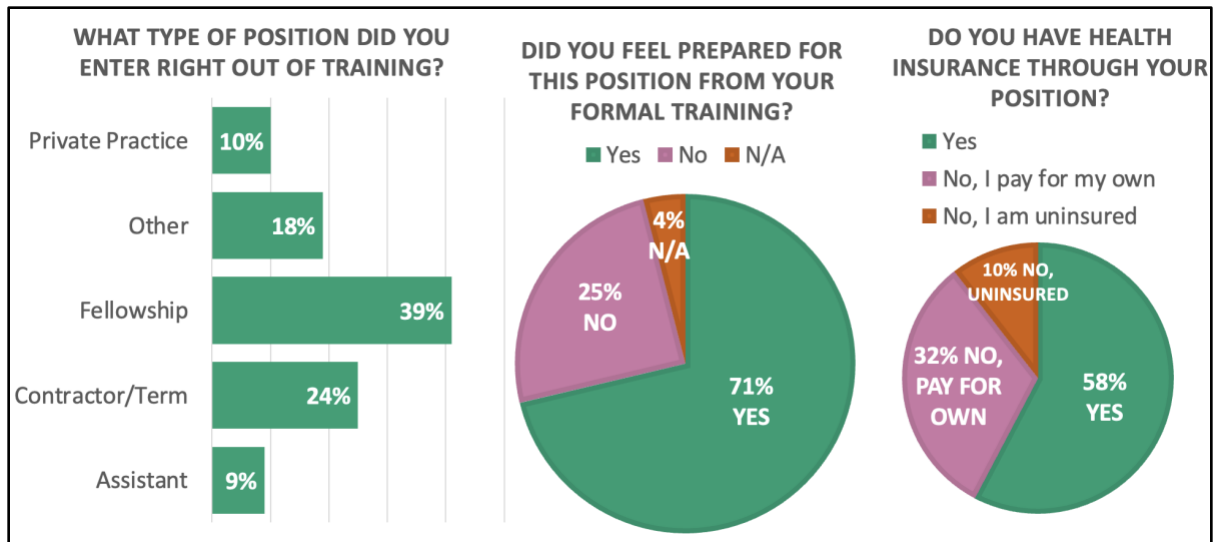


Figure 17. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding positions post-training and health insurance in Survey 1, post-training track. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

Based on the MIT Living Wage Calculator, 71% of respondents in the post-grad category are paid a living wage. Despite that, only 59% say they are able to live off their stipend/salary without additional streams of income. Just over half (54%) report that they do not believe they are adequately compensated for the work they are completing. See figure 18 for the total distribution of these responses.

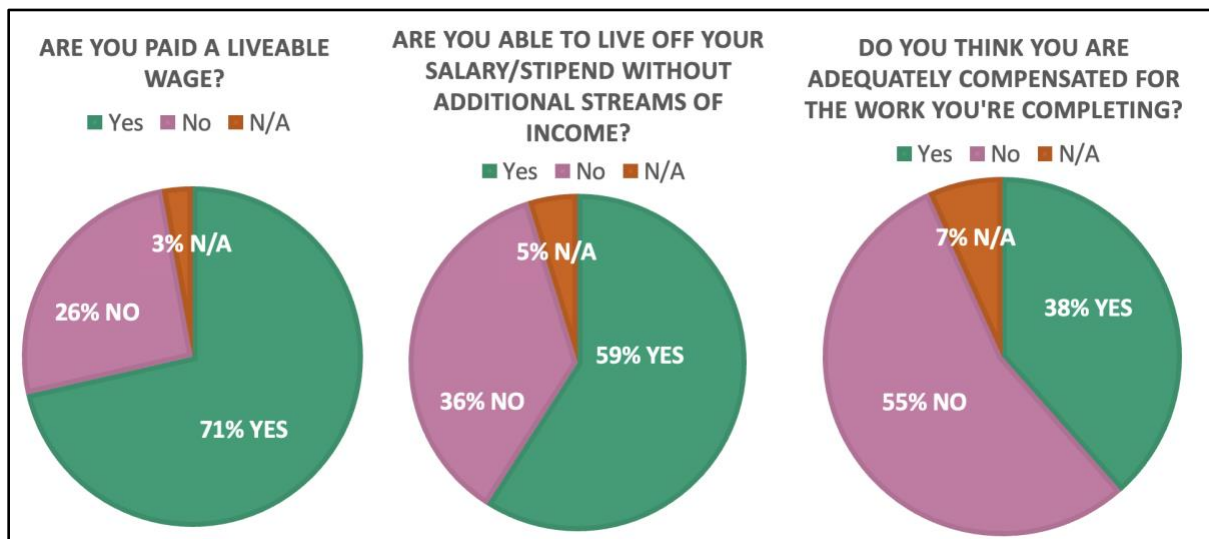


Figure 18. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding compensation in Survey 1, post-training track.

Finally, 69% of respondents reported that they are happy with the position they have and 60% of respondents believe their responsibilities are appropriate for their job title and wage. Most (70%) feel supported and mentored by their supervisors, but a concerning quarter of respondents do not. See figure 19 for the total distribution of these responses.

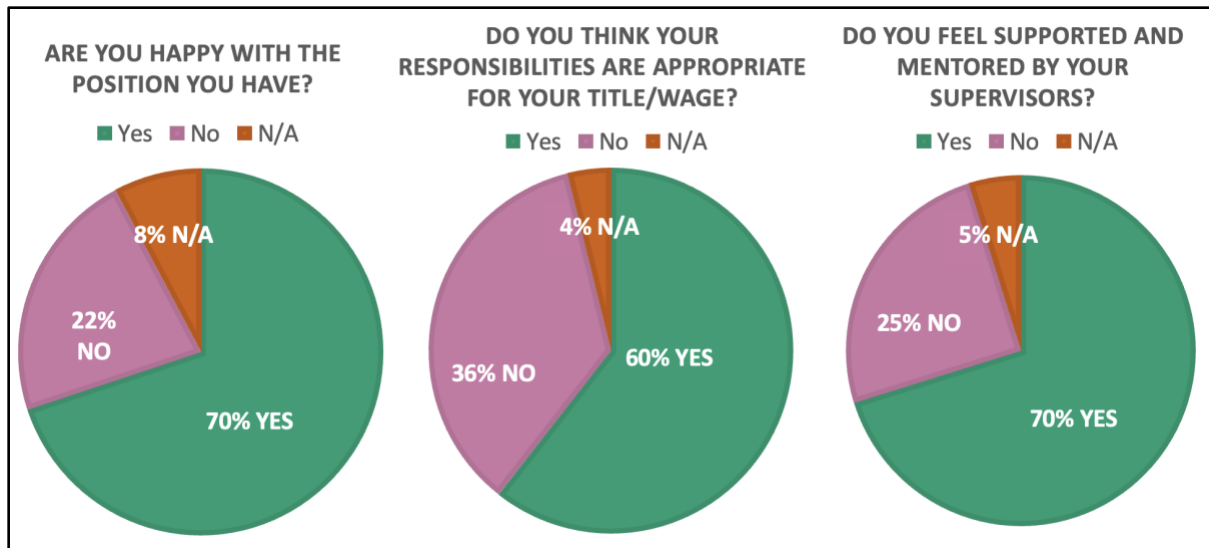


Figure 19. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding satisfaction of position, responsibilities, and support from supervisors in Survey 1, post-training track.

Open ended responses (see Appendix C)

As with respondents to the other tracks, post-training respondents love what they do and collaborating with conservators and professionals in other fields who are full of passion, knowledge, and support. They hope for a more diverse and inclusive field, better salaries, permanent positions, and less relocation across the board. At work, there is excitement around continuously expanding on skill sets, becoming more confident, and generally growing as a conservator. They are excited to begin mentoring those entering the field and are eager to embrace change. There are some who expressed dismay over the quality of graduate education and subsequent lack of support from the program after graduation. They've expressed that the limited path of entry to the field is frustrating, with no known paths through apprenticeship. In the same vein, it is discouraging that there is condescension from those conservators who are trained at graduate programs towards those who are bench trained; just one example of the competitive behavior, elitism, and politics within the field.

There is a desire for more safe spaces for ECPs to have honest conversations about burnout; it was stated that ECPN felt like a safe space, however it is felt that a lot of what ECPs say is not seriously considered outside of that peer group. Some have suggested that their previous work experiences have been more valuable than formal training. There is a desire to learn more about private practice during pre-program and graduate school, as well as having more support for those in private practice from larger organizations. Many have cited that forming a union would be ideal and hopefully help a lot of previously mentioned issues, including short-term opportunities without access to health care.

4.2. Survey 2 Data

Respondents were asked to self-identify where they are in their conservation journey with two options: training/recently out of training (including pre-program, current student, post-graduate, if you consider yourself in training) and educator, supervisor, mentor (including anyone who supervises others, lectures, or leads workshops, at any capacity or stage). Nearly half (47%) of respondents indicated they were training or recently out of training, and 53% identified as a mentor, educator, or supervisor.

Regarding demographics of respondents in Survey 2, 82% of mentors/supervisors and 83% of mentees/students are female. No mentor respondents are non-binary, while 9% of mentees are non-binary. No mentors identify as Black or African American, while 2% of mentees do; 82% of mentors and 74% of mentees identify as white. See the distribution of responses in figures 20 and 21.

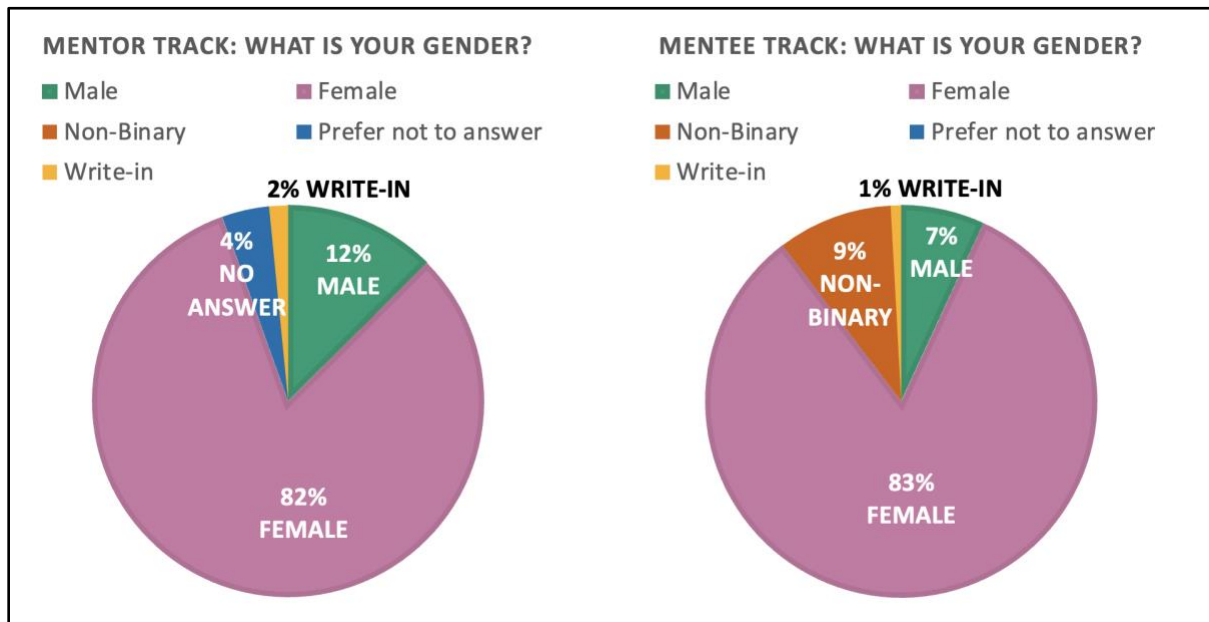


Figure 20. Distribution of responses to the question “What is your gender?” including all participants in Survey 2, organized by track. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

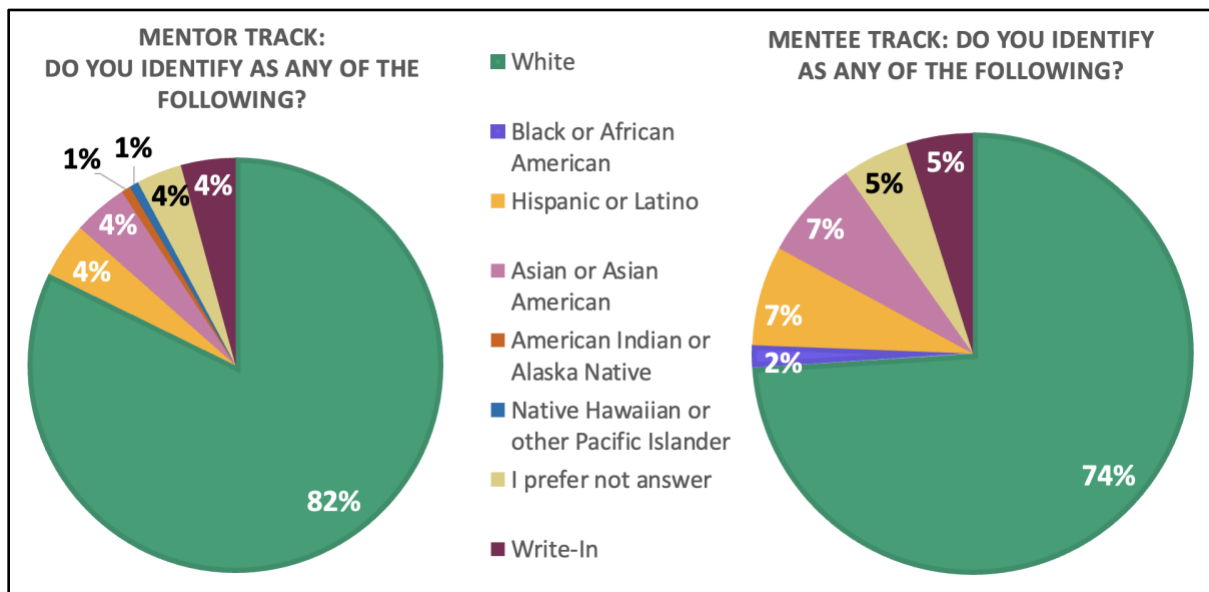


Figure 21. Distribution of responses to the question “Do you identify as any of the following?” including all participants in Survey 2, organized by track. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

When asked what their current age group is, the mentor track had a wide range of responses, with the largest group (23%) being between 44-50 years old. The next largest age group for mentors was 37-43 years old (19%) then 58-64 years old (16%). 9% of respondents said they were over the age of 65. For mentees, a vast majority (49%) are between the ages of 23-29, followed by 30-36 (34%), and 37-43 (14%). Only 1% of mentees are between the ages 18-22. See figure 22 for a distribution of responses.

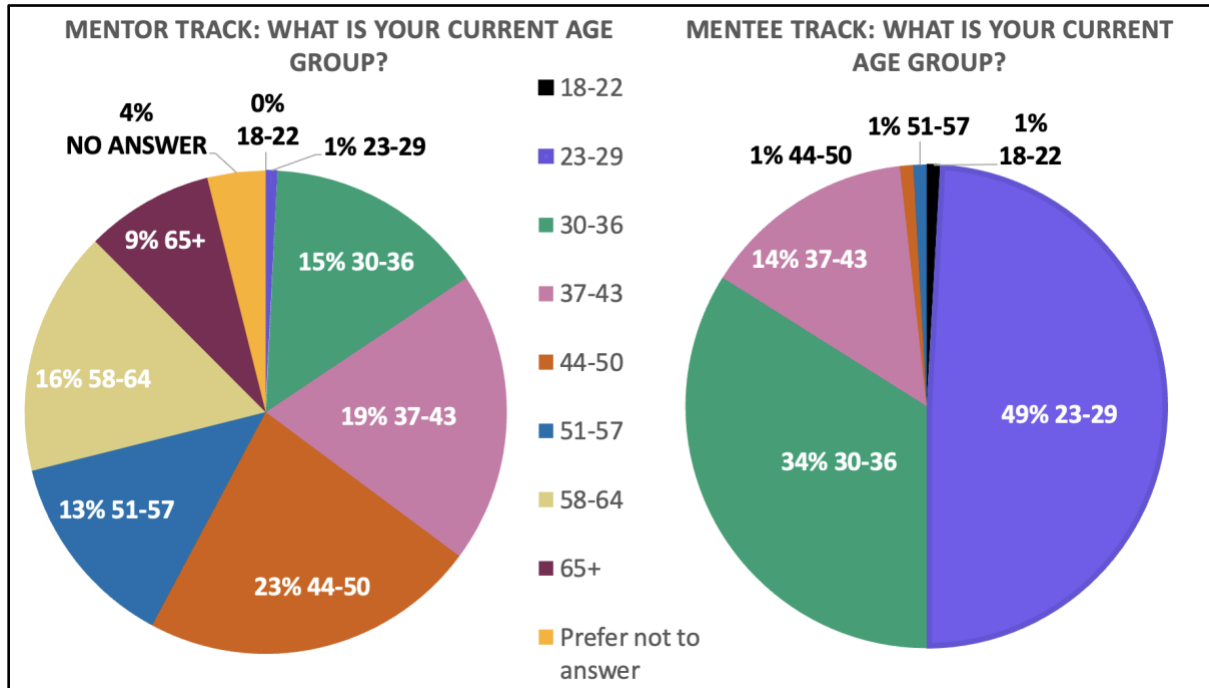


Figure 22. Distribution of responses to the question “What is your current age group?” including all participants in Survey 2, organized by track.

When asked if they have a visible or invisible disability or chronic illness, 17% of mentors and 40% of mentees replied yes. See a distribution of responses in figure 23.

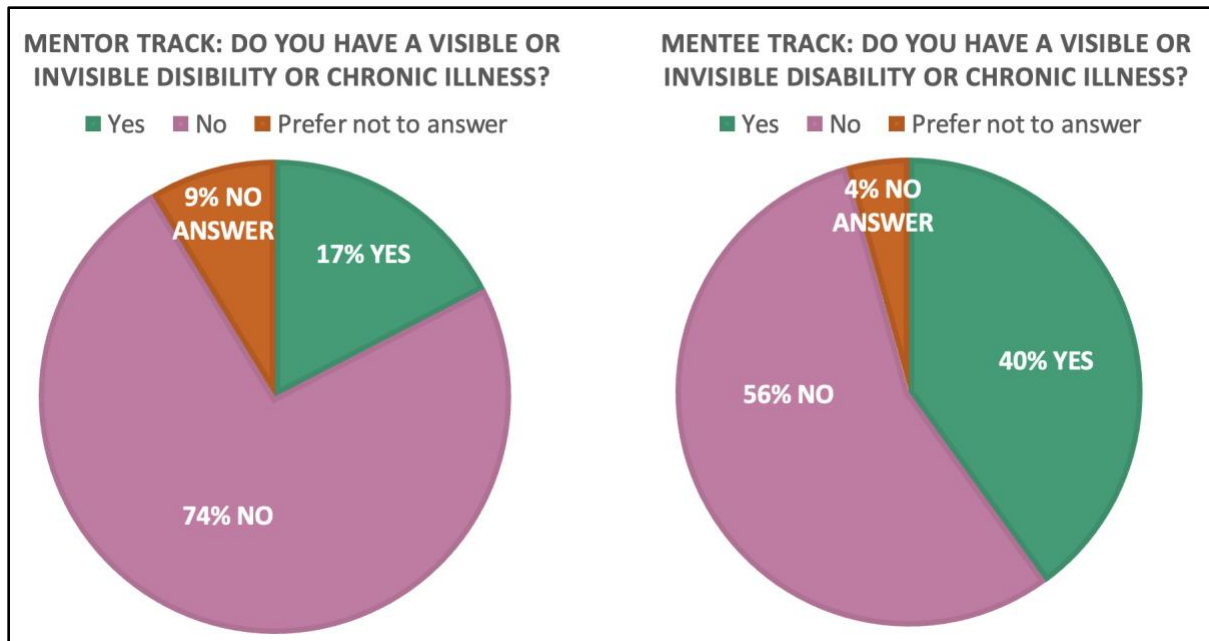


Figure 23. Distribution of responses to the question “Do you have a visible or invisible disability or chronic illness?” including all participants in Survey 2, organized by track.

Forty-two percent of mentors and 5% of mentees indicate that they have dependents. Sixty percent of mentors and 49% of mentees are in a dual income household or have additional/supplemental financial support. See total distribution of responses in figures 24 and 25.

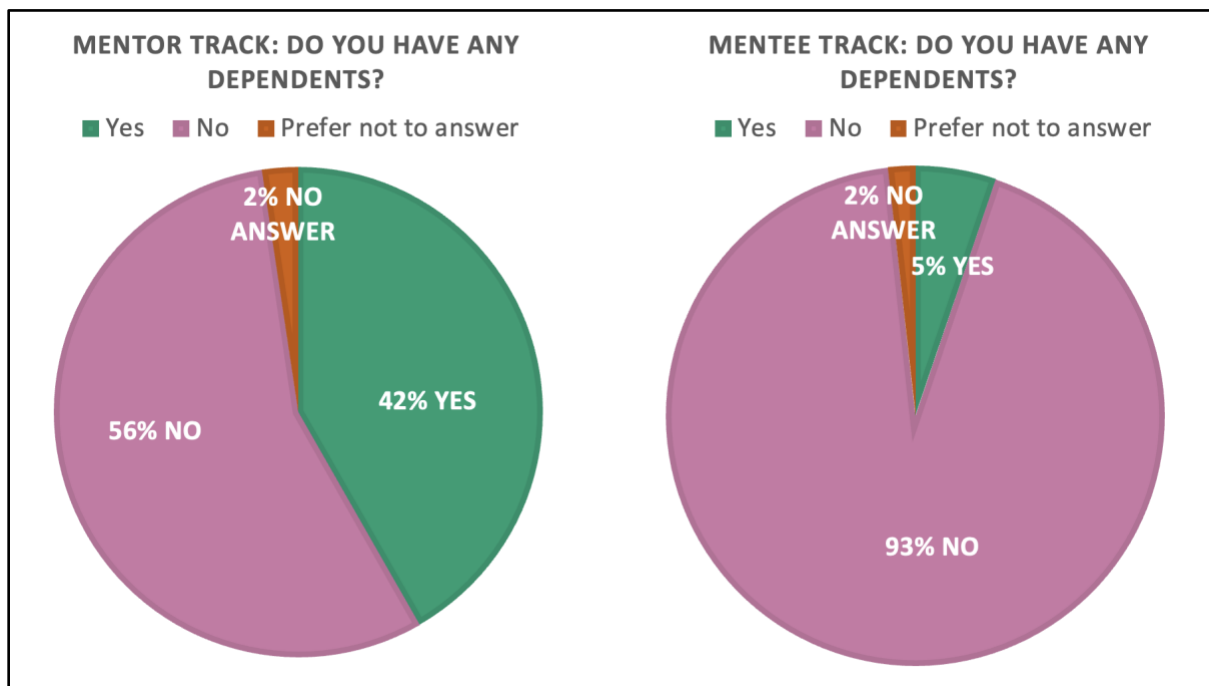


Figure 24. Distribution of responses to the question “Do you have any dependents?” including all participants in Survey 2, organized by track.

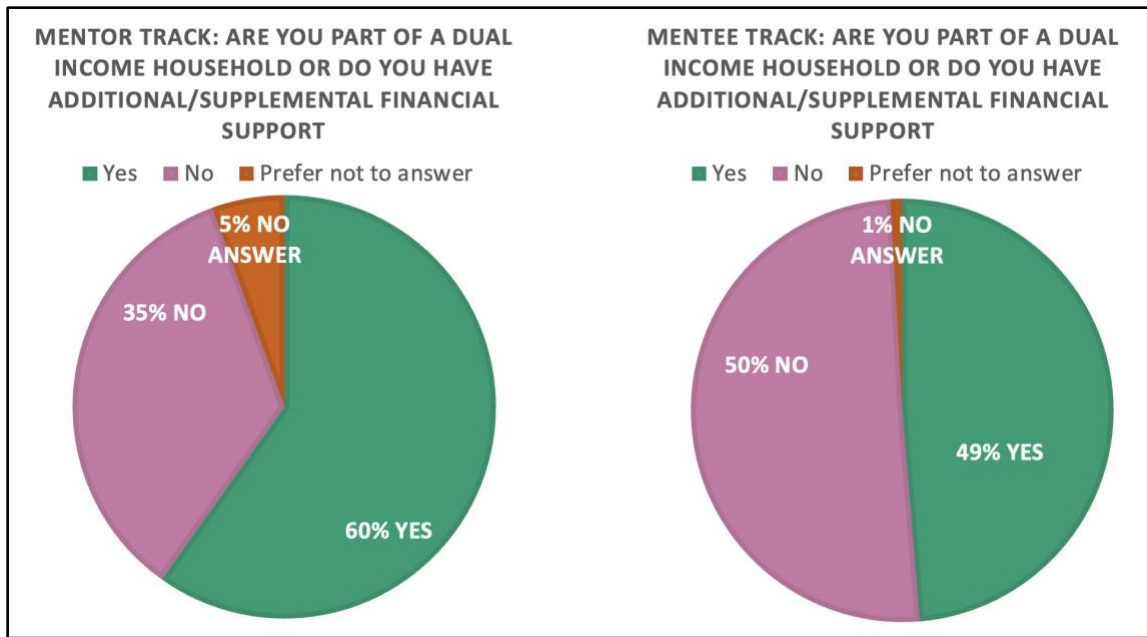


Figure 25. Distribution of responses to the question “Are you part of a dual income household or do you have additional/supplemental financial support?” including all participants in Survey 2, organized by track.

4.2.1. Educator/Supervisor/Mentor Track

In the educator, mentor, and supervisor track, 77% of respondents indicate that they take interns, students, and mentees. Those who do not take interns, but would like to, cite lack of funds to support the interns as the reason they do not. The most common reason (55%) they take interns/students is to train the future generation of conservators, followed by (21%) assistance with completing projects. See figure 26 for a total distribution of the responses.

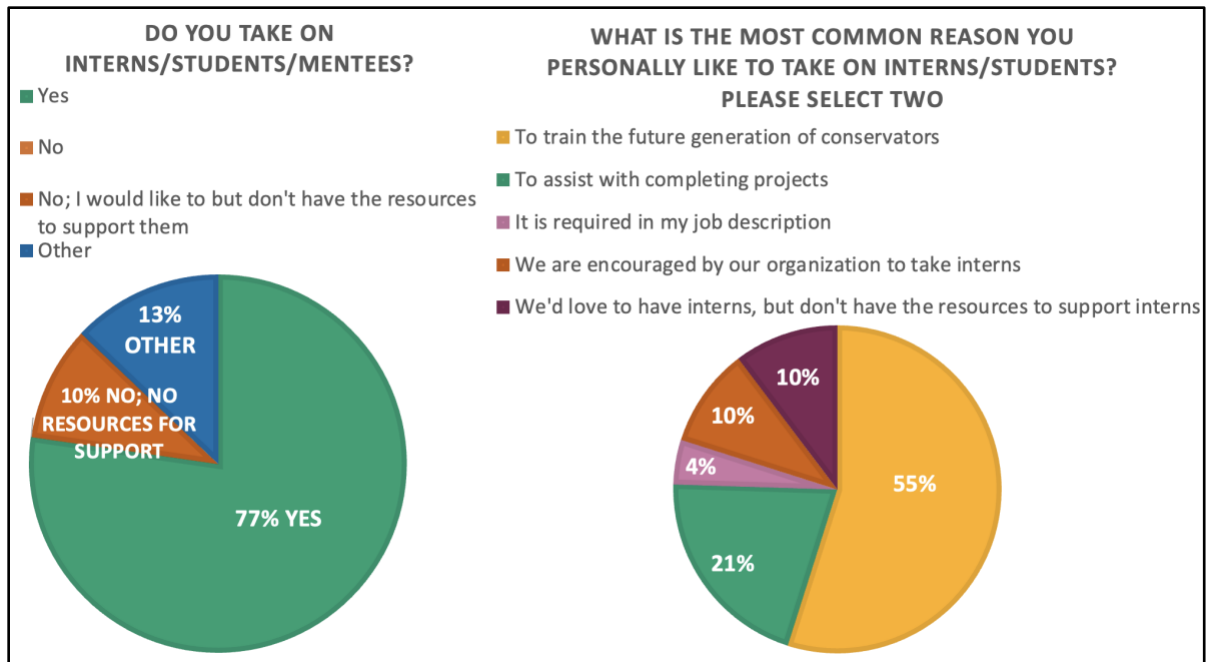


Figure 26. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding mentors taking on interns in Survey 2, mentor track. Write-in “other” responses can be seen in Appendix C.

When asked to rank what is most important to them in a good mentor, the highest ranked importance overall was to provide treatment advice and supervision followed by a personal connection to the mentee. Introductions, community building, and networking were also ranked high. Business practice/professional advice and research/analysis supervision were the lowest ranked. See figure 27 for distribution of answers.

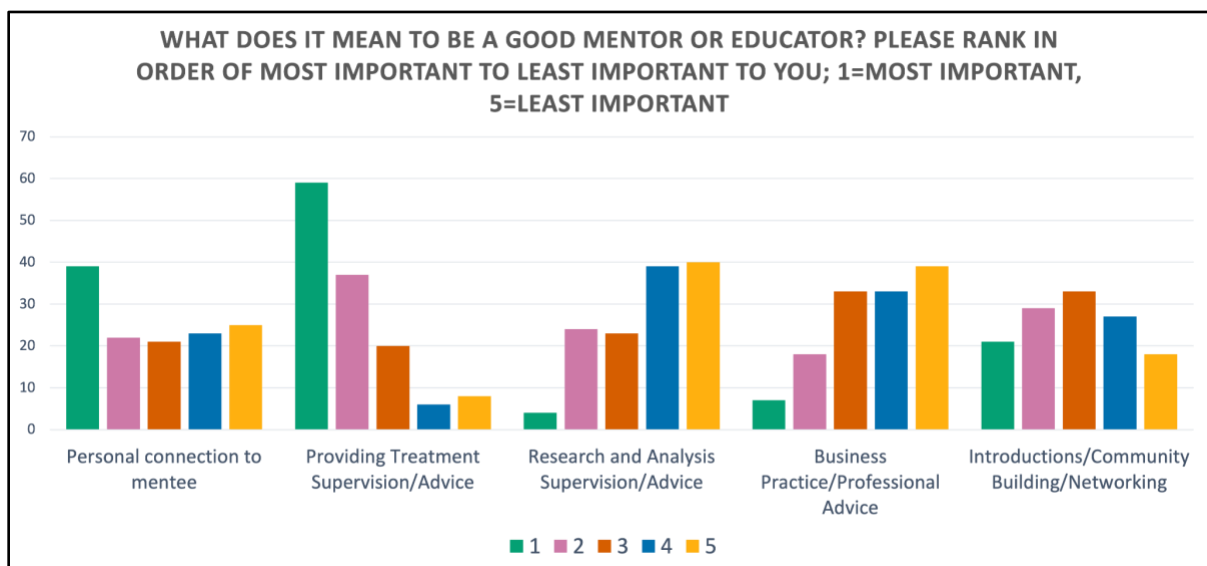


Figure 27. Distribution of responses from a question regarding what it means to be a good mentor in Survey 2, mentor track.

Participants were asked if they have any other feedback on what it means to them to be a good mentor other than the options in the multiple-choice question above. The responses had an overall emphasis on mutual trust and respect, getting to know the individual intern's needs/gaps, and making sure to take the time it takes to be a good mentor. While some people emphasized the importance of a personal connection with the intern (bolstering confidence and supporting through mistakes), others reiterate the singular purpose to be a professional mentor (leading by example and providing networking opportunities). Some mentors cite the importance of giving career trajectory advice and assisting interns to get to the next level.

When asked how they plan their curriculum, 31% state they ask the students/interns for their goals/needs and 28% plan based on personal and peer experience. Please see figure 28 for total distribution of responses.

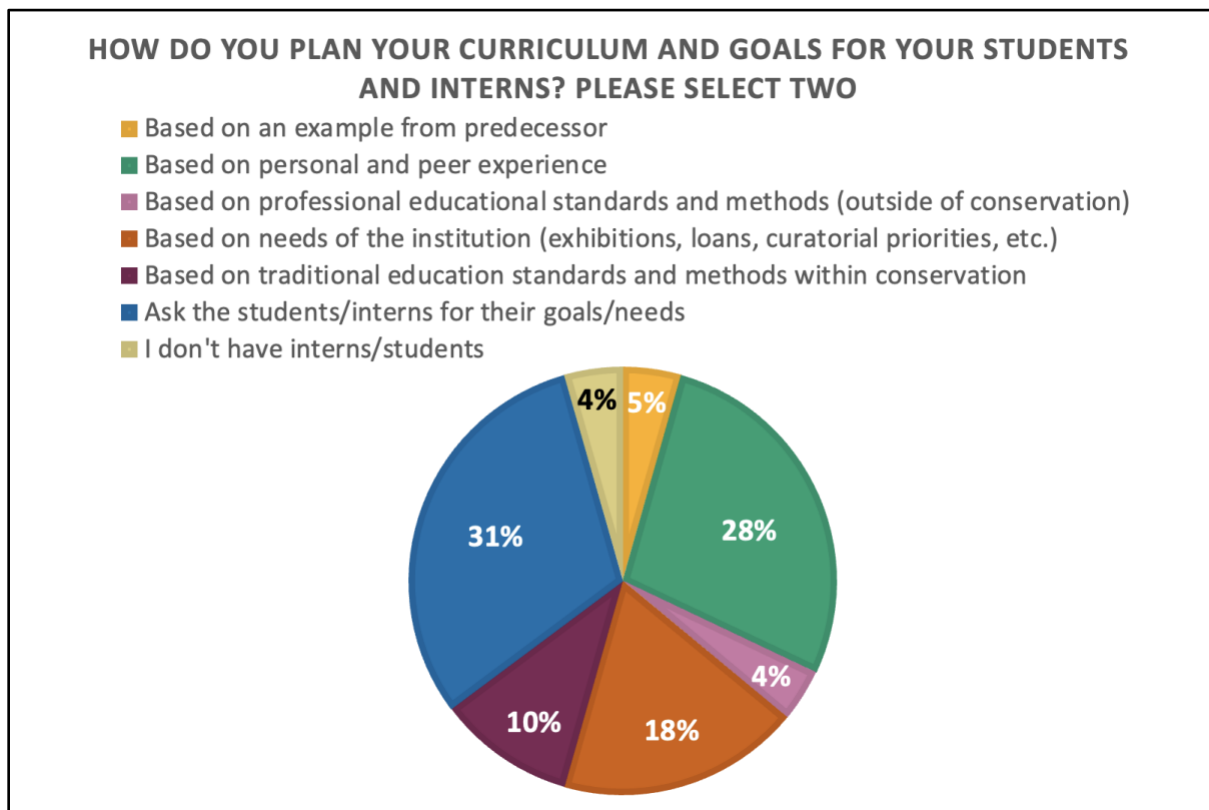


Figure 28. Distribution of responses from a question regarding planning curriculum and goals for interns in Survey 2, mentor track.

Participants were given the chance to provide relevant feedback to the question on planning curriculum and goals for their students and interns. Mentors across the board are looking at the individual intern's experience to round out and enhance their portfolios, noting also the need to build confidence and provide opportunities for interns to work on their own (both for their autonomy and because the mentor does not have enough time).

Thirty-eight percent of respondents say they have not changed their training & internship practices since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; 34% indicate they were not a mentor/supervisor/educator at that time. Under half (43%) of respondents report they have not changed their training and

internship practices since the national call for diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI). Please see figure 29 for total distribution of responses.

