Barriers to Grants Activity Among Social Scientists: Results of a Faculty Survey Across Institutional Types

Holly M. Hapke, Ph.D.
Director of Research Development and Research
School of Social Sciences
University of California, Irvine

Barbara Endemaño Walker, Ph.D.
Director of Strategic Research Initiatives and
Special Assistant to the Executive Vice
Chancellor for Diversity Initiatives
University of California, Santa Barbara

Billy Wagner, Ph.D., MPH
Professor, Department of Sociology
Professor, Department of Health Sciences
California State University Channel Islands
Executive Director, Social Science Research and
Instructional Council (SSRIC) of the CSU

Leslie Ponciano, Ph.D.
Director of Research Opportunities
Department of Research & Initiatives
California State University Chancellor's Office

Jemima Esther Moses
Student Assistant II
California State University Channel Islands &
CSU Chancellor's Office

Abstract

This poster describes a study conducted in California with 300 social and behavioral science faculty members from a range of public universities, including research-intensive, primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs), and minority-serving institutions (MSIs). The results reveal both general barriers to grant-seeking activity as well as how these barriers are mediated by the intersectional identities of faculty members.
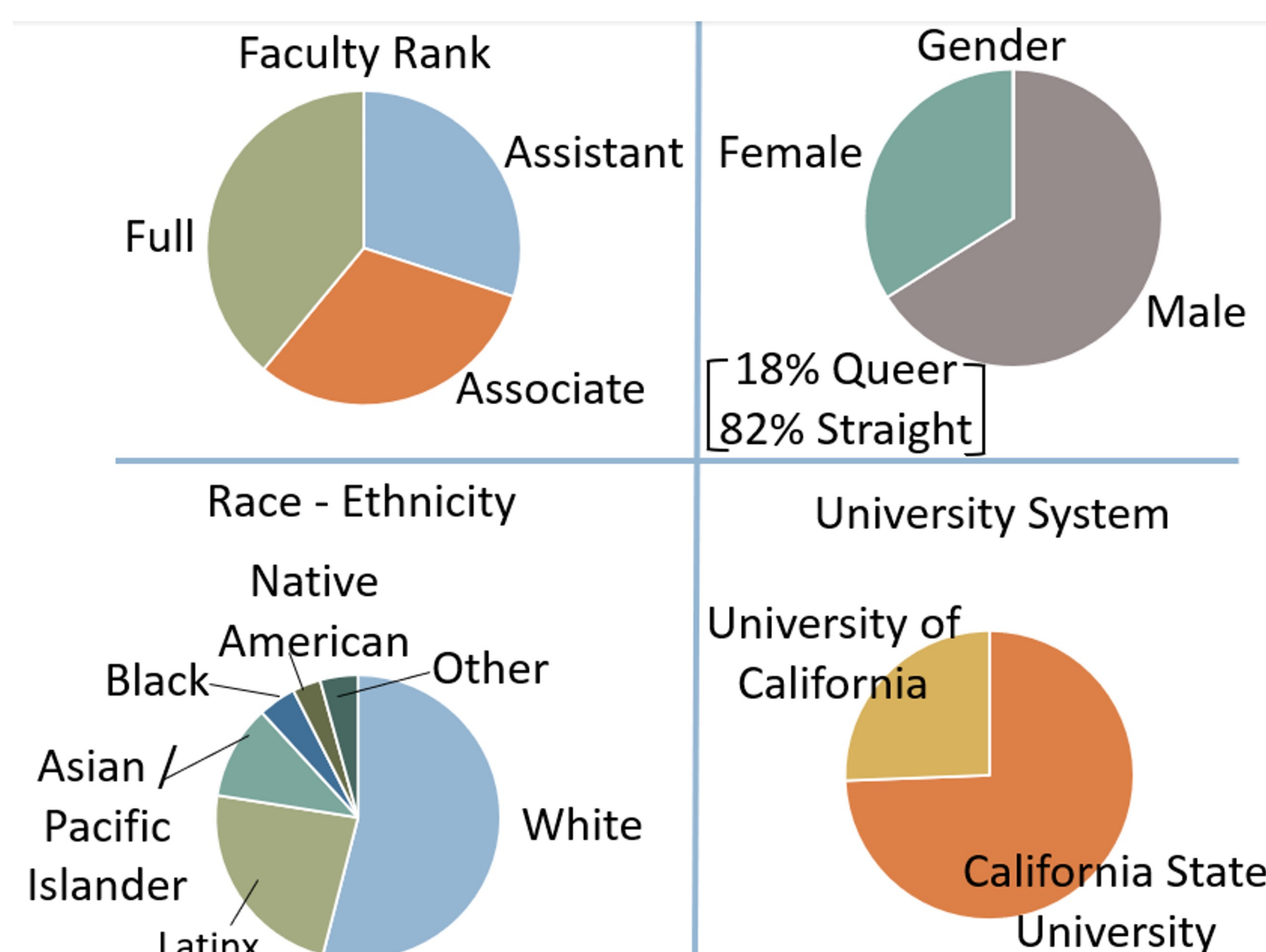
Research Goals

