

# SLA Climate Survey Results and Discussion

SLA Virtual Roundtable  
July 28, 2020

# Introductions

**Michael Sholinbeck**

he/him/his

msholinb@library.berkeley.edu

Public Health Librarian

University of California, Berkeley

DICE Co-convener

San Francisco Bay Area Community

Past-President

**Amy Trost**

she/her/hers

atrost1@umd.edu

Data Services Librarian

Universities at Shady Grove/University of  
Maryland Libraries

DICE Member

Maryland Community President

# Meeting Logistics

- This meeting is being recorded
- Questions? Use chat or raise your e-hand
- Slides will be available afterwards
- No one knows everything; together we all know a lot
- Embrace curiosity and a willingness to listen

# Agenda

1. Introductions and such
  2. Climate survey background
  3. Selected survey results: quantitative
  4. Selected survey results: qualitative
- + Discussion..!

Background

## **Diversity & Inclusion Task Force:**

- Charged by then-President-Elect Dee Magnoni in 2016
- Final Report, November 2017 (read it on DICE Connect!)
- One recommendation was a membership-wide climate survey

## **DICE Caucus/Community:**

- Co-conveners worked on the survey questions

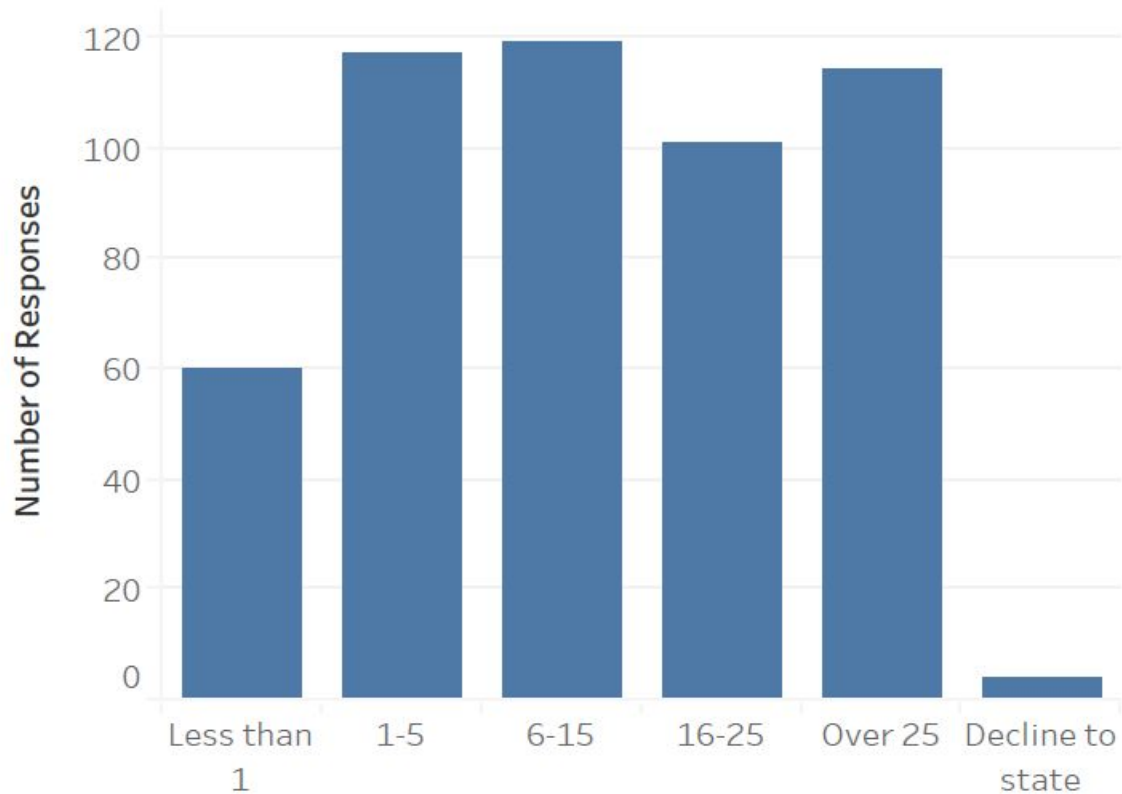
## **Survey:**

- Sent to members February 27, 2020; closed March 13, 2020
- 515 responses; most free-text questions had 100-200 responses
- Response rate about 15% of total membership

