



Examining Gender Disparity in Middle Tennessee

A CACE Foresight Exercise Examining
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Trends through
the Lens of Gender in Middle Tennessee

June 28, 2021

Designing an Equitable Profession

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AIA Middle TN's Women in Architecture Committee

Founded 2019

Committee Members

Rachel Gresham, AIA, WELL AP, CDT
Founding Chairperson

DiAnne Smith, AIA, NCARB, EDAC
Co-founder

Halie Chandler, AIA, NCARB, CDT
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Additional Contributors

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Shared Definitions and Framing Our Findings

Reading from the Same Page

Before continuing, it is important to establish a few shared definitions and contexts pertinent to the content of this report:

IMPORTANT!

It is important to understand while reading this document that the resulting themes and findings were inherently explored through a gender lens. We recognize that by seeking feedback from primarily women through a committee titled as such, voices of other identities may not be represented.

We recommend readers use a specific lens of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion when exploring the findings herein.

Equity

A step further than equality, equity deals with the distribution of effort, resources, and treatment in a way that levels the playing field. The end result being equal opportunity for individuals with varying identities to perform at their highest level as much and as often as possible in and out of the workplace.

Diversity

During our work, the EDI Committee adopted a definition of diversity inspired by Sara Schonwald of Listen to Lead as well as Team Dynamics in Minneapolis. That definition is as follows:

“Differences that make a difference”

Inclusion

Cultures, races, gender identities, religious affiliations, backgrounds, sexualities, physical abilities, etc., representing “Differences that make a difference” are thoughtfully included. The resulting collection of voices are intentionally sought, heard, and considered. This document inherently focuses on gender inclusion. Please see the important note above.

Summary of Activities

Launch Event

The committee initiated programming with a launch event at Tuck Hinton Architecture & Design, not only to celebrate the formation, but to start conversations around the needs of members.

Conversation was facilitated by free answer on post-its to be collected and compiled by the committee in order to determine a direction for programming.

The committee posed the following questions:

What are some ways an ideal firm culture could support females?

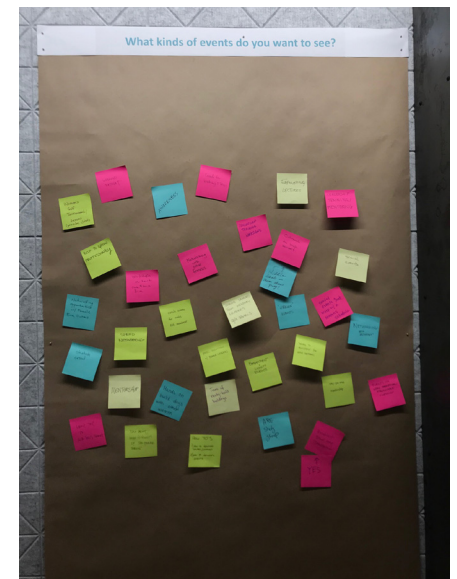
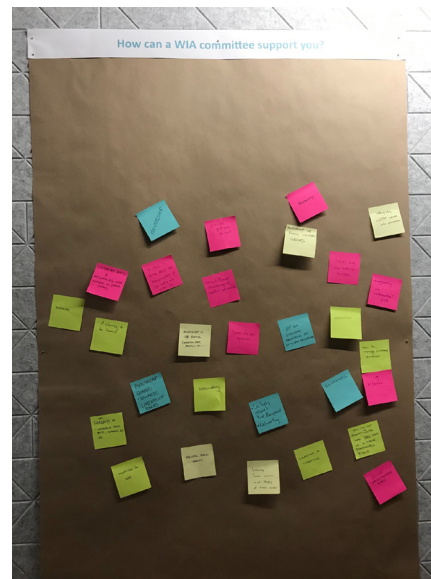
What strengths do women bring to our profession?

What is the biggest challenge you face being a woman in architecture?

What kind of events do you want to see?

How can a WIA committee support you?

The committee produced a graphic shown on the following page that highlights the most frequent answers which was then distributed to membership.



Summary of Activities

Launch Event

After examining the results of the launch event and the passion observed in the room that evening, a graphic was presented to all of membership highlighting the three most common responses for each question.

Additionally, the committee sought a tool that would allow the committee to collect and assess reliable data in order to discover what issues challenge the profession of architecture in Middle Tennessee and prevent the Chapter from being the most equitable place to practice architecture in the country for women.