- Characterize research at HSIs across various institutional types
- Understand challenges, barriers, and opportunities for research activity
- Assess demographic differences in grant activity and perception of challenges and opportunities
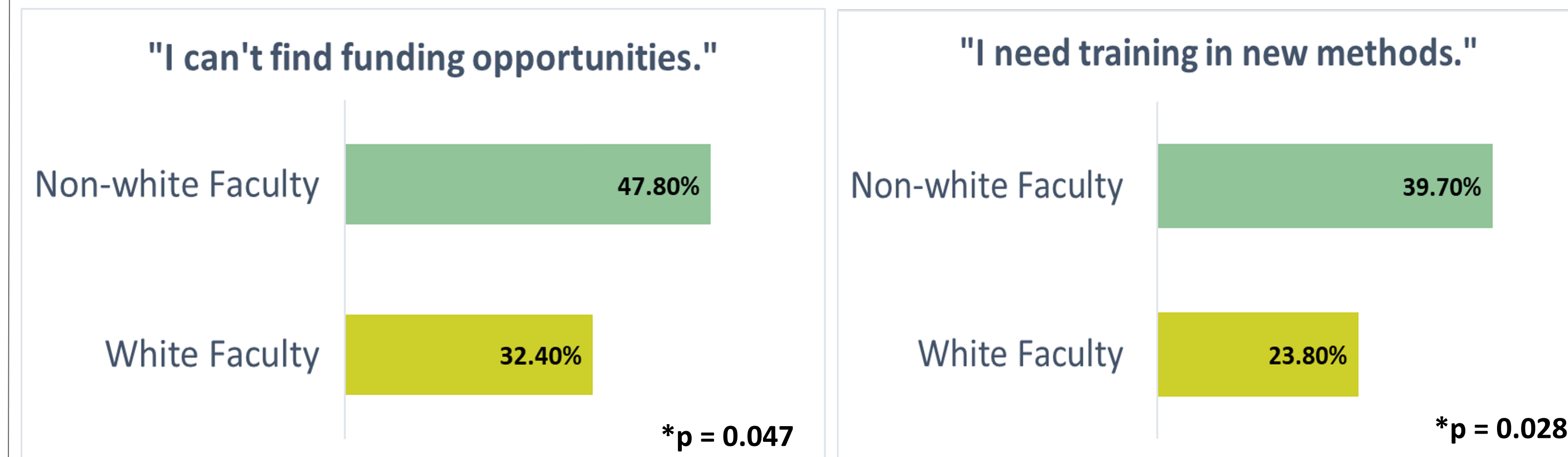
Methods

