

# **Evaluating Career Development Resources:**Lessons from the Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN)

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#### **Abstract**

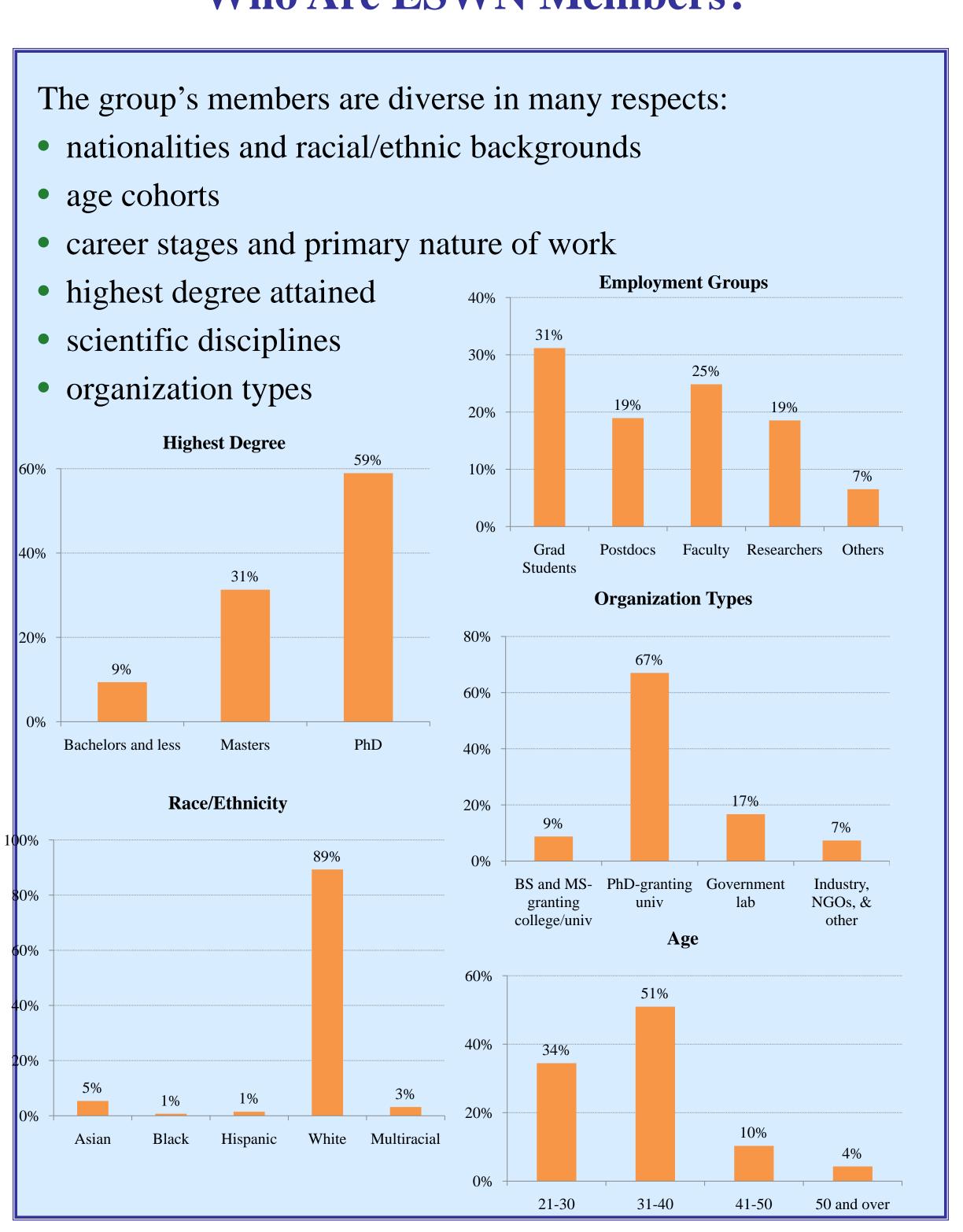
Retention of geoscientists throughout the professional pipeline is especially challenging in the case of groups that are already underrepresented in science, including racial minorities and women. The Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN) is a professional network of early-career female geoscientists that provides its members with a variety of career resources, through both informal, online and in-person networking and formal career development workshops.

#### Our study includes:

- 1) *Survey Study*: What are professional and personal situations of ESWN members, their professional development needs and the obstacles they face as women scientists?
- 2) *Focus Groups*: *H*ow do members perceive ESWN's purpose, benefits it offers, and ways to improve the network?
- 3) *In-depth Leadership Interviews:* What are their backgrounds, experience, and effect of the ESWN leadership position on their career?