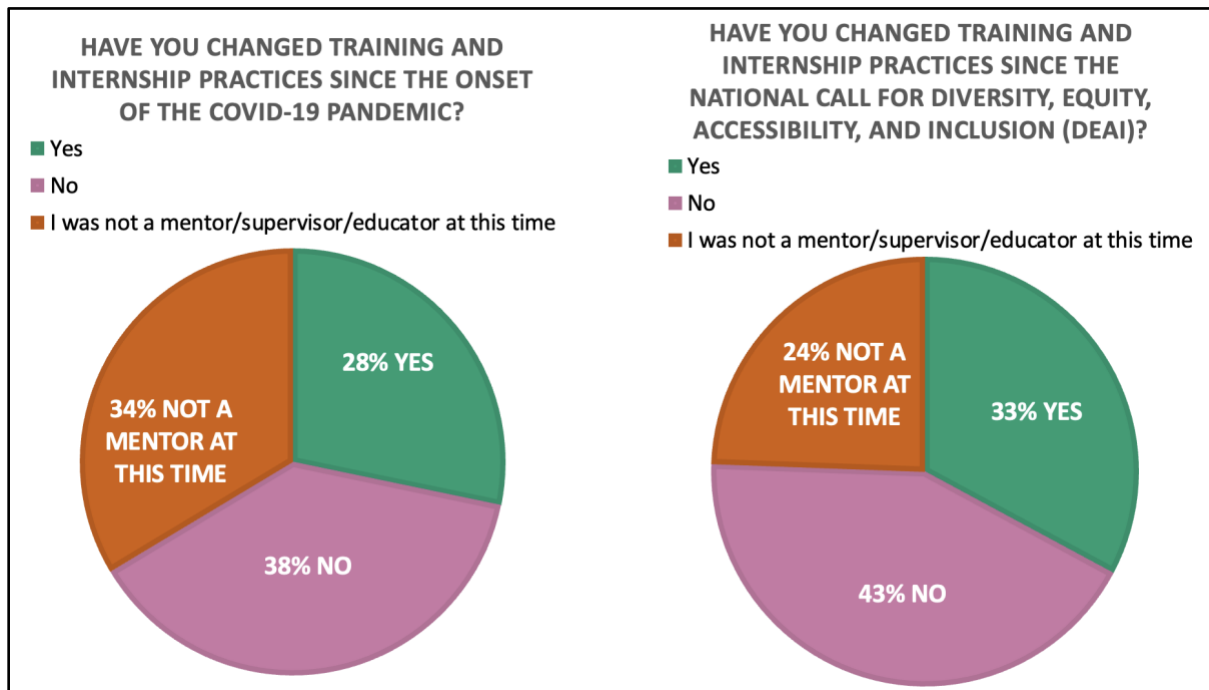


Figure 29. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding changing internship practices due to COVID-19 and calls for DEAI in Survey 2, mentor track.

Respondents were asked to expand on both survey questions “Have you changed your practices since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?” and “Have you changed your practices since the national call for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility?” Responses to these questions show that in response to COVID-19, there has been an increase in schedule flexibility, which is also seen in scheduling for interns/non-staff. Supervisors/mentors re-thought instructional delivery and projects, which allowed for a re-thinking of what the interns actually needed to accomplish for their skill set, leading to individualized projects in some cases to fill in gaps missed because of COVID. Expanded responses from the later question indicated that DEIA attempts have been on some peoples’ minds for years, while others were introduced to concepts like implicit bias because of this national call. Across the board, there have been shifts away from unpaid internships, attempts to raise compensation, and efforts to partner with HBCUs, etc. Through both recent shifts, respondents mention the need to have patience and understanding—meeting the intern where they’re at—and in some instances lowering expectations to allow for better work/life balance.

Despite only 33% of respondents indicating they have changed their internship practices since the national call for DEAI, 53% of respondents indicate that their organization is actively searching for interns and students who are racially or culturally diverse, or part of an underrepresented demographic in our field. When asked if there are mechanisms in place to support interns/students with underrepresented backgrounds, 27% of respondents indicate there is adequate financial support and 20% indicate there are safe spaces and people for them to connect with. Only 14% indicate that there are no mechanisms in place. See figure 30 for total distribution of responses.

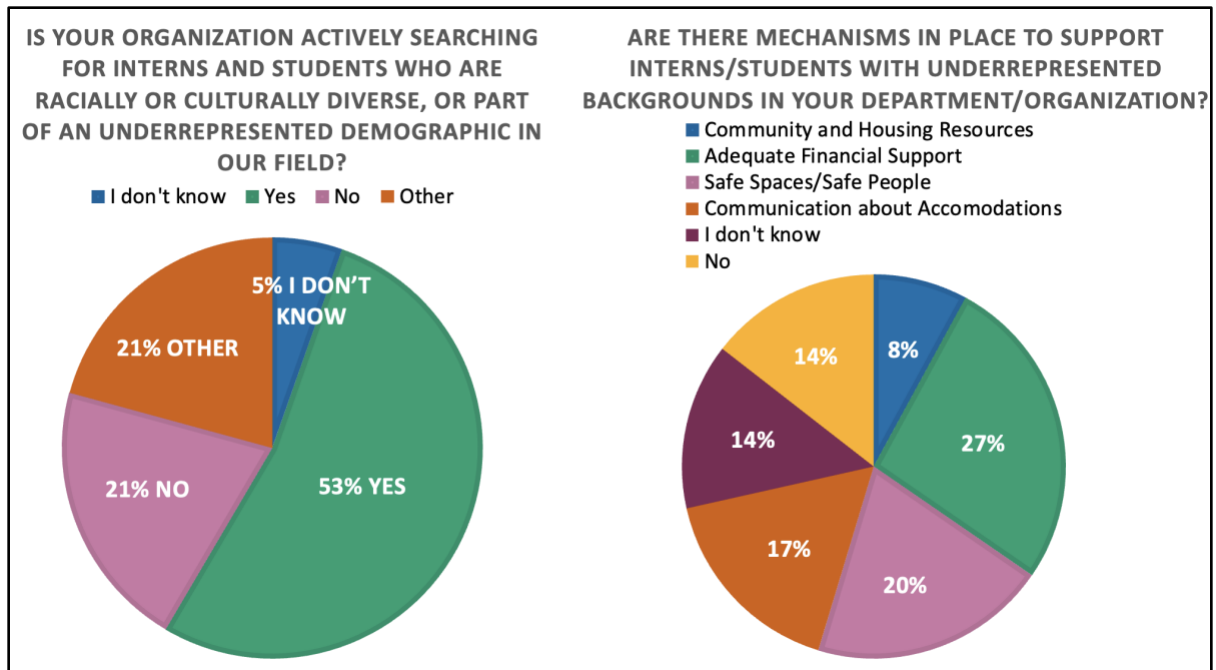


Figure 30. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding searching for and supporting actively diverse interns in Survey 2, mentor track. Write-in expansions of “other” responses can be found in Appendix C.

When asked how mentors acquire the skills related to leadership and supervisory training, 47% indicated they acquired them through experience. Only 7% of respondents indicate they took courses, webinars, or workshops. When asked if they felt equipped to be a good mentor/supervisor/educator when they had their first student/intern/mentee, the results are split. Respondents equally indicated they were prepared (48%) or they did not feel prepared (48%); 81% of respondents indicate they would take a training course on how to become a good mentor/supervisor through AIC, with 36% indicating they would take it only if it was available at low or no cost. See figure 31 for distribution of responses.

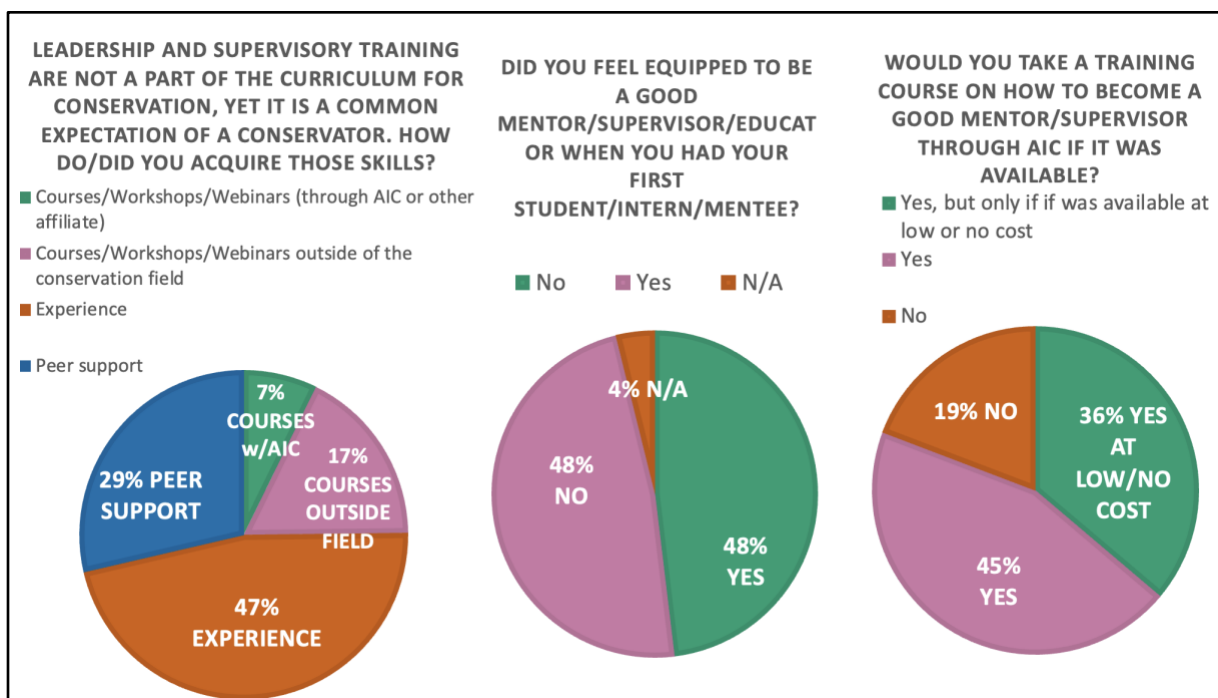


Figure 31. Distribution of responses from three questions regarding feeling equipped to be a good mentor and leadership training in Survey 2, mentor track.

Finally, respondents in the mentor/supervisor/educator track were asked if they think graduate school is a necessary step to becoming a conservator, with 72% responding yes. See figure 32 for distribution of responses.

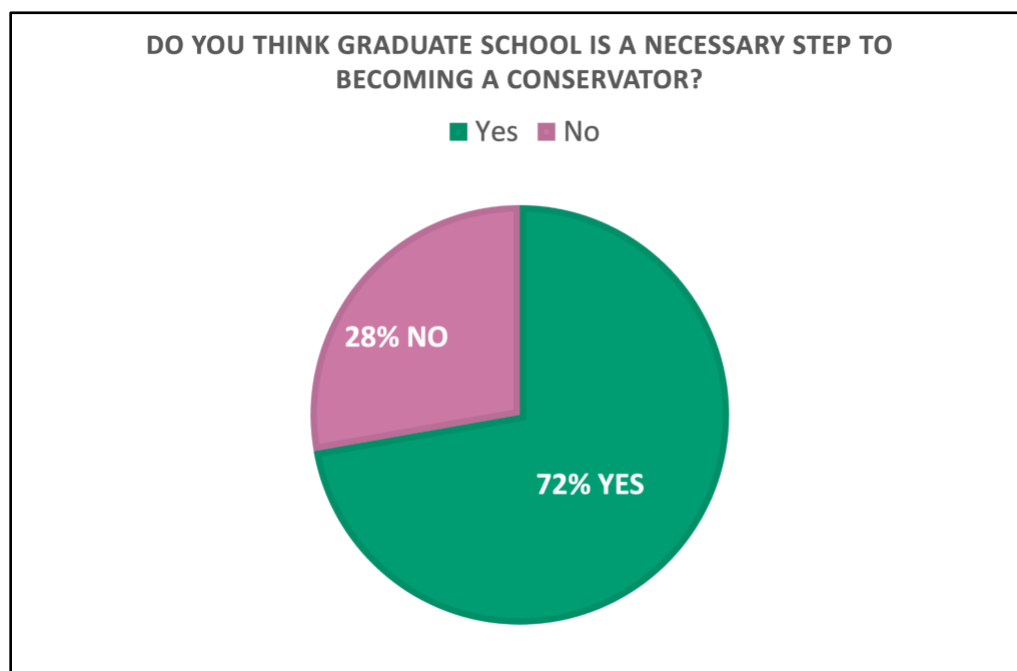


Figure 32. Distribution of responses from a question regarding whether graduate school is necessary in Survey 2, mentor track.

When asked to expand, participants who said that graduate education is necessary to become a conservator cited that job postings require it, the credential associated with the degree (and the visibility) is invaluable, and the time required for theory is often not available through an apprenticeship. There is interest in a formalized apprentice option and, as always, certification to even out the perceived disparity between apprentice trained conservators and program trained conservators. One respondent even said "Graduate programs prepare students to be excellent conservators at the "top" level. Other paths could lead to excellent conservators, too. And what is missing is a clear path for conservators who may not want to work at the "top"."

Additional comments from respondents in the mentor/supervisor/educator track frequently included a lack of funding being a major impediment to the implementation of ideal DEAI practices and a general field uplift including adequately paid positions, raises, and individual financial sustainability. Many also mentioned that mentoring is a two-way street in terms of the expectations we all should have—mentors should be willing and open to learn from their interns and that interns should realize that mentors are also stretched thin and doing the best they can. There were also a few mentions of the differences in support for those working in an institution versus private practice

4.2.2. Mentee/Student/Supervisee Track

In the mentee/student/supervisee track, respondents were asked what to rank what they want most in a mentor (note: we only selected the word *mentor* here, not supervisor or educator). Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated they want treatment supervision and advice. Also higher on their rankings were personal connection and business practice/professional advice. Research and analysis supervision/advice seemed to rank lowest. See distribution of responses in figure 33.

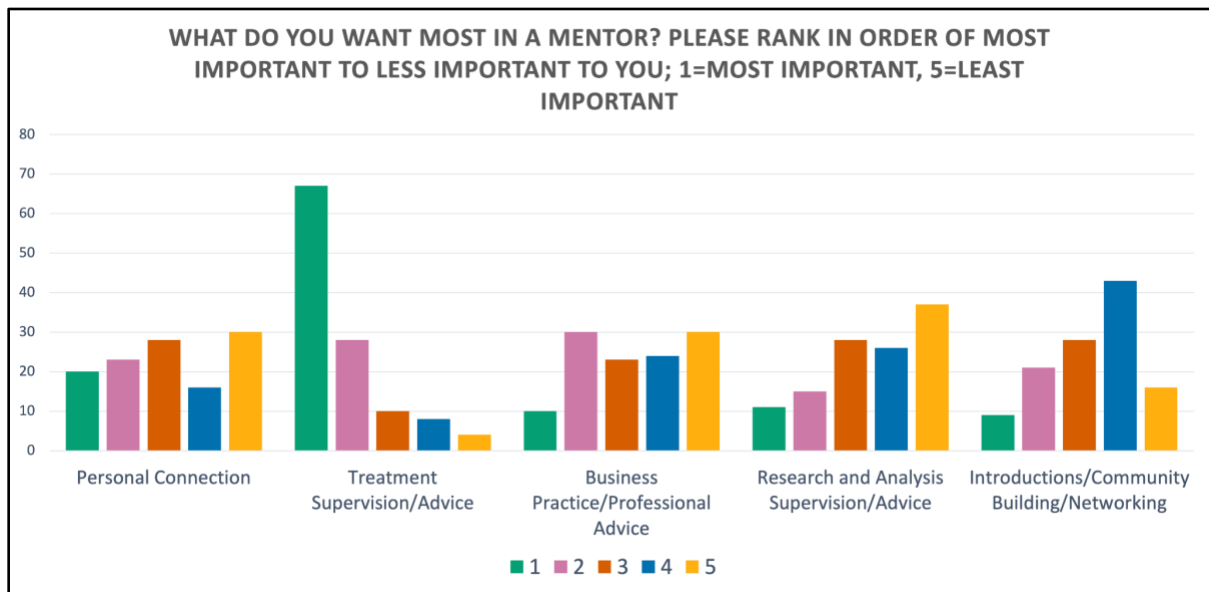


Figure 33. Distribution of responses from a question regarding what mentees want most in a mentor in Survey 2, mentee track.

Participants were asked if they have any other feedback on what they want in a mentor other than the options in the multiple-choice question. In general, there is a strong sense of interns looking for a mentor to "meet them where they're at." Personal and professional support are important, as well as

honest, unbiased, non-judgmental feedback. Some responses mention the presence of gatekeeping, while others tell of mentors who have freely shared information, pointing to a diverse experience across the field. There is a desire for mentors to better understand the current state of interns (local costs of living, expenditures with moving, landscape of education, job market, etc.) to better advocate for them and help the intern advocate for themselves.

When asked the top three ways students/mentees/supervisees learn best, 32% indicated they learn best from hands-on experience, 27% prefer moderate supervision, and only 1% prefer constant supervision. More respondents prefer independent work (14%) and lecture (11%), while less prefer to learn through video recordings (6%). See figure 34 below for distribution of responses.

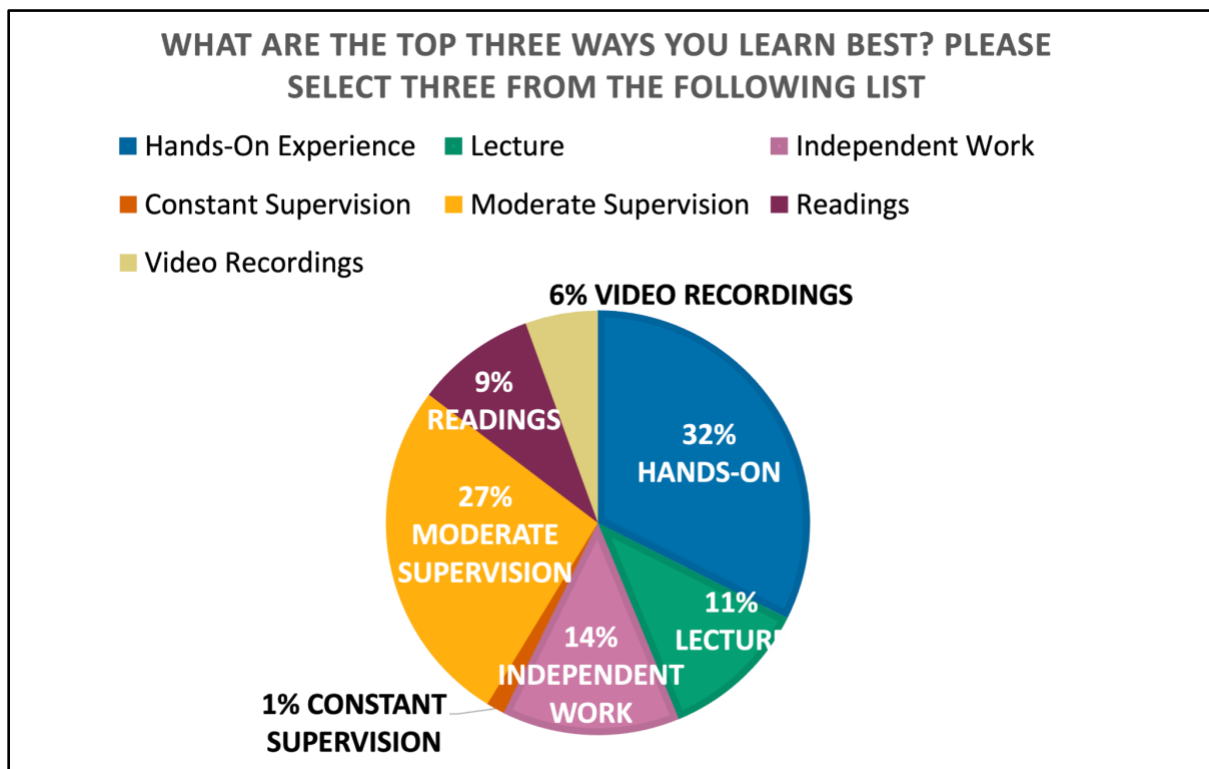


Figure 34. Distribution of responses from a question regarding how mentees/students/interns learn best in Survey 2, mentee track.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many mentees/supervisees/students' training changed. Answers show that 26% of respondents had more online content/meetings, 18% experienced a lack of training/mentorship, and 18% felt like they missed out on a lot. Respondents also indicated the focus of training shifted to more theory than practice and 8% of respondents felt good about their training situation. See distribution of responses in figure 35.

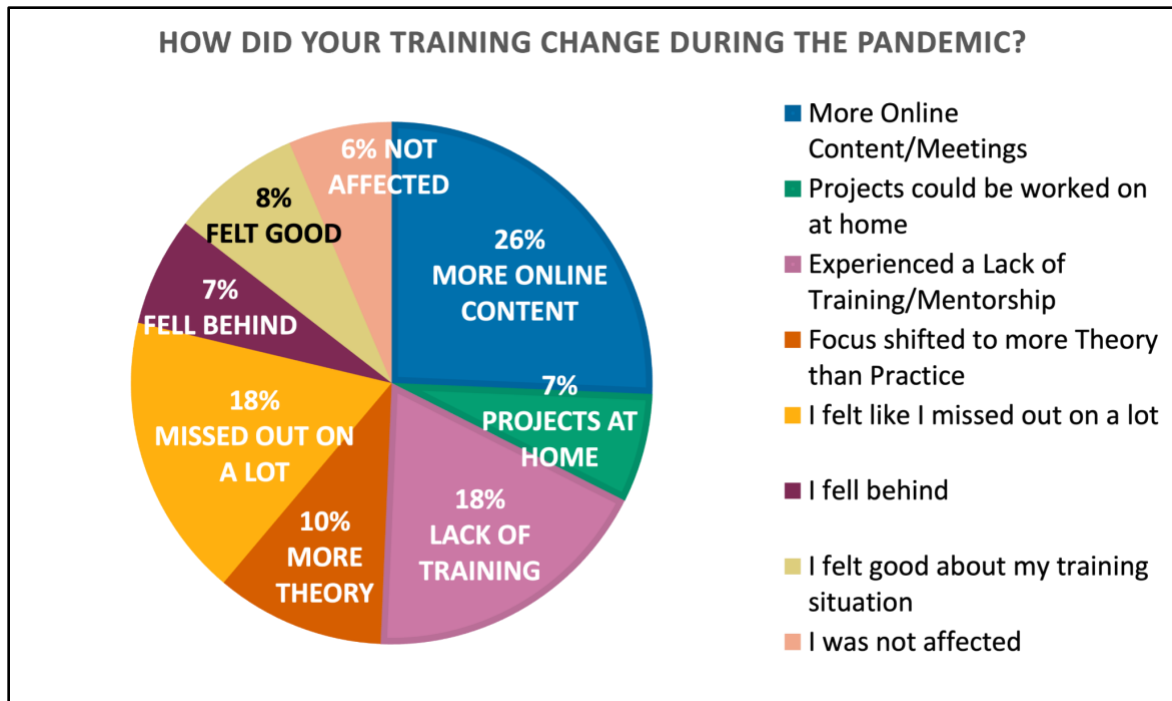


Figure 35. Distribution of responses from a question regarding how mentees' training changed due to COVID-19 in Survey 2, mentee track.

When asked if financial compensation is a determining factor when deciding what educational opportunity to take, 117 or 48% of respondents say it is the most important factor; 42% of respondents say financial compensation is a factor, but not as important as the value of the opportunity. At 67%, most respondents believe that graduate school is a necessary step to becoming a conservator. See figure 36 for a distribution of responses.

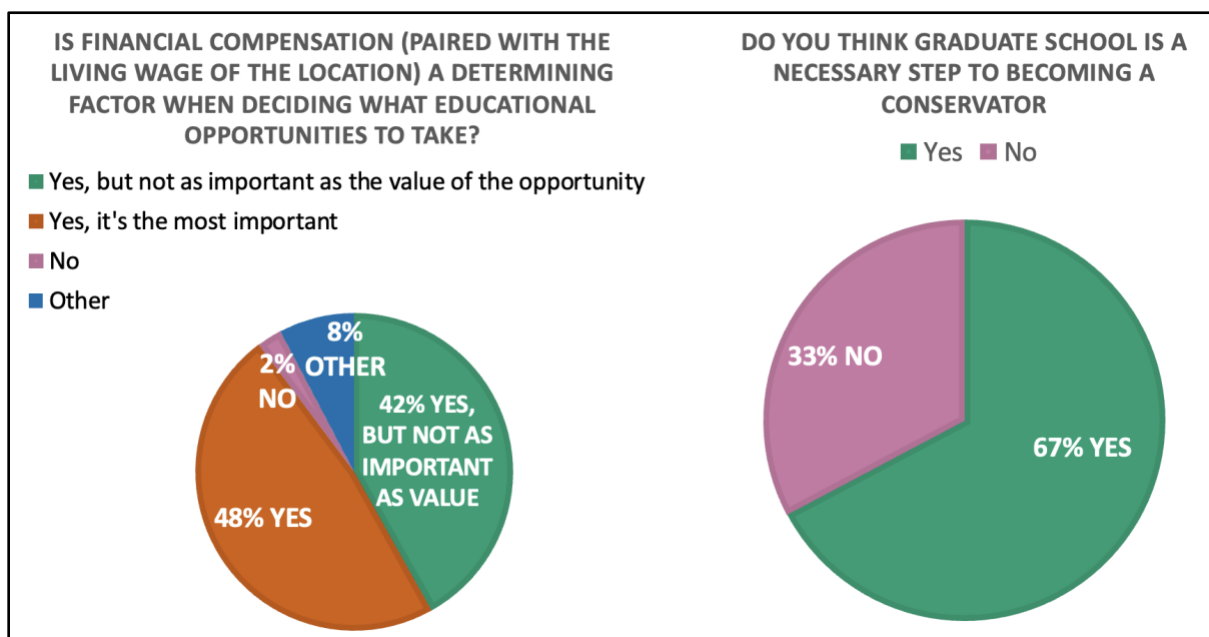


Figure 36. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding decision making based on compensation and the necessity of graduate school in Survey 2, mentee track. Additional write-in expansions can be found in Appendix C.

Participants with the response “other” to the question “is financial compensation (paired with the living wage of the location) a determining factor when deciding what educational opportunities to take?” appear to believe pay and the perceived value of the opportunity can be sometimes weighed with the same importance.

Participants were encouraged to add additional commentary to the question “do you think graduate school is necessary to become a conservator?” The responses point to the necessity of attending a graduate program being dictated by employers and adjacent fields (specifically being taken seriously by other departments in a museum). With the lack of certification, an advanced degree is the current only way to legitimize oneself as a professional conservator. While the graduate programs are not comprehensively adequate to prepare one for their entire career, it is generally accepted as the quickest and most straightforward way to establish oneself as qualified to be hired or establish a practice and be respected by colleagues.

When asked if students, mentees, and supervisees believe that DEAI initiatives have been adequately considered by training programs, mentors, and supervisors, only 17% of respondents said yes. Notably, 33% of respondents were either unsure or would rather not answer. See figure 37 for a distribution of responses.

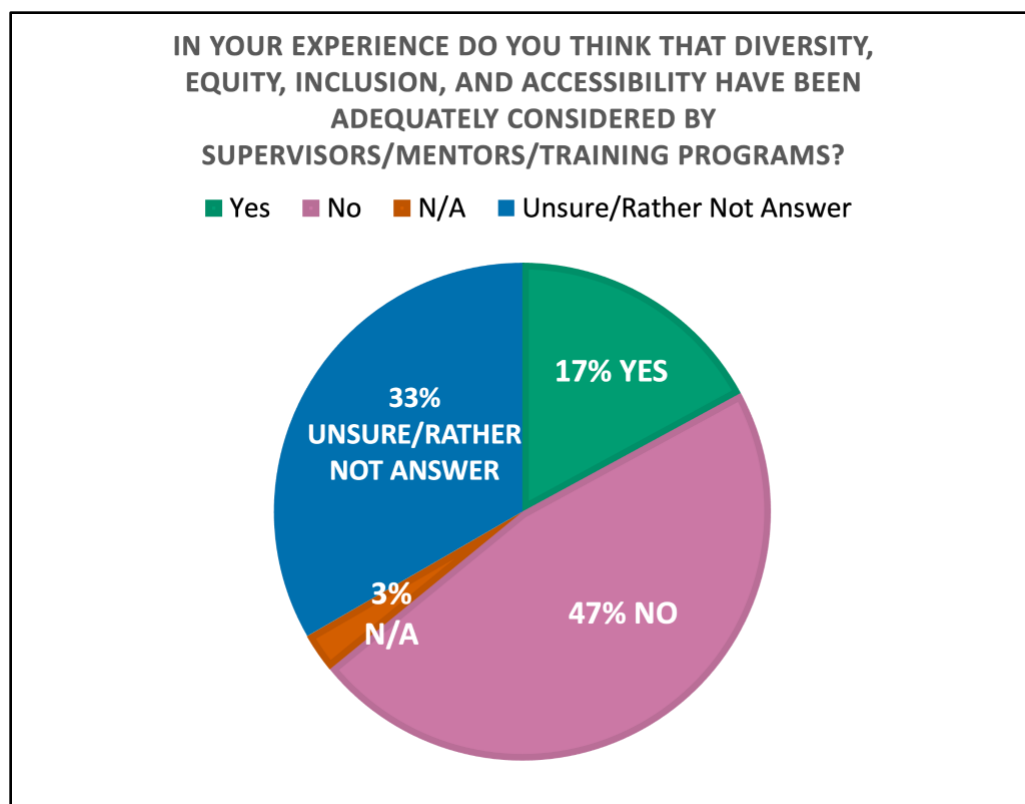


Figure 37. Distribution of responses from a question regarding whether or not DEAI has been adequately considered by supervisors/training programs in Survey 2, mentee track.

Respondents were asked to expand on the question “in your experience do you think that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility have been adequately considered by supervisors/mentors/training programs?” The overall sentiment of responses is that there is so much more work to be done; strides

have been made, but the pay is simply not enough—one response even mentioned being paid better at a fast-food restaurant. There are not enough systems in place to adequately support and accommodate anyone who is not white, wealthy, and able-bodied.

Finally, participants in the mentee/supervisee/student track were asked if they had anything to add. One responder expressed frustration in the expectation for pre-programmers to have outreach and research experience in addition to hands-on conservation experience. Adding additional expectations for non-conservation skill sets seems like it may have limited potential participation, not made positions more inclusive (which may have been the intention in broadening these prerequisites). The lack of diverse paths and positions has created a pipeline that cannot broaden the field. Additionally, ego has played a role for some who have not received adequate training or help in their internships, both in employers looking for specific pathways on a resume, and in applicants feeling unqualified because of an unconventional path. Two responders suggested more workshops, one specifically suggesting that AIC offers workshops specifically on mentorship and supervision training.

4.3. Survey 3 Data

Respondents to Survey 3 were 90% female, 5% male, and 4% non-binary. Their current age group lies in a majority of 30-36 years old (29%), with 37-43 (24%) and 23-29 (18%) the next highest groups. See figure 38 for a distribution of responses.

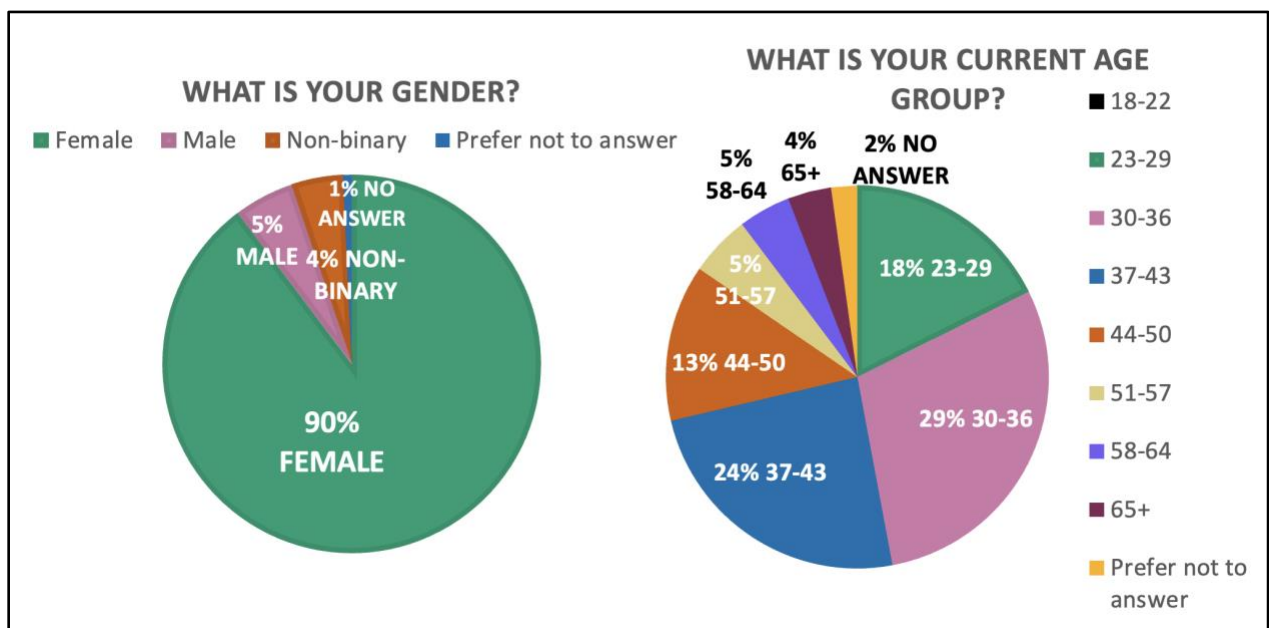


Figure 38. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding gender identity and age group in Survey 3.

A majority of respondents identify as white (75%), with 1% identifying as Black or African American, 8% identifying as Hispanic or Latino, and 6% identifying as Asian or Asian American. A distribution of responses can be found in figure 39.

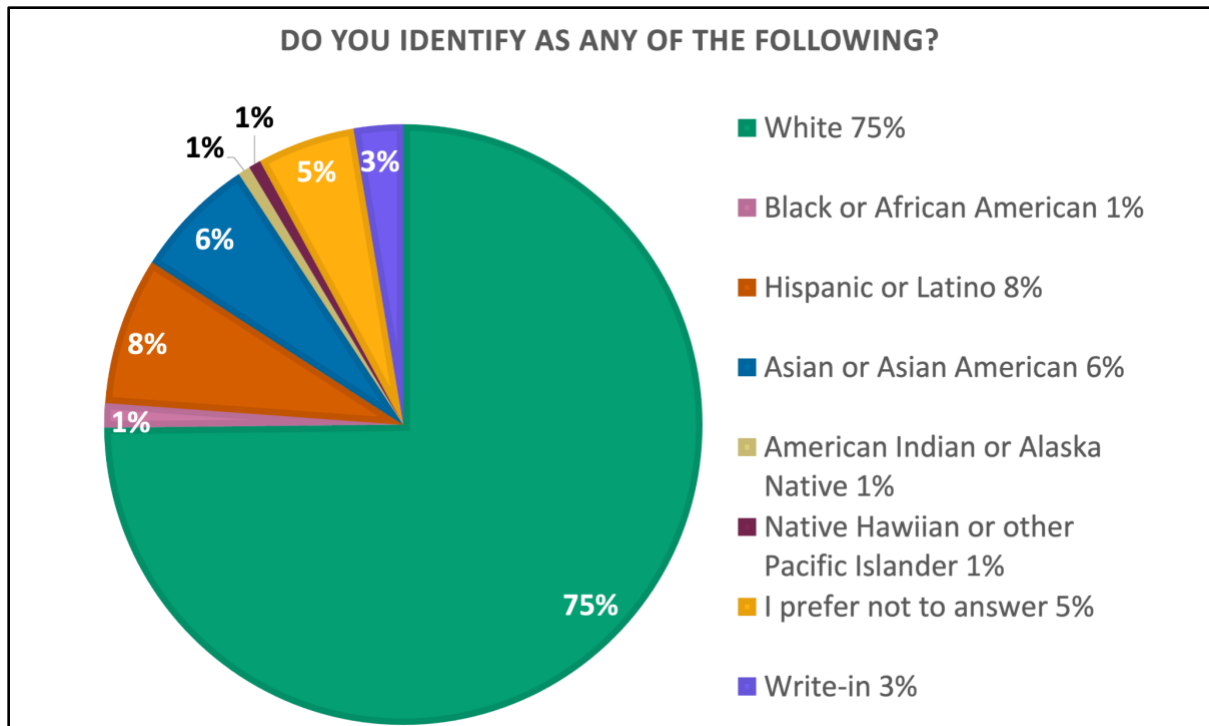


Figure 39. Distribution of responses from the question “Do you identify as any of the following?” in Survey 3. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

When asked if they have a visible or invisible disability or chronic illness, 28% of respondents indicated yes. See figure 40 for a distribution of responses.