The survey was distributed in 2022 to all social science faculty at 10 University of California and 23 California State University institutions. All faculty in the sampling frame were invited by email to complete an online questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions.
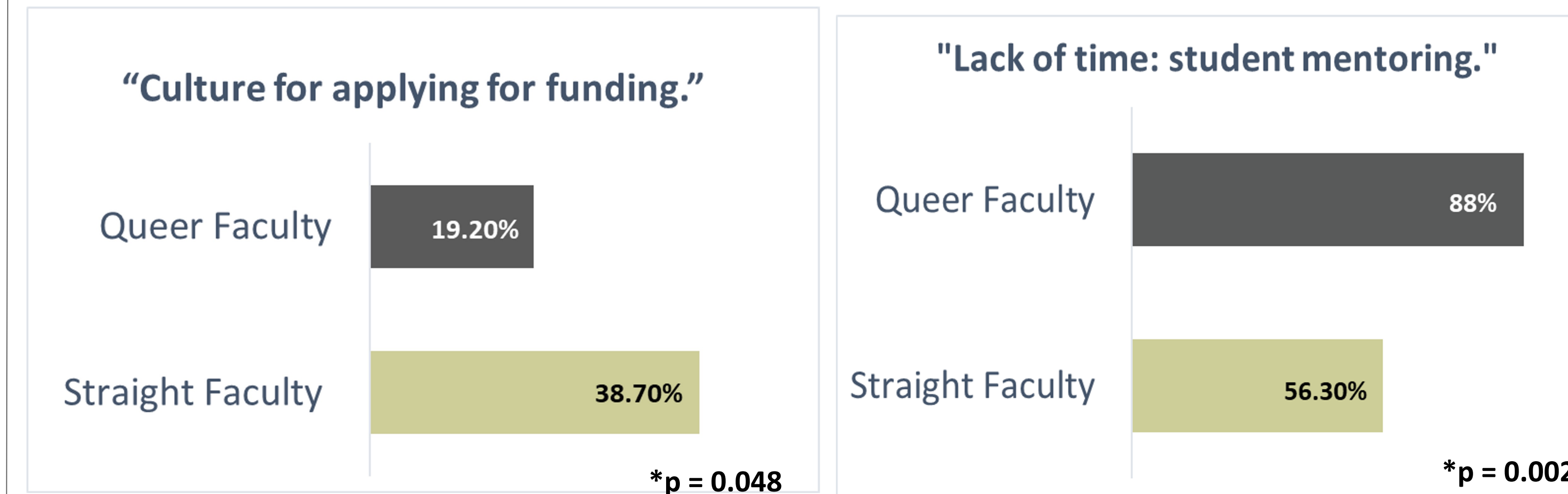
Participants

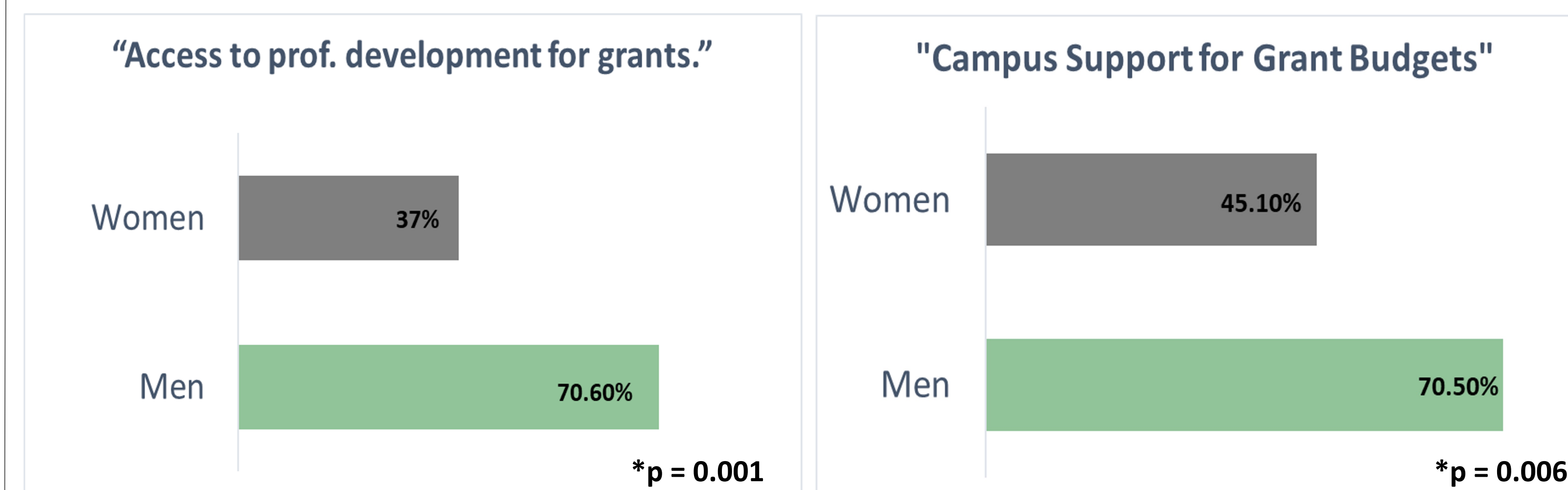*A sampling of the findings are below. For a more comprehensive report, please contact the authors listed above.*

