

Employer commitment and employee satisfaction and have increased since 2018, yet a diverse, equitable, and inclusive experience remains elusive for many

Report issued on the 2023 Workplace Equity Survey offers comparisons against 2018 benchmarks and specific recommendations to drive change in the scholarly publishing industry

May 1, 2024. Five years after the Workplace Equity Survey (WE Survey) first benchmarked the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the global scholarly publishing industry, the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC) conducted the survey for a second time in 2023. This week, C4DISC released *Workplace Equity in Scholarly Communications 2023 Executive Summary*, the initial analysis of the 2023 data and free-form comments collected across six continents from 1,755 respondents, 48% more than in 2018.

“Since 2018, employers made highly visible commitments to DEIA. C4DISC’s mission in conducting the second Workplace Equity Survey was to evaluate how our workplaces changed. By tapping into the lived experience of colleagues around the world, the survey sought to identify employees’ perceptions of change and if there was measurable progress. What we found is a mixed bag – there was some progress, but gaps and barriers remain,” said Melanie Dolechek, Executive Director, Society for Scholarly Publisher and C4DISC Steering Committee Member. Four high-level themes emerged from a trove of substantive findings.

Recognition of employer commitments to diversity and employee satisfaction have increased since 2018.

- o More employers across the industry stated their commitment to diversity in 2023 than in 2018 (89% versus 60%).
- o In 2023, more respondents were satisfied with their work/life balance (78%, up 2% over 2018), current position (78%), and mentorship experiences (46% report being mentored).
- o Satisfaction appears to increase with seniority: While 68% of respondents in entry-level positions rated their satisfaction highly, 89% of respondents in senior or executive-level roles did so.

Not everyone experiences tangible improvements in workplace culture and workplace equity efforts –

The data reveals different experiences based on demographic group.

- o Respondents in some historically marginalized groups were twice as likely than other respondents to disagree that their employer is committed to advancing inclusion and equity (35% disabled and neurodivergent, 29% Black, and 35% non-binary respondents, versus 15% non-disabled and non-neurodivergent, 15% White, 17% men, and 16% women). Similar inequities were evident in perceptions of equal opportunities for promotion.
- o While a majority (81%) agreed that their workplace culture is supportive, those who agreed in substantially lower rates identified as disabled (76%), multiracial (74%), non-binary or gender diverse (72%), neurodivergent (71%), and/or Black (63%).

Key focus areas for improving equity include mentorship and networking opportunities, promotion structures and processes, and supporting employees who return from career breaks – Inequities persist

across the career lifecycle, and action is needed to remove barriers to career progression, build equitable structures, and honor diversity.

- Nearly half (46%) agreed that networking has advanced their career or benefited them in other ways, compared to 31% for whom this was not the case. However, younger respondents, who tend to be early in their careers, may face barriers when it comes to attending conferences compared to older respondents, who tend to be in more senior roles.
- Women were more likely to experience a negative impact on their career as a result of taking a career break than men and non-binary respondents.
- About half (46%) of the respondents reported having a mentor at some point in time, and 86% of them reported that the experience had a measurable impact on their professional growth.

The future of workplace equity requires organizational and personal accountability – To build momentum for action, recommendations and resources for individuals and organizations are presented with the findings. Organizational leaders must practice transparency about the current state of equity and goals for everyone to strive for and individual change-makers must show up as advocates and allies. The report details specific actions to drive meaningful, sustainable change.

WE Survey co-founder and co-chair Simone Taylor noted that the report reflected findings from the initial analysis of the 2023 data, and that “we intend to do a deeper, multivariable analysis over the next year to get a better understanding of how intersectionality affects workforce opportunities and barriers.” [Updates and news will be posted on the C4DISC website.](#) Co-chair Chhavi Chauhan added that, “We have already started sharing these findings at various international forums and are leveraging the proposed recommendations to drive meaningful change for more equitable workplaces in our domain.”

C4DISC ran the second survey iteration from May 29 to July 17, 2023, receiving 1,755 responses across 6 continents, with an average of 1,513 responses to the demographic questions. An array of organizations and individuals supported the effort, which was bolstered by the involvement of C4DISC’s wide-ranging membership.