Graphic by Wes Webb

Women in Architecture

Launch Topic Answers
2019

What are some ways an **ideal firm culture could support females?**

QUESTION 1

1. FLEXIBLE HOURS
2. INVITE WOMEN TO OUT-OF-OFFICE EVENTS
3. Flexible, Paid Maternity Leave
Multiple Versions of Success
Child Care Options
More "Sick Time" For Use With Kids
Equal Opportunity
Team Member Support
Female Leadership
Equal Pay for Performance/Experience

What **strengths do women **bring** to our profession?**

QUESTION 2

1. EMPATHY
2. DETAIL-ORIENTED THINKING, ORGANIZATION, A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE, MULTI-TASKING
3. Communication

What is the **biggest challenge you face being a **woman in architecture**?**

QUESTION 3

1. WORK/LIFE BALANCE
2. BEING EXCLUDED FROM "THE BOYS CLUB"
3. Being in a mostly male community
Getting set back for having kids
Having a seat at the table
Being underestimated
Being viewed as an assistant on site

What **kind of events do you want to see?**

QUESTION 4

1. NETWORKING WITH OTHER FEMALES
2. MENTORING
3. Breakfast/Small Groups
Leadership Training
Outreach to schools
"Intro to Allyship" for males
QA panels/workshops

How can a WIA committee **support you?**

QUESTION 5

1. MENTORSHIP
2. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
3. How to manage and embrace emotion in the workplace



Summary of Activities

CACE Foresight Exercise

Summary

For a full explanation of the Foresight Exercise developed by AIA National's CACE (Council of Architectural Component Executives), please visit www.aia.org. The full workbook is free to download for all members or available from your local component staff.

The Foresight Exercise is used for “designing and implementing foresight programs ... and teaching others within their components how to create future ready practices.”

This report covers Steps One and Two and addresses how individuals and firms can take steps Three and Four in their practices and community to exact change in the profession.

The Foresight Exercise consists of 4 steps:

1. Seeking and Listening
2. Analyzing and Interpreting
3. Design a Response
4. Taking Action

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee felt this exercise was an appropriate framework for exploration as the committee formed its direction and purpose. To best serve members of AIA Middle TN, it was vital to understand what issues are affecting its members now in order to develop relevant programming with the highest effectiveness and impact for the future of members and the profession.

The Process

The process began with Step One in July 2019 during an event hosted by the State Architect, Ann McGauran, and sponsored by Hawkins Partners.

Participants were asked to respond to the following question:

“What does the ideal landscape look like for women in architecture five years from now?”

After the event, The Scanning Map in the CACE Foresight exercise was used to synthesize hundreds of responses into three categories of practice (Operating Environment, Professional Practice and Business of Design.) The responses were further organized into subcategories within the categories of practice and ranked on a scale of “importance” and “pace.”

The diagrams on the following pages illustrate the the Categories of Practice and the six predominant trends the committee found and their categories of practice.



Summary of Activities

CACE Foresight Exercise: Description of Categories of Practice

Operating Environment

Operating Environment includes items affecting macroeconomic trends that affect individual business environments, shifts in social environments that effect local economies, impacts on global health, and shifts in the use of technology.

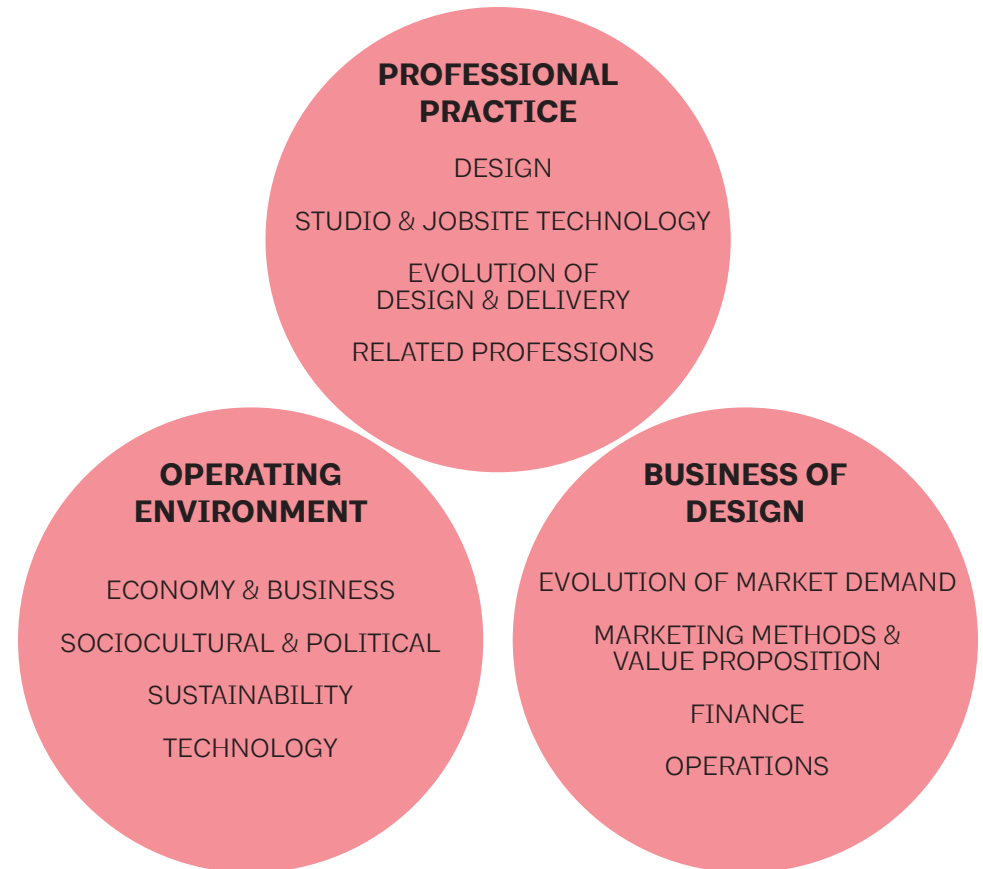
Professional Practice

The Professional Practice Category includes shifts in the visioning of spaces and structures, shifts in technology that support the business side of practice, shifts in delivery methods and their effects on stakeholders, and shifts in how design occurs in affiliated and other creative professions.