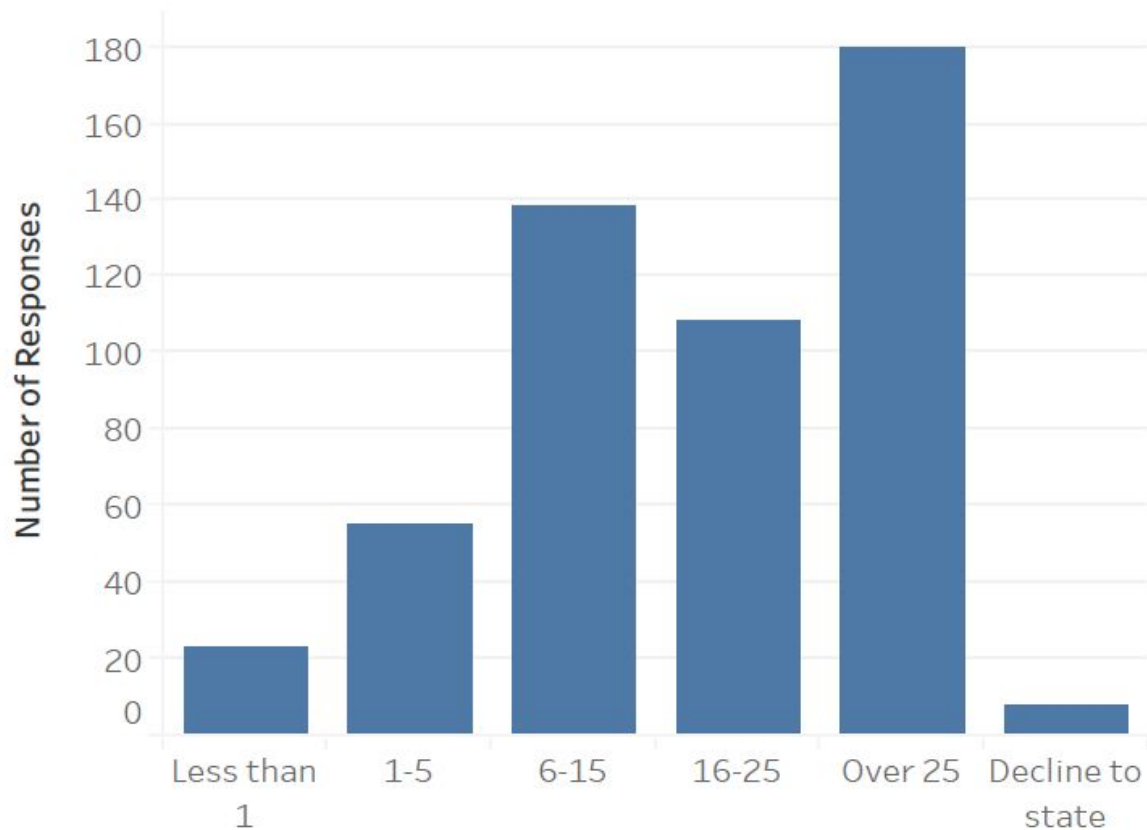
# Survey Results