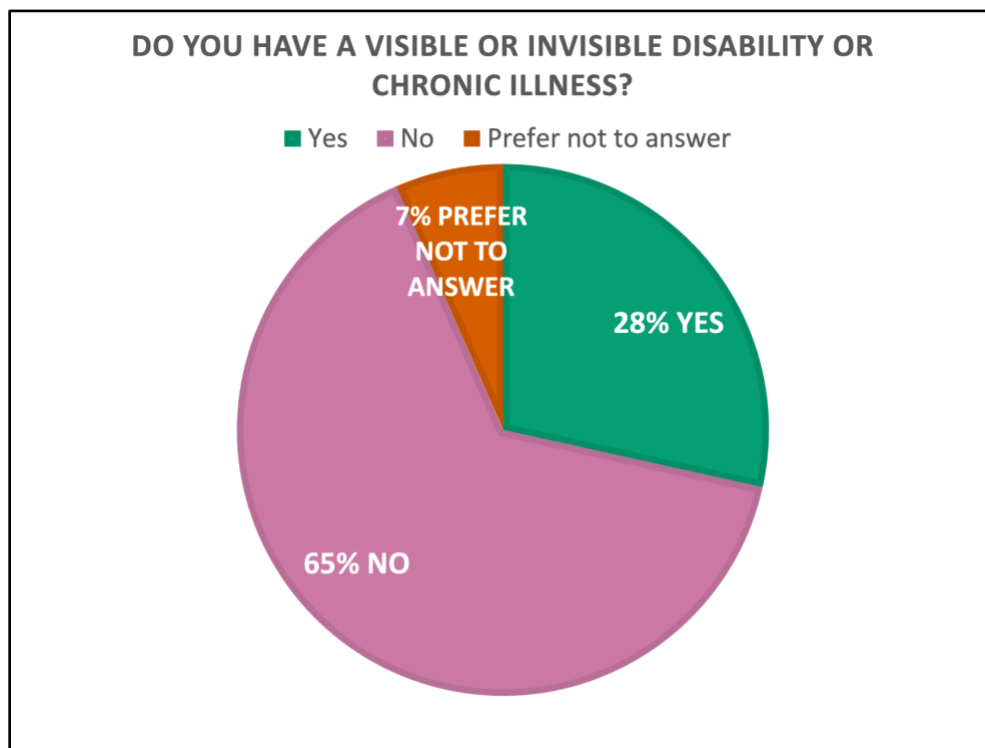


Figure 40. Distribution of responses from a question regarding disabilities in Survey 3.

About a quarter (26%) of respondents have dependents and 62% indicate they are part of a dual income household or have additional/supplemental financial support. See figure 41 for a distribution of responses.

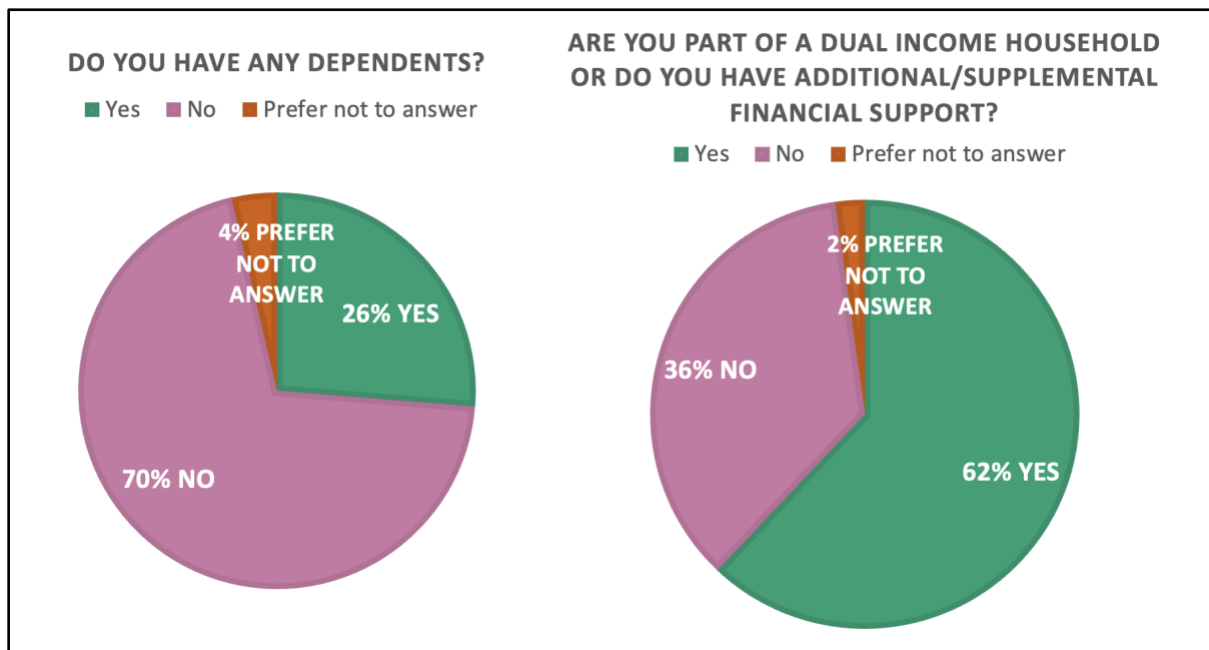


Figure 41. Distribution of responses from two questions regarding dependents and household income in Survey 3.

All respondents were asked to identify their current career stage within conservation; all respondents were given the same set of questions regardless of answer to this first question. Write-ins to this response included PhD students, professor/lecturer, and those who fit in multiple categories. A distribution of responses can be found in figure 42.

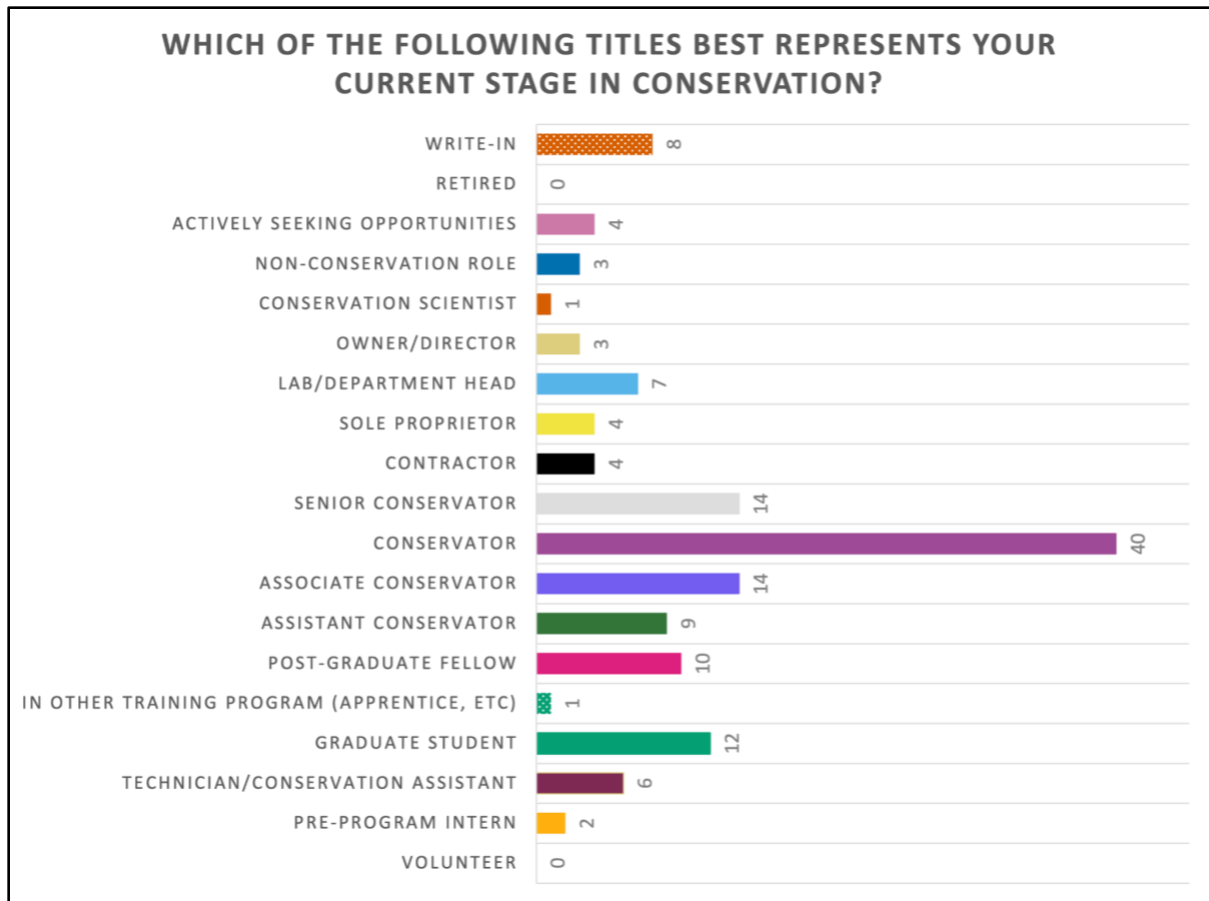


Figure 42. Distribution of responses from a question regarding their current stage in conservation in Survey 3. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

Respondents were asked to select benefits provided through their workplace. All respondents who indicated they were at the pre-program stage said they had no benefits, and many respondents at the “in-training” stage indicated the same. A full distribution of benefits of respondents broken out by career stage can be seen in figure 43.

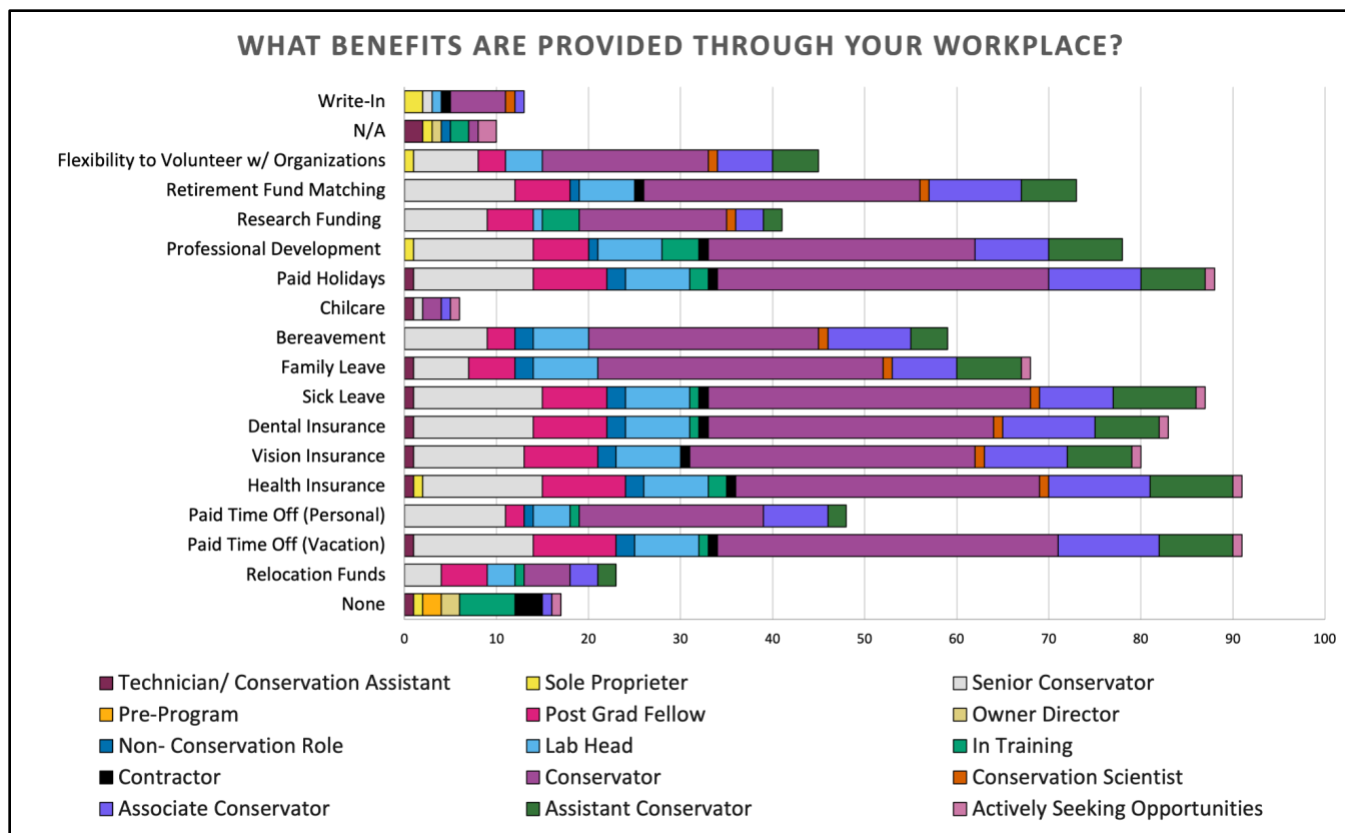


Figure 43. Distribution of responses regarding benefits from respondents in Survey 3. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

When asked how many years had been spent in training roles, including pre-program, intern, student, fellow, and technician roles, respondents were very spread out, with the highest percentage spending 6-8 years in these roles. Very few of respondents (only 15%) spent less than 3 years in these roles. See figure 44 for a distribution of responses.

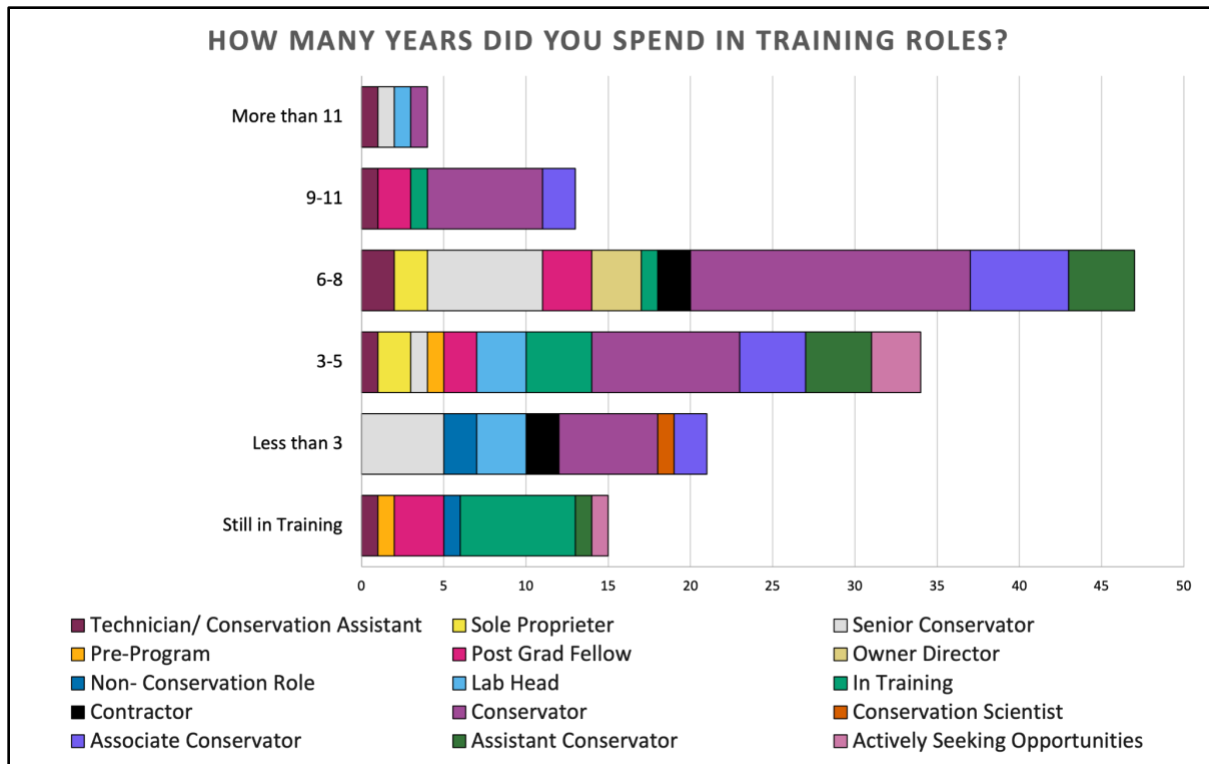


Figure 44. Distribution of responses regarding years spent in training roles from respondents in Survey 3.

When asked if they were paid a self-sustaining wage for the city that they live in, 69% of respondents said yes. Despite this, only 32% of respondents indicated that they could afford to live alone without support from a partner/roommate/etc. See figure 45 for distribution of responses by career stage.

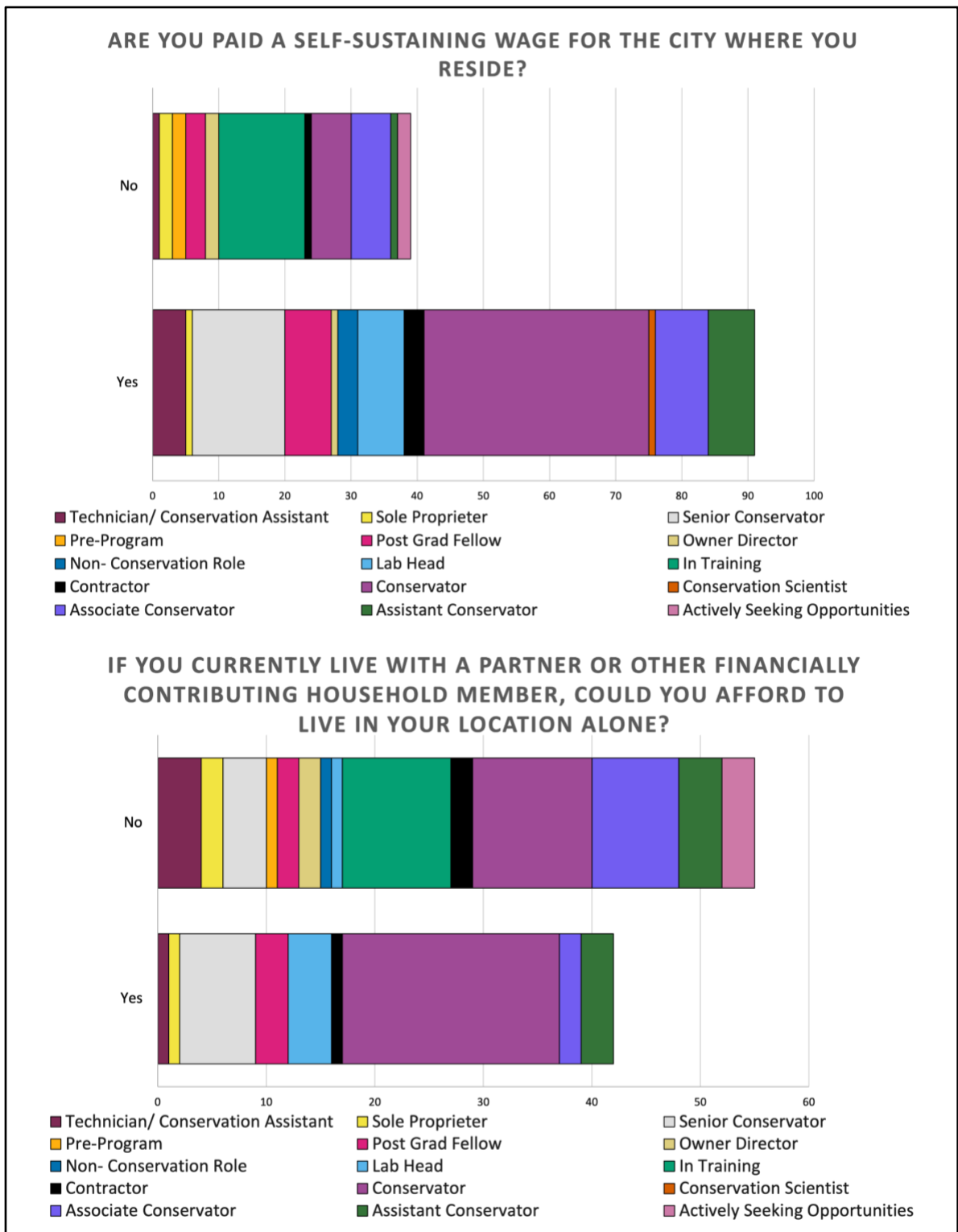


Figure 45. Distribution of responses of two questions regarding compensation and financial stability in Survey 3. Three percent of respondents replied “N/A” to if they are paid a self-sustaining wage, and 28% of respondents replied “N/A” when asked if they live with a partner or have additional financial support; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

Nearly half (48%) of respondents believe their job title/salary is appropriate for their experience level based on other posted positions. See Figure 46 for distribution of responses.

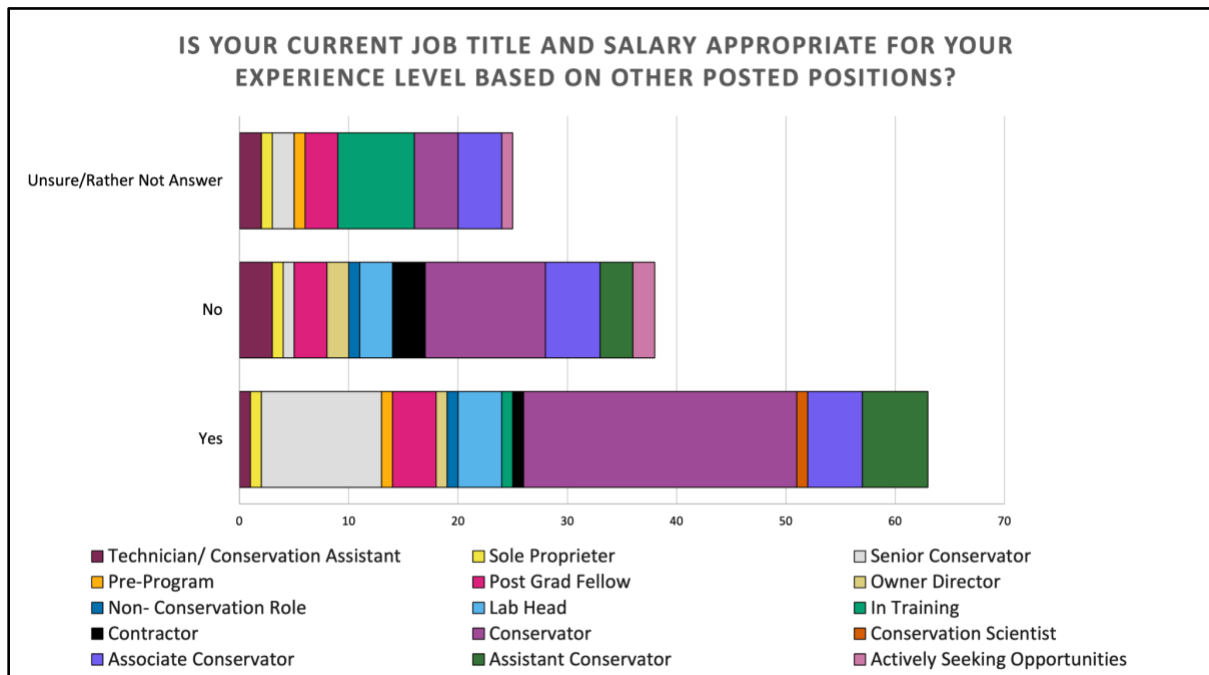


Figure 46. Distribution of responses regarding appropriate job title and salary from respondents in Survey 3. 6% of respondents replied “N/A”; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

When asked if there were opportunities for advancement and pay/benefit increase within their workplaces, 45% of respondents indicated yes. See a distribution of responses in figure 47.

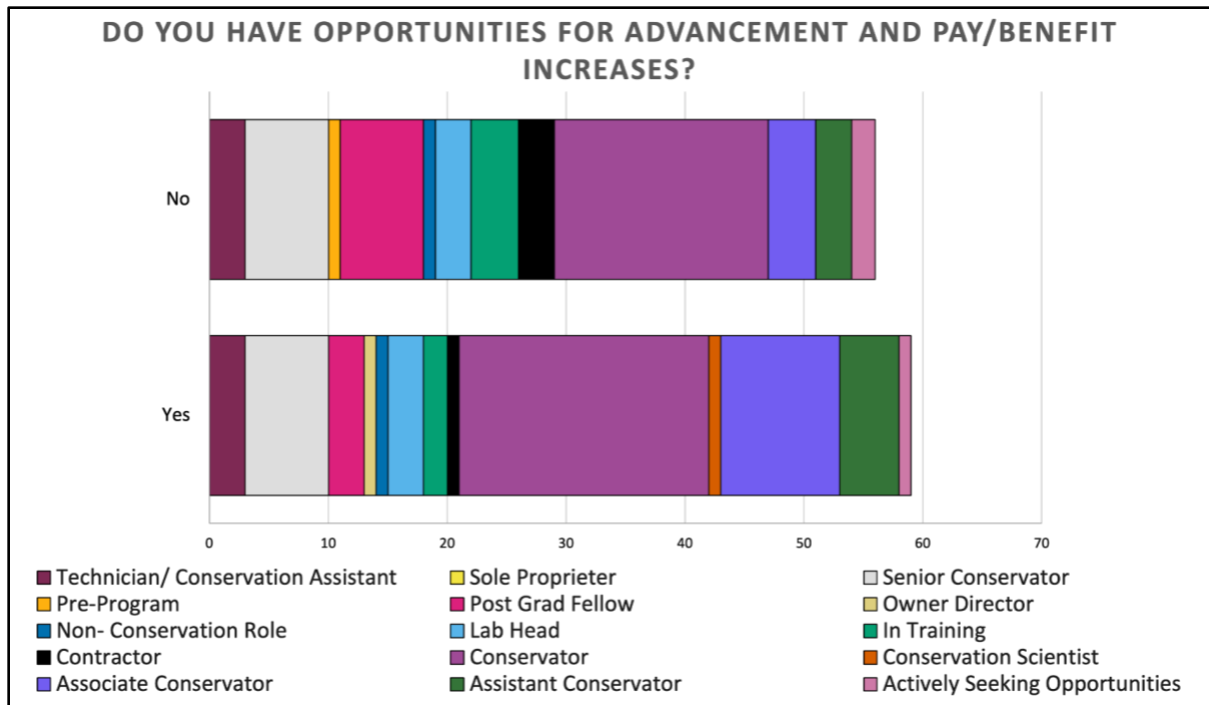


Figure 47. Distribution of responses regarding advancement and pay/benefit increases from respondents in Survey 3; 14% of respondents replied “N/A”; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

The most common number of people reporting to those in a supervisory role is between 1-4, with most respondents (76%) indicating that they are not in this type of role. See figure 48 for distribution of responses.

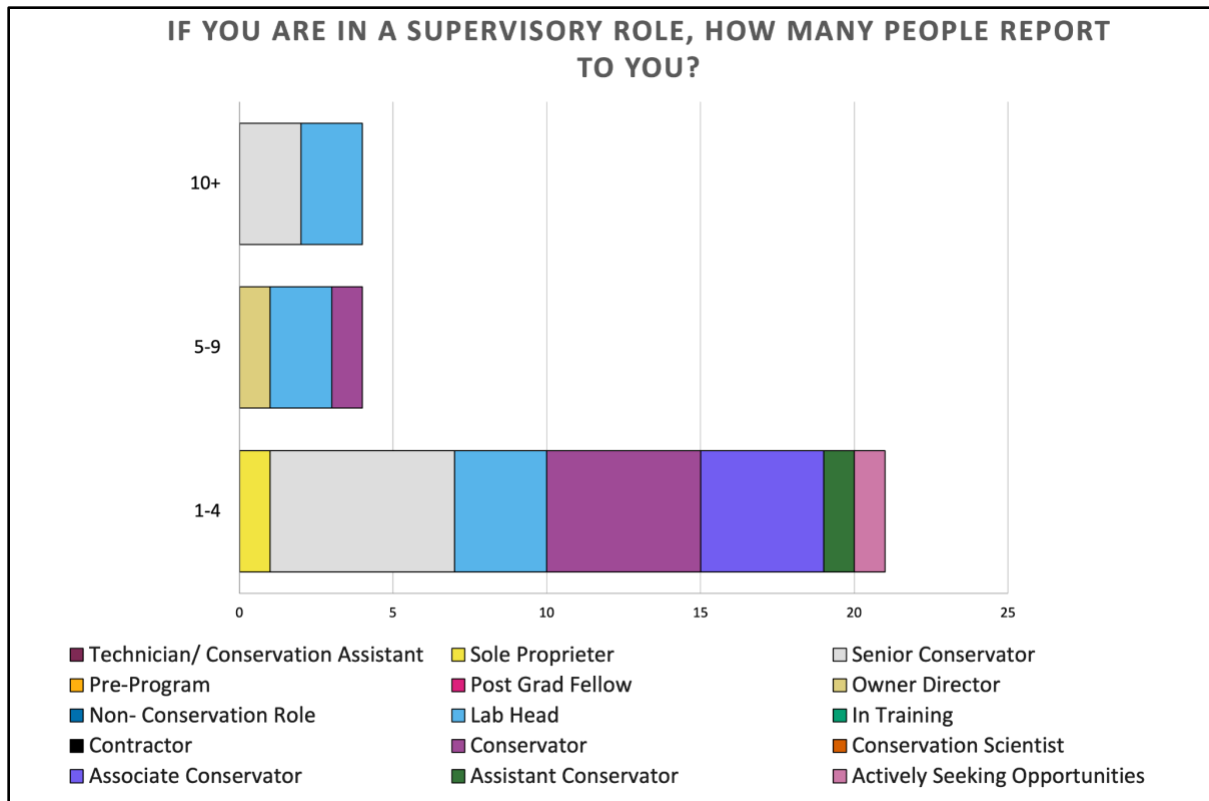


Figure 48. Distribution of responses regarding how many people report to supervisors from respondents in Survey 3. Over three quarters (76%) of respondents replied “N/A”; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

Fifty-eight percent of participants responded that they are satisfied with their current work-life balance. See figure 49 for distribution of responses.

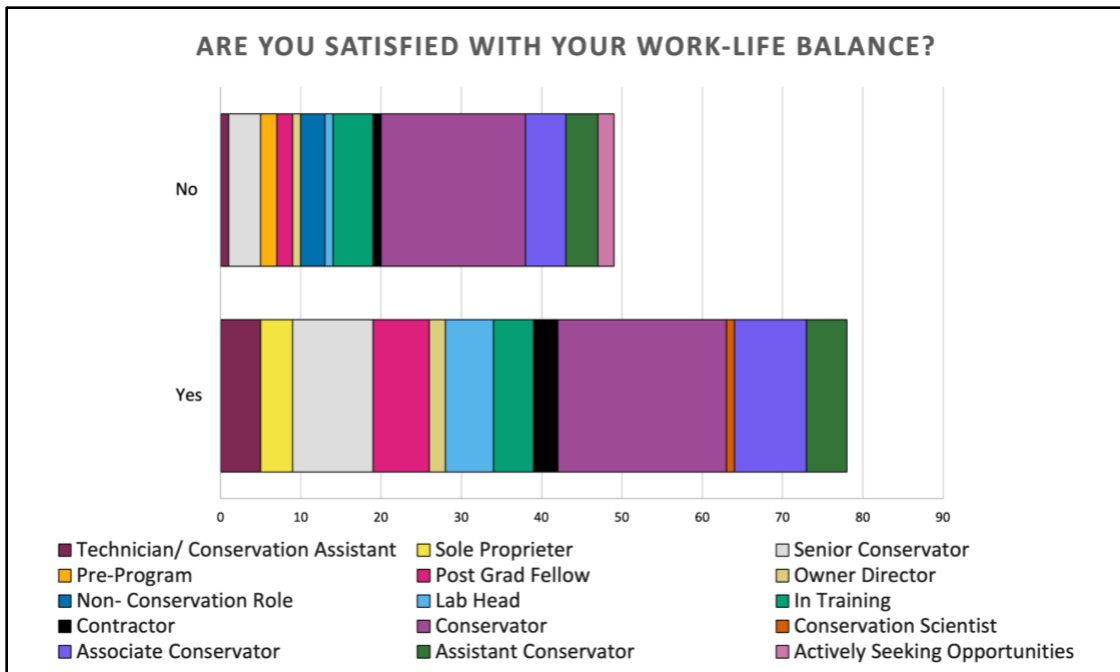


Figure 49. Distribution of responses regarding work-life balance from respondents in Survey 3; 4% of respondents replied “N/A”; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

When asked if they feel like they have enough time to complete the tasks expected of them within their job title, 58% of participants responded yes. See distribution of responses in figure 50.

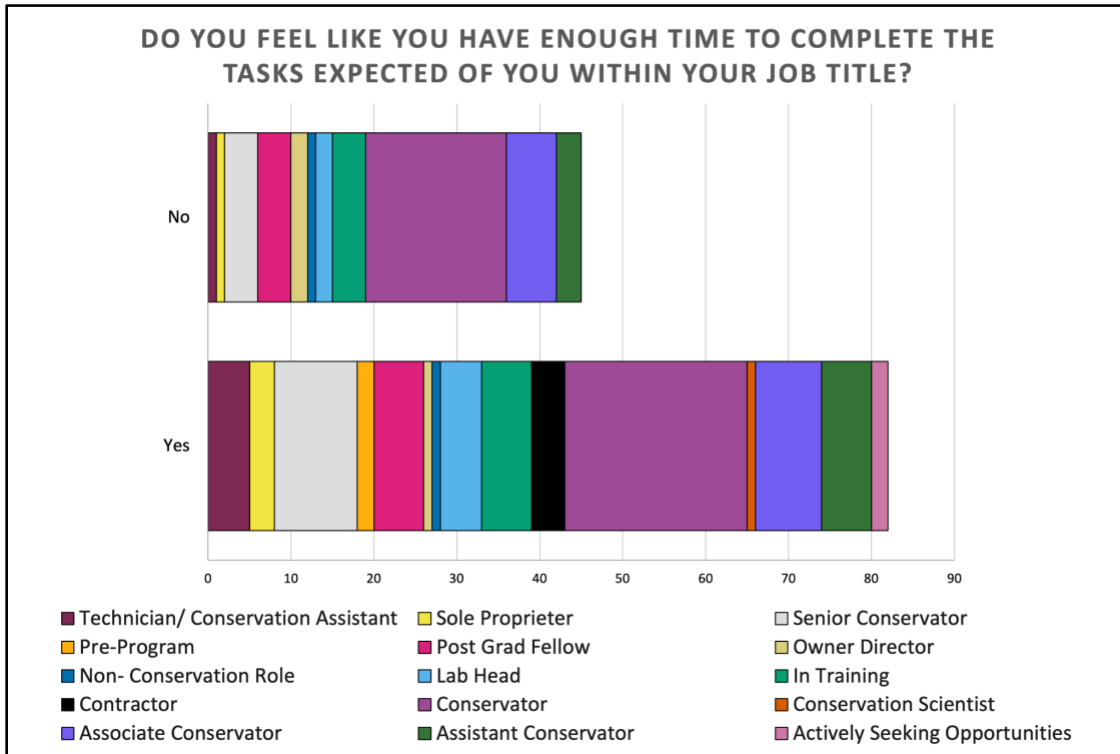


Figure 50. Distribution of responses regarding time to complete tasks within your job title from respondents in Survey 3; 6% of respondents replied “N/A”; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

Only 36% of respondents indicated they felt their lab was adequately staffed for the tasks required to be successfully completed in the appropriate timelines. For those in private practice, 73% of respondents said they were adequately staffed. See distribution of responses in figure 51.