This poster is based on the data collected in the Survey Study.

#### Who Are ESWN Members?



### **Professional Atmosphere and Obstacles**

# While responses to many survey items indicate a workplace atmosphere generally favorable to women scientists, other workplace indicators are less encouraging:

- 43% of respondents agree that some colleagues have a condescending attitude toward women
- 33% agree that men are more likely than women to receive helpful career advice from colleagues
- 67% disagree that women are appropriately represented in senior positions

#### Interactions with colleagues were also reported to have some negative aspects:

- 38% indicate feeling excluded from an informal network in their unit
- 46% report encountering unwritten rules about how they are expected to interact with colleagues
- 39% report having to work harder than their colleagues to be perceived as a legitimate scientist
- 55% indicate doing a great deal of work that is not formally recognized by their colleagues
- 38% are **reluctant to bring up issues** that concern them about the behavior of their colleagues for fear it might affect their reputation or advancement

#### ESWN members do not always feel like full participants in decision-making in their unit:

- 41% disagree that they have a voice in how resources are allocated
- 32% of respondents disagree that they feel like an equal participant in their unit's problem-solving & decision-making

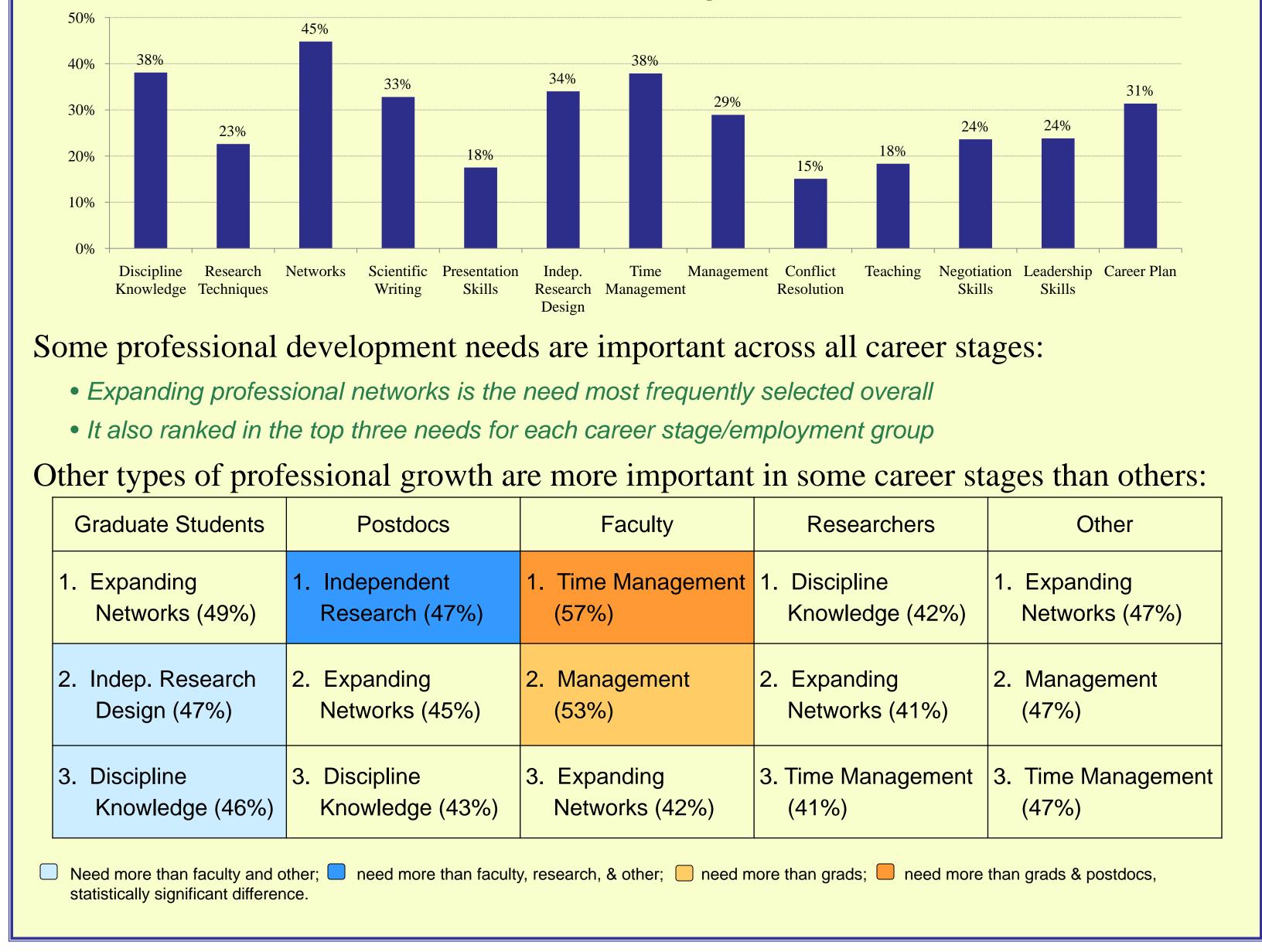
#### The most commonly reported obstacles that members face as women in science are:

- 1. Work-life balance (62% checked)
- 2. Male culture of academia (27% checked)
- 3. Isolation (26% checked)

## **Professional Development Needs**

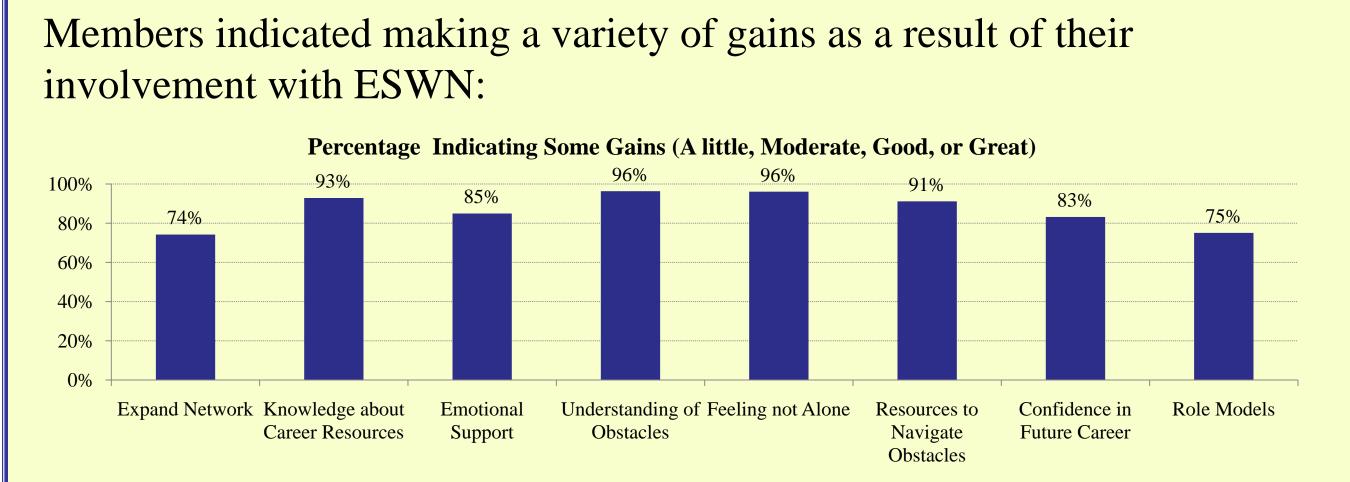
Members indicated a variety of needs for advancing their career in the next 1-2 years:

**Most Selected Professional Development Needs** 



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#### Gains



#### Expanding professional networks is an important gain for the members:

- this gain meets the most frequently expressed need
- •74% indicate making some gains in expanding their professional network

## Members reported strong gains with respect to some personal and professional needs:

- 28% report good and 11% great gains in knowledge about career resources
- 24% indicate good and 14% great gains in emotional support in facing challenges
- 33% report good and 28% great gains in understanding of obstacles faced by women in science
- 29% indicate good and 39% great gains in recognizing that they are not alone
- 27% report good and 12% great gains in resources to help them navigate obstacles

#### Word Cloud: One Year of Discussion



#### Conclusions

- Members report a variety of professional development needs and obstacles they face in achieving their career goals.
- The most common need is to expand their professional network...
- > ...and members reported making significant gains in expanding their professional network as a result of their involvement with ESWN.
- The most prominent obstacles reported by members are work-life balance, male culture, and isolation...
- > ... and members reported very strong gains in understanding obstacles they face as women in (the male culture of) academia and recognizing that they are mot alone (isolation).
- Future analysis will address how gains differ by the level of participation in ESWN activities.