

Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science 2 (WILIS 2): Preliminary Results from the Recent Graduates Survey

Joanne Gard Marshall^{1,2}, Susan Rathbun-Grubb^{1,2}; Jennifer Craft Morgan²; Victor W. Marshall²; Deborah Barreau¹; Barbara B. Moran¹; Paul Solomon²; Cheryl A. Thompson^{1,2}

¹School of Information and Library Science, UNC Chapel Hill & ²UNC Institute on Aging

Background

The WILIS 2 project aims to design and implement an alumni survey that all Library and Information Science (LIS) programs can potentially use. LIS programs have generally lacked the time and resources to systematically survey their alumni. As a result, stakeholders lack an adequate understanding of what happens to graduates. Educators, in particular, do not have ongoing data about the extent to which their programs meet students' expectations, prepare them for the workplace or meet continuing learning needs. Such an understanding will assist in educating and managing the LIS workforce more effectively.

Methods

The WILIS 2 project builds on WILIS 1, a comprehensive study of career patterns of graduates of LIS programs in North Carolina. In WILIS 2, a community based participatory research approach was taken to revising the recent graduates portion of the WILIS 1 survey so that it is suitable for use by all LIS programs. The web-based survey gathers data on the perspectives of recent graduates about their LIS programs, educational and work histories, satisfaction with LIS as a career, and continuing education needs. The survey launched in three phases: a pilot phase of 8 programs (Spring 2009), a second phase of 20 programs (Fall 2009), and a third phase of 15 programs (Spring 2010).

Participating Programs:

Appalachian State University*
Dalhousie University
Dominican University
Drexel University
East Carolina University*
East Central University*
Long Island University*
Louisiana State University*
McDaniel College
McGill University*
North Carolina Central University*
Old Dominion University*
Rutgers University*
St. John's University*

San Jose State University
Simmons College
Trevecca Nazarene University
University at Albany, SUNY
University at Buffalo, SUNY
University of Alabama
University of Alberta*
University of Arizona
University of British Columbia
University of California – Los Angeles
University of Central Missouri
University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign
University of Kentucky
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill*
University of North Carolina – Greensboro*

University of North Texas
University of Pittsburgh
University of Puerto Rico
University of Rhode Island
University of South Carolina
University of South Florida*
University of Tennessee
University of Texas - Austin
University of Toronto
University of Washington
University of Western Ontario
University of Wisconsin – Madison*
Wayne State University
William Paterson University

*phase 3 participant

Deans, directors, and chairs of participating programs will receive de-identified datasets, a summary report of text responses, frequency tables for each survey question, and a graphical summary report that compares their results with those for all other programs combined.

Preliminary Results from Phases 1 and 2 (28 programs)