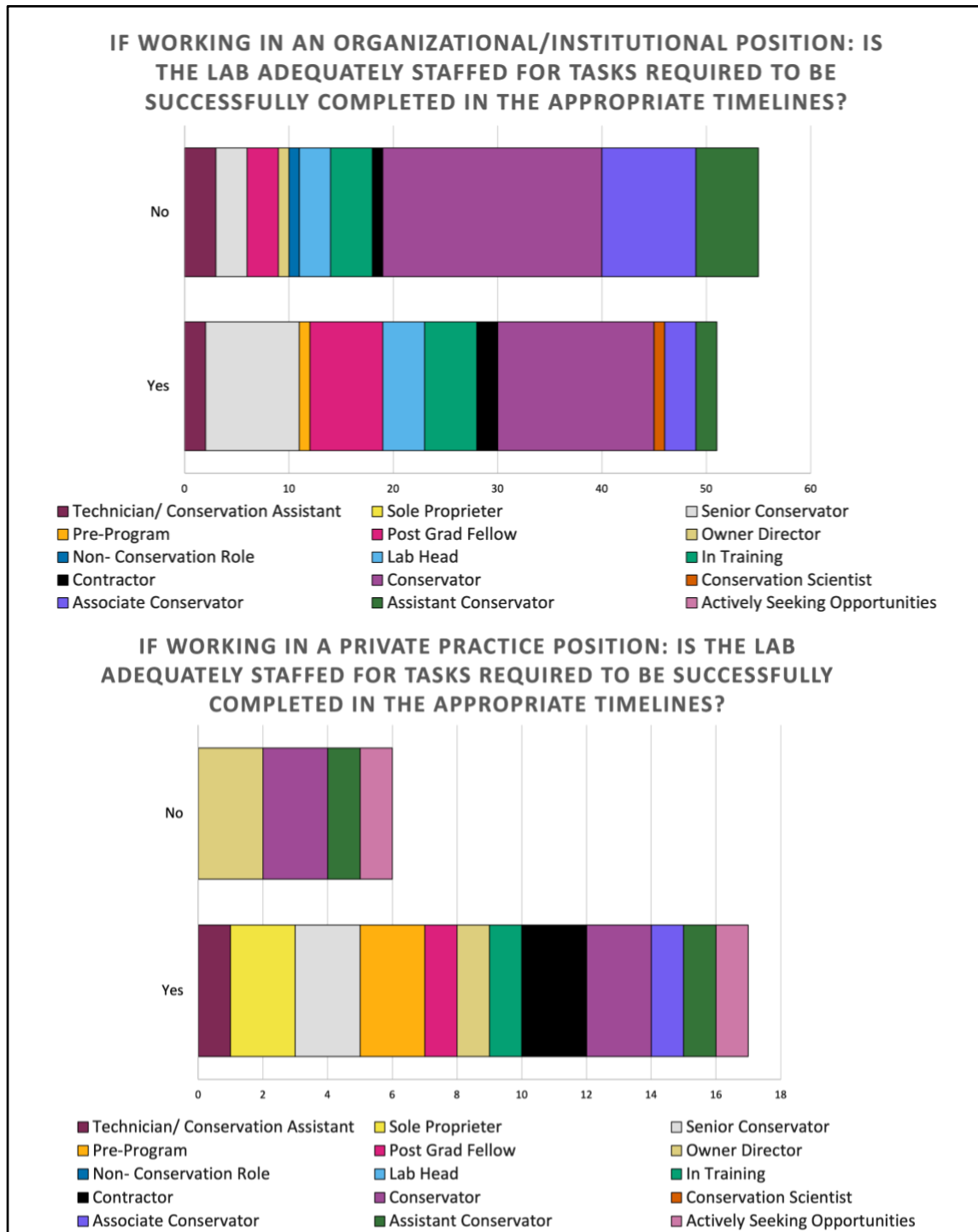


Figure 51. Distribution of responses of two questions regarding adequately staffed labs from respondents in Survey 3; 21% of respondents replied “N/A” to the question geared towards those in organizations, while 84% replied “N/A” in the question geared towards those in private practice; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

Results were mixed when respondents were asked if they felt their role as a conservator was understood/supported within their workplace; 34% of respondents selected “yes” and 42% selected “somewhat.” See distribution of responses in figure 52.

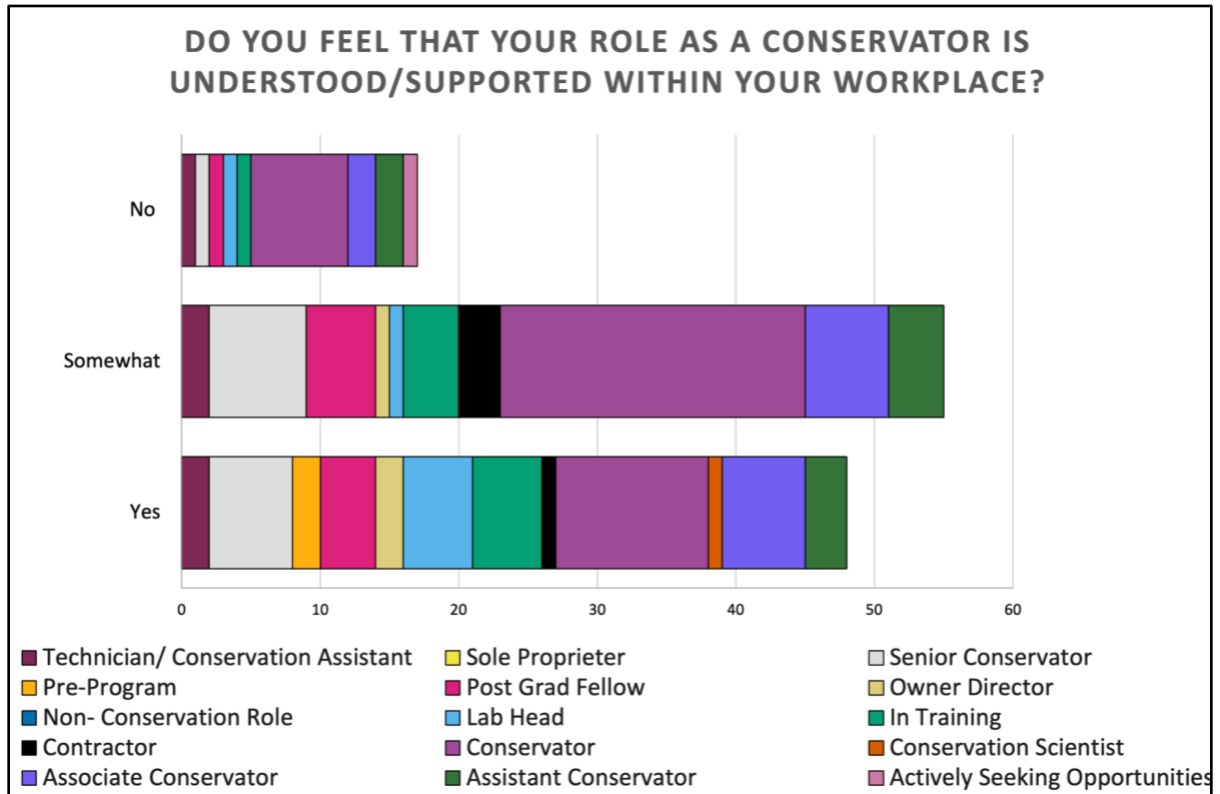


Figure 52. Distribution of responses regarding the understanding of the role of conservators in the workplace from respondents in Survey 3. Eleven percent of respondents replied “N/A”; this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

Nearly half (47%) of respondents indicated they felt prepared for moments of transition to “the next level” of their career. The most frequently indicated reason given by those who felt prepared to transition in their career but were unable to do so, was that there was a lack of available/appropriate positions (23%) followed by a lack of support for conservation within their organization/institution (13%). A majority of those who did not feel prepared (26%) indicated that professional development opportunities in salary negotiation, management/mentorship training, project management, or other professional skills would have helped them feel more prepared. See distribution of responses in figure 53.

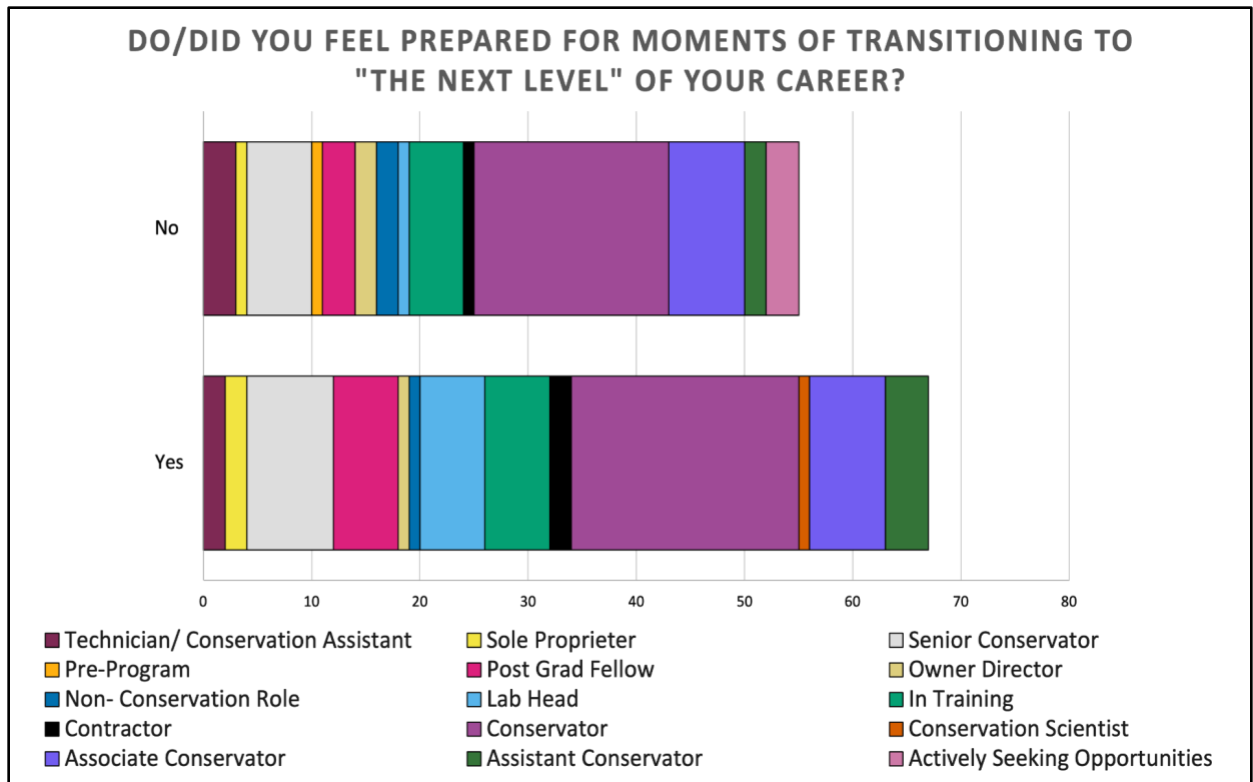


Figure 53 a. Distribution of responses of three questions regarding preparedness for moments of transition from respondents in Survey 3. Ten percent of respondents replied “N/A” when asked about moments of transition, 23% when asked why they were unable to transition to the next level, and 42% when asked what would’ve helped transitioning to the next level; this data was removed for ease of interpretation. Write-in responses can be found in Appendix B.

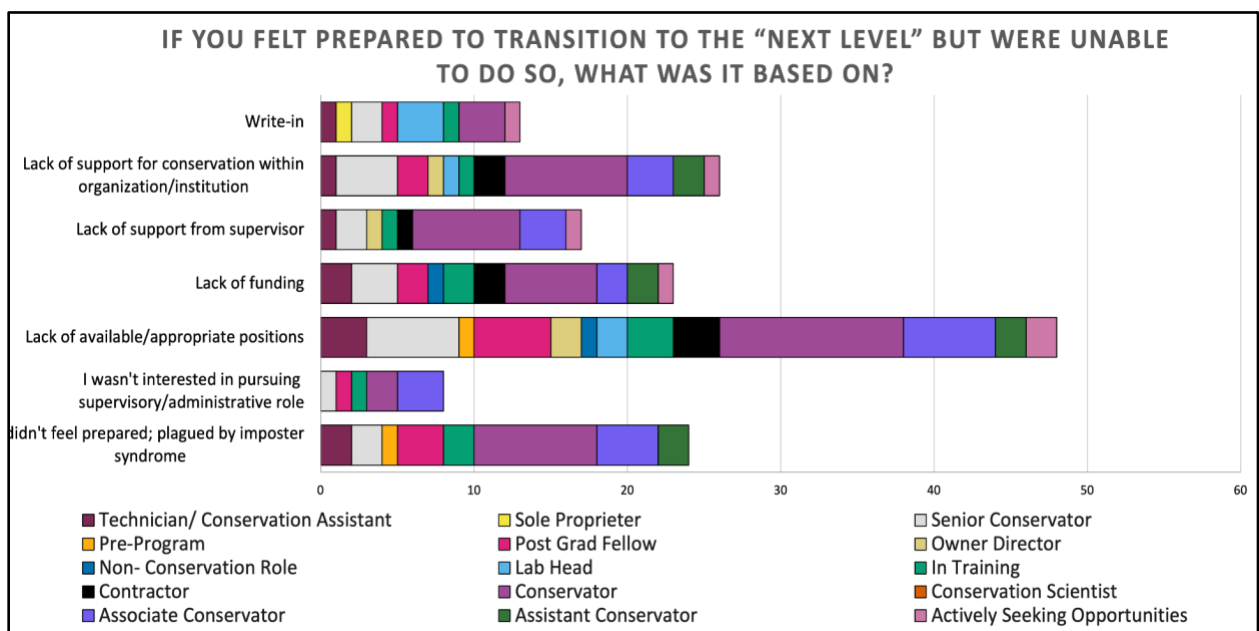


Figure 53 b.

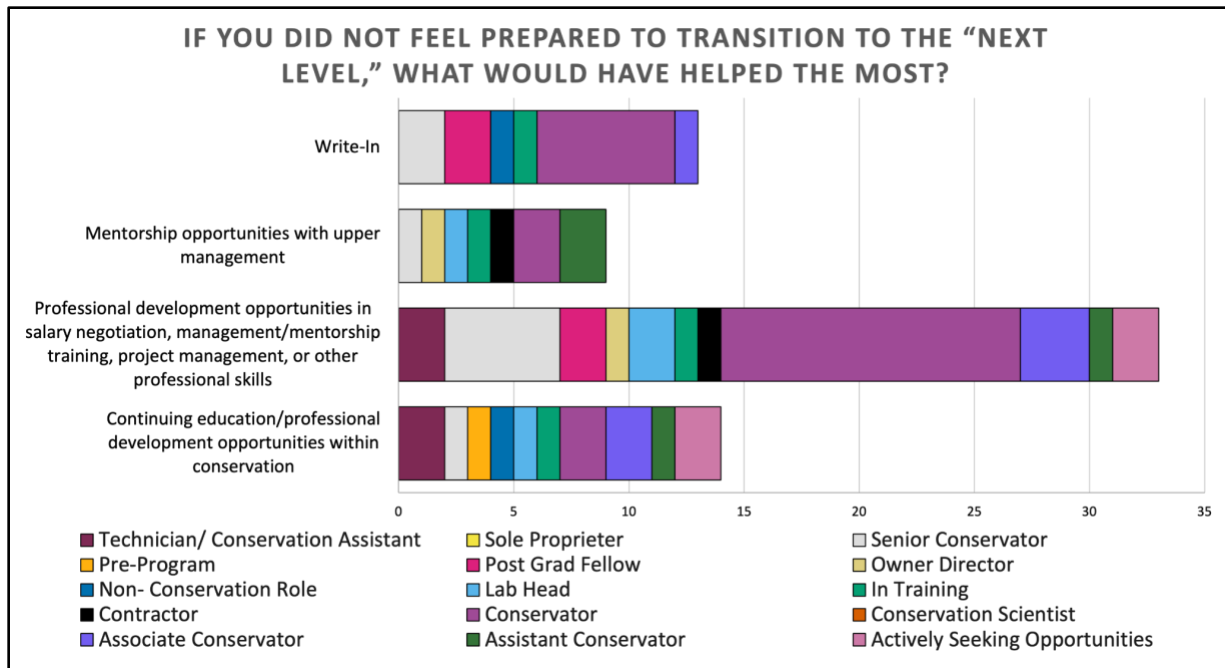


Figure 53 c.

More than half (56%) of respondents indicated that expectations for each job title level, raises, and other metrics of success were not clearly defined by their workplace. Of those, only 27% indicated that this information was available to them in writing. Please see figure 54 for a distribution of responses.

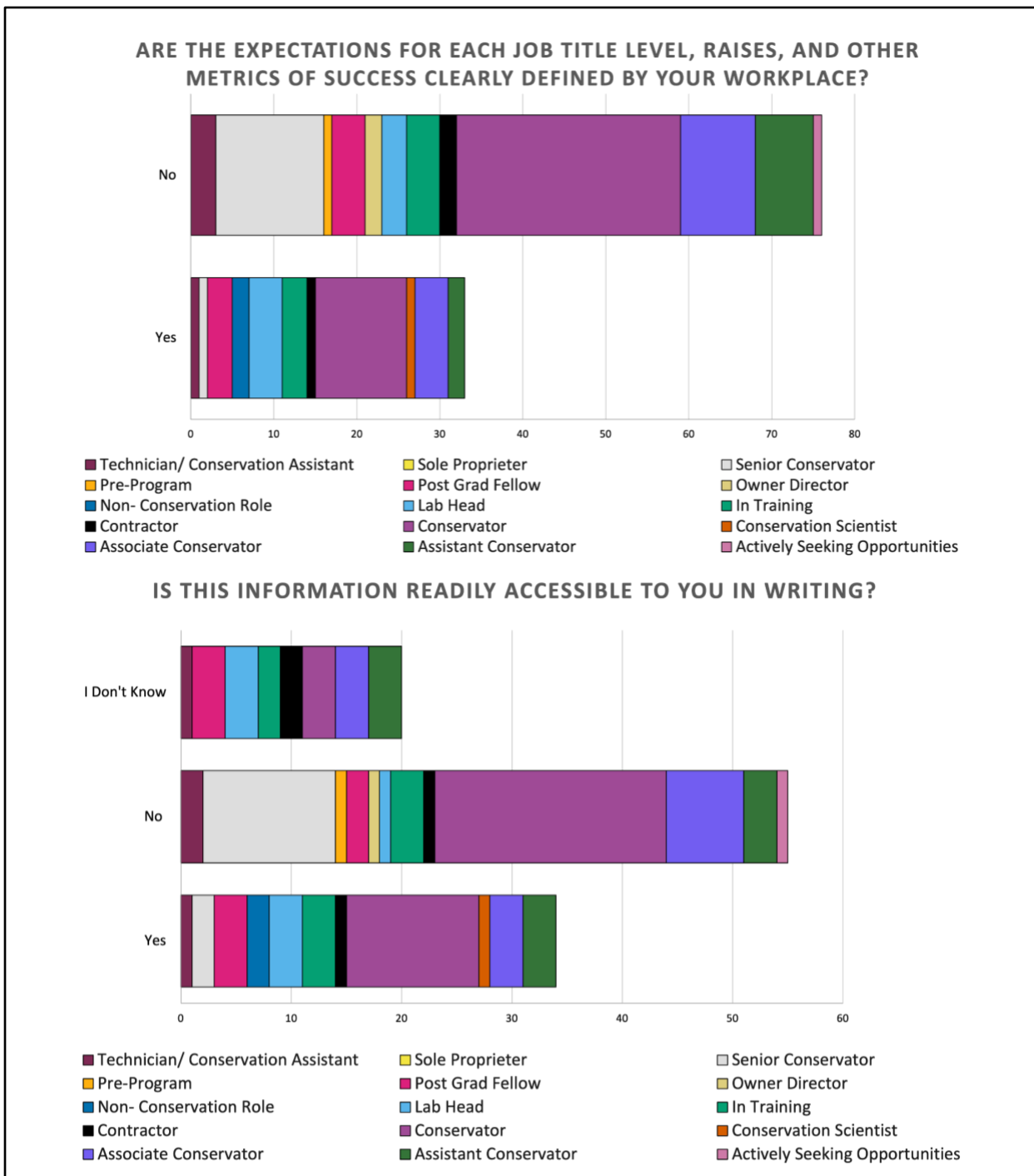


Figure 54. Distribution of responses of two questions regarding expectations from institutions at each job title from respondents in Survey 3; 17% of respondents replied “N/A” when asked about clear expectations for job title, raises, and metrics of success, 18% when asked if this information is available in writing. This data was removed for ease of interpretation.

When asked if their job title levels/rank and compensation were commensurate with other departments, 44% of respondents did not know and indicated there wasn't transparency about this. Nineteen percent of participants responded "yes." See figure 55 for a distribution of responses.

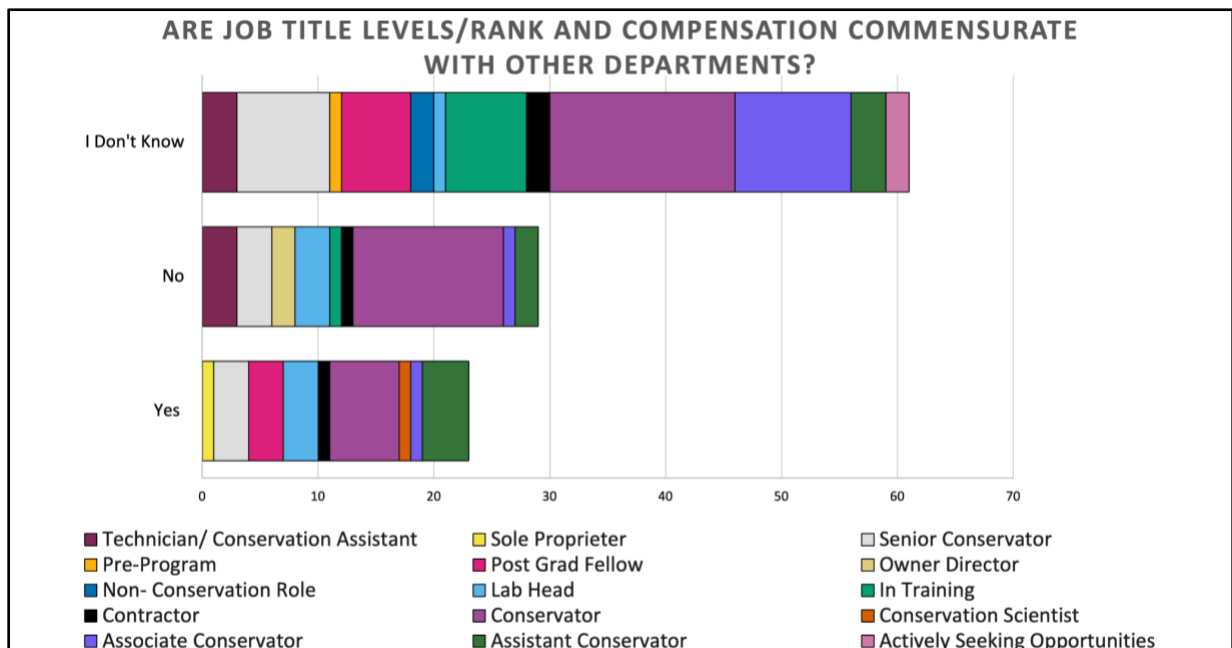


Figure 55. Distribution of responses regarding commensurate job titles/ranks from respondents in Survey 3; 15% of respondents replied "N/A" so this data was removed for ease of interpretation.

When asked what is discouraging about the field, overwhelmingly, respondents identified the following issues as the most discouraging aspects of the field:

- Compensation
- Scarcity of jobs (permanent or contract)
- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of support.

Poor compensation and scarcity of jobs were the most common responses. Unrealistic expectations from both supervisors and institutions were also identified as sources for discouragement. There is the impression that field-wide, the expectation is that people can and should work predatory contracts or poorly paid positions, which is reinforced by supervisors' actions and attitudes. This expectation contributes to the overall sense of instability and further strains financial situations. Survey respondents also reported that there are few supervisors who understand the stress and insecurity that comes with pursuing conservation and expected respondents to feel "lucky to be employed".

The majority of survey respondents describe a true passion and sense of importance for the work conservators do. They love the amount of collaboration, open sharing of knowledge, research and continuing education, as well as the hands-on work of treating materials. Overall, the survey respondents reported that they were hopeful that the field will continue to fight for better salaries, more permanent positions and less short-term contracts. Respondents were also hopeful that the field will be appropriately recognized and valued by institutions for their contributions, difficult work, and education. While most of the respondents are encouraged by the continuing evolution of the field

to expand diversity and broaden our partnerships with communities, some admitted that they were not hopeful about the future of conservation. They mention poor pay, burn out, and the emphasis on project management rather than actual benchwork for conservators in permanent positions.

While many respondents were excited about transitioning to a new role, retiring, mentoring, or continuing to work on interesting projects that encourage collaboration, more respondents expressed fears and frustrations with the field as they looked toward the next five years. The majority reported that they were looking forward to stability, which would hopefully include a permanent position that is equitably compensated, not having to move every year to pursue contracts, or developing a private practice that is sustainable. Some responders mentioned that they were hopeful they could establish a better work/life balance and could plan other aspects of life such as starting a family.

Discussion and Analysis

The immense amount of survey data, the very well attended General Session at the 2024 Annual Meeting, and continued feedback indicate that there is a strong common desire to improve the accessibility and quality of the profession. While there are many perspectives that cannot be summarized succinctly, multiple throughlines across career stages have been identified, including: unclear career milestones, inconsistent training and mentorship, insufficient employment, lack of work/life balance, economic instability, the importance of community, and the role of a professional organization.

5.1. Murky Titles, Accepted Pathways, and Imposter Syndrome

There is significant confusion regarding career stages in the profession. This is illustrated plainly in responses from current graduate students, who overwhelmingly shared that they are excited about having a “real” (often with quotes in the response) job. Each individual's experience prior to formal training is unique, and from these responses, it appears that many are devaluing experience gained prior to graduate school. Frequently, job postings will ask for a number or range of years of experience, specifically excluding pre-program years. For some applicants, pre-program experience is extensive and completed at a very independent, professional level. In the General Session, multiple panelists discussed how invaluable their whole work journey has been to their current skills, even if it was outside of the museum or cultural heritage sector. Valuing one experience over another when hiring, largely based on museum name or job title, perpetuates this myopic view that only one path to the profession is acceptable.

Training

A common sentiment expressed in multiple panels and survey answers was the need to broaden training from this one path, noting that the insurmountable barriers for many individuals continue to keep the field inaccessible and limit diversity. Current and recent graduate students appreciate collaborative efforts between the graduate programs, particularly those that were developed during the pandemic. Panelists discussed the value in providing opportunities for non-graduate students to attend virtual classes, to access workshops, and/or qualify for certification credits in particular areas. Expanding the availability of undergraduate coursework and resources, increasing outreach workshops, widely publicizing graduate student presentations, and normalizing hybrid attendance are steps that can continue to be taken by the graduate programs and other institutions alike to broaden the field. Until recently, graduate programs required extensive internship experience to apply, and they still require at least one long term internship to graduate. Experience outside the classroom is clearly essential. There is a desire to make an apprenticeship model possible again, which would require significant buy-in from conservators and institutions and establishing a set of standards to ensure safety and competency. As a relatively young field, previously legitimized through shaping conservation practice to reflect existing academic models, this broadening would be a similar, but not impossible, struggle.

Terminology and Hierarchy

In addition to the confusion expressed around career experience, there are wildly variable definitions to career stages throughout the field. Panelists used a range of terms when encouraged to self-identify their career stage. This exposed a discrepancy between how conservators perceive their

careers and feel about their level of ability, and their numerical years of experience and actual qualifications. Using these self-ascribed stages in projected biographical information during the session also resulted in confusion from the audience, as there was feedback questioning some of the designations. Someone who has been in the field for eight years may still feel that they are emerging and, when calculating a ratio of total working years, someone who has 25 years of conservation experience can consider themselves mid-career. This is one reason a limit was placed on the number of years of experience post-formal training to participate in Survey 1; 21% of total respondents were considered ineligible for the survey based on the experience limit, but still considered themselves to be emerging. While the nature of this field requires continuing professional development and learning throughout a career, the true “emerging professional” is still developing foundational learning that precedes the ability to complete tasks independently. These gray areas in terms of terminology hurt conservators in institutions and those competing for institutional contracts. Frequently, terms including technician, assistant, associate, and senior are used by employers to categorize compensation and supervisory ability, however these are not standardized across workplaces and can be instigators of confusion and obstacles for promotion.

Survey 1 respondents who wrote about AIC’s Professional Associate (now Professional Membership) designation were all post-graduates who had not yet achieved that status. One person mentioned they were not yet eligible to apply, and others described how they perceived the process to be arduous and opaque. It is recognized that the timing of these surveys coincided with a time of transition in improving this process, thanks to immense work done by the Membership Designation Working Group and associated volunteers. However, there are many conservators who have fallen through the cracks of these efforts, requiring advocacy for stop-gap measures and swifter implementation.

Imposter Syndrome

It is a misconception that one must know everything to be a professional conservator. This falsehood was pointed out by panelist Lauren Fair who noted her strategy in teaching includes admitting that she, as the instructor, does not have all of the answers. The field cannot rely on self-identified established experts as the only valid professionals, as questioning, experimentation, observation, and collaboration are paramount to successful conservation, and can be performed by anyone, regardless of experience level. Likewise, ability cannot be tied simply to years of experience or confidence level.

5.2. Supervisor vs. Mentor

Referenced during the first panel at the General Session by panelist Nylah Byrd and covered at length in the “Cultivating Competencies” workshop, supervisor and mentor are not always synonymous roles. While some may be equipped for technical instruction and supervision, they may lack the capacity, follow through, and ability to mentor an individual or group. It is important to establish respectful communication, with both teacher and learner valuing each other’s experiences, and conversations on what support (to be received and given) looks like. Financial compensation, assistance with accommodations, and guidance through present and future experiences are all forms of support. Regardless of the level of personal mentorship, it is important to instill confidence and trust in a mentee; to find times to grant autonomy, with multiple opportunities to check in and provide feedback. Further, as the session’s closing speakers Ameya Grant and Fran Ritchie said, interns are not simply free or cheap labor. The purpose of an internship is to learn, not to further organizational goals, and, as reported by survey respondents, the learning frequently goes both ways.

For some educators/supervisors/career coaches, support may look like navigating accommodations with an intern or student. This was noted particularly by panelist Minyoung Kim who, as an international student, cited many tasks in a confusing visa process. Understanding the additional hurdles that an international student or an intern with a disability will need to address to participate fully and succeed is an important form of support. Internship hosts, supervisors, and administrators must anticipate these challenges and be proactive in providing accommodations and pathways to assistance. Their initiative and follow through with requests can greatly impact the individual's experience. In this way, instead of the incoming person who requires accommodation bearing the burden of securing it through unknown channels, an authority figure within the organization who understands the existing infrastructure can advise all incoming staff/students about the options available. It is also important to recognize the capacity of supervisors and the time commitment that onboarding individuals takes on both sides. That said, host sites should not operate by the lowest common denominator (i.e. less money, less support) and there should be no resistance to accommodate requests that will improve accessibility and equity.

Practitioners in this field often pride themselves on being forever learners. Survey respondents and panelists talked about the importance of encouraging independence through questioning and a trial-and-error approach when approaching a teaching situation, both to avoid the stigma against making mistakes and to encourage different ways of thinking about and solving a problem. Only teaching one method to do something results in bias and 'othering' differences in training. There are many differences in optimal learning modes and expanding the field requires expanding ways of delivering lessons and content. When in a position of power, it is important to remember that everyone comes to this field with various experiences and backgrounds and that no one knows everything. As panelist Lauren Fair shared, educators should avoid giving the impression that, with enough study, one can know everything; it is unrealistic, and it closes off the flexibility and drive to continue to learn new things and new ways to do the same task. It was also brought up that the exclusivity of the field can result in individuals considering allied fields if they have not found success in conservation. This is not necessarily to deter anyone, but to give practical feedback that allows for considered choices in regard to allotting energy to potential future careers (Careers in Cultural Heritage 2023).

Training the Mentors

The ability to take on a mentee, supervisee, student, or other kind of direct report is not done without preparation. Experience can be gained on the job, for example, having a fellow supervise a less advanced intern, with opportunities for feedback from both parties with a more senior colleague. However, there are precedents in other fields, including academia, for more formally training supervisors, mentors, teachers, and coaches. Conservation does not have to invent a new way to prepare its practitioners to help train and support the following generations. Those who seek job opportunities that have direct reports or students and those who would like to have such relationship structures in their careers should seek out training, even if they do feel prepared for such a role. As in similarly specialized fields, instructors are typically trained in the craft, not in education practices. The expectation for instructors and mentors to be flawless deliverers of knowledge, hands-on experts in the craft, and networkers is as unrealistic as the expectation for all students and interns to learn with one delivery method, be instantaneously successful at a new task, and never need additional support. Those in positions of power need to recognize their limitations and be transparent about them, while those seeking mentoring/supervision need to be clear and reasonable about what they are looking for in such a relationship.

Suggestions brought up during the session for approaching these dynamic working relationships include setting a written framework of foundational goals and intentions, determining the scope and extent (for example, will it continue beyond working hours or the current project?), and setting honest and clear boundaries to establish trust. These were all mentioned within the overarching theme of meeting individual people where they are at, in the field and in their lives, as those are not separable. Both parties have to participate equally and see one another as people, with the understanding that there is no standardized approach, and every individual has different needs. Those in the position of power must consider how open they are willing to be about their experiences, including regarding sensitive subjects like pay and benefits, and whether their preferred or natural feedback style suits the situation. Similarly, not every person will be an effective mentor to every mentee. It is not a failure to encourage a direct report to seek out different professionals for different needs. Interns/mentees need to build the ability and capacity to ask for what they need and should not hesitate to look to others around them in similar positions for support, even in different departments or other local organizations or private practices. Creating a cohort that includes colleagues at, above, and below the individual's level results in the kind of supportive network that keeps the field dynamic.

5.3. Looking for That “Dream Job”

In contrast to the positive feedback about the work and personal support, there were many foundational issues reported. Predominantly, 1) a lack of livable wages and benefits (even if a livable wage calculator determines you meet the definition of livable wage), 2) the perpetuation of harmful expectations, such as the need to “move anywhere” for a job, which contribute to the systemic lack of diversity in the field, and 3) the overwhelming perception of established elitism in the field, which creates an inhospitable environment for diversity. Some respondents spoke to an observed disconnect they felt from those in secure, established positions and the pool of potential applicants. There appears to be a preference for applicants with traditional academic backgrounds and experience in high profile museums, and a reticence to understand requests for additional support, such as higher salaries, funds for moving and professional development, and flexible work schedules. Institutions feel comfortable offering such poor compensation because jobs are scarce, budgets are set, and underemployed departments lead to unrealistic workloads without paths for advancement or resources for job creation.

In a field with a lack of mobility, the expectation is that individuals must be flexible until they find something satisfactory. Once this is achieved, many individuals stay in one position for the rest of their career, with very little opportunity for advancement. This can lead to a disconnect in life experiences, economic realities, education practices, and compensation expectations between senior employees and new hires. The lack of mobility is an issue expressed by survey respondents, who cited not seeing available positions and not receiving support within their organization to move to the next level in their career, contributing to a sense that they weren't ready to move on in their career. Mid-career survey responses noted a severe lack of opportunities for people at their stage with the only chance of promotion being a head of lab position, requiring the conservator to shift from treatment to management, a skill set that is not included in many conservators' training. One suggestion brought forth in the second panel by Kaeley Ferguson was the importance of including all levels of conservators (pre-program and graduate interns, students, fellows, contractors, etc.) in conversations and decisions department wide. This trains and empowers all individuals in key skills, such as creative problem solving, planning, and executing important tasks, while creating a more robust and inclusive team, no matter how long an individual is a member of that team. This may prepare individuals for realities ahead of them, inspire more bridging opportunities, and hopefully show examples of advocating for change within departments and institutions.

One way that conservators have forged a path towards more fair compensation and positive experiences is through private practice work. Panelists shared their reasoning for setting up their own businesses, which included stagnation in their museum career, a desire to forge their own path, relocation to an area without open positions, and a need to create a work environment specific to their own health, safety, or family needs. Private work provides exposure to new colleagues on a regular basis, collaboration, and consistent expansion of treatment skills. Panelist Stephanie Hornbeck spoke about the meaningful cultural collections work that she was able to do through her private practice. Overall, with perspectives from interns to proprietors, panelists discussed the positive and important role of private practice conservation in the field and that private practices can lead in alternate training pathways to traditional conservation graduate school.