Business of Design

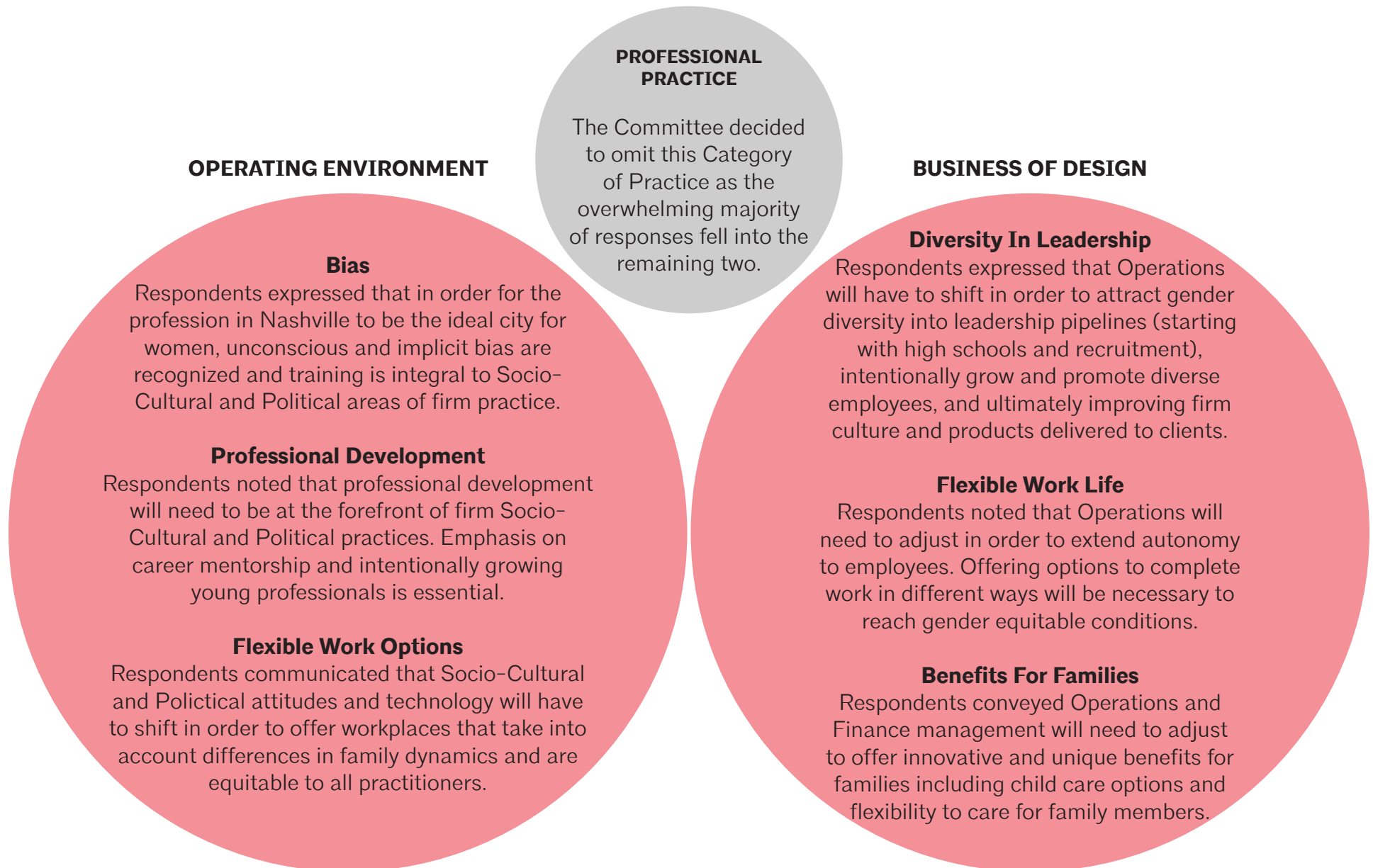
Business of Design captures changes in the use of the built environment of different market sectors, shifts in how design is valued and communicated, shifts in financial management practices, and shifts in talent retention, workplace culture, and firm organization.

Again, a full description of these Categories and how to use the Scanning Map is outlined the CACE Foresight Workbook available to all members to download at www.aia.org.



Summary of Activities

CACE Foresight Exercise: Emergence of Trends



Summary of Activities

February 2020 Chapter Meeting

Qualitative Analysis: Background

During the July CACE Foresight Launch, the respondents noted how critical it would be to have both men and women participate in these conversations. It quickly became the Committee's goal to share findings with the entire Chapter. Not only did the committee share the findings to generate discussion, it asked the Chapter to dive deep into the next phase of completing the CACE Foresight Exercise along with the Committee.