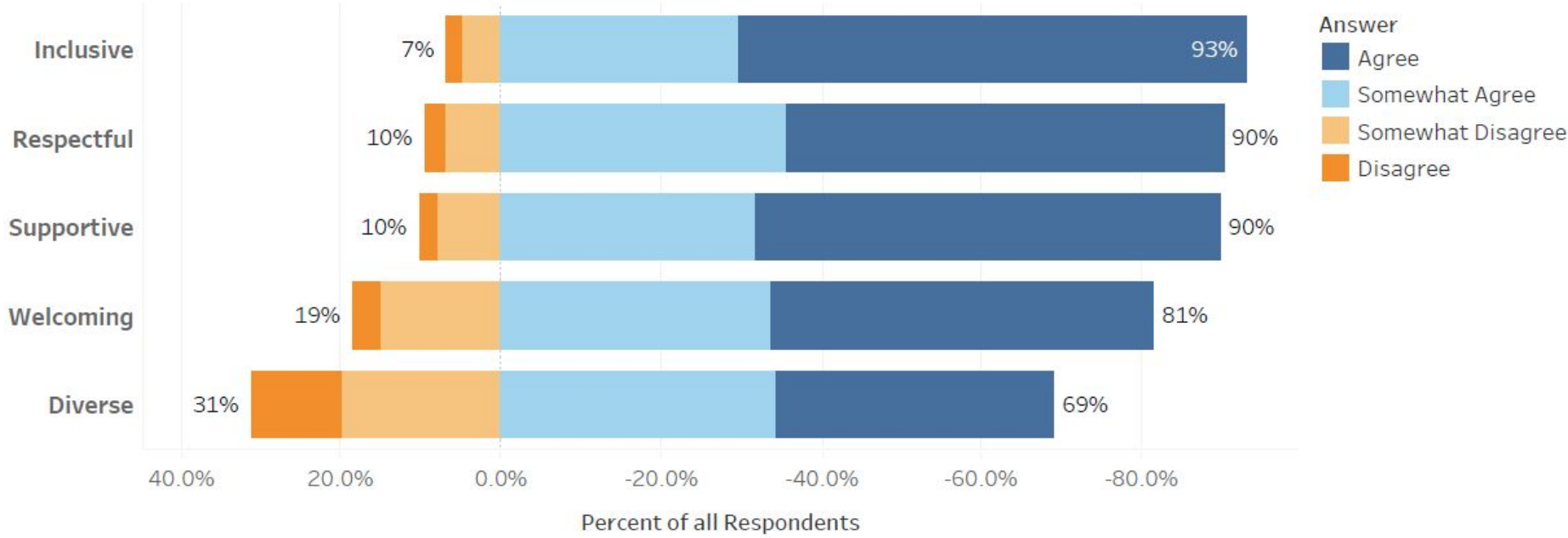
## How many years have you been a member of SLA?