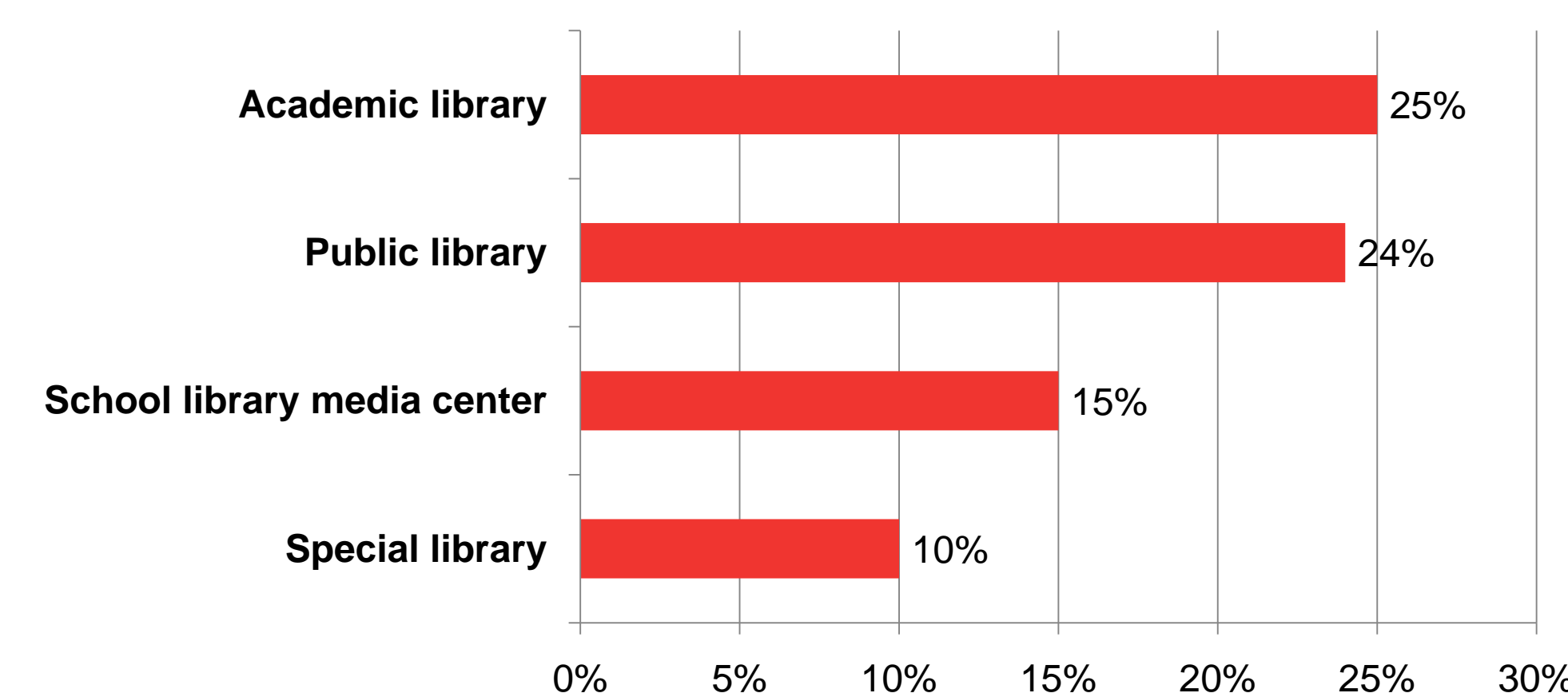
❖ Response rates

- Overall – **45.4% (N=2801)**
- Individual program response rates ranged from **23.6% to 80.4%**.

❖ Highlights

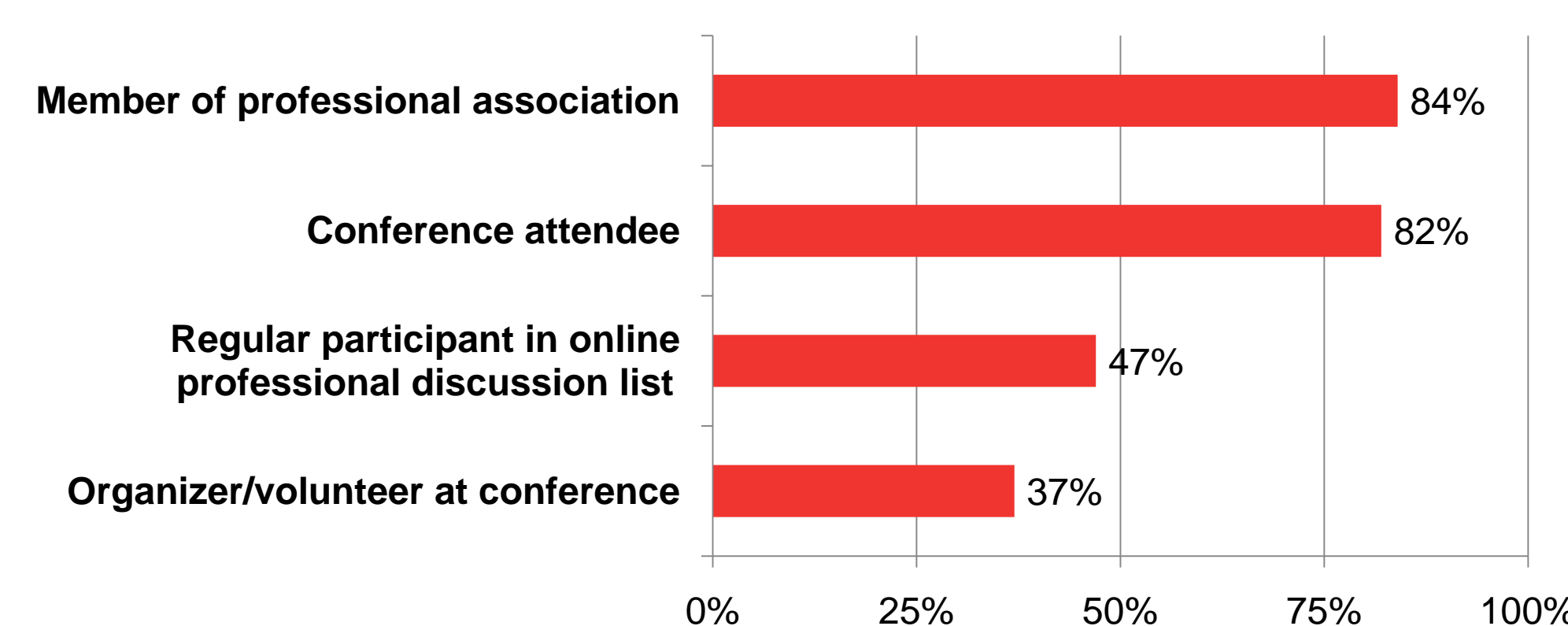
- Most graduates (**84%**) rate their overall LIS program experience as “good” or “excellent.”
- Most graduates (**74%**) find a job within 3 months after graduation.
- The vast majority of LIS graduates (**89%**) are working in jobs that use their LIS skills/knowledge.