At the February 2020 AIA Middle Tennessee Chapter Meeting, the Women In Architecture (WIA) Committee conducted a group exercise seeking insight from the meeting attendees. This was a four part exercise consisting of a two part individual reflection followed by a table discussion and a presentation.

Each table of participants was asked to brainstorm the context of an assigned Category of Practice and Trend. There were two categories within three trends each. The first category was Business of Design. Its trends included Benefits for Families, Diversity in Leadership, and Flexible Work Life. The second category was Operating Environment. Its trends included Bias, Flexible Work Options, and Professional Development. These categories and trends were derived from a previous group activity conducted by WIA as described earlier.

Top Right: The WIA Committee Members before the presentation.
Bottom Right: Members engage in silent reflection and table discussion.



Summary of Activities

February 2020 Chapter Meeting

In Task One, individuals were asked to give three responses to the following question based on their assigned Category of Practice and Trend:

**What conditions would allow
Nashville to be the most equitable
place to practice architecture three
years from now?**

These responses included everything from ideas members would like to see implemented in their firms, to changes in academia, and the profession as a whole.

In Task Two, individuals were asked to choose one of their responses from Step One and elaborate on it using a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. In this analysis, only the insight collected from the first two steps of the exercise was analyzed.

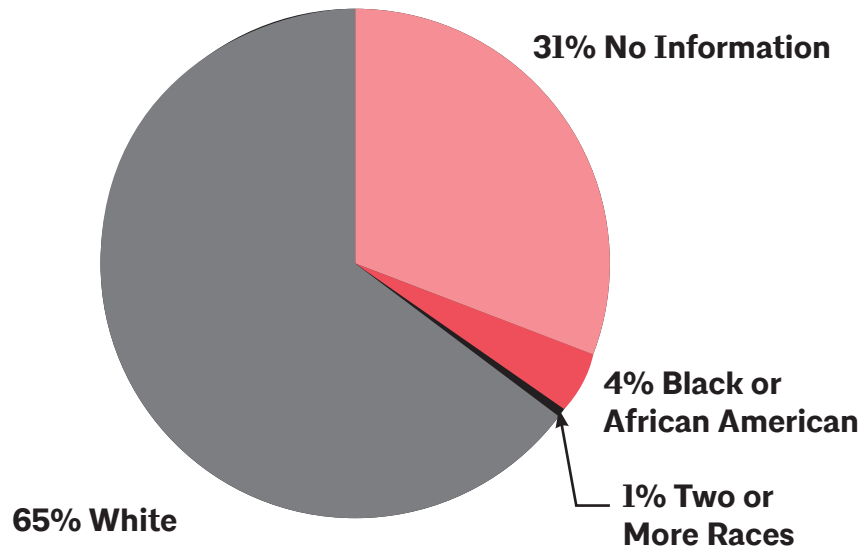
After table-led discussions, each table pre-selected table leader was invited to share the table's consensus with all meeting attendees. The line between comments made by males and females was blurred. There were common threads among all discussions, and regardless of the topic, there were some extremely clear directions that were desired for future growth. Our Chapter was highly engaged, and the energy in the room was palpable, with members leaving the room equipped with discussion topics to take back to their respective firms.

To the right: Respected AIA Mid TN Chapter members Linda Marzialis and Valerie Franklin, share highlights from their table's discussion.