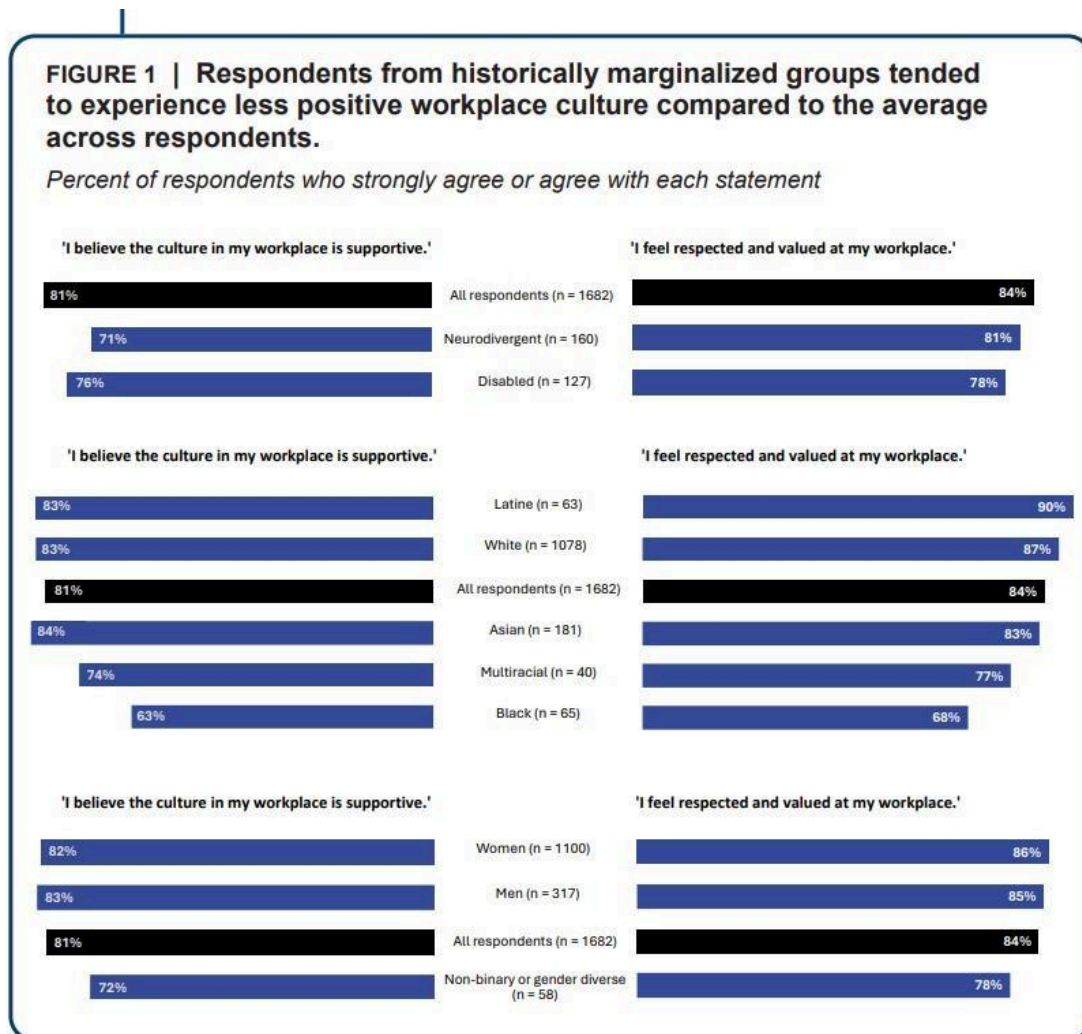
Efforts to advance DEI and drive cultural change began to coalesce in scholarly communications over the last decade. The establishment of C4DISC in 2017 was an important early step, providing a forum to discuss and address these pressing issues among a wide array of global voices and organizations. Another key milestone was the landmark WE Survey, which sought to benchmark the state of workplace equity in the global scholarly publishing landscape in 2018. The [2018 survey findings were published in *Learned Publishing*](#).

ABOUT C4DISC

C4DISC was founded in 2017. Its **vision** is a socially just community that welcomes, values, and celebrates all who seek to contribute to scholarly communications and its **mission** is to work with organizations and individuals to build equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility within the community. C4DISC members meet monthly to address its areas of focus, including: developing a joint statement of principles; conducting market research; providing training resources, best practices, toolkits, and documentation for our collective memberships; and establishing outreach programs, curricula, events, and publications.

Workplace Equity in Scholarly Communications 2023 Executive Summary is available at <https://c4disc.org/workplace-equity-survey-2023/>

The Workplace Equity in Scholarly Communications 2023 full data set, images, and report will soon be available with the 2018 Workplace Equity Survey (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E116922V2>) archived at OpenICPSR, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research data archive which is part of the institute for Social Research at University of Michigan.



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of respondent data from the Workplace Equity Survey, 2023.

Additional images available in the [Executive Summary](#) and [Appendix](#)

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