While many emerging conservators are excited to land their “dream job” and established conservators are not sure if it exists, there is a consensus that conservators make the decisions that are right for them at the time. No matter the position, panelist Elena Bowen encouraged people not to be afraid of taking any particular role, as “it doesn’t have to be forever.”

5.4. What is Work/Life Balance?

There is no one ratio of work/life that means balance to everyone. A traditional “9 to 5” is what resulted in many of the panelists in private practice to leave the institutional world to set their own schedules. They now have the more time-consuming task of running a business, but it is on their terms and timelines. The panelists in the session spoke about managing a ratio that felt unbalanced much of the time but was the direct result of a series of choices they made and priorities they have. Having self-awareness is important to recognizing work/life imbalance and in setting boundaries to rectify imbalances.

In a field that attracts overachievers and perfectionists, it is important for supervisors, managers, and mentors to model the work/life balance that works for them but to also be flexible with direct reports about both completing work and learning as well as taking time for themselves. Direct reports must understand their own needs to advocate for the necessary balance in order to avoid burnout. Many emerging survey respondents noted personal burnout from years of juggling multiple jobs, application processes, and demanding training. This is linked to the idea of “imposter syndrome,” as it results in a newly christened conservator who has rarely had any career consistency and may struggle to confidently step into yet another new role, despite their qualifications.

In situations where a direct supervisor does not exhibit or support a work/life balance, panelist Samantha Springer encouraged individuals to “manage up” by setting their own boundaries. One survey respondent was encouraged by their recently found balance. While they admitted it was not perfect, they wrote: “I am finally at a point where my personal life is not on the backburner to my professional career.” In a field where the average person spends 6 to 8 years in training roles without a clear career path or self-sustaining wage during or afterwards, the assumed expectation of giving one’s life for the job has lasting negative effects on the individual.

5.5. It’s Not the Avocado Toast

When asked what is discouraging about the field, across all three surveys, financial hardship was the most common answer. While low salaries are not new to conservation, current economic realities

exacerbate this situation, leading to increased instability and hopelessness. While a helpful tool for illustrating need, the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) does not accurately reflect the cost of living; on paper, many people technically make above living wage, but seriously struggle in real life. A living wage simply illustrates the amount needed to cover expenses; it includes self-sustaining monthly bills, necessities, and taxes, but does not account for debt or savings (Glasmeier 2024). Individuals should not have to simply scrape by on their wages, but should be able to achieve stability, build savings, retirement and emergency funds, explore hobbies, and pay down debt. We reimagine the livable wage, frequently not met by many conservation positions, as a comfortable wage instead, one that enables a safety net and progression towards financial security, as a better comparison figure for salary negotiations (DeJohn 2024).

Perceptions of affordability may perpetuate low wages; for example, a homeowner established in a locale may remember their experiences and expenses, assuming not much has changed over time. The reality is that the cost of living continues to rise, as everything from groceries to tuition to transportation to housing have increased greatly over the years (Nguyen 2022). For example, using the Zillow Observed Rent Index, average rental costs in the United States have increased 40% between January 2018 and July 2024 (Zillow 2024). These realities, and not frivolous spending habits or perceived sporadic splurges, are driving the financial hardship of conservators. Further, costs of moving, health insurance, and basic expenditures have risen, regardless of location. Where low wages used to satisfy costs in less urban locations, this is less feasible in 2024. It simply costs more to live, and wages have not increased to accommodate.

The survey data shows that those who are single in the field struggle more than those who have partners or other financial support. As efforts to diversify the field have been successful in attracting individuals from underrepresented backgrounds (the demographic representation of ECPs is more diverse than more experienced professionals), salaries, stipends, and benefits have not been raised at appropriate levels to adequately support an individual without familial or partner support, let alone those with dependents. Additional needs, like specialized medical care, carry additional burdens of time and cost. While an individual who is established in one geographical area can have sustained communities and medical providers, the individual who is moving every 1 or 2 years (or more frequently, particularly when pre-program) must re-establish insurance coverage and providers, which often requires extensive labor, time, and additional cost, and can result in dangerous lapses in care.

5.6. No One is an Island, Even in a Conservation Desert

Overwhelmingly, people recognize the need for community and support, at all career stages. AIC and ECPN, official regional guilds, and other more casual subsets of conservators are meant to function as networks and are full of conservators who have the desire and the bandwidth to share and collaborate. There is a recognized need for smaller, one-off opportunities for people to experience what being involved in the organization is like without committing an entire year or more to volunteering for a group.

The continued efforts by colleagues to define and refine constructive and mutually beneficial relationships between conservators is praiseworthy and necessary. Reconsidering what a mentor is and can be may help avoid the disappointment in unmet expectations experienced in traditional hierarchical settings. Creating a cohort of conservators at all stages of their careers will help provide solidarity: a group to check experiences against and seek advice and improve situations for conservators who feel they cannot find or build community that lasts through many moves. Virtual event experience learned in recent years can bridge geographical gaps, and building opportunities

around skill sharing or workshops can justify taking time out of one's workday for these important community building and professional development activities.

5.7 What is AIC's Role?

Looking for real, honest feedback on our professional organization, a number of questions were asked about the role of AIC in the life of a conservator. ECP responses identify AIC largely as a community-building network, job posting repository, and resource for volunteer-crafted content. Their level of involvement is directly affected by financial barriers, and many stated a hesitancy to support an organization that heavily relies on unpaid labor. Many respondents want to see AIC actively involved with and transparent about important initiatives such as ethics, diversity, and unionization. One response on this topic stated they "hope these conversations will progress to a point where there are ethical standards surrounding community collaboration and cultural sensitivity, as well as worker organizing efforts for diversity and fair pay, that are field-wide rather than centered around individual institutions." The broader group of conservators in Survey 3 cited AIC membership as being great for networking, webinars and other continuing education opportunities, job postings, and resource libraries. Many noted the value of volunteering for growing their community, while others said they were not able to justify the cost of membership and participation.

Overall, members would like to see AIC involved with the following inward-facing advocacy efforts:

- Be willing to grow and change with the membership
- Promoting the value of conservation within the museum and cultural heritage field
- Providing and implementing a more robust stance for better pay across the field
- Serving as a platform to help organize a national union
- Establishing an accreditation program
- Helping private practice conservators with essential resources, such as acquiring affordable health insurance, accountants, and lawyers

While AIC remains a mid-sized organization with a small staff and large volunteer base, the cost is still prohibitive for many to participate and most are looking for more leadership, resources, and transparency. The survey responses identify pain points across the field and the desire for the organization to alleviate or assist in these specific areas.

Conclusions and Next Steps

There are many ways, large and small, in which individuals, organizations, and institutions can continue strengthening the field. For ECPs this includes understanding their needs to effectively advocate for themselves, as individuals and as a group. Though an understanding of the reality of the situation is paramount and a clear vision on what compromises are livable is necessary, ECPs cannot afford to hesitate in self-advocacy and negotiation. Related, it is important that individuals learn to take care of themselves, set boundaries, and avoid burnout. Individuals with stable employment for an institution or organization can and should advocate for the conservation department in general, for maximum wage increases and work/life balance practices for themselves, colleagues, and new hires, and if they have direct charges, continue their education on how to be an effective instructor, supervisor, and/or mentor. Employers and institutions should support collective bargaining and unionizing efforts, learning with and from the number of leading institutions paving this path towards equity and support. Employers can also support conservation by advocating for funds for professional development, continuing education, and adjacent skill development opportunities.

Another area of opportunity is clarifying gray areas around career stages. With more standardized designations across the field, and an acknowledgement that no conservator is ever finished learning, more discrete pathways can be forged from training to professional, from position to position. Removing personal feelings and confidence levels from the equation and standardizing vocabulary can minimize the effects of imposter syndrome and enable more clear-cut language in workplace organization.

Members are looking to AIC to initiate and drive improvements in the field overall. While the list of suggestions in the previous sections covers multiple large asks, a few suggestions for quicker, meaningful opportunities were suggested:

- Develop smaller opportunities to be involved as a volunteer
- Offer compensation for volunteer work; if it cannot be direct payment, a clear structure for discounted or trade membership dues, registration fees, etc., should be established
- Organize one-off events or mini talks or tips sessions outside of the Annual Meeting
- Reformat the pricing of dues and meeting registration to match the reality of conservators' wages. Consider staggered income-based pricing, particularly for those post-training but still financially unstable
- Explore why and how information does not reach all practicing conservators:
 - misunderstandings about changes in PA/PM applications
 - slow changes to the ethics documents
 - confusion about applying for funding, particularly with conflicting deadlines
- Collaborate with graduate programs about planning events around one another

Conservation also needs to connect more effectively with allied fields. Not only does this strengthen occupational skills and understanding but allows for joint efforts in advocacy. While conservators love their work, the field must move away from task satisfaction being misconstrued, or accepted, as compensation. The field will not be sustained beyond the level of a hobby career, or beyond wealthy individuals, if wages and environments do not change. To sustain conservation, the expressed desire for diversity of background and perspective must be officially validated by considering alternative pathways and experience, and support must rise to meet the individuals. It is vital for supervisors, mentors, and educators to be tuned in to current realities in the world and the field. This can be

achieved through conversations with the broader community and individuals, and with an open mind, a relinquishing of one's own biases and a true desire to improve situations for the next generation of conservators.

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Appendices

Appendix A: All Survey Questions

- 9.A.1. Survey 1
- 9.A.2. Survey 2
- 9.A.3. Survey 3

Appendix B: Survey Responses Not in Report & Expanded “Write-ins”

- 9.B.1. Survey 1
- 9.B.2. Survey 2
- 9.B.3. Survey 3

Appendix C: All Short Form Answer Summaries

- 9.C.1. Survey 1
- 9.C.2. Survey 2
- 9.C.3. Survey 3

Appendix D: Breakout Tables with Percentage Data

Appendix E: Questions and Responses from Audience and Panelists During General Session

- 9.E.1. Session 1 : Emerging Conservation Professionals
- 9.E.2. Session 2 : Education & Training
- 9.E.3. Session 3 : Career Stages
- 9.E.4. Closing Session

Appendix A: All Survey Questions

9.A.1. Survey 1

This session for the 2024 AIC Annual Meeting is focused on the experience of emerging conservation professionals (ECPs). Part of this session will include data and perspectives collected from a series of three surveys. The data will be fully anonymized and we are **not** collecting emails. Any information you share in this survey is your choice. At the end of the survey, there are personal demographic questions for the purposes of understanding who is represented in this data set only. Long form questions are optional and you can indicate your preference for sharing all or part of your responses. We plan to share the collective data and approved anonymized answers from this survey with the AIC membership at large in the session and in the form of a report. You can choose to provide email contact information to be **entered into a drawing for a complimentary Annual Meeting registration**, but this information will not be associated with your responses. The drawing will happen mid November prior to the application deadline for the George Stout Grant.

This, the first survey is targeted towards Emerging Conservation Professionals only. Our goals are to understand the current state of affairs of today's emerging professionals. We recognize that the path and circumstances of an ECP are constantly changing and in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic, these situations have changed even further. We want to understand a bit about the financial, professional, and emotional well-being of our ECP colleagues in order to advocate for actions that will benefit in the present and future.

The majority of the survey is multiple choice with some open ended questions. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your openness and participation.

Dynamic survey to go in three different paths:

1. In general, and historically, an Emerging Conservation Professional (or ECP) has been a self-identifying designation. It helps to identify those who are in need of support, guidance, and additional training. AIC extends discounted rates for current students, those who are one year out of formal training, and does not allow for Professional status until three years after graduation. We are trying to collect data for current ECPs with the goal of sharing the actuality of life for ECPs in 2023/24 and taking substantive steps to improve it. Therefore, for the purposes of this survey, an Emerging Conservation Professional is defined as anyone working in or pursuing a career in conservation, from pre-program through three years post formal training.

Are you an Emerging Conservation Professional by this definition?

☐ Yes

☐ No, but I still self-identify as emerging

(response) Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey, however we are only looking for ECP data at this time. There will be two additional surveys to look for in the future and we would love your input then. Thank you!

☐ No

2. Where are you in your conservation journey? If none of the below answers are exactly applicable, please choose the closest one.

☐ Pre-program
☐ Graduate Student or Equivalent
☐ Graduate or Equivalent

Pre-program survey track:

We admit that we are forcing these questions and answers that are often personal and nuanced into a very binary yes/no situation; we're doing this in order to collect as much raw data as possible.

Please answer the following to the best of your ability, to the closest accurate answer. There are longer form answer questions near the end, do feel free to explain or qualify your answers there if need be.

3. Are you currently employed in the field?
☐ Yes
☐ No
4. Are you paid?
☐ Yes
☐ No
5. Are you paid a livable wage? If you are unsure what the living wage is, here is a handy tool to find out based on your geographical location: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>
☐ Yes
☐ No
6. Do you have health insurance through your job?
☐ Yes
☐ No, I pay for my own
☐ No, I am uninsured
7. How many concurrent jobs do you have to support yourself?
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4+
8. Do you feel supported and mentored by your supervisors?
☐ Yes
☐ No
9. Do you think you are adequately compensated for the work you're completing?
☐ Yes
☐ No
10. Do you think that your responsibilities are appropriate for your job title and wage?
☐ Yes
☐ No
11. What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the field?
☐ Yes
☐ No
12. What are you the most excited about for your next five years?
☐ Yes
☐ No
13. What about the field do you find discouraging?
☐ Yes
☐ No

14. What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?

Graduate Student survey track:

We admit that we are forcing these questions and answers that are often personal and nuanced into a very binary yes/no situation; we're doing this in order to collect as much data as possible. Please answer the following to the best of your ability to the closest accurate answer. There are longer form answer questions near the end, do feel free to explain or qualify your answers there if need be.

1. Do you have a living stipend as a graduate student? If you are unsure what the local living wage is, here is a handy tool: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>
☐ Yes
☐ No
2. Are you able to support yourself on only your graduate school stipend?
☐ Yes
☐ No
3. Are you taking on personal debt or receiving additional support from family, etc, to attend your graduate program?
☐ Yes
☐ No
4. Are/were your graduate internships funded? This includes summer internships and final-year placements.
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ It's complicated; do you care to elaborate?
5. If funded, are they funded through your graduate program, interning institution, or both?
☐ Graduate program
☐ Intern institution
☐ Both
☐ Neither
6. Are you provided with health insurance as a student?
☐ Yes
☐ No
7. Was your current program your top choice for your conservation education?
☐ Yes
☐ No
8. Do you feel supported and mentored by supervisors/faculty?
☐ Yes
☐ No
9. Do you feel like the training you are receiving is what you wanted/expected from your graduate education?
☐ Yes
☐ No
10. Are you optimistic about your future prospects in this field?
☐ Yes
☐ No
11. What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the field?
12. What are you the most excited about for your next five years?

13. What about the field do you find discouraging?

14. What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?

Post-training survey track:

We admit that we are forcing these questions and answers that are often personal and nuanced into a very binary yes/no situation; we're doing this in order to collect as much data as possible. Please answer the following to the best of your ability to the closest accurate answer. There are longer form answer questions near the end, do feel free to explain or qualify your answers there if need be.

1. Did you train in an accredited graduate program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Are you employed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Did you enter into a fellowship, assistant position, or other post formal training/graduation?

☐ Fellowship

☐ Contractor/Term

☐ Assistant position

☐ Private practice

☐ Other (open form for answer)

4. If in a fellowship, how many fellowships have you held?

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ N/A

5. Are you paid a livable wage? If you are unsure what the living wage is, here is a handy tool to find out based on your geographical location: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Are you able to live off your stipend without additional streams of income?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

7. Do you have health insurance through your position?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Do you think you are adequately compensated for the work you're completing?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Do you think that your responsibilities are appropriate for your title and wage?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Are you happy with the position you have?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. Did you get the type of position post training that you anticipated or wanted?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. Did you feel prepared for this position from your formal training?

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. Do you feel supported and mentored by supervisors?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ N/A

14. What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the field?

15. What about the field do you find discouraging?

16. What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?

Back to questions for all:

Lastly, we're asking personal demographic questions for the purpose of knowing who we're representing with this data. Is the field actually changing to be more accessible and diverse? All of these questions are optional to answer and you can have multiple answers if you don't feel represented by the listed answers. Again, we are sacrificing a degree of nuance for the sake of clearer data.

1. What is your gender?

☐ female

☐ male

☐ transgender

☐ non-binary

☐ prefer not to answer

2. What is your current age group?

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-22

☐ 23-29

☐ 30-36

☐ 37-43

☐ 44+

☐ prefer not to answer

3. Do you identify as any of the following?

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

☐ Black

☐ Latino

☐ white

☐ the term I best identify with is:

☐ Prefer not to answer

4. Do you have a visible or invisible disability or chronic illness? (If you're not sure, this link might help <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to answer

5. Do you have any dependents?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to answer

6. Are you part of a dual income household or do you have additional/supplemental financial support?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to answer

7. What role does AIC have in your career?

8. What role do you hope AIC will have for your career?

9. May we quote part of your **open form** answers during our session at the AIC Annual Meeting or in the final survey report that will be circulated to the membership? Reminder, these quotes will be shared anonymously and will not have any identifying information included with them.

☐ No

☐ Yes, I give permission for you to use all or part of my answer

☐ Yes, I give permission for you to use all or part of my answer but would like to be contacted first (please provide your email below)

10. Do you want to be entered to win a free annual meeting registration to AIC 2024? If so, please enter your email below. This information will be separately collected and removed from the survey response prior to data collation.

9.A.2. Survey 2

As you've hopefully seen posted, we are planning a General Session at the upcoming AIC Annual Meeting: *Expectations and Realities: The State of Emerging Professionals in the Field*. This session is focused on the experience of emerging conservation professionals (ECPs).

Part of this session will include data and perspectives collected from a series of three surveys. The data will be fully anonymized and we are **not** collecting emails. Any information you share in this survey is your choice. We plan to share the collective data and approved anonymized answers from this survey with the AIC membership at large in the session and in the form of a report. You can choose to provide email contact information to be **entered into a drawing for a complimentary Annual Meeting registration**, but this information will not be associated with your responses. **The drawing will happen NOVEMBER 15.**

This, the second survey, is focused on **education and training in conservation**. Anyone in the field, regardless of status, employment, career stage, etc, is welcome to participate. Our goals are to understand the current practices in conservation training. We recognize that efforts towards equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, as well as circumstances tied to the COVID-19 Pandemic have evolved this process, but how much? What changes have been made? In what ways are we still behind? We're asking these questions in order to advocate for actions that will benefit ECPs in the present and future.

The majority of the survey is multiple choice with some open-ended questions. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your openness and participation.

We have two tracks of this survey and the questions are geared for two separate groups: the mentor and the mentee.

1. Where are you in your conservation journey? We understand that this is a self-identifying question; please choose which is most applicable to your current standing.

☐ Training/Recently out of Training (includes pre-program, current student, post graduate, as long as you consider yourself in training)

☐ Educator, Supervisor, Mentor (includes anyone who supervises others, lectures, or leads workshops, at any capacity or stage)

TRAINING/EDUCATION TRACK

1. What do you want most in a mentor? Please rank in order of most to less important. (or however Survey Monkey will let us do this)

☐ Personal connection

☐ Treatment supervision/advice

☐ Business practice/professional advice

☐ Research and analysis supervision/advice

☐ Introductions/community building/networking

-
2. What are the top three ways you learn best? (select multiple)

- ☐ Hands-on experience
- ☐ Lecture
- ☐ Independent work
- ☐ Constant supervision
- ☐ Moderate supervision
- ☐ Readings
- ☐ Video recordings

3. How did your training change during the pandemic? (select multiple)

- ☐ More online content/meetings
- ☐ Projects could be worked on at home
- ☐ Lack of training/mentorship
- ☐ Focus shifted to more theory than practice
- ☐ I missed out on a lot
- ☐ I fell behind
- ☐ I feel good
- ☐ I was not affected

4. Is financial compensation (paired with the living wage of the location) a determining factor when deciding what educational opportunities to take?

- ☐ Yes, it's the most important
- ☐ Yes, but not as important as the value of the opportunity
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other

5. In your experience do you think that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility have been adequately considered by supervisors/mentors/training programs?

- ☐ Yes, how?
- ☐ No, how can they?
- ☐ Unsure/N/A/rather not answer

6. Do you think graduate school is a necessary step to becoming a conservator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Why/Why not?

7. Are you aware of the following resources for [pre-program internships](#)/[remote internships](#)/and [compensation](#)? Have you used any of them?

- ☐ No, I was not aware these resources existed
- ☐ Yes, I was aware that these resources existed but haven't used them
- ☐ Yes, I was aware that these resources existed and I have used at least one of them

8. Is there anything we missed that you'd like to share?

MENTOR/EDUCATOR/SUPERVISOR TRACK

1. What does it mean to you to be a good mentor or educator? Please rank in order of most to less important.

- ☐ Personal connection
 - ☐ Treatment supervision/advice
 - ☐ Research and analysis supervision/advice
 - ☐ Business practice/professional advice
 - ☐ Introductions/community building/networking
-

2. What is the most common reason you personally like to take on interns/students? Choose up to 2:

- ☐ To train the future generation of conservators
- ☐ To assist with completing projects
- ☐ I'd rather not take on interns/students/it is required in my job description
- ☐ We're encouraged by our organization to take interns
- ☐ We'd love to have interns but don't have the resources to support interns

3. How do you plan your curriculum and goals for your students and interns? Please select up to 3:

- ☐ Based on an example from predecessor
- ☐ Based on personal and peer experience
- ☐ Based on professional conservation educational standards and methods
- ☐ Based on professional educational standards and methods (outside of conservation)
- ☐ Based on needs of the institution (exhibitions, loans, curatorial priorities, etc.)
- ☐ Ask the students/interns for their goals/needs
- ☐ I don't have interns/students
- ☐ Fill in the blank

4. Have you changed training and internship practices since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I was not a mentor/supervisor/educator at this time

5. Have you changed training and internship practices since the national call for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I was not a mentor/supervisor/educator at this time

6. Explain how your personal and/or organizational practices have changed based on COVID and calls for DEIA.

7. Is your organization actively searching for interns and students who are racially or culturally diverse, or part of an underrepresented demographic in our field (examples could include people of color, folks from a different socioeconomic background or with disabilities, etc.)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know/other

8. Are there mechanisms in place to support interns/students with underrepresented backgrounds in your department/organization?

- ☐ Community and housing resources
- ☐ Adequate financial support

- ☐ Safe spaces/safe people
- ☐ Communication about accommodations
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ No

9. Leadership and supervisory training are not a part of the curriculum for conservation, yet it is a common expectation of a conservator. How do/did you acquire those skills?

- ☐ Courses/Workshops/Webinars (through AIC or other affiliate)
- ☐ Courses/Workshops/Webinars outside of the conservation field
- ☐ Experience
- ☐ Peer support
- ☐ Other?

10. Did you feel equipped to be a good mentor/supervisor/educator when you had your first student/intern/mentee?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

11. Would you take a training course through AIC (or conservation-centered) if it was available at low/no cost?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. How much time would you be willing to commit for a course like this?

- ☐ 1 hour session
- ☐ Multiple sessions
- ☐ Week-long workshop
- ☐ None

13. Are you aware of the following resources for [pre-program internships](#)/[remote internships](#)/and [compensation](#)? Have you used any of them?

- ☐ No, I was not aware these resources existed
- ☐ Yes, I was aware that these resources existed but haven't used them
- ☐ Yes, I was aware that these resources existed and I have used at least one of them

14. Do you think graduate school is a necessary step to becoming a conservator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Why/Why not?

15. Is there anything we've missed that you'd like to share?

Lastly, we're asking personal demographic questions for the purpose of knowing who we're representing with this data. Is the field actually changing to be more accessible and diverse? All of these questions are optional to answer and you can have multiple answers if you don't feel represented by the listed answers. Again, we are sacrificing a degree of nuance for the sake of clearer data. *Followed by the same demographic questions in Survey 1.*

9.A.3. Survey 3

This, the third survey, is focused on conservation career stages. Anyone in the field is welcome to participate, regardless of status, employment, career stage, etc. Our goals are to understand the current paths, mobility, and available support in the field. We're asking these questions in order to advocate for actions that will benefit ECPs in the present and future.

The majority of the survey is multiple choice with some open ended questions. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your openness and participation.

We acknowledge that we are forcing these questions and answers that are often personal and nuanced into a very binary yes/no situation; we're doing this in order to collect as much raw data as possible. Please answer the following to the best of your ability, to the closest accurate answer. There are longer form answer questions near the end, do feel free to explain or qualify your answers there if need be.

1. Which of the following titles best represents your current stage in conservation?

- ☐ Volunteer
 - ☐ Pre-program intern
 - ☐ Technician/conservation assistant
 - ☐ Graduate student
 - ☐ In other training program (apprentice, etc)
 - ☐ Post-graduate fellow
 - ☐ Assistant conservator
 - ☐ Associate conservator
 - ☐ Conservator
 - ☐ Senior conservator
 - ☐ Contractor
 - ☐ Sole proprietor
 - ☐ Lab/department head
 - ☐ Owner/director
 - ☐ Conservation scientist
 - ☐ Non-conservation role
 - ☐ Actively seeking opportunities (not currently employed)
-

2. How many years did you spend in "training" roles (including pre-program, intern, student, fellow, and technician roles)?

- ☐ I'm still training
- ☐ Less than 3
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-8
- ☐ 9-11
- ☐ More than 11

3. Are you paid a self-sustaining wage for the city where you reside? If you are unsure what the living wage is, here is a handy tool to find out based on your geographical location:

<https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

4. If you currently live with a partner or other financially contributing household member, could you afford to live in your location alone? *If you are unsure what the living wage is, here is a handy tool to find out based on your geographical location:* <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

5. What benefits are provided through your work? Select all that apply.

- ☐ None
- ☐ Relocation funds
- ☐ Paid time off (vacation)
- ☐ Paid time off (personal time)
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Vision insurance
- ☐ Dental insurance
- ☐ Sick leave
- ☐ Family leave
- ☐ Bereavement leave
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Paid holidays
- ☐ Professional development - including membership fees to professional organizations, conference travel, workshops or courses
- ☐ Research funding - for travel to collaborate with colleagues or examine objects, etc.
- ☐ Retirement fund matching
- ☐ Flexibility to volunteer with professional organizations

☐ N/A

6. Is your current job title and salary appropriate for your experience level based on other posted positions? Please reference [FAIC's 2022 compensation survey](#) and [AAMD's 2020 survey](#) if you are unsure.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

7. If you are in a supervisory role, how many people report to you?

- ☐ 1-4
- ☐ 5-9
- ☐ 10 or more
- ☐ N/A

8. Do you have opportunities for advancement and pay/benefit increases?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

9. Are you satisfied with your current work-life balance?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

10. Do you feel like you have enough time to complete the tasks expected of you within your job title?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

11. If in an organization/institution position: Is the lab adequately staffed for the tasks required to be successfully completed in the appropriate timelines?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

12. If working in a private practice position: Is the firm adequately staffed for the tasks required to be successfully completed in appropriate timelines?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

13. Do you feel that your role as a conservator is understood/supported within your workplace?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

14. Do/did you feel prepared for moments of transitioning to “the next level” of your career?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

15. If you felt prepared to transition to “the next level” but were unable to do so, what was it based on? Please select up to 3:

- ☐ I didn't feel prepared; plagued by imposter syndrome
- ☐ I wasn't interested in pursuing supervisory/administrative role
- ☐ Lack of available/appropriate positions
- ☐ Lack of funding
- ☐ Lack of support from supervisor
- ☐ Lack of support for conservation within organization/institution
- ☐ Other
- ☐ N/A

16. If you did not feel prepared, what would have helped the most?

- ☐ Continuing education/professional development opportunities within conservation
 - ☐ Professional development opportunities in salary negotiation, management/mentorship training, project management, or other professional skills
 - ☐ Mentorship opportunities with upper management
 - ☐ N/A
-

17. Are the expectations for each job title level, raises, and other metrics of success clearly defined by your workplace?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

18. Is this information readily accessible to you in writing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ N/A

18. Are job title levels/rank and compensation commensurate with other departments?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know/there isn't transparency about this
- ☐ N/A

19. What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the future?

20. What are you the most excited about for your next five years?

21. What about the field do you find discouraging?

22. What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?

Lastly, we're asking personal demographic questions for the purpose of knowing who we're representing with this data. Is the field actually changing to be more accessible and diverse? All of these questions are optional to answer and you can have multiple answers if you don't feel represented by the listed answers. Again, we are sacrificing a degree of nuance for the sake of clearer data. *Followed by the same demographic questions in Survey 1.*

Appendix B: Survey Responses Not in Report & Expanded “Write-ins”

Elaboration or short answer responses that were submitted without permission to share were omitted or rephrased to maintain anonymity.

9.B.1. Survey 1

Demographic Data Write-Ins

Question	% Write-In	Responses
Pre-Program: What is your gender?	2% “My gender is:”	Transgender, transmasculine
Grad Student: What is your gender?	2% “My gender is:”	Genderqueer
Pre-Program: Do you identify as any of the following?	6% “The term I best identify with is:”	Arab
		Asian-American/Jewish-American
Grad Student: Do you identify as any of the following?	3% “The term I best identify with is:”	White, but not from US
Post-Training: Do you identify as any of the following?	6% “The term I best identify with is:”	European
		I am white but grew up in Eastern Europe so my experience does not fit the Western white people group
		Indian
		Mixed race; middle eastern, Hispanic, and white
		White
		Mixed white and Asian

Graduate Training Track Write-Ins

Question	% Write-In	Responses
Are/were your graduate internships funded?	21% "It's complicated, I would like to elaborate:"	Archaeological dig: living arrangements covered, but otherwise no real income
		Erasmus ~ 400 euro monthly
		First year student
		Have not yet completed graduate internships
		I have not had placements yet. Hopefully they will be funded.
		I only accepted funded internships due to need and principle
		My first summer internship was not (I had to apply for external funding). My second summer was funded but was paid 19\$/hr in Boston so it would have been rough without the addition of my graduate stipend. Part of my third year is funded. The first part of my third year experience is international and getting paid as a foreigner is logistically complicated. However, it was thankfully in a country where wages were consistent with standards of living and I was able to take advantage of the affordable healthcare system even though I did not have international insurance.
		Nowhere we applied would pay us in Canada, part of that was the college being silly about liability and it counting as a class, so they didn't have to pay us.
		Only one funded so far
		Some are/were funded. Some are not.
		Some internships were paid, though I had to move cities to go to them. The payment covered the rent. Others were paid through OPS of a University- minimum wage with no benefits and only allowed to work 10 hours a week. Another was unpaid. Through all of my internships I had a part time job which I could also work remotely at night which helped, my partner also paid our rent and utilities so I was able to sustain myself barely doing this.
		Summer internships are not funded, generally. There is a grant you can apply for, but it doesn't give much. Final-year placements are partially funded, although we rely heavily on the hosting institution to provide additional funding.
		There was funding, but it wasn't enough so I had to apply to grants.

		Yes, but additional grant applications were needed to make it enough funding
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Post Training Track Write-Ins

Question	% Write-In	Responses
Did you train in an accredited graduate program?	4% "I'd like to elaborate:"	I have a post graduate diploma from West Dean and have been going the apprenticeship route since.
		I received a degree in June 2023 from North Bennet Street School in Bookbinding.
		There is no accreditation for heritage science

Post Training Track Write-Ins

Question	% Write-In	Responses
What type of position did you enter right out of training? Private Practice, Fellowship, Contractor/Term, Assistant, or Other.	18% "Other position:"	Applying but not yet accepted into any
		Associate position
		Conservator position
		Fellowships followed by an assistant position
		I am "freelancing"
		I entered a permanent, full-time conservator position
		Internship in a private practice
		No I entered into a full-time position without formal training
		program was p/t distance learning (NU) and I am continuing in my position as conservation technician (for now)
		Pursued another graduate school for a related degree
		Started in private, less than a year later I am a contractor at another institution
		Term for two years, now a fellowship

		Textile Conservator (not associate or assistant)
		Volunteer
		Volunteering

Those within the post-training track of Survey 1 were asked how many fellowships they have had. Distribution of responses can be found in figure 56.

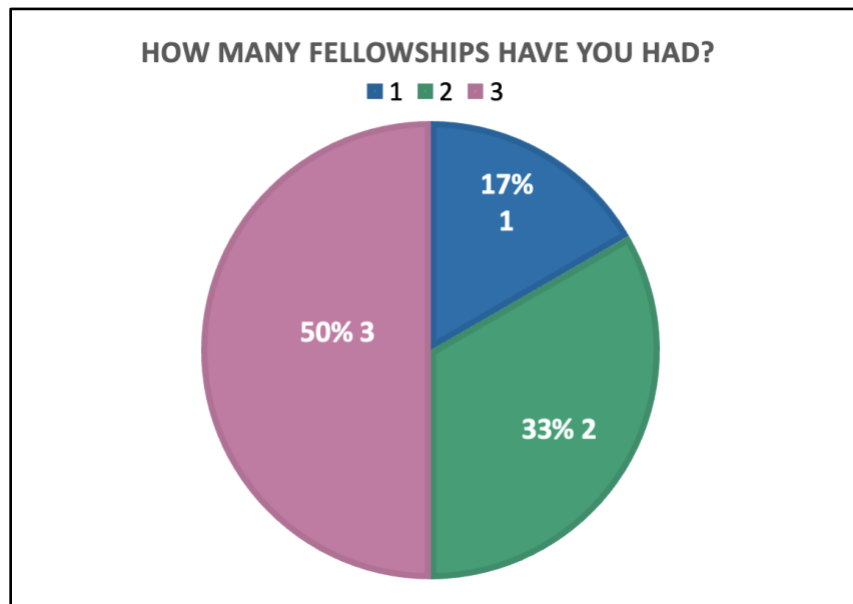


Figure 56. Distribution of responses regarding number of fellowships from respondents in Survey 1, post-training track.

9.B.2. Survey 2

Question	% Write-In	Responses
Mentor: What is your gender? Male, Female, Non-Binary, Prefer not to answer, Write-in	2% "My gender is:"	Female, but with trans experience. My age noted below is that of my birth, not my reality, that is 31 ½ years.
		Gender is a culturally specific concept, often homophobic and misogynist and it is disappointing to see so little nuance in this question

Mentee: What is your gender?	1% "My gender is:"	Meaningless, my sex is female
Mentor: Do you identify as any of the following?	4% "The term I best identify with is:"	A world citizen. My invisible disability noted below is that of a white person who grew up in the era i did in a white first world country, inherited racism. It is a disability I strive to defeat, but it is a constant battle.
		European and then white
		Lesbian
		White other
Mentee: Do you identify as any of the following?	5% "The term I best identify with is:"	European
		Jewish
		Middle Eastern, Hispanic, White
		Not from the US
		Slavic

Mentor/Supervisor/Educator track

Mentors, supervisors, and educators were asked if they would be willing to take a course on becoming a better mentor/supervisor. 81% of respondents indicated yes (fig. 31) and when asked how much time they'd be willing to spend on this course, the majority of respondents indicated multiple 1-hour sessions would be best. 57% of respondents in this survey were not aware of the resources for pre-program internships/remote internships and compensation put out by ECPN. Distribution of these responses can be found in figure 57.