Differences by Race/Ethnicity

"I can't find funding opportunities."

- Non-white Faculty: 47.80%
- White Faculty: 32.40%

*p = 0.047

"I need training in new methods."

- Non-white Faculty: 39.70%
- White Faculty: 23.80%

*p = 0.028

Differences by Sexuality

"Culture for applying for funding."

- Queer Faculty: 19.20%
- Straight Faculty: 38.70%

*p = 0.048

"Lack of time: student mentoring."

- Queer Faculty: 88%
- Straight Faculty: 56.30%

*p = 0.002

Differences by Gender

"Access to prof. development for grants."

- Women: 37%
- Men: 70.60%

*p = 0.001

"Campus Support for Grant Budgets"

- Women: 45.10%
- Men: 70.50%

*p = 0.006

Findings

- Only ≈30% of CSU/UC Social Sciences faculty respondents report confidence about campus research office support
- Only ≈30% of CSU/UC Social Sciences faculty respondents believe academic leaders are helpful with grant-seeking
- ≈43% of tenured CSU Social Sciences faculty participants who previously pursued grants, no longer do so - need to understand why
- General barriers to grant-seeking:
  - administrative obstacles
  - lack of time
  - lack of resources
  - lack of grant writing knowledge
- CSU/UC Social Sciences faculty from underrepresented groups report less access to grant-seeking resources
  - Non-White
  - Queer
  - Women

Recommendations:

- Expand awareness of research office services and expertise
  - consider new modes of communication to faculty from underrepresented groups
- Create inclusive policies and practices in the research office:
  - ask questions about current practices
  - reflect on the need for changes
  - train staff
  - understand faculty perception of services and resources
- Develop programs to provide targeted support for tenured faculty
- Facilitate partnerships between research development professionals and academic leaders to coordinate a dialogue about the benefits of grant-seeking for faculty:
  - course release time, summer pay, conference travel support
  - increased job satisfaction and field recognition
  - more time and data to produce publications
  - increased prestige for institution

CAHSSA
California Alliance for Hispanic-serving Social Science Advancement

https://cahssa.ucsb.edu

CAHSSA Initiatives

- **Faculty Professional Development**
  - Proposal Development Webinar Series
  - Mentored Writing Groups
  - Collaborative Proposals Writing Retreats

- **Research**
  - Survey about barriers and opportunities for social science grants activity at UC and CSU campuses
  - Content analysis of NSF review comments to assess for institutional bias

- **Research Leadership Workshops**
  - Translating research findings to new practices and policies.

UC SANTA BARBARA

CSU Channel Islands — CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

SSRIC

UCI University of California, Irvine

CSU The California State University — OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

The University of California (UC) System is the land grant system of CA. It is comprised of ten research-intensive, doctoral degree-granting institutions. The California State University (CSU) System is comprised of 23 institutions that primarily provide undergraduate and graduate instruction through the Master's degree and conduct applied research in support of its mission.