▪ Most common current job settings



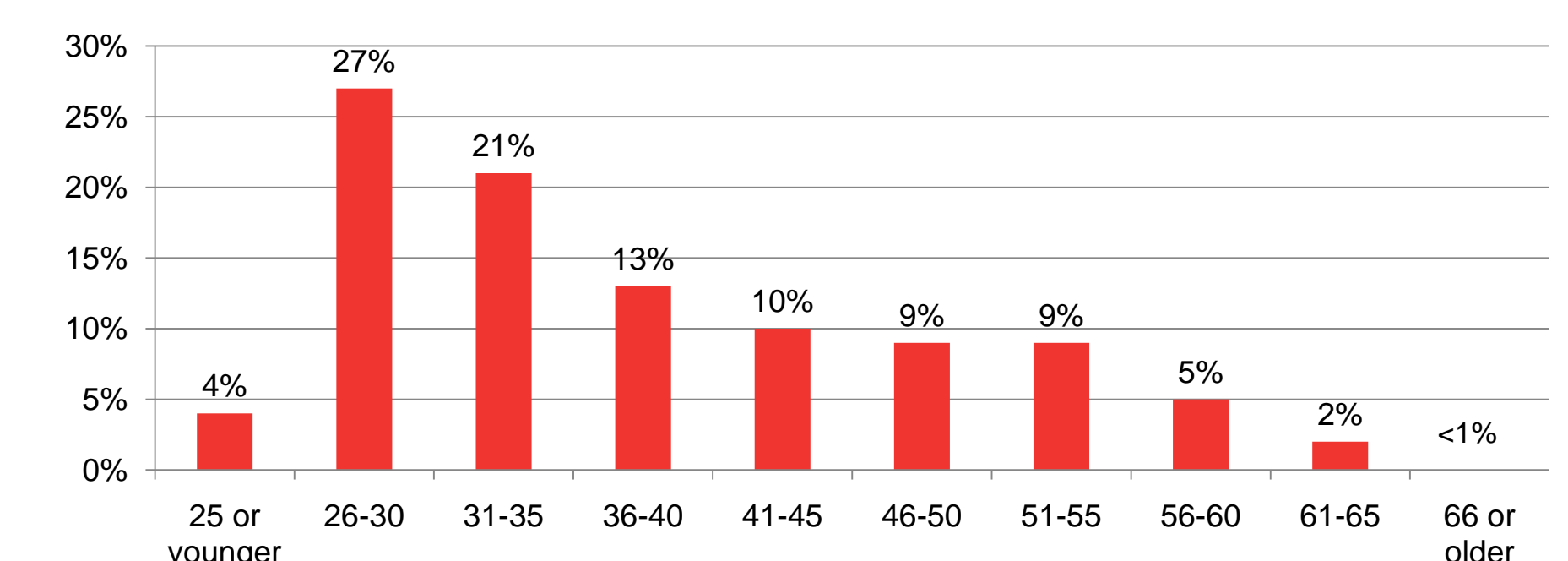
- Nearly all LIS graduates (**91%**) are satisfied with LIS as a career and anticipate staying in the field over the next 3 years (**90%**).

▪ Most common professional activities since graduation



❖ Demographic summary

- 79%** female
- 18%** non-white
- Age distribution:



Other job settings

Technology company – 2%
Other company – 2%
Archives – 2%
Museum – 1%
Computer industry – <1%
Library vendor – <1%

Other activities

Presenter at conference – 29%
Author of paper accepted for publication – 22%
Officer of professional association – 20%
Winner of a competitive grant – 17%
Winner of a work-related award – 17%
Leader in LIS practice innovations – 12%

- LIS graduates are interested in participating in **continuing education** via traditional modes (workshops and training sessions) and online modes (webinars, courses).