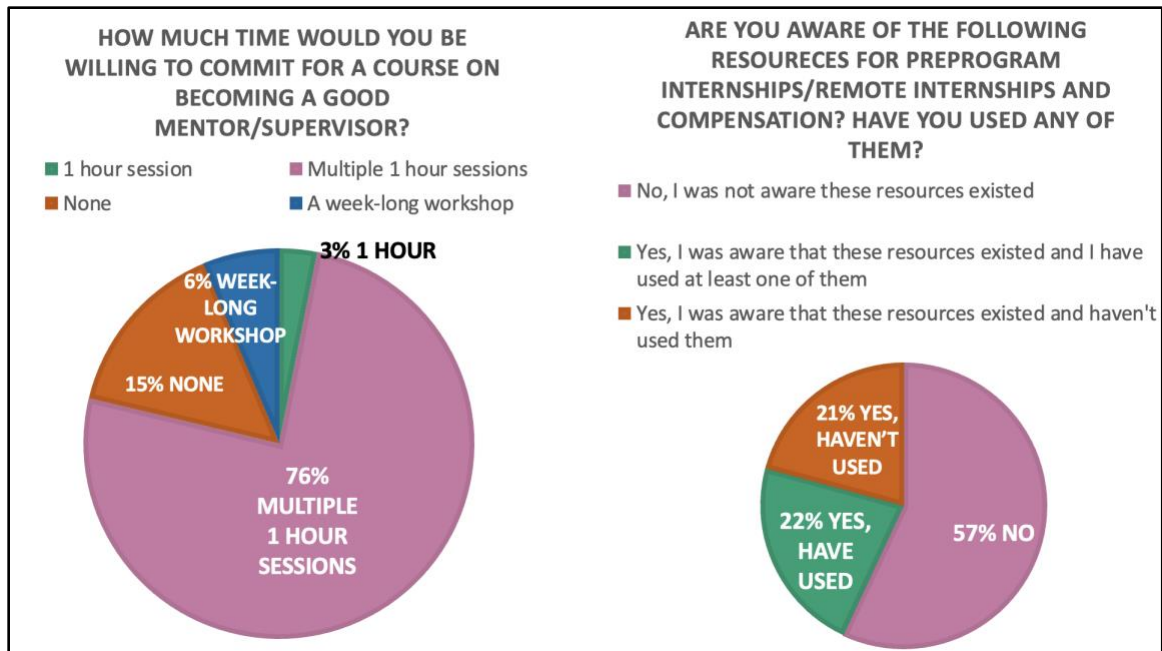


Figure 57. Distribution of responses of two questions regarding time allotment for training courses to be a better mentor and of awareness of ECPN resources from respondents in 2, mentor track.

9.B.3 Survey 3

Question	% Write-In	Responses
Do you identify as any of the following?	3% "The term I best identify with is:"	Mixed - Eastern European / Latin

Question	% Write-In	Responses
Which of the following titles best represents your current stage in conservation?	6% "Other position:"	Conservator and employed but actively seeking opportunities
		Adjunct conservation professor & owner of small private practice
		Conservation administrator - Assoc. Director of institution level
		Conservator and Director
		Conservator, currently PhD student

Question	% Write-In	Responses
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What benefits are provided by your workplace?	% "Other:"	All time off (vacation/sick/leave) is considered part of general PTO, of which I have approx 30 days/year
		All insurance is split cost as well as retirement. Only organizational memberships are paid for, no individual memberships.
		Flexible time off
		Healthcare and cell phone monthly stipends
		I am not aware if family care/childcare is applicable but it might be
		I can contribute to a retirement fund, but matching does not begin until >2 years of employment
		No insurance required, UK based
		Professional development funding had to be negotiated, it was not initially included
		Research funding of \$2500 subject to approval
		Sabbatical every five years
		Transit, health, and childcare FSA's

Question	% Write-In	Responses
If you felt prepared to transition to "the next level" but were unable to do so, what was it based on?	8% "Write-In:"	More varied opportunities for advancement aka a less linear trajectory for conservators.
		As I have moved through career stages, and as I continue to take on professional responsibilities outside of my organization, I have often felt as if I were in over my head. However, I have had the great fortune of having mentors who acknowledged those fears and insecurities and assured me that I had a network of support and guidance to assist me in succeeding in my new roles.
		Stepping into this role from my previous role: I felt prepared and am currently comfortable in this role and not looking to transition up, out, or over for some time yet.
		I would have liked to have slowly been given the opportunity for more independence and responsibilities like the ability to go to meetings for my own projects and to send emails without

		constant oversight and having to CC my supervisor for everything. I understand the need to build trust and to slowly be given those responsibilities takes time. But I never felt like I was able to build confidence in those skills since I felt micromanaged constantly.
		I recently moved to a different institution and while my current employer is clear about expectations and supports professional development, my previous employer was unsupportive, didn't have an interest in development of the conservation department.
		Would have loved a grantwriting training/workshop
		All of the above.
		Institutional support for upward mobility. Transparency in pathways for advancement.
		A broader network of conservators within the local region, skilled labor force to hire as, affordable rental space for a lab.
		Reduced workload to allow time to pursue opportunities and training to better prepare me
		Having more jobs in the market that offer a living wage.
		Probably need a legal or financial consult to take me through some options with respect to handling oneself as a sole proprietor and the pros and cons of these options; after I do some preliminary research. I need to answer "What are my options and what are the pros and cons of each?" I don't think the above would cover this.
		I did not want to be a manager and stop treating/researching art.
		Advocacy from an effective leader.

Appendix C: Survey Short Form Answer Summaries

Open ended questions from all surveys followed by summaries and quoted responses. The responses published here are anonymous. Numbers below are assigned for ease in reading this report and do not correlate with question numbering in the surveys distributed. Questions with bolded portions indicate that it was a multiple-choice question and the following responses were optional elaborations.

9.C.1. Survey 1

Pre-program Track

1)	What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the field?
	The majority of survey participants reported that they loved that the field was open and generous in sharing their knowledge, particularly to people who are just getting started. They also report that the work itself is fulfilling, engaging, and significant. The majority of survey participants reported that they were hopeful about three things: 1) That financial support for emerging conservators will increase. That the field will achieve fairly compensated positions and that pay transparency will continue and be more commonplace. 2) That the field will continue to support inclusivity and diversity so that new perspectives can be brought into the care of cultural heritage. 3) That access to conservation will be broadened to include underserved communities and voices. That this broadened access will allow for collaboration between communities and conservators in the conservation of cultural heritage.
2)	What are you the most excited about for your next five years?
	While many of the survey respondents reported that they were looking forward to the potential of attending a graduate program in conservation, several others reported that they are actively abandoning the pursuit of conservation. These respondents cite underpaid internships where they feel underappreciated as well as the arduous application process for graduate schools as reasons they are no longer pursuing conservation. They report that they have either experienced or been told of the necessity to apply multiple times to graduate school without success. These frustrations have led emerging conservators to experience fear and uncertainty as well as instability. Several respondents report that they are using the skills they have developed pursuing conservation to pursue other fields.
3)	What about the field do you find discouraging?
	Almost all survey respondents find that the lack of paid opportunities for pre-program interns, lack of post-graduate jobs (especially permanent jobs), underfunding of conservation and extreme low wages as the most significant discouraging factors of the field. The significant lack of opportunities creates extreme competition for emerging conservators, both for pre-program internships and admission into graduate school. Many emerging conservators are caught in an impossible situation. Some report that they are ineligible for funded undergraduate positions because they are in the liminal space of fulfilling graduate school prerequisites and being in a graduate program. The predominance of unpaid internships and volunteer opportunities leads many to work multiple jobs, just to maintain the bare minimum of a livable wage. They report discouragement from the many rejections they receive for pre-program internships because they "do not have enough hands-on experience". Similarly, they are discouraged by repeated rejections from the graduate programs despite receiving

	feedback from the programs and mentors that they "are doing everything correctly", and they should "keep doing what they are doing." Even when respondents are admitted into graduate school they report a critical lack of positions and livable wages. Respondents who have a technician position report unfair compensation based largely off of the precedents set by what institutions pay graduate interns, no path for advancement both in their position and in regards to other opportunities without a graduate degree, and general lack of acknowledgement from the field. Additionally, respondents were discouraged by the field's unrealistic expectation that people can and should move to other locations just to accept an underfunded or unpaid position regardless of their economic status or current living situation. Many respondents also mentioned the current state of the field as being unsupportive of diversity (socioeconomic, racial, gender, ableness, and sexual). This causes a substantial mental toll on respondents who feel isolated, unsupported and in some cases at risk in the field. Comments, discouragement, and unrealistic expectations from mentors are also cited as a source of discouragement. They report their mentors sharing that their wages will not support retirement, that they are not open to hearing or understanding issues of unfair compensation, and the normalization of low wages paired with high expectations.
4)	What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?
	Many respondents expressed that they appreciate the field of conservation, but there are many foundational issues. The predominant issues mentioned were 1) Lack of liveable wage (even if a liveable wage calculator determines you meet the definition of liveable wage). 2) The perpetuation of harmful expectations, such as the need to "move anywhere" for a job, which contribute to the systemic lack of diversity in the field. 3) There are serious and substantial issues in the field that systemically gate-keep people from ever pursuing a career in conservation. 4) There is an overwhelming perception of established elitism in the field which creates an inhospitable environment for diversity. Some observed a disconnect from those in secure established positions in the field who seem to value traditional academic backgrounds and prioritize those who are able to afford the demands set by the field (ability to move, ability to work for free or for little money, ability to pay for workshops and conferences). Generally, it is understood by participants that the only way to get into the field is through a graduate program even though the field still claims to accept "nontraditional" paths such as apprenticeship or bench training. There is a desire, amongst the respondents, for the field to be honest about these potential pathways, further develop and support alternative pathways, and offer guidance.
	"I think lack of diversity in conservation is directly affected by low wages. A lot of people from marginalized backgrounds simply cannot or will not invest the 2-5 years of underpaid pre-program training, then 3-4 years of graduate school training, only to come out making \$50,000/year or less...Underpaid pre-program professionals cannot afford to save because they're often paid right at what is considered a living wage for their area or even below a living wage, and then down the line they become established professionals who cannot afford to retire."
5)	What role does AIC have in your career?
	Emerging professionals that identify as pre-program generally were divided on how AIC affects their careers. A majority of pre-programmers commented that AIC helped them to build networks and community (through mentorship, participating in local ECPN programs, and attending the AIC Annual Meeting), to find internship application opportunities, and to engage with online resources (reading JAIC articles, visiting the AIC Wiki, and watching Connecting to Collections Care webinars). Several others commented that AIC had little or no relevance to their career; some attributed this status to their "inexperience", the presence of financial barriers (no professional development funding), or scarcity of AIC conservation activities in their geographical region.

6)	What role do you hope AIC will have for you in the future?
	Some survey respondents were uncertain of what to expect from AIC in the future. More than a dozen pre-program professionals responded that they hope AIC will continue to connect them with other conservators, identify new employment opportunities, and be a resource for their ongoing education and research. Several people mentioned that they hope to get more involved in the future by: becoming new AIC members, presenting a lecture or poster at an Annual Meeting, or by applying for a Professional Associate (P.A.) member status. Pre-programmers also want to see AIC actively involved with and transparent about important initiatives, such as ethics, diversity, and unionization. One response on this topic stated they “hope these conversations will progress to a point where there are ethical standards surrounding community collaboration and cultural sensitivity, as well as worker organizing efforts for diversity and fair pay, that are field-wise rather than centered around individual institutions.”

Graduate student track

1)	What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the field?
	Respondents wrote that they love the work and the amount of interesting research and innovative projects happening in the field. They reported that people working in conservation are generally very kind, passionate, and there is a true sense of community. They are encouraged by the changes they see being made in the field right now, specifically how ECPs are visibly driving change and by seeing unionizing efforts across the country. All respondents are hopeful for increased wages, more job opportunities, more diversity and a more welcoming environment in the field.
2)	What are you the most excited about for your next five years?
	Most respondents are excited about either starting or finishing a training program, ‘finally’. They wrote about finally having a “real job” (many people used “real” with quotation marks in their answer, which is an important indicator of how the field perceives pre-program and graduate experiences as not-real work). They are excited about long-term stability in both a work position but also in not having to move constantly, opportunities for improving the field for the better (i.e. diversifying the field, bettering pay, etc.), and continuing to learn and grow as a conservator
3)	What about the field do you find discouraging?
	The most discouraging things graduate students report about conservation include the necessity of going to graduate school to become a conservator (particularly in the US). They are frustrated with the low pay and few opportunities for jobs, the temporary/contract nature of most pre-program and newly post-graduate positions, which requires near constant physical movement around the country to stay in the field and support oneself. Some entry level job postings that ask for unreasonable amounts of experience are discouraging, especially when the same institutions do not consider pre-program or graduate placements as qualifying experience. In particular, they are disappointed by those who resist change or are opposed to trying new ideas (particularly from well-established professionals and institutions), and the elitism and eurocentricity of conservation - “it’s all about who you know”.
	“At this stage, the constant moving is exhausting, the lack of health insurance and difficulties maintaining routine medical care, the below living wage pay, the expectation to work beyond the 9-5, the vast reach of the duties of a conservator beyond benchwork, the lack of institutional funding for conservation.”

4)	What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?
	Some insights not covered in the survey questions, but written in by graduate student track respondents, include mild to negative experiences with mentorship while in graduate school, but reporting that internship supervisors generally take more supportive roles (including when it comes to pursuing interests outside offered courses). There is not enough support from the programs to supplement stipends (often students are discouraged from seeking side jobs while in school) or afford/find healthcare, which makes graduate school not the safe haven that may be expected. There are frustrations with talks (like this) that have no follow-up actions and obscurity on how to get involved individually to be a part of the change.
	"Graduate school supervisors are supportive mentors ... to a point. They often come with good intentions but fall short when it comes to supporting student's mental health, financial needs, etc."
5)	What role does AIC have in your career?
	Graduate student track respondents interact with AIC as they can fit it into their training schedules. Some volunteer for AIC in roles with flexible time requirements, but some are not involved at all. Most use AIC for networking and finding resources, attending conferences to present their work and learn about others', and accessing online publications. Some find it overwhelming, cost-prohibitive, and are hesitant to join a group that relies so heavily on volunteers who see little benefit, especially since many want more advocacy from AIC on their behalf. Many appreciate ECPN for being free and largely open-access, though there are still some murky areas about how to sign up, find resources, and the levels of involvement available. Many wish that AIC would take a union stance so that small groups of conservators in institutions are not fighting on their own.
	"Keeps me updated on current events in the field, ongoing research, talks, jobs, etc. Connects me to a network larger than the number I could ever meet in person."
	"Somewhat useful for networking, built on volunteerism which is problematic for equity"
6)	What role do you hope AIC will have for your career in the future?
	Graduate student respondents want more advocacy from AIC on their behalf and continued networking opportunities. Many expressed the hope to engage with the organization when they have more time and when such engagement will not affect their work-life balance. Their biggest hopes are that AIC will continue to evolve to involve less gatekeeping, better affordability, and a focus on community building. Graduate student respondents look forward to continued research sharing and discovery, conference attendance, and job searches through AIC
	"I would hope that a membership in AIC can support an emerging private practice conservator, but as of now, it's hard to see that there are benefits to membership other than being on the find-a-conservator tool. I hope that AIC can consider making attendance to their annual meetings more accessible for private practice conservators in general. I think there's a lot of great work being done by private practice conservators, but unfortunately, they rarely have a voice because there is no tangible compensation for an AIC volunteer."

Post-graduate track

1)	What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the field?
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	As with respondents to the pre-program track and the graduate student/training track, those who identified as post-training love what they do; working with all types of cultural heritage and preserving it for future generations gives them joy. They are also thrilled to collaborate with people both within the field and within allied fields who are full of passion, knowledge, and support that create a welcoming sense of community. They love that the sense of community within conservation is moving towards more honest and open conversations about pay-equity, diversity, inclusion, mental health, and unionization. They are hopeful that these conversations lead to better DEAI practices that result in a truly more diverse and inclusive field. They are hopeful for better salaries, permanent positions, and less relocation across the board. They are also very hopeful that more viewpoints and perspectives are included within the field to get rid of secrecy and elitism and embrace different kinds of thinking.
	"I love the move towards more honest an[d] open conversations from all topics in our field. From mental health to a dedicated general session topic about catastrophic damage in the line of treatment, I see a move towards the recognition that we are human beings working in a field with relative high stakes, numerous stakeholders, and often with no clear answers. I think this honesty in conversation and education will lead to a more earnest and human focused stewardship of the cultural heritage we are responsible for."
2)	What are you the most excited about for your next five years?
	Overwhelmingly, those who identified as post-training are excited to land a permanent position that has higher pay. After moving around for so many years between pre-program positions and during graduate education/training, post-training conservators are eager to have job stability, to be required to move less, to have health insurance, and to be more financially stable. At work, there is excitement around continuously expanding on skill sets, becoming more confident, and generally growing as a conservator. They are excited to begin mentoring those entering the field and are eager to embrace change, moving the field towards diversity, equity, and inclusion, and away from previous notions of elitism. Many recent graduates are excited to start enjoying life outside of work and working on their mental and physical health again. While most responses reflect these notions, there are a few that are leaving the field due to low salaries and lack of opportunities.
3)	What about the field do you find discouraging?
	Those who identified as post-training strongly feel that the incredibly low job prospects and low pay throughout all stages in the field is the most discouraging. The expectation of uprooting their lives every 1-2 years due to the lack of permanent positions is particularly disheartening, especially when those who have been in the field longer have an "it is what it is" attitude. They expressed that conservators are often overworked and underpaid and their work-life balance is skewed due to lack of funding, staffing, and recognition from their employers. They've expressed that the limited paths of entry in the field is frustrating, with no known paths through apprenticeship. In the same vein, it is discouraging that there is condescension from those conservators who are trained at graduate programs towards those who are bench trained; just one example of the competitive behavior, elitism, and politics within the field. There are some who expressed dismay over the quality of graduate education and subsequent lack of support from the program after graduation. Post-training professionals believe that there are a number of conservators that are preventing positive change within the field such as addressing the lack of diversity and lack of equitability and are frustrated with this exclusivity.
4)	What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?

	It's worth noting that those who are single in the field struggle a bit more than those who have partners/other financial support. The MIT living wage calculator does not accurately reflect the cost of living; on paper, many people technically make above living wage, but seriously struggle in real life. There is a desire for more safe spaces for ECPs to have honest conversations about burnout. It was stated that ECPN felt like a safe space, however it is felt that a lot of what ECPs say falls on deaf ears. Some have suggested that their previous work experiences have been more valuable than formal training. There is a desire to learn more about private practice during pre-program and graduate school, as well as having more support for those in private practice from larger organizations. Many have cited that forming a union would be ideal and hopefully help resolve a lot of previously mentioned issues, including short-term opportunities without access to health care. Some reported that the cost of AIC membership/meeting registration is too high and that many conservators have incredibly low salaries for 5+ years after training, rather than the 1 year during which the lower post-graduate rate is offered.
	"There is an unspoken hardship that directly aligns with the need to move around so much to achieve "success" in the field. Dealing with no health insurance, or in the best case, a fractured continuity of providers, takes a toll mentally and physically on the body. Also, moving is expensive and eats up any little amount that you are able to save while working for free, on stipend, or in underpaid positions, often in the nation's most expensive places. It also disrupts the ability to build and rely on community, which is crucial for emotionally enduring and thriving in these isolating periods. There is much talk about wages, but offering emerging professionals opportunities without healthcare, a livable wage, or access to the full breadth of employee resources keeps them as a second class employee. These "opportunities" are trading on prestige without recognizing that without full benefits, they are offering even less than preprogram positions for highly trained and skilled labor."
	"Bigger system questions to consider: 1. Can/should AIC/FAIC be lobbying more formally? What could this look like? 2. The current reality is that you need undergraduate and graduate degrees to be a conservator. For some, college of any sort is not an option. What can the field look like outside of formal higher education? 3. What would happen if documentation was prioritized and treatment all but eliminated? How do digital photography and databases change our priorities?"
	"How is everyone able to afford to live right now? What am I missing here?"
5)	What role does AIC have in your career?
	The majority of post-graduate conservators who completed this survey agreed that AIC plays an active role in their lives. They generally described how the organization helped them become part of a community, view and apply to job postings, access other online resources, publish or present their research through AIC (some authors/speakers were also recipients of an FAIC scholarship). Respondents who talked about community-based content focused on either their professional growth (such as developing soft skills or leadership skills), engagement with the online forums, attendance at AIC Annual Meetings, or their volunteer role with AIC. Survey respondents who wrote about AIC's Professional Associate membership designation were all post-graduates who had not yet achieved that status; one person mentioned they were not yet eligible to apply, and others described how they perceived the process to be arduous. Most of the submitted responses about the AIC job postings were positive; however, there was constructive criticism about certain announcements that had been released without addressing the posting's lack of wage transparency. Online resources that post-graduates tend to use in order to remain "connected to the field" include: • Higher Logic digests (some refer to the "DistList") • Webinars and workshops

	• Blog entries on the AIC Wiki • Annual Meeting post-prints • JAIC articles Post-graduate conservators, who disagreed that AIC plays an active role in their lives, stated either that they recognize the organization is an asset for others in the field (even if they personally did not experience much of a benefit), that the organization contributes very little to their career advancement, or that the organization is “irrelevant”.
6)	What role do you hope AIC will have for your career in the future?
	Similar to responses received from the previous survey question, post-graduate conservators wrote that they hope AIC will continue to serve as a community-building network, job posting repository, and as a resource for continuing education. In addition, people expressed how they want to see AIC become more involved with advocacy. Some responses were about outward-facing advocacy related to climate change and sustainability; however, the majority focused on inward-facing advocacy for AIC members. Members would like to see AIC involved with the following inward-facing advocacy efforts: • The organization's willingness to “grow and change” with the membership • Provide and implement a more robust stance with regard to the support of living wages for internship, fellowship, and job postings • Serve as a platform to help organize a national union • Establish an accreditation program • Help private practice conservators with essential resources, such as acquiring affordable health insurance, accountants, and lawyers Post-graduate conservators who did not identify AIC as playing a major role in their lives are also unsure whether AIC will contribute to their future. One person stated “I would like to be more involved after I heal from burnout”, while others mentioned that the cost-to-benefit ratio does not entice them to keep their memberships current.

9.C.2. Mentor/Educator/Supervisor Track

1)	Do you take on interns/students/mentees? Other:
	“I take graduate student interns as long as they are getting a stipend and have health insurance. I cannot pay them at this time due to a variety of workplace rules.”
2)	Do you have other feedback on what is most important about being a mentor?
	There is an overall emphasis on mutual trust and respect, getting to know the individual intern's needs/gaps, and making sure to take the time it takes to be a good mentor. While some people emphasize the importance of a personal connection with the intern (bolstering confidence and supporting through mistakes), others reiterate the singular purpose to be a professional mentor (leading by example and providing networking opportunities). Some mentors cite the importance of giving career trajectory advice and assisting interns to get to the next level.
	“Do not tie it to ‘getting more work done’ even though it is sometimes true. Tie it to educational mission and giving back to the field.”
3)	How do you plan your curriculum and goals for your students and interns? Please select two. Please provide relevant feedback:
	Mentors across the board are looking at the individual intern's experience in an effort to round out and enhance their portfolios, noting also the need to build confidence and provide

	opportunities for interns to work on their own (both for their autonomy and because the mentor does not have enough time).
	"Of course intern projects will be shaped somewhat by what is available at the institution, but I think it is important to tailor projects to the intern's interests/needs as much as possible. Interns should never be taken on as low cost labor to achieve institutional goals."
4)	If yes to either of the above questions, please explain how your personal and/or organizational practices have changed based on COVID and calls for DEAI.
	In response to COVID-19, there has been an increase in flexibility to schedule: as staff is not able to be onsite 100%, also passing that schedule onto interns/non-staff. Supervisors/mentors re-thought instructional delivery and projects, which allowed for a re-thinking of what the interns actually needed to accomplish for their skill-set, leading to individualized projects in some cases to fill in gaps missed because of COVID. DEAI attempts have been on some peoples' minds for years, while others were introduced to concepts like implicit bias. Across the board, there have been shifts away from unpaid internships, attempts to raise compensation, and look for partnerships with HBCUs, etc. Through both of these recent shifts, respondents mention the need to have patience and understanding - meeting the intern where they're at - and in some instances lowering expectations to allow for better work/life balance.
	"As the field begins to create opportunities to diverse people I am constantly afraid that we are not supporting this group beyond the first internship, or made any changes to our infrastructure which welcome these diverse interns to a safe lab. As a mentor (and someone of mixed race who has experienced a lot of racism in the field), I am very protective of interns. Before we started an internship program which aimed to increase diversity I spoke with my department head and explained that we have not historically been a place that is safe and inviting to diverse interns. I don't know that anything actually came from that conversation, but I always ensure that our interns know I am a safe space."
5)	Is your organization actively searching for interns and students who are racially or culturally diverse, or part of an underrepresented demographic in our field (examples could include people of color, folks from a different socioeconomic background or with disabilities, etc.)? Other (please specify)
	133 responses, 75 Yeses. Very few don't know, suggesting they aren't at a decision making level. Of those who expanded on this topic, some mentioned limitations in their hiring practices required by law (Texas: SB17), some mentioned hiring specifically diverse interns for specific projects or programs, some said that they don't seek interns but instead take those who make inquiries, one talked about trying hard to fund a really good intern through the pre-program phase because otherwise they wouldn't be able to afford it. Some mentioned lip service to seeking diverse candidates, but no follow through.
6)	Do you think graduate school is a necessary step to becoming a conservator? Please discuss your answer:
	34 out of 129 respondents say "no." Reasons for "yes" include: job postings require it, the credential associated with the degree (and the visibility), the time required for theory that is often not available through an apprenticeship, providing structure and breadth with the lack of certification, etc. Interest in a formalized apprentice option and, as always, certification to even out the disparity between incredible apprentice trained conservators and mediocre program trained conservators.

	"In my experience, there isn't time to properly train a conservator in a working environment. The field has become more professional and ethics have become more important and in my experience, conservators without formal training do not have the experience, decision making skills, familiarity with materials, and repertoire of treatment options that those with formal training have. The inaccessibility of graduate school to many people is a real problem and barrier to diversity in the field."
	"I think that conservation requires both academic and apprentice training in combination."
	"There are many excellent apprentice trained conservators out there, so clearly it's a viable path, but grad school can offer a structure and breadth of learning that is more difficult to otherwise achieve, and since we lack any kind of certification process in the US, it serves as a credential that gives an advantage when applying for jobs"
7)	Is there anything we've missed that you'd like to share?
	The matter of funding for the ideals of DEAI and in general upholding the field was mentioned many times. Many quotes also mentioned that mentoring is a two way street in terms of the expectations we should have - mentors should be willing and open to learn from their interns, interns should realize that mentors are also stretched thin and doing the best they can. There was also a few mentions of the differences in support for those working in an institution vs. in private practice
	"Conservation training has become too rigid. Each school has the same requirements, every applicant must have very similar backgrounds and experience. But conservation often employs methods, tools, and materials from different professions. It is crucial that we encourage people from different backgrounds into the field in order to get new ideas and ways of thinking. Everyone receiving the same training with the same background will lead to stagnation in the field, there must be more than one route into the field."
	"Mirroring professionalism is a two-way street-- the best intern experiences are ones in which communication and trust was developed amongst all individuals involved. Supervisors have to incorporate a growth mindset into everything they do and be open to change. Interns must understand that most conservators are overworked, underpaid, and burnt out-- everyone must do their best to act with grace and empathy. Our field must be considered a team sport and not a dog-eat-dog race. Everyone wins when we open doors for each other and professionally develop together. Supervisors have to be committed to stretching and expanding their daily skills and ways of thinking. If supervisors think they have nothing to learn, then they do not possess the skills to have interns. Interns must bring new ideas to the table and be open to processes and criteria that are unique to each institution. Having goals for each person in an internship and clear expectations for what gets done in a time frame is essential."

9.C.2. Mentee/Student/Supervisee Track

1)	Do you have other feedback on what you want most from a mentor?
	There is a strong sense of interns looking for a mentor to "meet them where they're at." Personal and professional support are important, as well as honest, unbiased, non-judgemental feedback. Some responses mention the presence of gate-keeping, while others tell of mentors who have freely shared information, pointing to a diverse experience across the field. There is a desire that mentors understand the current state of interns (local costs of living, expenditures with moving, landscape of education, job market, etc) to advocate for them and help the intern prepare to advocate for themselves.

	"I had a fantastic mentor and I think what I appreciated the most from her was that she empowered me to make my own decisions. Even if she might have made a different treatment decision, she respected my choices. We frequently talked about how and why our choices differed but, in those conversations, she always placed my opinions on equal footing with hers."
	"I come from an underrepresented community in Conservation and I didn't realize how important and meaningful it would be to find a mentor from my same community until I recently found one. It has been so empowering to learn from them!"
2)	Is financial compensation (paired with the living wage of the location) a determining factor when deciding what educational opportunities to take? Other:
	It looks like pay and the perceived value of the opportunity can be sometimes weighed with the same importance.
3)	In your experience do you think that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility have been adequately considered by supervisors/mentors/training programs? Please feel free to add additional commentary:
	The overall sentiment is that there is so much more work to be done; strides have been made, but the pay is simply not enough (one response mentioned being paid better at a fast food restaurant) and there are not enough systems in place to adequately support and accommodate anyone who is not white, wealthy, and able-bodied.
	"As a very demanding and underfunded profession, conservation training and early career work significantly favors people who are not impacted by disability, chronic illness, mental health challenges, communication and learning differences or difficulties, unstable or poor economic or social backgrounds, or are not from urban areas."
	"I feel like every lab I've worked in so far people have their hearts in the right place and are making efforts towards increased diversity, but there's often just a lot of misunderstanding, awkwardness and tokenism."
4)	Do you think graduate school is a necessary step to becoming a conservator? Please feel free to add additional commentary:
	The responses point to the necessity of attending a graduate program being dictated by employers and adjacent fields (specifically being taken seriously by other departments in a museum). With the lack of certification, an advanced degree is the current only way to legitimize oneself as a professional conservator. While the graduate programs are not comprehensively adequate to prepare one for their entire career, it is generally accepted as the quickest and most straightforward way to establish oneself as qualified in order to be hired or establish a practice and be respected by colleagues.
	"Necessary to find a job, not necessary to do the job."
5)	Is there anything we missed that you'd like to share?
	One responder expressed frustration in the expectation for pre-programmers to have outreach and research experience in addition to hands-on conservation experience. Limiting factors including location and compensation make this aspect more narrowing, not more inclusive (which may have been the intention in broadening these prerequisites). The lack of diverse paths and positions has created a pipeline that cannot broaden the field. Additionally, ego has played a role for some who have not received adequate training or help in their

	internships. Two responders suggested more workshops, one specifically suggesting that AIC offers workshops specifically on mentorship and supervision training.
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9.C.3. Survey 3

1)	What do you currently love about the field and what are you hopeful for in the future?
	The majority of survey respondents describe a true passion and sense of importance for the work conservators do. They love the amount of collaboration, open-sharing of knowledge, research and continuing education, as well as the hands-on work of treating materials. Overall the survey respondents reported that they were hopeful that the field will continue to fight for better salaries, more permanent positions and less short term contracts. Respondents were also hopeful that the field will be appropriately recognized and valued by institutions for their contributions, difficult work, and education. While most of the respondents are encouraged by the continuing evolution of the field to expand diversity and broaden our partnerships with communities, some admitted that they were not hopeful about the future of conservation. They mention poor pay, burn out, and the emphasis on project management rather than actual benchwork for conservators in permanent positions.
	"I love that our field is becoming more diverse. I'm hopeful about the ways I see members our field raising/gaining awareness of the ethical implications of our work regarding systemic racism, colonialism, and the problematic histories (and present realities) of the cultural institutions where we work."
2)	What are you the most excited about for your next five years?
	While many respondents were excited about transitioning to a new role, retiring, mentoring, or continuing to work on interesting projects that encourage collaboration, more respondents expressed fears and frustrations with the field as they looked towards the next five year. The majority reported that they were looking forward to stability which hopefully includes a permanent position that is equitably compensated, not having to move every year to pursue contracts, or developing a private practice that is sustainable. Some responders mentioned that they were hopeful they could establish a better work/life balance and have the ability to plan other aspects of life such as starting a family. Many expressed that they were hopeful they could get rid of a sense of imposter syndrome, gain confidence in their knowledge and skills as a conservator, but also continue to build their knowledge and skill set. Finally, many respondents look forward to becoming leaders in the field and seeing the changes emerging conservators are bringing to the field.
	"I am incredibly fortunate to have gotten a full time, permanent position after graduate school and I am most excited about being able to pause for a bit and not be working multiple jobs, and taking classes, and volunteering just to be able to get to graduate school."
3)	What about the field do you find discouraging?
	Overwhelmingly, respondents identified the following issues as the most discouraging aspects of the field: 1) Compensation 2) Scarcity of jobs (permanent or contract) 3) Unrealistic expectations 4) Lack of support. Poor compensation and scarcity of jobs were the most common responses. Most often this was expressed by conservators entering the field after graduate school, but mid-career conservators also cited a severe lack of opportunities for people at their level. Some observed that even if someone is able to get into graduate school, get a fellowship, or an assistant/associate position there is an absolute lack of possible advancement for them resulting in a trend of mid-career conservators leaving the field. There is a sense that the only advancement possible is to become a head of lab. This

	often means conservators asked to give up bench treatment and focus on management but conservators are not trained for this in any meaningful way. Unrealistic expectations from both supervisors and institutions were also identified as sources for discouragement. Supervisors (and the field in general) have created the expectation that people can and should work contracts or poorly paid positions. This expectation contributes to the overall sense of instability and further strains financial situations. Survey respondents also reported that there few supervisors understand the stress and insecurity that comes with pursuing conservation and expected respondents to feel "lucky to be employed". Institutions have also come to hold unrealistic expectations from conservators in general. With limited financial and institutional support conservators are expected to know everything and do everything. Some also reported that institutions seem to be moving towards contract positions and are not filling open positions and instead add more work to the employed conservators. The most discouraging aspects of the field are interconnected. Financial insecurity is prominent because people have to repeatedly move cities or states for opportunities, but the overall compensation offered is not in line with the advanced degrees required to get a job. Institutions are able to offer such poor compensation because jobs are scarce; however, there is also a sense that current supervisors do not understand these difficulties and are either unwilling or unable to advocate for higher wages. Because there are so few jobs those who have them are tasked with an unrealistic amount of work and see no path to advancement.
	"Abysmally low salaries despite the requirement of an advanced degree. I shouldn't have to be married to someone making a ton of money to be able to afford to live in my city. Additionally, I am very discouraged by the old guard that refuses to fight for higher salaries simply because they had to pay their dues and expect everyone who comes after them to do the same. AIC could be a powerful union and bargaining entity yet refuses to step up to that [role]."
	"I see a lot of early to mid career conservators leaving for other fields. While I understand much of this is normal, I worry about the pathway for advancement for the bulk of the newest crop of conservators, especially the DEAI efforts. Even if you get into grad school, get a fellowship or two, even if you make it to associate conservator level, where is the support for advancement? Has this always been missing and I only see it now that I'm at this level?"
4)	What are we missing? Anything else you'd like to share?
	More of the same sentiments as above - general frustrations, lack of advancement, lack of hands-on/more management roles when able to advance, financial instability, how different institutional settings may affect jobs and work/life balance, that private practice should be considered more of a viable option and not have museum work be the default. Many entries thanking ECPN for this work and having these surveys. Others pointed out missing elements in our surveys including that sole proprietors can answer most questions only with N/A, we should ask what other income sources to get a fuller picture of the compensation landscape.
	"I feel a deep sadness that I cannot in good conscience recommend this career to students that are interested in conservation. It is not financially sustainable and is difficult on mental health. While we are becoming better as a field at funding pre-program opportunities, there are no guarantees of stable employment on the other side of the graduate programs. This situation is dire at a time when we need to be welcoming and encouraging a young and more diverse cohort of conservators into the field."
	"I think tracking how long people stay in term positions would be useful: for example I've been on a term contract for 13 years: so still no job security."