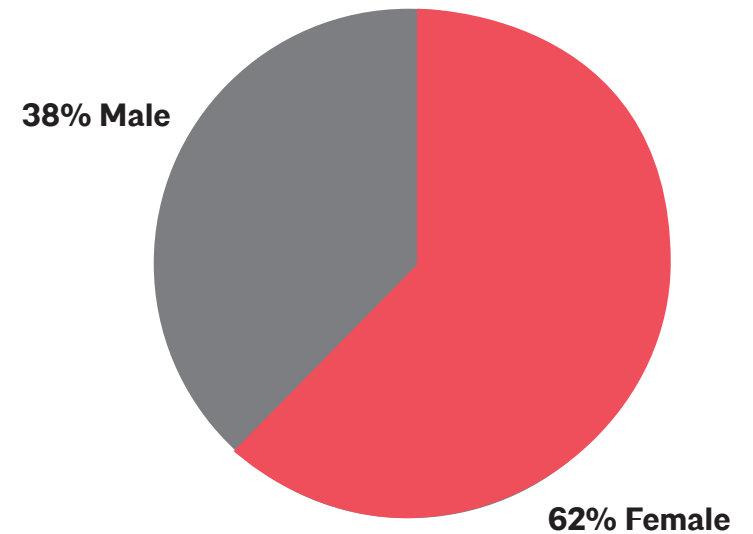
Qualitative Analysis

Meeting Demographics



Ethnicity Distribution

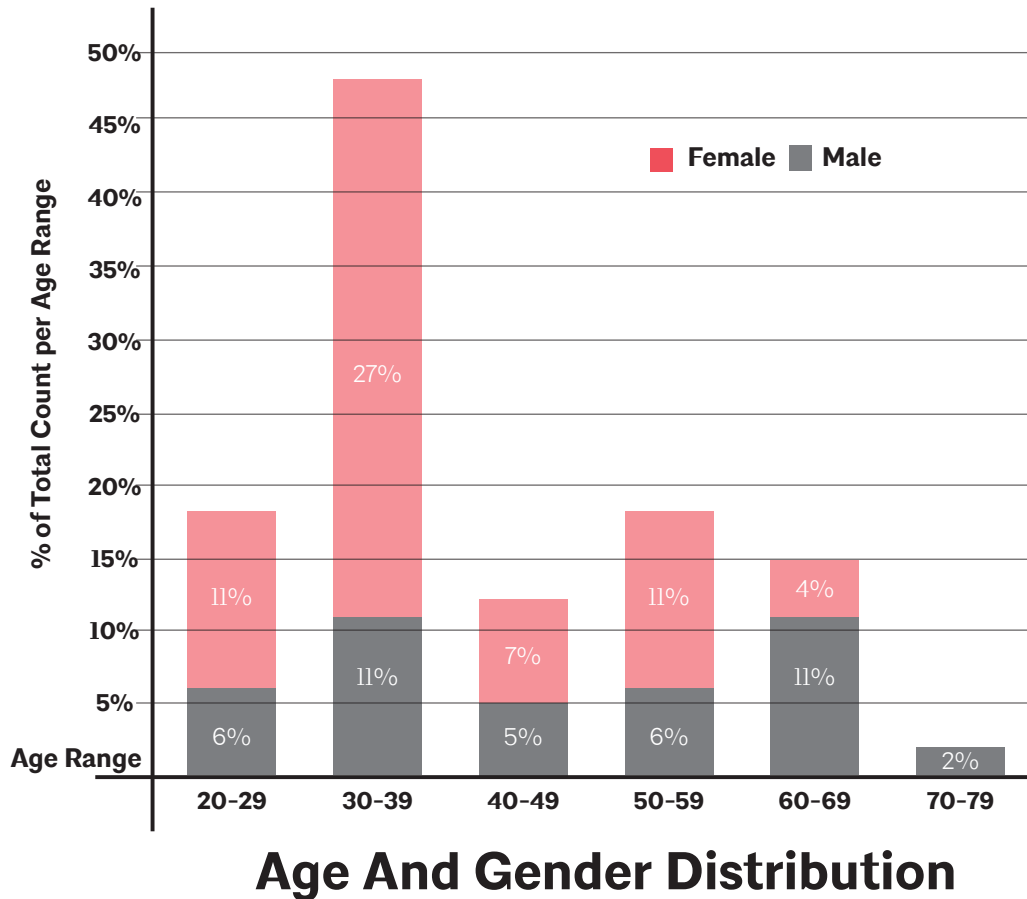
*This graph does not include information from non-members



Gender Distribution

Qualitative Analysis

Meeting Demographics



Observations on Demographics

It is important to acknowledge that the respondents in our exercise represent a self-selected group of sorts. Our demographics are affected by the name of the Committee hosting the event, the topic at hand, the demographics of previous steps in our exercise, and the demographic make-up of AIA Middle Tennessee.

The meeting attendance was majority white females between the ages of 30 and 39. The only two age ranges that reported more males in attendance than females were 60-69 and 70-79. More than 50% of attendees were under the age of 50.

It should be noted that the information shown does not include demographic data from non-AIA members who attended the meeting.

This committee observes that the 30-39 age range is likely when women are at the highest risk of dropping out of the profession due to growing family care duties.* This committee infers their interest in these topics could account for the spike of female attendees in this particular age range. The likelihood of women dropping out is illustrated by a fact the Zweig Group (an AEC industry management consulting firm) recently uncovered: “100% of women principals have considered leaving the AEC industry, compared with 47% of men.”

*Wanda Lau. Q+A: Rosa Sheng Wants to Know Why Women Leave Architecture. Architect Magazine. May 14, 2014. https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/q-a-rosa-sheng-wants-to-know-why-women-leave-architecture_o

Summary of Activities

February 2020 Chapter Meeting

Qualitative Analysis: Methodology

The response forms were collected, and a third party assisted with data analysis in order to systematically explore and attempt to explain the responses. In the content analysis, the responses were first reviewed by the analyst at a high level for the sake of familiarization. In a second pass through the responses, codes were developed to identify recurring and/or intriguing key words, phrases, and themes; in this analysis, codes refer to single word or short phrases that encapsulate a response.

Overarching themes were thoughtfully derived from the first round of codes, based on their connection to one another. Additional passes were made through the responses in order to refine the overarching themes and accurately classify each response based on the analyst's interpretation.

The following themes, presented as generalized responses to the question asked by EDI, are listed in alphabetical order here:

What conditions would allow Nashville to be the most equitable place to practice architecture three years from now?