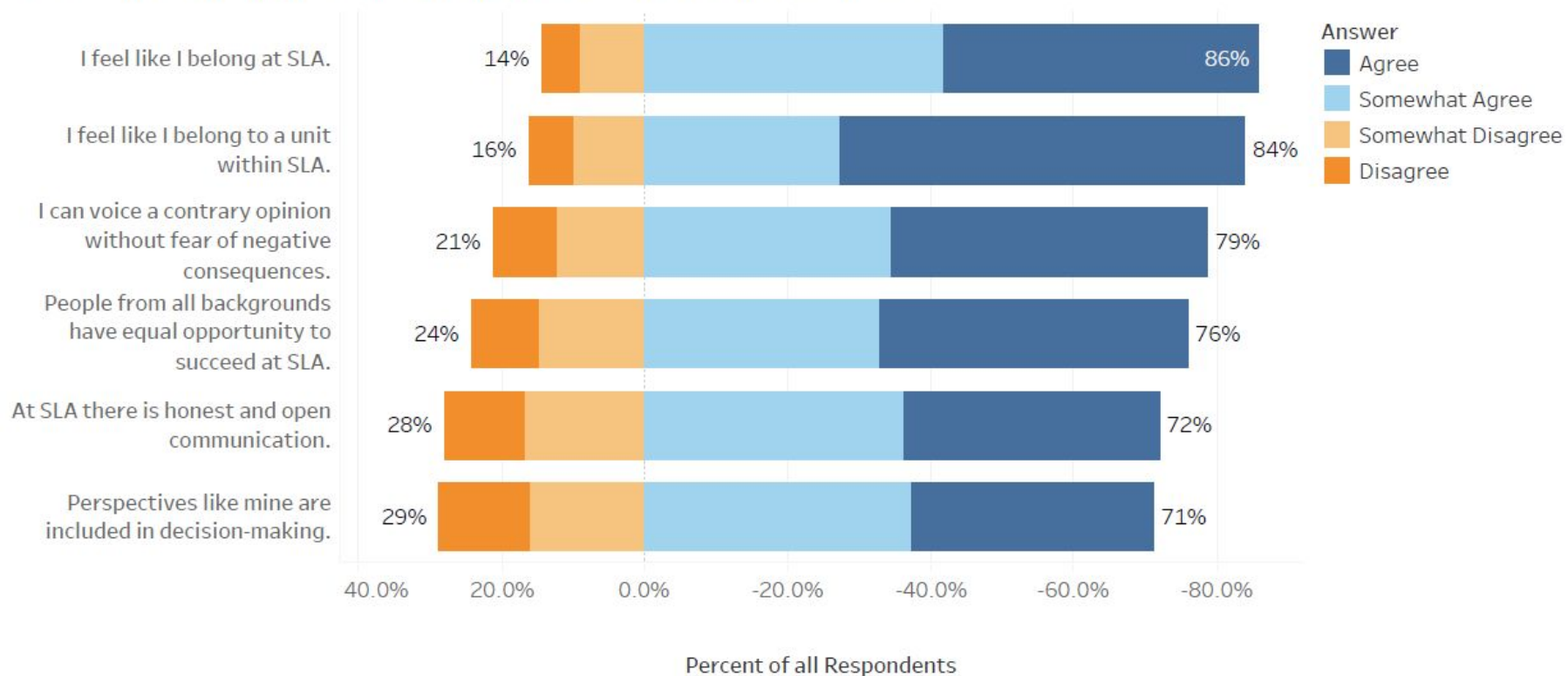
How many years have you been an information professional?



Climate in SLA is defined as the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of members, leadership, staff, vendors, and colleagues concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My experience has been that the SLA climate is:

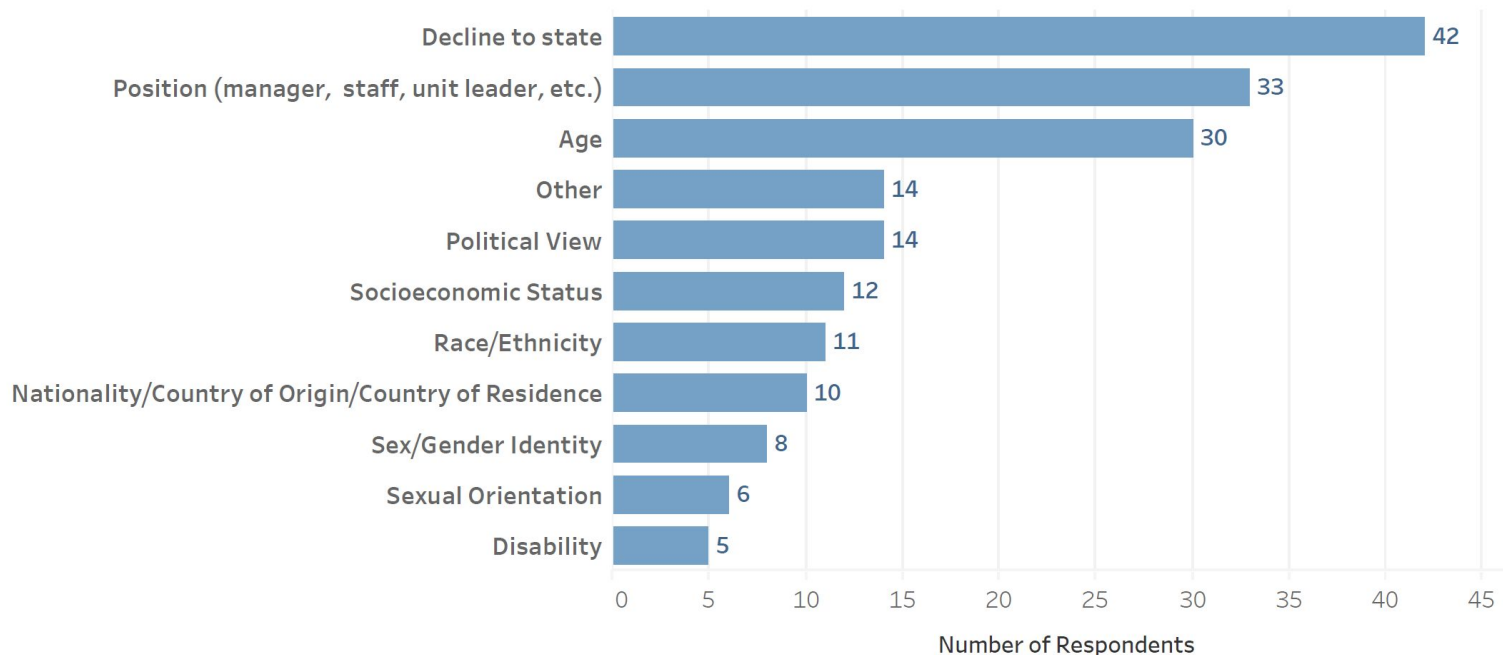


Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:



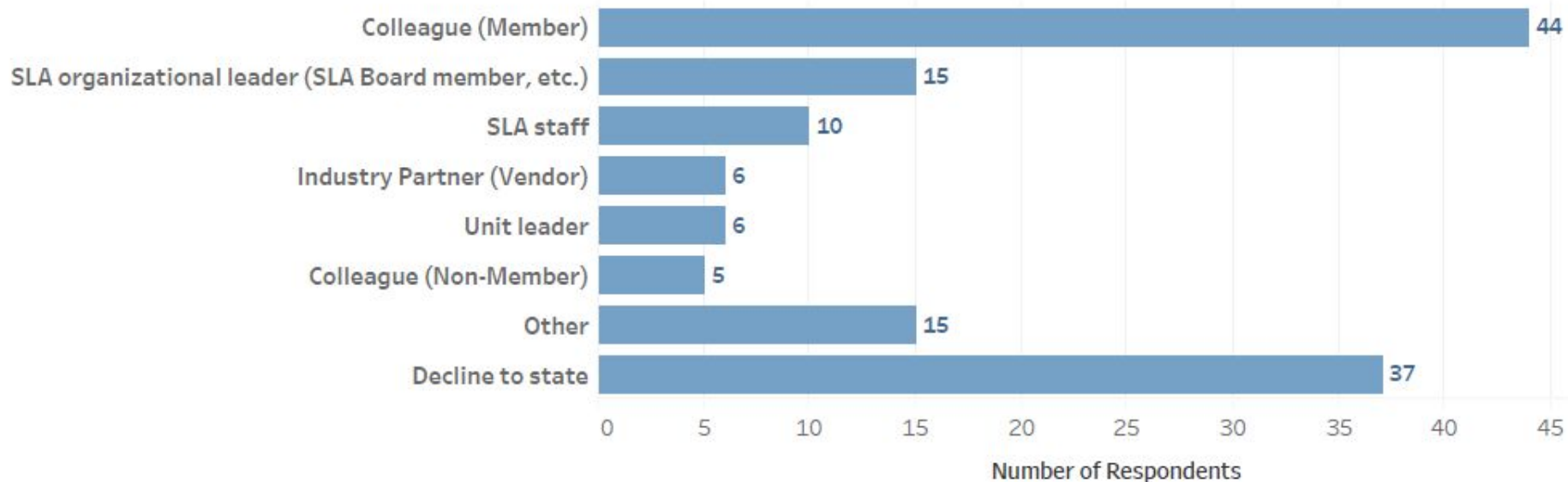
# Common forms of discrimination experienced by members