	"A lot of the parameters discussed here are only possible because of the recent creation of a workplace bargaining unit. Previously a lot of the elements of transparency, living wages and standard of living increase, and paths for growth were highly limited. The FAIC survey was used multiple times to advocate for the technicians' compensation during the bargaining process. Frustratingly, I still can't afford to live in my area with financial growth/peace of mind: my take home pay after all my deductions (including benefits) is nearly half my salary, but I'm grateful for the swathes of benefits regardless. I recognize that my imposter syndrome is strong and perhaps not completely accurate. The positive responses to the above questions are largely due to the fostering community that is my lab head and colleagues more so than the greater institution which we serve."
5)	What role does AIC have in your career?
	Overall generally positive experiences with AIC. Most cited benefits of AIC as a networking opportunity, webinars and other training opportunities, job/internship opportunities, resource for articles and other information, volunteer opportunities to build skills and collaborate with colleagues. Some felt out of place in the organization or not financially viable/not able to justify the cost.
	"huge. I have made life-long friends, benefited from peer-to-peer mentorship as a recipient and giver, grown soft skills in leadership and collaboration, learned important technical things. It's huge."
	"Honestly, I don't know. It looks good on the resume and other conservators expect you to be a member. AIC publications and presentations at Meetings are the most valuable thing for executing my job but have very little to do with career advancement."
6)	What role do you hope AIC will have for your career?
	Generally most say they will continue to go to meetings, network, and share information, but would like AIC to take a great stance in arguing for and promoting the value of conservation, and advocate for better pay.
	"I hope that AIC can advocate for conservators as professionals who demand equal recognition to peers in other professional areas, both within cultural heritage and beyond. AIC plays a role in educating the larger community about the work and education of conservators."
	"I hope AIC works harder to increase salaries across the board, starting with fellowship stipends. I also hope they offer management training. Too many conservators become promoted to management positions with no training, or they are passed over for promotions because they have no management training or experience."

Appendix D: Breakout Tables with Percentage Data

The following tables report the data percentages represented in graph form in section 4.3.

Each question from Survey 3, the corresponding figure number, and a table of data follow.

Table 1: Expanded data from Fig. 43, responses to “What benefits are provided through your workplace?” broken out by career stage.

Write-In	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	15%	7%	25%	50%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%
N/A	0%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	25%	0%	33%	0%	33%	50%
Flexibility to Volunteer w/ Orgs	0%	50%	0%	30%	56%	43%	45%	50%	0%	25%	57%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Retirement Fund Matching	0%	67%	0%	60%	67%	71%	75%	86%	25%	0%	86%	0%	100%	33%	0%
Research Funding	0%	33%	31%	50%	22%	21%	40%	64%	0%	0%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Professional Development Funds	0%	50%	31%	60%	89%	57%	73%	93%	25%	25%	100%	0%	0%	33%	0%
Paid Holidays	0%	83%	15%	80%	78%	71%	90%	93%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%	67%	25%
Childcare	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%
Bereavement	0%	83%	0%	30%	44%	64%	63%	64%	0%	0%	86%	0%	100%	67%	0%
Family Leave	0%	67%	0%	50%	78%	50%	78%	43%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	67%	25%
Sick Leave	0%	83%	8%	70%	100%	57%	88%	100%	25%	0%	100%	0%	100%	67%	25%
Dental Insurance	0%	83%	8%	80%	78%	71%	78%	93%	25%	0%	100%	0%	100%	67%	25%
Vision Insurance	0%	83%	0%	80%	78%	64%	78%	86%	25%	0%	100%	0%	100%	67%	25%
Health Insurance	0%	83%	15%	90%	100%	79%	83%	93%	25%	25%	100%	0%	100%	67%	25%
Paid Time Off (Personal)	0%	67%	8%	20%	22%	50%	50%	79%	0%	0%	57%	0%	0%	33%	0%
Paid Time Off (Vacation)	0%	100%	8%	90%	89%	79%	93%	93%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%	67%	25%
Relocation Funds	0%	17%	8%	50%	22%	21%	13%	29%	0%	0%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%
None	100%	17%	46%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	67%	0%	0%	25%
Pre-Program															
Technician/Conservation Assistant															
In Training															
Post-Graduate Fellow															
Assistant Conservator															
Associate Conservator															
Conservator															
Senior Conservator															
Contractor															
Sole Proprietor															
Lab/Dept Head															
Owner/Director															
Conservation Scientist															
Non-Conservation Role															
Actively Seeking Opportunities															

Table 2: Expanded data from Fig. 44, responses to “How many years did you spend in training roles?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Still in Training	Less than 3	3-5	6-8	9-11	More than 11
Pre-Program	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	16.5%	0%	16.5%	34%	16.5%	16.5%
In training	54%	0%	31%	7.5%	7.5%	0%
Post-Graduate Fellow	30%	0%	20%	30%	20%	0%
Assistant Conservator	11%	0%	44.5%	44.5%	0%	0%
Associate Conservator	0%	14%	29%	43%	14%	0%
Conservator	0%	15%	22.5%	42.5%	17.5%	2.5%
Senior Conservator	0%	36%	7%	50%	0%	7%
Contractor	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Sole Proprietor	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Lab/Dept Head	0%	43%	43%	0%	0%	14%
Owner/Director	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Conservation Scientist	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	25%	0%	75%	0%	0%	0%

Table 3: Expanded data from Fig. 45, responses to “Are you paid a self-sustaining wage for the city where you reside?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No
Pre-Program	0%	100%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	83%	17%
In training	0%	100%
Post-Graduate Fellow	70%	30%
Assistant Conservator	87%	13%
Associate Conservator	57%	43%
Conservator	85%	15%
Senior Conservator	100%	0%
Contractor	75%	25%
Sole Proprietor	33%	67%
Lab/Dept Head	100%	0%
Owner/Director	33%	67%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	100%	0%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	100%

Table 4: Expanded data from Fig. 45, responses to “If you currently live with a partner or other financially contributing household member, could you afford to live in your location alone?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No
Pre-Program	0%	100%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	20%	80%
In training	0%	100%
Post-Graduate Fellow	60%	40%
Assistant Conservator	43%	57%
Associate Conservator	20%	80%
Conservator	65%	35%
Senior Conservator	64%	37%
Contractor	33%	67%
Sole Proprietor	33%	67%

Lab/Dept Head	80%	20%
Owner/Director	0%	100%
Conservation Scientist	N/A	N/A
Non-Conservation Role	0%	100%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	100%

Table 5: Expanded data from Fig. 46, responses to “Is your current job title and salary appropriate for your experience level based on other posted positions?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No	Unsure/Rather Not Answer
Pre-Program	50%	0%	50%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	17%	66%	17%
In training	13%	0%	87%
Post-Graduate Fellow	45%	33%	22%
Assistant Conservator	67%	33%	0%
Associate Conservator	36%	36%	28%
Conservator	63%	27%	10%
Senior Conservator	79%	7%	14%
Contractor	25%	75%	0%
Sole Proprietor	33%	33%	33%
Lab/Dept Head	57%	43%	0%
Owner/Director	33%	67%	0%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	50%	50%	0%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	67%	33%

Table 6: Expanded data from Fig. 47, responses to “Do you have opportunities for advancement and pay/benefit increases?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No
Pre-Program	0%	100%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	50%	50%
In training	33%	67%
Post-Graduate Fellow	30%	70%
Assistant Conservator	63%	27%
Associate Conservator	71%	29%
Conservator	54%	46%
Senior Conservator	50%	50%
Contractor	25%	75%
Sole Proprietor	N/A	N/A
Lab/Dept Head	50%	50%
Owner/Director	100%	0%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	50%	50%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	33%	67%

Table 7: Expanded data from Fig. 48, responses to “If you are in a supervisory role, how many people report to you?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	1-4	5-9	10+	N/A
Pre-Program	0%	0%	0%	100%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	0%	0%	0%	100%
In training	0%	0%	0%	100%
Post-Graduate Fellow	0%	0%	0%	100%
Assistant Conservator	11%	0%	0%	89%
Associate Conservator	29%	0%	0%	71%
Conservator	12.5%	2.5%	0%	85%
Senior Conservator	43%	0%	14%	43%
Contractor	0%	0%	0%	100%
Sole Proprietor	25%	0%	0%	75%
Lab/Dept Head	43%	28.5%	28.5%	0%

Owner/Director	0%	33%	0%	67%
Conservation Scientist	0%	0%	0%	100%
Non-Conservation Role	0%	0%	0%	100%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	25%	0%	0%	75%

Table 8: Expanded data from Fig. 49, responses to “Are you satisfied with your work-life balance?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No
Pre-Program	0%	100%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	83%	17%
In training	50%	50%
Post-Graduate Fellow	78%	22%
Assistant Conservator	56%	44%
Associate Conservator	56%	44%
Conservator	54%	46%
Senior Conservator	71%	29%
Contractor	75%	25%
Sole Proprietor	100%	0%
Lab/Dept Head	86%	14%
Owner/Director	67%	33%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	0%	100%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	100%

Table 9: Expanded data from Fig. 50, responses to “Do you feel like you have enough time to complete the tasks expected of you within your job title?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No
Pre-Program	100%	0%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	83%	17%
In training	60%	40%
Post-Graduate Fellow	60%	40%
Assistant Conservator	67%	33%
Associate Conservator	57%	43%
Conservator	56%	44%
Senior Conservator	71%	29%
Contractor	100%	0%
Sole Proprietor	75%	25%
Lab/Dept Head	71%	29%
Owner/Director	33%	67%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	50%	50%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	100%	0%

Table 10: Expanded data from Fig. 51, responses to “If working in an organizational/institutional position: is the lab adequately staffed for tasks required to be successfully completed in the appropriate timelines?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No	N/A
Pre-Program	50%	0%	50%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	33%	50%	17%
In training	38%	31%	31%
Post-Graduate Fellow	70%	30%	0%
Assistant Conservator	22%	67%	11%
Associate Conservator	22%	64%	14%
Conservator	38%	52%	10%
Senior Conservator	69%	23%	8%
Contractor	50%	25%	25%
Sole Proprietor	0%	0%	100%

Lab/Dept Head	57%	43%	0%
Owner/Director	0%	50%	50%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	0%	33%	67%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	0%	100%

Table 11: Expanded data from Fig. 51, responses to “If working in a private practice position: is the lab adequately staffed for tasks required to be successfully completed in the appropriate timelines?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No	N/A
Pre-Program	100%	0%	0%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	17%	0%	83%
In training	8%	0%	92%
Post-Graduate Fellow	11%	0%	89%
Assistant Conservator	11%	11%	78%
Associate Conservator	8%	0%	92%
Conservator	5%	5%	90%
Senior Conservator	14%	0%	86%
Contractor	50%	0%	50%
Sole Proprietor	50%	0%	50%
Lab/Dept Head	0%	0%	100%
Owner/Director	33%	67%	0%
Conservation Scientist	0%	0%	100%
Non-Conservation Role	0%	0%	100%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	25%	25%	50%

Table 12: Expanded data from Fig. 52, responses to “Do you feel that your role as a conservator is understood/supported within your workplace?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	Somewhat	No
Pre-Program	100%	0%	0%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	40%	40%	20%
In training	50%	40%	10%
Post-Graduate Fellow	40%	50%	10%
Assistant Conservator	33%	45%	22%
Associate Conservator	43%	43%	14%
Conservator	28%	55%	17%
Senior Conservator	43%	50%	7%
Contractor	25%	75%	0%
Sole Proprietor	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lab/Dept Head	72%	14%	14%
Owner/Director	67%	33%	0%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	N/A	N/A	N/A
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	0%	100%

Table 13: Expanded data from Fig. 53, responses to “Do/did you feel prepared for moments of transitioning to ‘the next level’ of your career?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No
Pre-Program	0%	100%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	40%	60%
In training	55%	45%
Post-Graduate Fellow	67%	33%
Assistant Conservator	67%	33%
Associate Conservator	50%	50%
Conservator	54%	46%
Senior Conservator	57%	43%
Contractor	67%	33%
Sole Proprietor	67%	33%
Lab/Dept Head	86%	14%

Owner/Director	33%	67%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	33%	67%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	100%

Table 14: Expanded data from Fig. 53, responses to “If you felt prepared to transition to the ‘next level’ but were unable to do so, what was it based on?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Didn't Feel Prepared; Plagued by Imposter Syndrome	Wasn't Interested in Pursuing Supervisory /Admin Role	Lack of Available positions	Lack of Funding	Lack of support from supervisor	Lack or support for conservation	Write-In	N/A
Pre-Program	33%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	17%	0%	25%	17%	8%	8%	8%	17%
In training	11%	5%	16%	11%	5%	5%	5%	42%
Post-Graduate Fellow	17%	5%	28%	11%	0%	11%	5%	23%
Assistant Conservator	18%	0%	18%	18%	0%	18%	0%	28%
Associate Conservator	16%	12%	24%	8%	12%	12%	0%	16%
Conservator	13%	3%	20%	10%	11%	13%	5%	25%
Senior Conservator	9%	4%	26%	13%	9%	17%	9%	13%
Contractor	0%	0%	34%	22%	11%	22%	0%	11%
Sole Proprietor	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
Lab/Dept Head	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	13%	37%	25%
Owner/Director	0%	0%	50%	0%	25%	25%	0%	0%
Conservation Scientist	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Non-Conservation Role	0%	0%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	0%	30%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%

Table 15: Expanded data from Fig. 53, responses to “If you did not feel prepared to transition to the “next level,” what would have helped the most?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Continuing education/professional dev within cons	Professional development in salary negotiation, management training, etc.	Mentorship opportunities with upper management	Write-In	N/A
Pre-Program	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	33%	33%	0%	0%	33%
In training	8%	8%	8%	8%	68%
Post-Graduate Fellow	0%	29%	0%	29%	42%
Assistant Conservator	12%	12%	26%	0%	50%
Associate Conservator	15%	23%	0%	8%	54%
Conservator	6%	38%	6%	18%	32%
Senior Conservator	7%	36%	7%	14%	36%
Contractor	0%	25%	25%	0%	50%
Sole Proprietor	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
Lab/Dept Head	17%	33%	17%	0%	33%
Owner/Director	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Conservation Scientist	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Non-Conservation Role	33%	0%	0%	33%	33%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

Table 16: Expanded data from Fig. 54, responses to “Are the expectations for each job title level, raises, and other metrics of success clearly defined by your workplace?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No	N/A
Pre-Program	0%	50%	50%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	17%	50%	33%
In training	23%	31%	46%
Post-Graduate Fellow	30%	40%	30%
Assistant Conservator	22%	88%	0%
Associate Conservator	29%	64%	7%
Conservator	28%	67%	5%
Senior Conservator	7%	93%	0%

Contractor	25%	50%	25%
Sole Proprietor	0%	0%	100%
Lab/Dept Head	57%	43%	0%
Owner/Director	0%	67%	33%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	67%	0%	33%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	25%	75%

Table 17: Expanded data from Fig. 54, responses to “Is this information readily accessible to you in writing?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No	I don’t know	N/A
Pre-Program	0%	50%	0%	50%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	17%	33%	17%	33%
In training	23%	23%	15%	39%
Post-Graduate Fellow	30%	20%	30%	20%
Assistant Conservator	33%	33%	33%	0%
Associate Conservator	21%	50%	21%	8%
Conservator	30%	53%	7%	10%
Senior Conservator	14%	86%	0%	0%
Contractor	25%	25%	50%	0%
Sole Proprietor	0%	0%	0%	100%
Lab/Dept Head	43%	14%	43%	0%
Owner/Director	0%	33%	0%	67%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	67%	0%	0%	33%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	25%	0%	75%

Table 18: Expanded data from Fig. 55, responses to “Are job title levels/rank and compensation commensurate with other departments?” broken out by career stage.

Career Stage	Yes	No	I don't know	N/A
Pre-Program	0%	0%	50%	50%
Technician/Conservation Assistant	0%	50%	50%	0%
In training	0%	8%	54%	38%
Post-Graduate Fellow	30%	0%	60%	10%
Assistant Conservator	45%	22%	33%	0%
Associate Conservator	7%	7%	72%	14%
Conservator	15%	33%	40%	12%
Senior Conservator	21%	21%	58%	0%
Contractor	25%	25%	50%	0%
Sole Proprietor	33%	0%	0%	67%
Lab/Dept Head	43%	43%	14%	0%
Owner/Director	0%	67%	0%	33%
Conservation Scientist	100%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Conservation Role	0%	0%	67%	33%
Actively Seeking Opportunities	0%	0%	50%	50%

Appendix E: Questions & Responses from Audience and Panelists

The following is an addendum to the live general session at the 52nd AIC Annual Meeting on Friday, May 24th, 2024: “Expectations & Realities: The State of Emerging Professionals in the Field.”

Comments and questions from the livestream were compiled by the organizers and sent to the session speakers and panelists. To retain the anonymity of questions and comments, identifying information has been removed. A huge thank you to our session organizers and participants for providing their time and thoughtful insights even after the session!

The sequence (SEQ.) of comments has been included to keep a record of the conversation happening (available in the session recording) when the comment/question was made.

Session 1 : Emerging Conservation Professionals

Session 2 : Education & Training

Session 3 : Career Stages

Closing Session

9.E.1. Session 1 : Emerging Conservation Professionals

SEQ.	LIVESTREAM COMMENT (C) or QUESTION (Q) and PANELIST ANSWERS (A)
1	C: A huge shout of praise for this panel, from a senior....you all will be the ones to make these changes happen!! Thank you for your thoughtful discussions.
2	Q: Please address the issue of hiring etiquette. Overly excessive interviews, rude hiring managers, ghosting applicants AFTER interviews. We are a small field where if an applicant is treated badly they will share their experience and you will likely have to face that candidate in the future. There is no excuse for ghosting applicants anymore. A: In this scenario my suggestion is put yourself in the interviewee's shoes. If it's a process that you and your co-workers wouldn't want to go through, then don't make someone else go through it. (Nylah Byrd) A: I have had a few bad experiences with the hiring process. I've interviewed for several positions and then never heard back, even after inquiring about updates post-interview. I think this is completely unacceptable. I think jobs that go through HR departments need to check that the department is sending out rejection emails if the applicant did not receive an interview because we still took time to complete the application. In my current position at a university museum, I have noted that the university's HR does not always send all of the applications through to the hiring committee/museum HR staff. Now, I typically send an email directly to the conservator indicating I have applied for the role and I know bigger institution's HR processes can sometimes be fickle. I've also noticed recently that positions are being reposted across job boards and AIC dist list without notifying any of the applicants about the position, even though they might have applied months ago. (Ella Andrews)
3	Q: Will the slides and data presented be available later? A: Yes; a PDF of the presentation is available here and a comprehensive report with more data is forthcoming in the fall (Session Organizers)
4	C: Networking and collaboration between institutions and training programs

5	C: We need to put a stop to the private practice bias. Half of the field is in the private sector and is not less than an institution position.
6	Q: Please talk about how student loans affect the job market and your experiences. Specifically how Public Service Loan Forgiveness. A: I didn't have debt from college or MFA, and UCLA/Getty provided tuition and a stipend so this has not been my experience, but I realize that almost everyone who has applied for conservation positions I've known about or been involved with have had to make choices that would either allow them to pay off their debt or receive loan forgiveness. My opinion is that tuition debt is very close to being criminal and I actively support debt forgiveness. (Casey Mallinckrodt) A: I have just barely started scratching the surface on my PSLF, so I don't have an answer to this question specifically, but wanted to say this may be a great blog/webinar topic by those who have had success jumping through the hoops and can give pointers! (Kaeley Ferguson)
7	Q: How do you feel about paid internships decreasing the amount of internships available (I, as a graduate student, had a hard time finding a 3rd year b/c many institutions couldn't pay me and wouldn't take me for free)? Do you think "volunteering" will take over? A: There are a few aspects of this question that are relevant as I consider the question. Colorado (and possibly Federal) Law has qualification standards and wage requirements for internships to prevent unpaid internships being used as free labor and these are correcting abuse. Overseeing interns is very time consuming and difficult to schedule into pressured schedules. At this museum the number of internships is limited by the constraints on departmental budgets. Everyone wants more interns! Volunteer positions that provide pre-program experience can be configured within larger projects but again, require time to organize them and oversee the volunteer. I am trying to develop some short-term projects for the many people who have reached out to me asking if they could volunteer, but don't want to fall back into using free labor. This question is inciting me to define a volunteer program to allow aspiring conservators to learn, accomplish something, but not be required to use time needed for an income producing job. (CM) A: I don't understand the part of the question that asks if "volunteering" will take over, but I do understand the frustration of being caught in between a time of pushing for change and waiting for that change to take effect on a grander scale. I also empathize with the fact that in the case of graduate internships, institutions are providing a necessary component to their education and requirement for graduation—a fact that could be seen as compensation enough. However, if we believe that graduate students also bring immense value to the institutions hosting them (and I believe they absolutely do), then we need to do two things: One, continue making the case for why institutions should consider contributing to a student's financial earnings by getting them to a living wage in their respective city. And, two, supporting potential graduate internship supervisors that are trying to make that very case to their employers by encouraging them, providing them with as much helpful data as we can, and understanding the bigger picture and long game. As someone affiliated with one of the American graduate programs, I can tell you that I have seen an upward trend in just the last few years alone, not only in the amount of money graduate internship host sites are offering as stipends but also in the number of institutions offering any stipend at all. This is incredibly encouraging and will provide more impetus for other institutions to take a similar lead. Finally, to those graduate students and prospective graduate students who may also be worried about this point, I can assure you that we will help you find a worthwhile placement even if institutions you're interested in that particular year are caught advocating for their budget lines! (Lauren Fair) A: From the museum side of things, I fully endorse what Lauren is saying. We need more graduate programs to advocate for compensating students in the way that WUDPAC has in recent years. Their document explaining student compensation and the MIT living wage calculator was a powerful tool to share with management and get our stipends increased after years of stagnation. It doesn't change overnight but we are slowly getting better. We highly value not only the work that interns do but the fresh knowledge and skills that they share with

	us. It does mean that we can't necessarily host more than one graduate intern in our entire department each year but it brings awareness to the issue so we can do some long range planning for more funding in the future. (Angie Elliott)
8	Q: Clarifying question for Minyoung Kim - do BS grads with student visas have a different status than BA grads? I'm not aware of this issue! A: Before answering this question, I want to emphasize that I am not an immigration lawyer or a DSO (designated school official) for international students. That being said, I want to make sure you understand that I am doing my best to share what I learned from my experience as an international student and from other international students, the DSO of my school/previous school, and lawyers. However, please seek professional help if you need to better understand the visa problem for yourself or your students/employees. The visa statuses for international students for BS/MS and BA/MA programs are, in most cases, the same: F-1 student visa. (Some international students may receive J1 visas; however, those are not for degree-seeking students but for short-term exchange students, interns, or apprentices) However, even with the same F1 visa, some rules apply differently depending on various individual specifications. One of them is the field of study in which the student is majoring. While international students in both BA/MA and BS/BS programs can apply for a 12-month OPT (optional practical training) after graduation, only STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) students may apply for a 24-month extension. (you can read more about this here: https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students) As you may be able to imagine, this makes a significant difference in the pre-program or post-program career path of international students. For instance, one may get an offer for a 3-year fellowship after graduation, but they may not be able to finish the full three years, which is a loss of educational opportunity for the student/ECP and a loss of great human resources from the institution's perspective. The tricky thing about this OPT regulation is that not every BS or MS program is recognized as a STEM program by the USCIS. While art conservation degrees are mostly BS and MS, as far as I know, international students in those programs are not eligible to apply for OPT extensions as art conservation is not recognized as a STEM program by the government. (It may not be the same case for BS in art conservation programs. But from the information I could gather, BS conservation programs do not appear to be recognized as STEM programs) From this point on, I will briefly discuss the STEM program recognition appeal process, which I am not very confident or knowledgeable about. My amazing academic advisor, Kevin Martin, took on this case and spared me many headaches. Therefore, I highly recommend you read the USCIS information on their website, speak to your academic advisor, and consult with your designated school official (DSO) for international students at your institution rather than relying on the information I am sharing here. Please take it as a starting point for your own research in this matter. From what I understand is that those BS or MS programs that are not yet recognized as STEM programs can appeal to be recognized as such by making an argument that they fit in one of the STEM recognized fields of study categories that are listed in this document (https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/stem-list.pdf). I might be wrong, but what is surprising is that it sounds like anyone (any citizen, I assume) can appeal for whatever field of study they think should be categorized as a STEM program. Again, please take it with a grain of salt, do your research, and consult with your school. I highly, HIGHLY, HIGHLY recommend you speak to your program director and request the school to make this change, as it significantly affects the quality of your/your student's career path. As I mentioned, my program at NYU is in the process of making the change, and I believe the wonderful director of our program, Michele, shared this information with other Master's programs in art conservation (I am not sure how many). However, the BS in conservation programs may have yet to hear of this change in progress. Therefore, I wanted to share this information during our presentation at the AIC. This change can affect the international students in BS programs equally, if not more significantly. For instance, it will make a huge impact on those BS international students who may wish to continue their studies in conservation as the OPT extension would allow them to

	have time to get pre-program internships and workshops as a part of preparation to apply for a Master's program in conservation. (Minyoung Kim)
9	Q: For Minyoung - could you speak more on undergraduate conservation programs? A: Unfortunately, I am not sure if I could talk more about the undergraduate conservation programs. I did a very brief research to see if they are BS programs and if they are STEM-recognized programs. Other than that, I did not look much deeper into them. If you give me more specific questions about conservation programs in general, perhaps I may be able to provide a more helpful answer. Please let me know. (MK)
10	Q: Regarding question #1, I'd also suggest we stop asking "what program did you go to?" to "tell me about your training" when meeting a fellow professional. I am "apprentice trained" and have an applicable related graduate degree and am a Professional Member of AIC, and have to address that question with lots of qualifiers to justify my presence here. A: I like this notion and think we can instead ask people "what is your background?" which also opens the door for people that are not specifically in conservation but in a related field, which is welcome and what we need more of allying with conservation. (LF)
11	Q: When we talk about paid internships, is receiving some compensation like a stipend helpful or not? At the time when I was a student, I would appreciate having this option as it was better than unpaid, it gave me a hand nonetheless. I am wondering now if it actually hinders towards advocating for "livable" financial compensation - for those who can receive it. A: The conservators offering internships need to create opportunities that have a significant measurable learning component for the intern. A working group to create guideline would be helpful defining scope and expectation for potential supervisors and interns. Minimum wage is used here. (CM) A: One note from the session organizers specifically speaks to issues that U.S. graduate students in their final year internships might face: students are given a living stipend but there are limitations to the total amount a student can receive in some instances. If the internship host offers payment for the internship, the student may lose some or all of their stipend. It is not transparent and students should feel comfortable speaking about this issue as they try to support themselves in this stage. Additionally, internship sites could have a variety of types of support – should they not be able to compensate an hourly wage, perhaps housing, transportation, healthcare, etc, can all be significant ways to support an intern. When a full employment package cannot be offered, a flexible offer, catered to the specific intern, should be pursued. (Session Organizers)
12	Q: Rebecca, you see outside skill sets as a positive, but feel it necessary to downplay them. Do you think that is because you perceive them as a negative in the mind of your colleagues, or is it your own perception? A: I think it's a little bit of both here. I have found that while my outside skills are valued by others in this field, there can be a stigma to bringing them up and highlighting that they were learned outside of the field of conservation – occasionally I've had supervisors be explicitly dismissive of my prior work experience in other fields even though the same supervisors acknowledged that these skill sets and perspectives were helpful at other times. I've felt self-conscious about highlighting that so much of my own experience has been outside of my field of choice out of worry that the reaction would be "Oh, so I guess you couldn't find a job in conservation, this must be because you're bad at this!" But that's probably more based on impostor syndrome than in reality. (Rebecca Rosen)
13	Q: I have been thinking about non-financial resources that can be shared at the local level - things like housing, transportation, food support and other supplies. Any thoughts on nonfinancial asset sharing?

	A: NB- partner with local institutions and see if there's an exchange possibility. Or tap into local college dormitories to try and provide housing for interns/fellows. A lot of this is location specific and a great chance to build community between institutions. (NB) A: ECPN has a Facebook page for housing. I also recommend posting in the general ECPN Facebook page for any and all questions. If you're moving to an area you've never been to, I'm sure there are other local ECP's who would be happy to answer questions like best area to live, transportation, etc. (EA) A: Housing is a huge one. I've been directing people towards the ECPN housing Facebook group lately, but when I was moving around for pre-program internships it was a huge help to get connected to low-cost housing options that also matched the length of my internship term. I agree with Nylah that institutions providing this kind of support could use it as a way to strengthen collaboration overall. It's also important to keep in mind that these are not one-size-fits-all – some benefits may be of different utility to different people; a transit pass is great for someone who commutes to work by bus, but if they are living with extended family and driving in from a few towns over to get to work that won't help much. When someone leaves a role, it might be a good idea to do exit interviews to gather information on what the pain points actually are, and to discuss potential needs with the next person in that position. Things like the survey at the center of this panel are a way of doing this on a larger scale! (RR)
14	Q: To Nylah's point on hiring those with equivalent experience, are there any alternative terms for "pre-program" professionals? A: Not that I know of. But I don't think the term "pre-program" is actually a problem because even if we bring back apprentice training models, they may still be programmatic in nature, just not a graduate school program. (NB)
15	Q: For all speakers: can you describe an example of the best mentoring you've received? Success stories about impactful mentoring will help the mentors in the audience recognize how we can truly support emerging conservators. A: The best mentoring I've received is largely from people I've collaborated with outside of the work/school environment. I've also had previous supervisors become mentors in our continued relationship. It's easier to express desires and hopes when you don't feel there's potential repercussions (e.g. a bad rec letter). I'm lucky to have many many connections with people who are truly invested in my career and want to see me grow into whatever I choose to. Because of this I feel I can reach out to them with honest questions and receive feedback that is honest, helpful (even if constructive) and judgment- free. (NB) A: The best mentors I've had have connected me with other relevant professionals and networks. This has helped me tremendously in terms of career path mapping and network building. (EA) A: My best mentorship experiences have happened when my mentors are willing to be frank and open with me, which has often required ignoring institutional pressures. I have had mentors who have given me advice that runs counter to their own institutional needs, knowing that it will mean more paperwork or headaches for them professionally, but advising me to make the best choices for myself and my own career. My strong relationship with this mentor came through working closely together, but knowing that the decisions I made would also impact them made it more complicated to figure out the right path. Other positive experiences of mentorship that I have had have relied on my mentor being thoughtful and clear in telling me what areas I need to grow in, but delivering this message with kindness and respect; this created a space where I felt I could ask for help when I need it and admit mistakes and feel supported in that. (RR)
16	Q: Given that many of our more prestige- gaining and highly resourced institutions are located in the comparatively more expensive metropolitan areas on the coasts, do you have thoughts about the actual feasibility of living and working in the same communities throughout the length of your career?

	A: It is shameful to admit that I have never lived outside of New York State, three years upstate NY and eight years in NYC. While I am in an ultimate toxic relationship of love and hate with NYC, I would very much wish to find a job here after I graduate. This is in part due to my friends and community I found here and my familiarity with this city. However, it is also because there are more opportunities in this city, as you mentioned, for career but also for social events and other. The concern is, again, as you mentioned, the cost of living in the city. Over time, I learned to live in the city within my budget, and that has not been a problem for me as I am used to a frugal lifestyle and am not much of a going-out person. Therefore, I can easily imagine myself staying in NYC throughout my entire career, and I definitely would if I could. However, as we all know, positions do not open up to our demands. Therefore, I am trying my best to expand my horizons by doing my summer internship placement outside of metropolitan areas and speaking to fellow students from other parts of this country. However, my desire to stay in the city has not changed so far, and it is very much feasible to do so if you do not mind living with a tight budget. That being said, I have to admit this could only be possible with my privilege of not having any family member dependent on me, student loan, or debt of any kind. Therefore, I think living in a metropolitan area throughout the length of one's career may not be feasible for others. In addition, I do get concerned about saving and retirement plans, which I did not think about seriously until very recently. So, this may change my thoughts on my living situation later on. Lastly, I just want to add that working in the metropolitan area does not always mean you have to live in the area. Especially for NYC, where the public transportation system is very active and covers most of the neighborhood within and out of the city, you may be able to lower your living cost by finding a place outside of the most expensive neighborhood yet has good transportation. (MK) A: I don't have a good answer for this one because I enjoy living in larger metropolitan areas in general despite them being more expensive. I do think that in the current state it's not possible to live in the same place for your whole career unfortunately. (NB) A: This is something I worry about on a regular basis, and it feels like the prospect of having to move is looming. I've found an affordable apartment and built a strong community in the expensive city I live in, and if I can hang on to all that then I'll be fine, but at what point will I be sacrificing professional opportunities to keep it all feasible, and at what point does it become too much in the other direction? If I move elsewhere, will that cut me off and keep me out of the loop for NYC, making it harder to get back or potentially leaving me stuck in a position beyond when it makes sense? And with the feasibility of location dependent on competitive professional positions, it makes it more difficult to be a strong and reliable community-member for my friends, family, and other loved ones. (RR)
17	Q: When advocating for more accessibility, what are your thoughts about holding our institutions and schools accountable for providing adequate support to students/interns with equal passion but less experience? A: I believe this is very important and requires guidance and support for supervisors and for interns/students to succeed. The UCLA Conservation program Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation is a tremendous resource for considering the importance and work required to expand a community. Vis a vis prior questions- people who have been excluded from museums or for whom museums are unsafe need valuable opportunities and alliances in place. (CM) A: I think this is very important to do! As a graduate student, when we had something we wanted to discuss and advocate for within our program, we reached out to those in the organization and emphasized how important this was to us. We always felt listened to, despite the results not being immediate. I, personally, sometimes struggle to understand that these changes take time, but I believe that with more incoming classes/interns vocalizing their opinions, the point will get across even more. I think a major step to doing this is not only altering the admissions/internship requirements, but also thinking about how graduate education/the internship is delivered, now that there are students who have less (or different!) experience. (KF)