1. Increased **awareness** of unconscious bias and assumptions.
2. Improved **child care** resources and support.
3. Stronger and more supportive **community**.
4. Increased **diversity** in the workplace, including leadership, talent, recruits, owners, and stakeholders.
5. More **education** or mentorship opportunities.
6. **Equitable** and inclusive opportunities available for employee promotion, recognition, and benefits.
7. Paid **family leave**.
8. **Flexible** work hours.
9. More equitable **health benefits** for employees.
10. **Technology** available to make work from home feasible.
11. More efficient **transportation** available.
12. Ability to **work from home**.
13. Increased emphasis on **work/life balance**.



Qualitative Analysis

Worksheets

Worksheets provided to Chapter Meeting attendees:

AIA
Middle Tennessee

Chapter Meeting | February 27, 2020
Presented by the Women in Architecture Committee

Designing an Equitable Profession

CATEGORY OF PRACTICE:

TREND:

Step 1 Individual Reflection (3 min): In the context of the TREND your table is assigned:
What conditions would allow Nashville to be the most equitable place to practice architecture 3 years from now? (Your responses are anonymous unless you provide identifying information)

Response:

Response:

Response:

Step 2 Individual Reflection (3 min): Choose a response from Step 1 and describe any Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Be as specific as possible.

Strength(s):

Weakness(s):

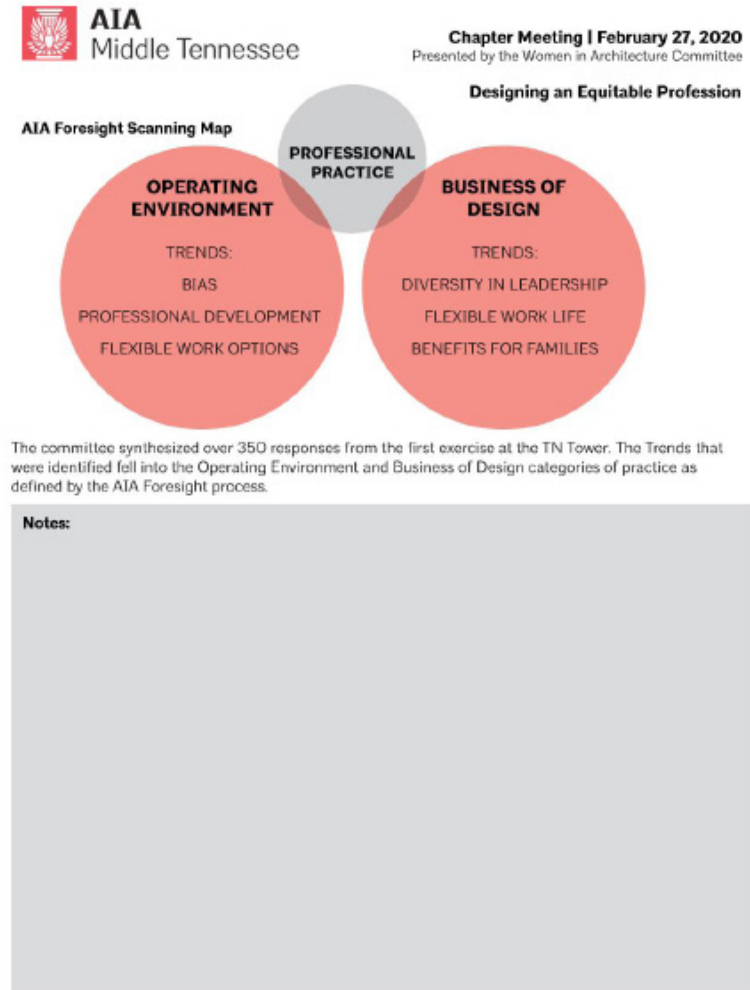
Opportunity(s):

Threat(s):

Step 3 Group Discussion (10 min): Discuss amongst your table. Your Table Leader will collect and prioritize your responses to present to the group.

Step 4 Group Discussion: Your Table Leader will have 2 minutes to relay findings to the chapter.

LEAVE THIS SHEET ON YOUR TABLE FOR DATA COLLECTION



CACE Foresight Steps:

1. Seeking & Listening

2. Analyzing and Interpreting

3. Design a Response

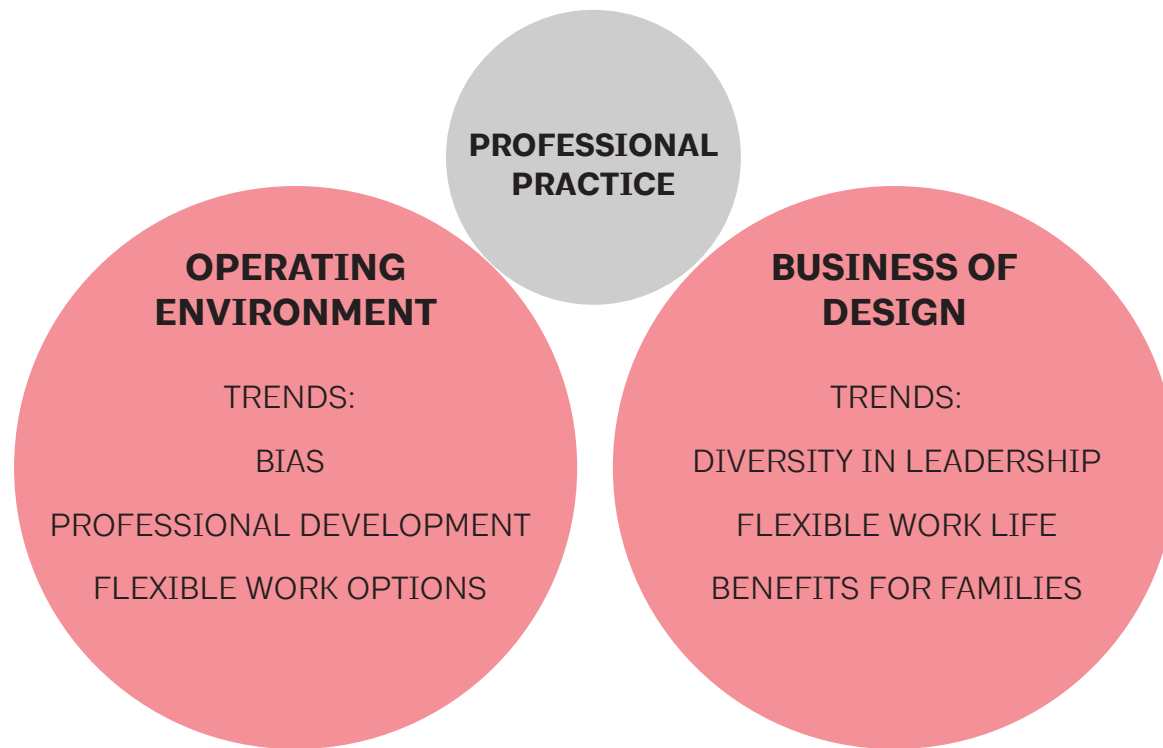
4. Taking Action

Discussion of Trends

Overall Results: Emergence of Themes

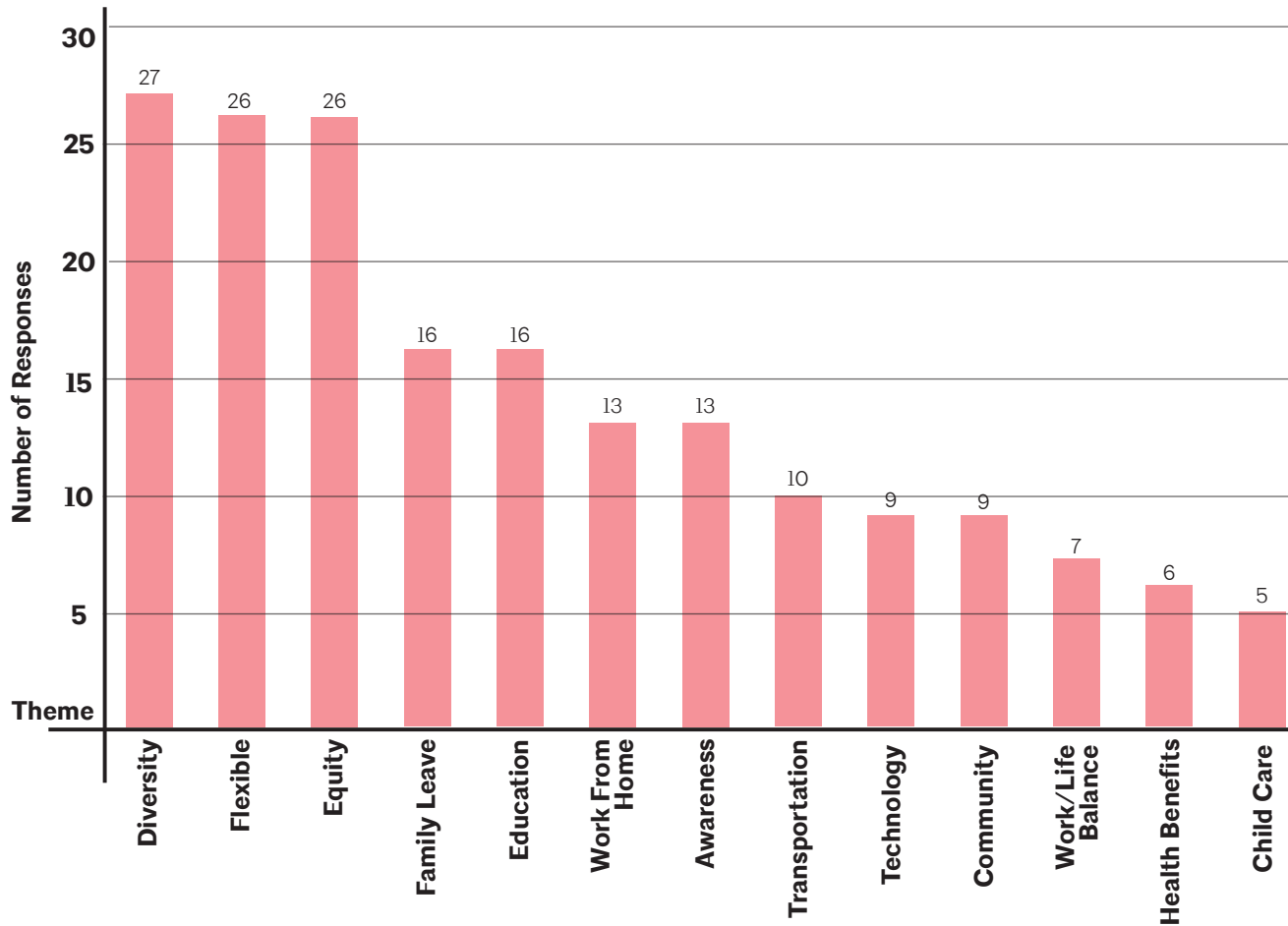
The next portion of this document reveals the overall qualitative results collected during the February 2020 Chapter meeting. The following graphs depict each Trend and the qualitative Themes mentioned by members. A full description of the Scanning Map is available in the CACE Foresight Workbook through your Chapter administration.