Refer to the following definitions for the upcoming questions: Discrimination is differential actions towards others because of their marginalized group membership. Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. Over the past year, have you personally experienced discrimination/microaggressions within SLA for any of the following? Check all that apply.



122 of 515 respondents indicated that they have personally experienced discrimination of microaggression within SLA. 41 respondents indicated that they experienced discrimination based on more than one factor. Other factors, including linguistic fluency, caretaker status, religion, citizenship status, and mental health were indicated as a form of discrimination by fewer than 5 members

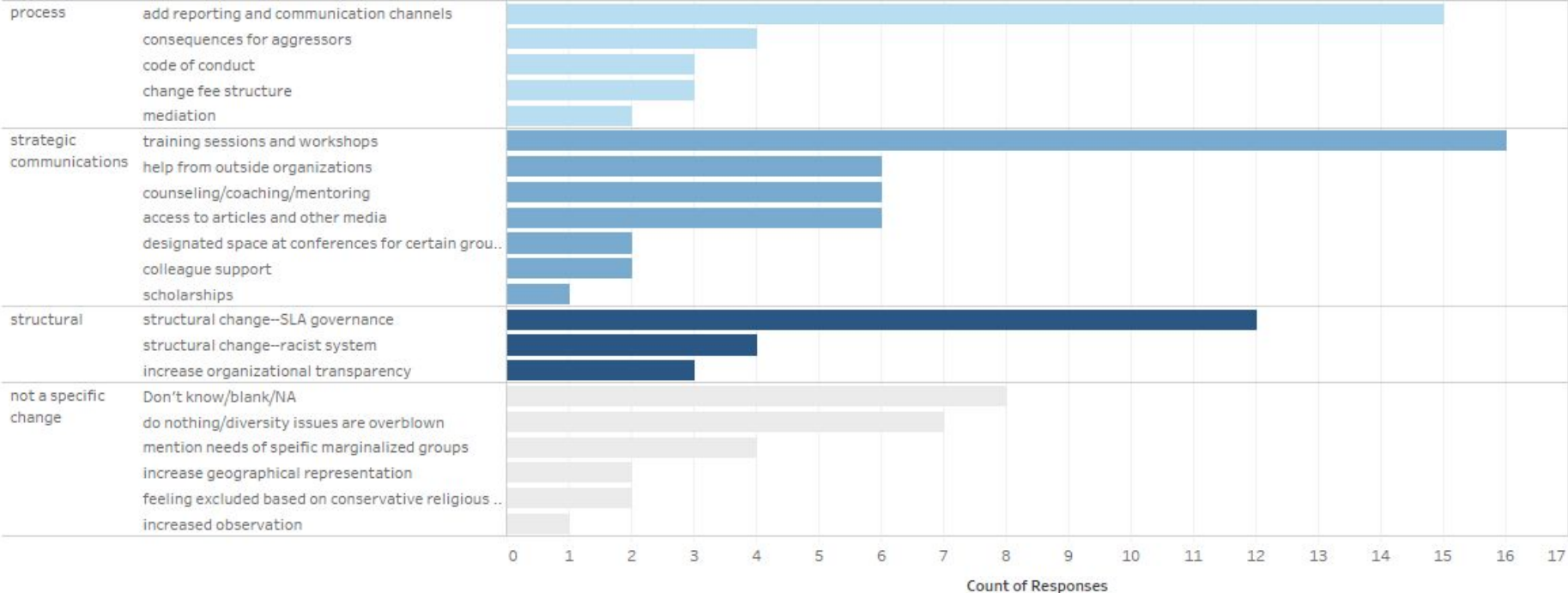
If you answered “Yes” to Question 5, who was the person who inflicted bias, discrimination, harassment, or microaggressions at SLA? Check all that apply.