	A: I would like to highlight how our community, AIC, institutions, and schools are limiting the pre-program students' learning opportunities by emphasizing internships or equivalent in-person as the only acceptable learning experience. On the AIC website, https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/become-a-conservator/pre-program, they highlight only three options for pre-program learning opportunities: 'Volunteer positions,' nearly impossible to find anymore as the rising awareness of ethical issues on unpaid positions. 'Internships,' which are highly competitive and often have a high barrier that prevents international students and those who are outside of the metropolitan area from applying. 'Technician,' which has the same issues as an internship opportunity. Often require previous experience in similar work: higher barrier. I have a lot to say about all this. But first, I want to emphasize that I am not against the whole change of making a financially sustainable environment for interns by giving them equitable payment for their labor in our field. However, I am concerned that this change is even more limiting already very limited learning opportunities for those who are trying to enter the field in general. For instance, I heard from some private conservators who previously had an unpaid intern to share the knowledge and support the passionate newcomers despite the limited time and resources as a small business now feel unease about having a new intern since they are concerned about being judged as an unethical conservator exploiting the desperate pre-program students. Of course, there are people who try to make a profit out of interns' free labor. However, if there is an overflowing population of pre-programmers who are thirty of any experience, there are very limited ethical in-person learning opportunities at the very few institutions and schools that require/emphasize the in-person experience; how can we point fingers at those small private practices trying to make a position for pre-programmers? Suppose we want to drive our newcomers toward more ethical entrance to the field; we have to be able to suggest more than one and broader doors for them to pass through before limiting their already limited source of exposure to the world of conservation. For that I suggest, The AIC should suggest more diverse modes of learning on its website for pre-program students, e.g., literature review, reconstruction of art/artifact with historical methodology, at-home treatment experience with encouragement to write out what went well and wrong, meeting conservators, or practice writing condition report and hypothetical treatment proposal, building one's own study collection using local thrift store etc. The AIC/ institutions can hold a long-term mentor-mentee program, providing a channel for students to learn real-life conservation without relocating and conservators to support the students without too much pressure. The AIC should endorse the school to accept various forms of experience for admission applications besides internships. For instance, (based on suggestion 1) one may write a literature review, reconstruction of a historical art making process, or at-home treatment experience with what they learned, what went wrong, and what they wish to learn more. Open studio/lab day for institution - Many labs and institutions take visitors upon request. However, finding the contact info and scheduling the visit is often very challenging. Therefore, I would like to suggest that institutions or private labs have an open studio/lab day, which would make it more feasible for people to plan ahead and register. These are just quick and brief brainstorming ideas of mine. I do not know how the admission process works or how AIC/institutions operate, so I do not know how these suggestions are feasible. However, I feel strongly that AIC, Institutions, and schools are the ones who should make more accessible entry points for new people to our field. (MK) A: Find resources to back up your advocacy and continue to advocate. (NB)
18	Q: What role do you feel internship and work opportunities in private conservation studios play in your development and career goals? A: I've never worked/interned in a private conservation studio (assuming non-profit regional centers don't fall under this category) and I have successfully met my career goals so far. (NB) A: My first hands-on role in conservation was in private practice. For me, even though it was an unpaid role and I didn't have an entirely positive experience, it broke the ice and provided an essential stepping stone to more pre-program work. I'm hoping to find work in an institutional lab after I finish my graduate training, but I recognize that there's a good chance I'll have to

	work in private practice or establish my own clientele at some point, so I'm trying to get more information about the business side of things in the next few years. (RR)
19	Q; How do you, as an emerging professional, juggle the demands of being preprogram/a graduate student/early career with having a family, a partner, etc? What advice can you give an emerging professional who can't drop everything and move across the country for a short-term internship or position? A: Unfortunately I think this is a problem area in the field, because training and job acquisition are pretty dependent on moving. However I would look into your local collecting institutions (museums, libraries, archives, etc) and private practice conservators to see what positions they have available or if you're able to get some experience part time. This might require volunteering (read: unpaid labor) unfortunately. (NB) A: It's definitely a challenge, and I haven't even come close to figuring it out. I've found it helpful to be clear with the people in my life outside of the field on what all I have going on, and to try to be as honest as I can in setting expectations for how much time, space, and energy I have available. It's helpful to know that there will always be trade-offs, and to accept that sometimes personal and professional priorities will be at odds. Recently I faced a situation where my decision to participate in a close friend's wedding severely limited my options for summer internship opportunities because of timing – a mentor of mine made sure that I recognized what was happening, but also told me to be careful not to be angry at myself for setting boundaries and sticking to my decisions, which I found very helpful to hear from someone within the field. I've tried to balance my priorities in a way that makes sense for myself and my own needs, knowing that for me professional success can't happen without feeling connected to my partner and my found family, and that I don't want to create a situation where I am resentful of my loved ones because I'm taking time and energy away from my professional life. At the same time, I'm also a much less attentive and available partner, friend, and family member as a graduate student than I was when I was working in a pre-program role, so I'm not sure how successful my efforts are. In my pre-program phase, I really struggled with the social aspect of moving around the country for short-term positions, and once I was able to find something that was in a place where I already had a network I did my best to stay there; the stability of a longer-term position and a community of friends and family around me made it much easier to plan for the future and to take the steps I needed to apply for graduate school, and is continuing to help during my graduate training. With that in mind, one of the weirdest bits of advice I have is to think more expansively about opportunities to spend time with friends – errands, big tasks, and to-do lists can turn into great quality time that you might not have otherwise, and helping out with things like moving or home improvement projects when you do have the time or even going grocery shopping together can be a great way to make sure that your relationships with others stay strong even when you're not very available, or can help build a community when you've just moved somewhere. (RR)
20	Q: Could the panelists please address mentorship within AIC and how the mentorship process could be more transparent? A: First of all, I want to point out how this mentorship program is not advertised effectively. Second, the two mentorship programs organized within the AIC are very limited: speed-mentoring at the conference and ECPN-CIPP mentorship for private practice. I think the AIC should cultivate more long-term mentorship programs that can provide guidance with consideration of various pursuits and individuals, such as pre-programmers, ECPs, BIPOC, and people with disabilities. However, for now, mentorship in our field is highly dependent on individuals' socializing skills or small interest groups trying to make mentor-mentee connections. (MK) A: If there's a formal mentorship program in AIC then I am unaware of it. Perhaps I'm misunderstanding the question. (NB)
21	Q: Given the statistics from the survey asking about opinions on whether graduate school is a necessity, it seems that people who follow the apprenticeship path would suffer a significant

	disadvantage in job applications when competing with people with a masters degree. How can we work to change the prejudice against apprenticed conservators amongst colleagues who strongly believe in the grad school path? A: I don't think changing the prejudice is the solution. People are going to be prejudiced unfortunately. The solution is creating equitable hiring and interview practices so those prejudices don't have the opportunity to influence the final candidate selected for the job. (NB)
22	Q: Our field relies on volunteer labor, especially in our professional organizations. Where does this rank in your priorities for change? A: Highly. The volunteer system is currently unsustainable and if we want the great work it brings forth to continue we need to do something about it asap. And by asap I mean have solid means of compensation for volunteer roles in the next 5 years. Compensation doesn't have to mean money, it can also be an exchange, discounts on conferences, tools, books, workshops etc. The only limit to this is really our imagination and I have full confidence that AIC could create a compensation system for volunteering by looking at other institutions that already do similar things. For example, I participated in a focus group for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and my compensation was a year of free membership and access to the forum. These things need to be considered when writing grants. I was very frustrated that none of the Held in Trust sub-group participants got compensated for their time and energy as it was not written into the grant. (NB) A: Highly, #1 priority. I don't think volunteer-based positions are ethical and they surely are not sustainable. It creates a massive barrier of entry into our field. I would rather see an institution not offer an internship than offer an unpaid one. But as Nylah stated, compensation can mean a lot of different things. For example at our lab, we offer college credit for undergraduate interns working in the lab. My supervisor still tries to find funding for them for specialty projects or workshops they help run. (EA)

9.E.2. Session 2 : Education & Training

SEQ.	LIVESTREAM COMMENT (C) or QUESTION (Q) and PANELIST ANSWERS (A)
23	C: Yes to allied fields! For people just looking into conservation , I'd urge them to look into Architectural Conservation. This often pays more than museum/object conservation--depending on the role of the conservator of course.
24	Q: How should AIC as an organization and we as a field approach those who are taking advantage of interns paid or unpaid? Are there structures or rules or guidelines that we should put in place as a more codified basic standard? Or would that discourage some people from taking interns because they may not feel like they are able to live up to those standards? A: This is an excellent question! I think that more mentorship and supervisor training would be a really great start. Obviously, this would be voluntary, so not everyone would choose to do this, but I think that it would create a baseline of "standards" to hold yourself to as a mentor/supervisor. I believe there are resources on the ECPN subsite that discuss typical internship practices from the intern perspective, and it'd be great to advertise those more so that interns can get a better idea of what they should be experiencing during their position. (KF) A: AIC Education & Training Committee Guidelines for Pre-Program Internships A: Taking advantage in a negative sense or positive? Are there structures or rules or guidelines that we should put in place as a more codified basic standard? YES! Many of us need to learn from conservators who have been hosting/mentoring/supervising aspiring conservators. We as a professional entity need to create a "place" for a working on this with many perspectives included: educators, learners, supervisors, aspiring supervisors. And create templates- simple and flexible- that define goals for interns and for supervisors. Or would that discourage some people from taking interns because they may not feel like they are able to live up to those

	standards? An essential goal of creating such guidelines must be to INCREASE internships. (CM)
25	Q: I work in a small institution. I am the only conservator and a resident graduate. Is there virtual mentorship for those who work alone? A: I would assume this is probably beyond capability of AIC to manage, but feel that AIC offers a number of opportunities to meet people that they may be able to solicit as mentors: - AIC member directory people giving webinars or talks of interest (through AIC or elsewhere) - Monthly online meetups - Wednesday online chats with the Board - They could create their own mentoring group as I imagine there would probably be a number of people in the same boat that would be interested in meeting up regularly. Also, I think it was interesting to hear at AIC about the difference between mentors, coaches, supervisors etc. and would encourage people to think about which aspects of support they are actually looking for – is it mostly the need to bounce ideas off another person (invaluable!) or more interpersonal advice or thoughts about career advancement, so that they can create a group of people that fit those different needs. (Beth Edelstein, AIC Board of Directors)
26	Q: What is your definition of mid-career versus senior ? People on the panel with 20 plus years in the field are listing themselves as mid-career. A: I have been working in the field since the age of 19, so I do indeed have 20+ years of experience, however, I fully anticipate working for a further 25 years if I remain in good health. Therefore, I would consider myself to be in the middle of my career. (Greg Bailey) A: I consider “senior conservator” and “mid-career” to be different career markers. Around 12-15 years into my post-graduate professional conservation experience, I considered myself a senior conservator. If I remain in good health and barring unexpected events, I expect to work for about 50 years in conservation, over my lifetime. So, the mid-career point in this scenario would be 25 years in. (Stephanie Hornbeck)
27	Q: Technical question: how was “training role” defined for the years given for each speaker? Is it pre-program only, years including time in school, or also post grad fellowships and internships? Are post grad, early career, assistant level positions also considered “training”? A: Everyone was invited to define themselves as they chose; many stages are self-identifying and there isn't a clear international definition, so we felt this would be the most appropriate. We did include education/training (pre-program years, formal education, etc) as “training roles” while post-graduate fellowships were not, as they are post-formal training. While some post-graduate fellowships are considered continuing one’s education, this can be true about all stages of conservation work, as we are always, always learning! (Session Organizers)
28	Q: (Not sure that this is a question for this panel, per se, but more a general question) I am wondering about the tension between making education more widely accessible and the current fellowship model. It seems that more students means that it is harder to offer financial support to supplement the cost of living during the training process, which is also super important to emerging professionals. A: Making conservation education more accessible doesn’t have to mean more students going to grad school. If there’s more opportunities in more locations for conservation education in smaller formats (workshops, community college/college courses, summer internships, etc) then there’s less need to worry about financially supporting the cost of living during the training process because there’s less chance people have to move to train in the first place. (NB)
29	Q: For those who work with undergrads- How can we encourage people to go into the field when the reality of the field and prospects are sometimes dim? Answered in the live program - access recorded sessions
30	Q: Can the panel also speak in the subject of problematic supervisor-supervisee relationships?

	A: This is difficult to answer generally. A clear written agreement of expectations could be a helpful anchor. At any point in a career accepting the behavior of a bullying boss or supervisor (micro aggression or outright abuse) may seem required to retain a desired position. It's inexcusable but without an advocate it can be very difficult to address. Museums with progressive HR departments can provide training in interpersonal relationships and appropriate expectations and behavior. There are legal ramifications of sexual abuse and these are clearly defined. (CM) A: I feel for anyone who is in this situation because I too was once in a difficult and uncomfortable situation in an internship. I felt powerless and was afraid that I was going to be labeled problematic. I wish that I had felt comfortable in advocating for myself and speaking more directly with the supervisor but the relationship wasn't balanced so I had more to lose. It's the exact situation that informs the way that I work with my colleagues, internships, and fellows to this day. I learned quite a bit during that time about the type of mentor and colleague that I wanted to be. I wish that I had mentors that I felt comfortable reaching out to or who made it clear that I could if I was ever in that situation. I feel strongly that formalized mentorship programs could provide that support for those that don't feel that they have it. I also think that we as mentors need to continue to stay in touch with past interns and fellows as they move on in their careers, and remind them that we can provide some neutral feedback without judgment. It takes a little more work on the part of the mentor but I think it's worth it. (AE) A: I think this one is really tough. I echo all of Angie's thoughts, and it makes me feel really happy to hear that those in mentor and supervisor roles such as her are thinking about this and trying to make positive change. I want to emphasize the relationship you have with previous mentors and supervisors that she mentioned—I often reach out to my mentors from years ago for advice and I really cherish those relationships and confidences I have made with them. They may not be able to help you out directly, but they would likely be able to offer some advice to help smooth it over for the time being. (KF)
31	Q: Often job postings ask for several years of “post graduate experience”, but many of us have MANY YEARS of relevant conservation experience prior to grad school. Why are those relevant years of working in the field so often being disregarded? And how can we get recognition for those years of work? A: I hear your frustration and understand where you're coming from. When roles specify several years of post-graduate experience, they are looking for an indication of your ability to work independently. So, highlight that in your cover letter and CV. They're looking to see that you're a peer, as opposed to a trainee. (Jen Munch) A: I think it is very important to highlight all of the relevant work experiences that one brings to any role. The best conservators that I know draw on a diverse array of skills, knowledge, and experiences, and while that is something that I feel is widely and rightly praised within the field, it is not always easy to explain to Human Resource professionals or managers. While this may partly be addressed by applicants' ability to craft a narrative around their experience, this issue will really best be addressed by conservators leveraging whatever influence they may have in the hiring process to craft more flexible and inclusive job postings. (GB)
32	Q: When is it appropriate as a mentor to recognize that conservation may not be a career path that is appropriate for everyone (in the sense that it can be exciting but also difficult and not everyone is going to be able to find happiness and satisfaction in the midst of the struggle to get education and find a job) and advise accordingly? <i>Answered in the live program - access recorded sessions</i>
33	C: I think the concept of creating networks as someone who studied abroad is important- I was a few steps behind others in terms of network, but I didn't see the American conservation field as full of nepotism which is what one speaker suggested. It's about forming connections with people you trust and it does involve reaching out and actively getting involved

34	Q: How can we get [Human Resources] people from museums and employers into rooms like this today. They need to hear these discussions! A: Aiming to present at other conferences like AAM, ALA, etc. Go to them. (NB) A: We can start by sharing compiled documents like this one with them! (LF) A: I think that HR is often not going to make the changes we need or is not empowered to do so. We need directors to hear about our issues and facilitate change. (AD) A: I agree on spreading the word broadly to non-conservator colleagues. Also, we need more conservators to become museum directors or executives so that conservation's profile is improved. That will help us to amplify our discussions. (JM) A: I agree with everyone above – we're kind of running into the problem of responsibility without authority here. Conservators moving into director roles might help, but if that doesn't happen, making directors, executives, and high-level administrators more aware of the challenges in our field could make a difference. (RR) A: Great question, that would be an interesting session to invite HR colleagues; we would want to find a partner first to think about what the conversation should cover and what the needs/goals are from their side. (BE)
35	Q: Can you talk about the lack of transparency in the admissions process of the grad schools. A: I'd want to know more about specifically what is seen as the most opaque part(s) of the process, but from my perspective as someone who sits on the Admissions Committee for an American graduate program periodically, I can share my personal opinion about what we could do better. We could share the rubrics we use for how we evaluate potential applicants so that everyone can see in a bit more detail not only what we require for submission (this should be clearly laid out) but how we evaluate the components. I will add this though: no matter how much more we add to the website or written instructions for applying, there will undoubtedly be some level of uncertainty about the process. This is true for any job you apply for as well; because a lot of it comes down to who else is in the applicant pool for how exactly it will all shake out. My advice to anyone applying to the graduate programs is to talk to people in those programs to get one-on-one advice rather than to rely solely on what is listed on a website. Talk to present students and recent graduates, current faculty, etc., and if you feel comfortable, have someone who will give you honest feedback review your application materials in advance of submitting them. (LF) A: I absolutely was frustrated with the graduate application process while going through it. I applied several times and was constantly confused and defeated about why the changes I made between application cycles didn't seem to make a difference (retaking the GRE, retaking chem courses, seeking more outreach, etc.). Finally getting into school and going through the program didn't really offer me any further insight on the admissions process, except that I learned that most of the faculty on the admissions committee are genuinely wonderful people and also struggle with who to admit and what to say to those who don't make the cut (often, multiple times). Perhaps those on the committee can suggest alternate career paths that work with cultural heritage (there's a resource on this on the ECPN Wiki!) based on the interests described in the applicant's material? As a recent graduate, when giving advice to prospective students/applicants, I would talk about what I personally thought strengthened my application, but I never knew what ended up being the thing that made me stick out. As Lauren said, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes that changes year to year and it's just like a job application process. (KF) A: I'm unsure of what this specifically refers to. FYI accredited academic institutions are required by laws as well as ethics to assure confidentiality. Schools are not allowed to consult with one another about candidates. The reasons for applicants being accepted are, again, confidential. (CM)
36	Q: For Lauren - How can supervisors mentoring pre-program students better support or prepare students for graduate school? A: Encourage them not only to think about what they are doing but the "why" of it as well. E.g., why they are using a certain solution to clean, material to fill, or system to monitor, etc; why

	they are working on a particular object at all and the deeper meanings behind an artwork or a cultural object; why museums or libraries operate in the ways that they do—inspiring them to see how conservation is situated within larger institutions and systems; why our field is having the current conversations its having around sustainability, equity, inclusion, access, diversity, etc., etc. If you are willing to invest the time, it can be very helpful to offer to look over application materials or do a run-through of their interview presentation. And if you have questions about our process so as to give the most helpful advice, please don't hesitate to reach out to the programs! Students that we can tell had excellent pre-program mentorship are those who are clearly excited by the potential of our profession, have been encouraged to ask questions and be curious, and are already starting to think about the bigger picture. (LF)
37	Q: The requirements for some of the American graduate programs have changed drastically in the past three years. Has it really changed considering how many people apply every year and the limit number of spots? A: The goal of the changes aims to diversify our applicant pool, and from my perspective, it is working. This unfortunately does not mean that more people are going to get in (and in fact, it makes for a much more competitive process in many ways!), but what it does mean is that we have a much broader array of backgrounds and perspectives that we are able to bring into the field. That, to me, is very encouraging and exciting. (LF)
38	Q: Have the graduate programs considered taking a year off of admissions to really reflect on the efficacy of the programs and how to improve overall? Both as individual and as an ANAGPIC whole A: I'm surmising that no program can afford this. Universities have commitments to faculty as well as contributing the overall academic programs. I feel confident that all graduate programs are considering these questions deeply. (CM) A: We have thought about this, quite recently in fact at WUDPAC, and for the very reasons raised. However, logistically it has proved nearly impossible to do, so this is not in current plans. (LF) A: I like this thought! I could see the logistic complications that would come with it as Lauren mentioned. However, I do think that perhaps those within the ANAGPIC programs can come together to really assess the programs and goals—it's unclear to me how much communication goes on between the higher ups at each program, so maybe this is already happening! (KF)

9.E.3. Session 3 : Career Stages

SEQ.	LIVESTREAM COMMENT (C) or QUESTION (Q) and PANELIST ANSWERS (A)
39	C: [from a Senior Conservator] Since those of us in the field struggle with "educating upwards", I want to encourage established Conservators to move into admin positions and give up their conservation positions to younger conservators. it's a win-win."
40	Q: Thinking about the history of and need for apprenticeship training in conservation, is it possible that it might be time to move away from the humanities approach to conservation education (learning a little about a lot) to a focus on mastery of highly specific areas and more diversification of conservation education beyond material specialty? A: I support moving away from the strictly material based categories we use in training. They can still be an option but there are plenty of skill sets in conservation that require hybrids of said information. (NB)

41	Q: Can you talk about your differen[t] experiences between private practice and your full time positions? A: I have worked as a museum conservator, a former chief conservator at a museum, a conservator in private practice (mainly working with museums), and now serve as a preservation program officer supporting museums. For many museum conservators, the treatment-intensive phase happens earlier in one's career; as one advances in museum work additional responsibilities involve project management, administration and supervision of others. In private practice, object treatment was a large aspect of my work. The most complex treatments I have undertaken were in private practice. My experiences serving in my chief conservator and private practice owner roles had some overlap in duties as both involve administration, client relations, budget management, project management, team-building, and supervision of others. My current program officer role builds on my prior experiences as I serve as a senior subject matter expert and preservation liaison to 15 museums. I don't undertake object treatment (or work in a conservation lab) in this role. (SH)
42	Q: What are recommendations for conservators struggling with work life balance who are single/don't live with a partner? A: Set boundaries for yourself and ensure they are things you can stick to (easier said than done). Reminder that boundaries are about what you can control - yourself and your behavior. You can't control others' behaviors. Just how you react to them. For example, I set a work/life boundary for myself in grad school that I would not do school work on the weekends. If there was too much on my plate where it seemed like I would have to start using my weekend time, I would go to my supervisors and discuss about lessening the workload and still meeting the educational requirements and goals set. (NB)
43	Q: Do you all see yourself being able to ever retire in your rolls? A: Yes. I actively plan for retirement. Barring a catastrophic event I plan to retire. Everyone should start planning for retirement if you have not yet. Take advantage of any workplace retirement plans you can, and max out any "matching" contributions if you can. If you work for yourself there are also retirement plans you can use called SEPs. (JM) A: I fully anticipate retiring from my current position in my mid-60s, with the expectation that I will continue to work or contribute to the field of conservation in some other capacity for as long as I am able. While my pension was stripped from me in 2016, I have done as Jen suggests, and under the new IRS rules, am currently contributing 21% of my income to a retirement fund in hopes that it will be sufficient to support myself when the time comes. (GB)
44	Q: I hope this question is not offensive, more for the mother conservators...What is it like to get marr[ied] and have child birth in your career? Do you find support in your institutes/colleagues? A: I can only answer for myself. I've found that my colleagues & clients with kids love to connect about our shared experiences with our kids. So we also connect on that, outside of our work. I am sure that the answer will vary widely depending on who you ask and where they work. Especially with regards to maternity leave, and the flexibility parents need for school closures, kids' illnesses, etc. Many of your colleagues have spouses and children so this is a big topic to explore! (JM) A: I do not and will not have children so cannot speak to that choice, but I have been married for almost 13 years. Though it is somewhat difficult to admit, I almost certainly would not have advanced to my current position were it not for the financial stability and access to healthcare that marriage has afforded me. I do not believe that anyone should choose to be married for reasons of money and access, however, our current political regime continues to erode labor protections and restrict options for healthcare, which means this will remain a stark reality for many. Among my friends and colleagues in conservation, this is a fact that is widely recognized- and is borne out in the data collected by ECPN in association with this event- though it is a definite source of unease. (GB)

45	Q: Just a suggestion for the future: it would have been nice to hear perspective from emerging professionals in the time-based media field. Our specialization is facing unique challenges that are severely impacting emerging professionals. A: Absolutely! We aimed to spur conversations that cannot be static and should absolutely continue, within all specialty groups and subsets, as well as within the broader group of AIC membership. Representation is so important, and often the variety represented in panels/formal discussions is dictated by the pool of volunteers. For the continuation of these conversations, we really encourage those who can manage it to volunteer for opportunities like this when they are posted! Our field is sprawling and self-advocacy is so important. (Session Organizers)
46	Q: Many of us choose conservation because we find the work fulfilling, and sometimes it feels like the people paying us are using that dedication as an excuse to continue underpaying us. How do we break free from that cycle? Also, how can we change the narrative around “making sacrifices” being a necessary part of pursuing conservation? A: Lead by example and continuously advocate for fair pay. (NB) A: Advocating for pay in job interviews using comps from the area and the AIC compensation resource. I have found that some conservators who have sat in a role for 20+ years have no idea what it takes to move across the country with furniture, a partner who just gave up their job, etc. etc. Also advocating publicly for compensation, like when a job is posted on the dist list that is vastly underpaid for the job description, speak up about it. (EA)
47	Q: Can you address the issues you see between what your generation faced vs what the emerging generation is facing. <i>Answered in the live program - access recorded sessions</i>
48	Q: Conservators at my institution, particularly early career and technicians have been meeting informally to gather metrics about salaries and advancement from other institutions to organize and bring to our conservation leadership to advocate for ourselves as they work to advocate for us. Do you have any thoughts on how to approach leadership in this manner? A: I personally don't have thoughts but I would recommend reaching out to Anisha Gupta who does work around salary advocacy, and I believe there's an AIC course on the learning platform you can take for free about salary advocacy. There's bound to be helpful tidbits in there. (NB) A: If you are in a museum, The Association of Art Museum Directors annual salary survey (free to access) is one of the best tools I have found because it doesn't just focus on conservators but how we compare to our peers throughout museums. You can compare various metrics including your region and your annual operating budget (what my museum previously used), as well as the national median (what my institution now uses following a compensation study). Not every position is listed but it is a good place to start. I think the real salary power starts with sharing what you're making with your colleagues and building your case based on that knowledge. You can work to support each other and lift up those who have been unfairly neglected. I have spent a lot of time studying the survey and can say that it's worth consulting a variety of years because it can fluctuate heavily in some categories with small sample sizes. It's a passion of mine so I'm happy to talk about it with anyone who is interested. (AE) A: It sounds like they are doing it right already – and ECPN also compiles compensation information as well so that's a good resource. ETC (AIC Education & Training Committee) is working on communications as a theme and I can see this tying in – would be nice to have a chance for members to hear from some conservator-managers about how they advocate for advancement and salary increases. It's really about making it clear that if the institution doesn't pay people competitively, they will not get the best candidates, or people will leave. It's definitely a moment of change overall from the attitudes of “well at least we have a job” to “we need to get paid more” so it is also on employees to push the questions – as this person is doing! - and demonstrate that we have other options. (BE)

49	Q: To Stephanie's point - has anyone considered that there are different ways to be a conservator, outside of the traditional collections centric roles? A: I'd love to hear more about this! Your question reminds me of a colleague, Ruth del Fresno Guillem, whose conservator role is especially focused on artist interviews. I have not considered an alternate path myself but would love to hear more about others' experiences.(JM) A: I have worked as a museum conservator, a former chief conservator at a museum, a conservator in private practice (mainly working with museums), and now serve as a preservation program officer supporting museums. My current program officer role builds on the foundation of my prior experiences as I serve as a senior subject matter expert and preservation liaison to 15 museums. My work also involves interdisciplinary collaboration to develop directives, guidance and recommendation documents and communicating how to achieve compliance. I don't undertake object treatment (or work in a conservation lab) in this role. Also, for the past 10 years, I periodically serve as a paid consultant for areas of specialized expertise (ivory identification and documentation; post-disaster cultural recovery), if no ethical conflict of interest prohibits my involvement in a given project. (SH)
50	Q: How has your early training affected or influenced your approach to work-life balance? Has it helped develop a process that works for you? Have there been aspects that you have had to actively unlearn or reframe? A: I began my career as a bookbinder, eventually moving on to work as a technician for special collections in an academic library- very different roles from my position as an objects conservator today. The experience of working to refine a certain set of skills over nearly seven years led me to approach the physical work of conservation in a somewhat meditative mode, which I continue to value in my day-to-day experience. I had the pleasure of working for a kind, creative, and supportive supervisor, whose early advice and encouragement has inspired me to share my own enthusiasms with colleagues and trainees. (GB)
51	Q: How do we know when we've "made it" in this field? If we want to honor different ways of getting into conservation, how will we also adjust our expectations for what counts as success? How might that make our career stages look different? (Context: I am what I would call a mid-career paraprofessional. I'm happy with where I've ended up, but I have neither the title nor educational credential to be a "real" conservator so I sort of feel like I don't count. Note: the reason I can be happy where I've landed as a paraprofessional has a lot to do with being in a union, which means I get raises, health care, and work life-balance and can afford to live.) A: If you're happy with where you are, I don't think it matters what the rest of the field thinks. Of course, it might feel harder navigating the field if other[s] think you "don't count" and I want to acknowledge and sympathize with that. However, you do your job for you and no one else and if you're doing good work, that should speak for itself. "If they don't pay your bills, don't pay them no mind" - Ru Paul (NB) A: I think a lot of pre-program/ECP's imagine their roles in museum collections, in a nice lab, when in reality, a conservation role can take on a lot of different forms. I think educating pre-programs/current grad students about the breadth of work they can do as a conservator or heritage professional is important. I try to remind myself that our work is important no matter what it looks like or where it's at. We don't have to be at the [insert any large museum in the US] to do really interesting and important work as long as you are happy in your position. (EA)
52	Q: Many of the panelists have discussed being overachievers and working a lot without work-life balance. This may not be possible for everyone. Stephanie has touched on medical conditions, but it would be great for the panelists to reflect on how we can create more inclusive work places for folks with disabilities and chronic illness and even outside obligations who may not be able to work longer hours. A: In my response here, I'll address the cost and personal impacts of long-term illness. Now again in remission, I have had cancer twice. The first time I was in private practice (with an inadequate individual health insurance plan from the Healthcare Marketplace) and the second

	time I was chief conservator at a museum (with excellent medical insurance via a group plan). Financially-speaking the difference was very stark. After my first cancer experience I went into medical debt, needing to withdraw a third of my retirement savings to cover it. My second cancer experience involved much more treatment, spanning a year. It was very, very expensive (largely paid by insurance) and I missed a lot of work. I think if I had still been in private practice, my practice would have collapsed. Unlike at institutions, in private practice, one doesn't have paid time off. Each day not worked (whether on sick leave or vacation) is an unpaid day. At the museum, I had FMLA but it only afforded 12 weeks of leave and I had to use up all of my sick and annual leave and take some unpaid leave. Also, when one is facing a year of treatments and periods of recovery, 12 weeks of leave is not that long. Consequently, I often had to work when I was very fatigued. I sometimes thought about how if I were living in Scandinavia, I might have had the whole year off as paid leave. It is my hope (more a dream, really) that someday legislation will expand affordable healthcare and provide more substantial safety nets for workers with long-term illnesses in the United States. In my response here, I'll address work-life balance. My cancer experience involved daily fatigue over a long period, when I still had to work. I was no longer able to work into the evenings, as I had long done to accomplish things that mattered to me after the work day - like writing articles, serving on committees, and serving as a peer-reviewer for articles and grants. I had also long taken a perspective that was focused on the future and striving toward future goals. More recently I learned to take the writer Annie Dillard's axiom to heart: how we spend our days is how we spend our lives (and what we are doing this hour or that one is what we are doing). I became more discerning about how I was spending time, on which activities and with whom each individual day. (SH)
53	Q: I'm [a] post grad. [conservator], 3 years in private practice, 12 years total study. I work alone. I know that I learn faster when I have others to learn from. What is a good way to continue to have experienced conservators to learn from and collaborate with? A: My scenario is similar to yours. I joined a peer-mentoring program that AIC's Conservators in Private Practice set up. I love it! My peer mentor group just has two of us. My partner has been in the field longer than me but we have very different experiences and it's been well-balanced. We talk about all kinds of work things. Participating in a professional group might also provide the connections you seek. You could join or start a regional conservation group that has in-person meetups. You could also become active in an AIC group aligned with your interests. Or if you're working to keep up a specific skill, you could set up a discussion group or a book group related to the topic. (JM) A: What is the end goal from gathering this experience? If you're already working with experienced conservators and fulfilling your learning/training goals then I say keep doing what you're doing! Networking is always a good way to meet more conservators. Attending conferences - even if it's not the AIC annual meeting. Join your local or regional conservation group and go to their conference. (NB)
54	Q: As more emerged conservators, how have you personally tackled the imposter syndrome that is ubiquitous in our field? A: Ubiquitous among humans. Therapy helps, by which I mean doing the personal emotional work to recognize, take responsibility for and account honestly for self-doubt. (CM) A: Particularly at points of growth, e.g., when I am taking on a project that demands a new set of skills or putting myself out there by pursuing a new venture or initiative, I still feel it! I think that the difference between feeling it now and feeling it when I was younger is that now I recognize it as a point of growth and the feeling is not so all-consuming. (I had a therapist once who called these "FOG" moments—F'ing Opportunities for Growth.) Just like feelings of anxiety, the best way to work through it is to relax into it, know that it's a normal human emotion to feel this way, and to keep going with an open mind. While this may not seem helpful to some, it really does get better with time and more experience, which is why it is usually worth pushing through those uncomfortable feelings and letting yourself take lessons away from them. (Therapy or coaching also helps.) (LF)

	A: I love this question because I am still early in my career and this is incredibly relevant as I transition to a mentor/supervisor role in the coming years. Something that helped me (and this might not be the healthiest mindset) was knowing that conservators many years my senior still feel this. We're a field that is constantly changing and evolving with new techniques, materials, and processes. It is going to be impossible to know it all! Being open-minded, kind, and inquisitive will hopefully go a long way in negating this. I also think there may be those that have been in the field a long time that slip up and say things such as "you don't know that?". So, I think mentors and supervisors can be more thoughtful in their language to help this along! (KF) A: I addressed imposter syndrome during the panel, including my own experiences so I'll address the topic more broadly here. Imposter syndrome is common for people with high standards, which we are. It can take many forms and so overcoming it starts with knowing yourself. Take stock of your skills and your perceived deficits. If you feel something is lacking, do what you can to learn about that topic or practice that technique. You may also need to remind yourself that your imperfect work is "good enough" for a situation. You have to find it within yourself to recognize your own skills and wherewithal to overcome obstacles. Recognize your feelings and talk about them with people who you trust and who could help you to evaluate and reframe your thoughts. (JM)
55	Q: Do conservators not having a union have any connection with conservation as a distinct field being relatively young? A: It seems that this question is broaching the subject of a craft union, such as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers or the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. The United States National Labor Relations Act of 1935 established a pathway to recognize existing craft unions, many of which evolved from prior guild systems, however, the basis for almost all subsequent union recognition in the private sector is via individual employment entity. Establishing a sector-wide craft union under current labor law is technically possible but difficult to the point of near impossibility. The modern discipline of conservation (as distinct from the tradition of restoration) is sometimes dated to the 1930 Rome Conference on the Scientific Methods for the Examination and Preservation of Works of Art, which does indeed make it a relatively young field, so in a sense, the answer to this question is yes- had there been a craft union or guild system in the United States prior to 1935 it is much more likely that a sector-wide union for conservation would exist today. (GB)

9.E.4. Closing Session

SEQ.	LIVESTREAM COMMENT (C) or QUESTION (Q) and PANELIST ANSWERS (A)
56	C: I'd love to have a discussion about apprenticeship training and how other areas of conservation have had to navigate that and herefrom their experiences. And how it was challenging to fit in with the discussion today.
57	Q: What are some examples of next steps to address wage stagnation in the field? Who are the players responsible for affecting change within institutions? A: I think unions (you and your colleagues!) have a huge role to play in advocating for higher wages. My institution also identified a salary compensation study as a part of our DEAI goals so that's another route.(AE) A: I do think transparency is the biggest one, external as well as internal equity across similar positions and responsibilities. It would be interesting to talk with people like Bart Devolder and maybe Sarah Scaturro (and probably other good candidates) about how they have advocated in their institutions. Job definitions and advancement matrices are also critical – outlining what the roles, responsibilities and accomplishments are for each level, and how many years are needed in each level. The Met has this and the CMA, I am sure many other places do. And it

	needs to be reviewed periodically and updated. If someone's institution does not have this, it is a critical piece. (BE)
58	C: I'd love to hear more from those working in "conservation deserts" about what has been helpful for them to thrive, especially when they first started.
59	C: Can we expand the dialogue to consider differentiating mid-level vs mid-career - bc there is some nuance to and expectation associated places on individuals who are specializing in a certain area of conservation that may be a cultural specific trade on top of western conservation definitions. Like book binding, East Asian paintings, panel paintings....
60	C: I just wanted to send a big thank you to all the organizers and panelists of this session. It was incredibly helpful to attend this discussion!!
61	Q: Some employers and internship/fellowship supervisors have commented that applicants are not qualified because they went to an international training program. What can be done to reduce the stigma of an international masters degree? A: I don't think changing the stigma is the solution, unfortunately. People are going to have their prejudices. The solution is creating equitable hiring and interview practices so those prejudices don't have the opportunity to influence the hiring process and final candidate selected for the job. (NB) A: I find this incredibly frustrating because the stigma is completely unfounded. A lot of the international programs have been around longer than the US programs. We go through the same application process, learn the same material, and have the same standards as the programs stateside. We are just as passionate, qualified, and deserving of jobs as our US counterparts. I agree with Nylah that it is not an issue with the international programs, rather a stigma that persists due to prejudice. Circling back to a previous response, changing hiring practices to focus on individual experience rather than just where you went to school would greatly improve this. (EA)
62	Q: How can preprogram and early program conservators who have studied or worked out of the USA find mentorships or connections in the United States upon return? A: I highly recommend that you reach out to any conservators or museums that might have conservators in your area. Ask if they give tours or are available for a quick zoom or coffee sometime. I'm always happy to speak with people who contact me or try to arrange for a tour with me or the best person in our department. Not everyone has the time but you'll never know until you ask. I also highly recommend ECPN as a great resource. (AE) A: I once asked a well-connected colleague who trained abroad how they made connections in the US. They said something to the effect of, "I got a big bag of coins and used the payphone at school to cold-call many conservation studios in the US to try to find work." That was some time ago, but I think the same concept is applicable- make yourself known, reach out to people. (JM) A: I have been back in the US for two years now after nearly four years abroad at grad school and working. I really struggled coming back to the US to work because my entire network was in the UK and EU. I dove headfirst into AIC networks like ECPN and volunteering on boards. I reached out to local liaisons in areas I have lived in or want to work in and told them that I am interested in their lab or am just looking to make more connections. As soon as you know one person, you find that many more follow, especially through attending conferences or local meetups. I am in the process of trying to build a network for internationally trained conservators Stateside because I have found we all experience the same challenges. I am also happy to chat about this with you personally. (EA) A: Networking. Finding a local/ regional conservation group to join and attend their meetings/conferences. Attending an AIC conference. (NB)