# Free Text Responses

As we consider what services SLA could potentially offer to help individuals cope with discrimination, please suggest anything you would consider utilizing.

Categories assigned to free response text



See <https://tinyurl.com/SLAActions> for more details



# Process-oriented suggestions, such as:

*First, reframe the situation from helping individuals "cope with discrimination" to **holding the organization and the aggressor accountable** for discrimination.*

*Second, provide **clear and accessible channels for members to voice concerns** when they have been mistreated (or witnessed others being mistreated).*

*Third, **accounts of discrimination should be regularly reported to the SLA membership**, probably every 3-6 months, probably with names removed. That way the organization can acknowledge that a problem exists and will be able to transparently show what actions are being taken. It also makes clear to aggressors that their actions are seen and not acceptable.*

*Fourth, provide **consequences for aggressors**, not victims.*

# Strategic communications suggestions, such as:

*All board members and fellows should be given training on diversity and inclusion and how to be better about it within the profession.*

*Those in the dominant culture (white) need to realize the work WE all need to do. **It's not the people of color's responsibility to 'fix' us.** It would be so wonderful to have an entire track on this topic. Maybe have speakers/workshops from the Racial Justice Institute, etc.*

# Structural changes, such as:

*The climate within SLA is extremely tense. I think it feels like change is constant, with very little input from membership. To improve the tension, which could decrease the stress level and decrease the level of shouting and microaggressions, **SLA needs to take responsibility** for their part of the problem.*

*Any work SLA does in this area needs to support members but also **work in a framework of liberation**, not just addressing the situation. If somebody is discriminated against, it's easy to handle that individual case without any structural change. Don't do that.*

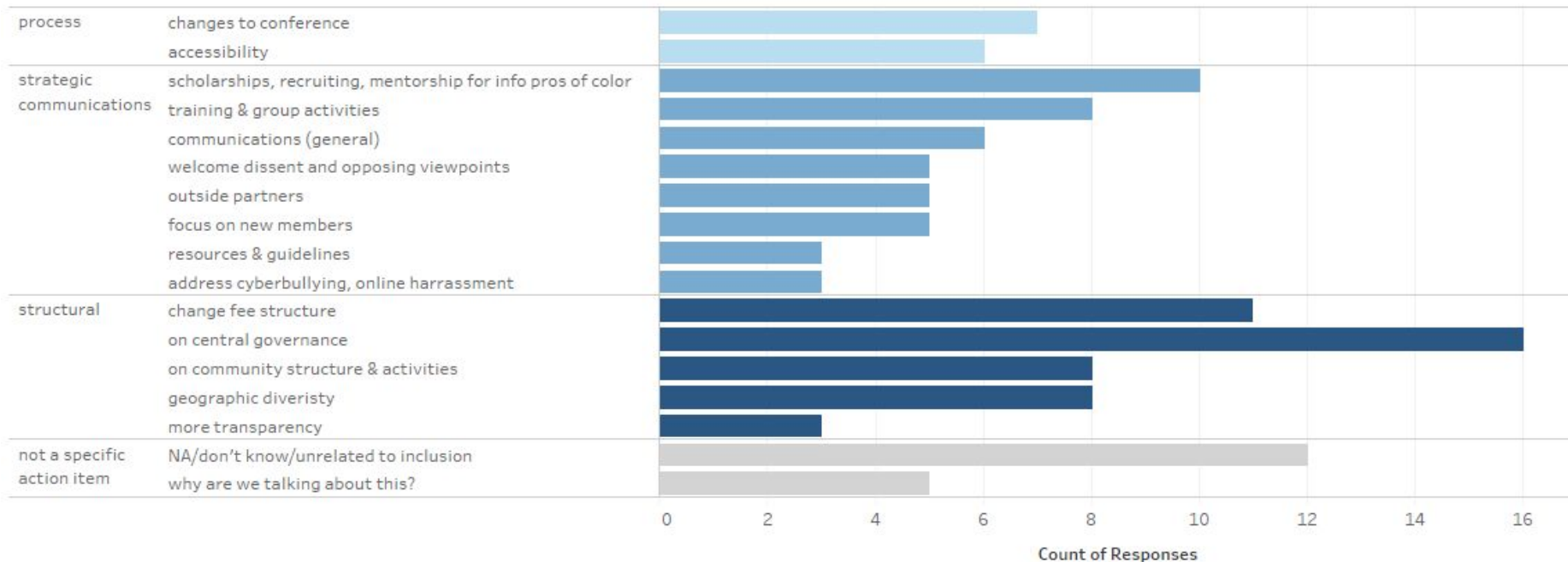
# Non-specific suggestions, such as:

*The ability to **calmly, rationally and respectfully interact with one another** no matter who everyone is and what they believe seems to be a dying art. Services that would increase everyone's ability to interact with one another would be a boon to the profession and quite likely lessen incidents of discrimination.*

*Doesn't SLA have more important things to worry about?*

If you have other ideas for specific actions you would like SLA to take to improve diversity, equity, community, and inclusion, please describe below.

Categories assigned to free response text



See <https://tinyurl.com/OtherIdeas> for more details

# Ideas for specific actions you would like SLA to take to improve diversity, equity, community, and inclusion

Many of these overlap with the proposals offered in the previous question:

- Alliances with other organizations
- Tiered membership rates
- Holding folks accountable for bad acts
- Make events, etc., more accessible
- Trainings

***Allow non-members to attend webinars and learning opportunities ... As a new librarian, it is not very encouraging to have to first pay hundreds of dollars in membership fees before you can even see the work that the organization is doing.***

***I'd love to see a **tiered dues structure**. If we're trying to gain members it is a difficult ask to have them pay \$220 and not know what they're going to get out of that investment.***

*I would love to see **SLA offer training on inclusiveness and mentorship**: I am dismayed by the micro- and outwardly aggressive behavior demonstrated by and enabled by SLA leadership on Connect. **It has had a chilling effect on me** - I haven't spoken up about a lot of things because of that behavior.*

*You have to **earn trust from the underrepresented members** of the association.*

*Embrace the idea of **ACCESSIBLE, recorded webinars**. Have ways to submit questions- chat, twitter, email, etc. that can be submitted in advance and allows you to track issues and ideas better.*



*Partner with ...*

*...the National Association of African American Librarians.*

*... other diversity, equity and inclusion organizations for speakers and programs*

*... black colleges to highlight our profession as an opportunity.*

*... small special libraries that are not currently represented in SLA and that may serve communities of color.*

***Stop the all consuming focus on the (expensive, American, old guard, hetero / white / able bodied / monosexual) conference,***

***Stop encouraging a culture that burns out volunteers,***

***Stop condescending to students, especially when they tell you membership is too expensive. They know there's value in it, but eating is of more value.***

***Run SLA like a community, not a business.***

# What is SLA doing well to improve climate?

Sense of community and feeling welcomed, especially at unit level

Events on reducing bias, social justice, etc., especially at the unit level

Lots of communication, and good exchange of ideas via Connect and elsewhere

SLA 2020 Conference's plans for equity: the "All are welcome" messaging

DICE Caucus events at annual conference

This survey

# Stand by for more..!

SLA Annual Conference presentation:

*“Do You Belong in SLA? Who Does and What Next?”*

We hope to present a more sophisticated analysis of the data - please join us!

Also: SLA DEI Town Hall this Monday August 3.