As a reminder, the Categories of Practice and the Trends explored are in the diagram below:



Discussion of Trends

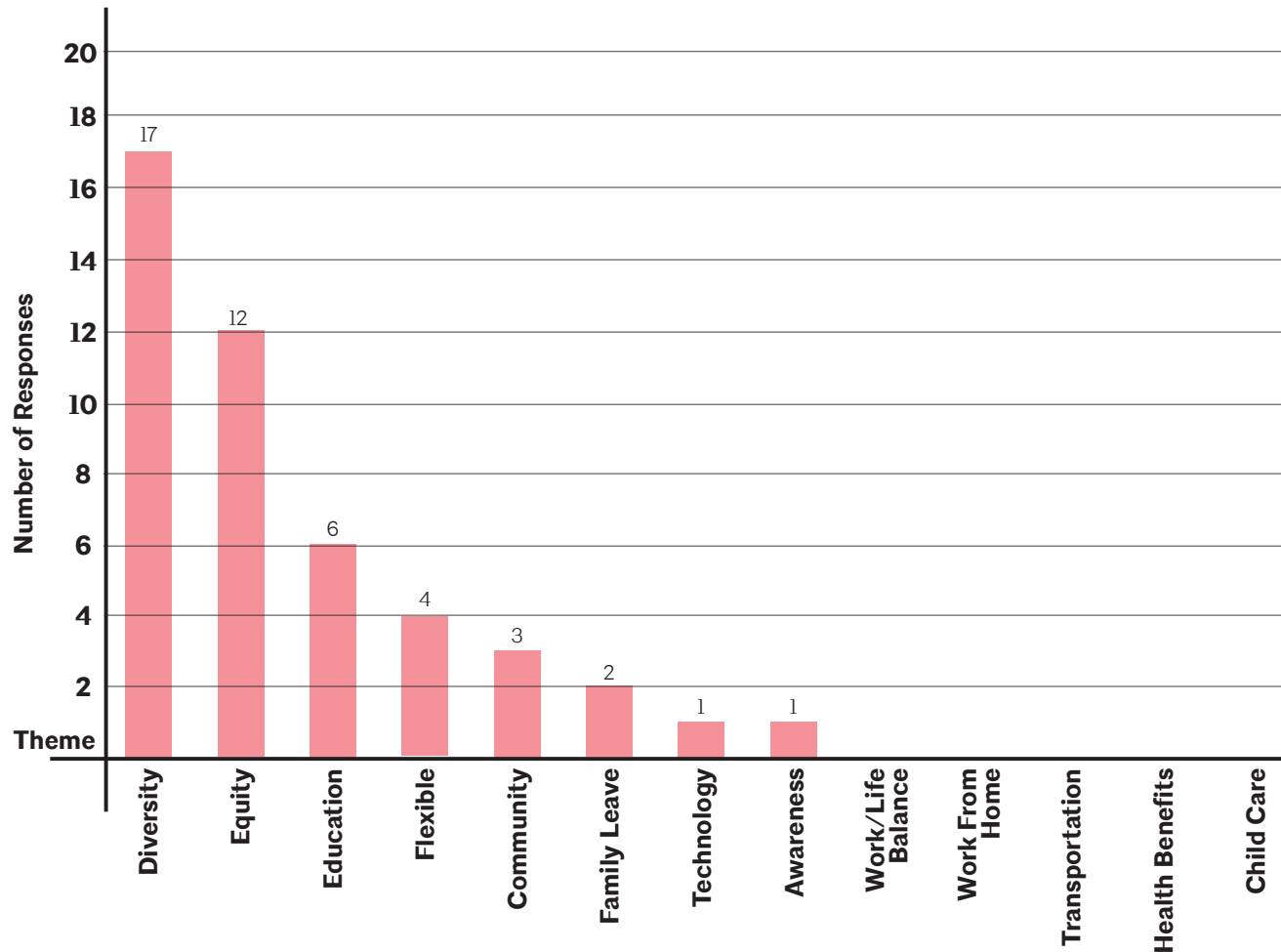
Overall Results: Emergence of Themes



By far, the top three themes within the responses included: more diversity in firm make up and leadership pipeline, more flexibility in performing work duties, and more equitable practices and operations with the business and environment.

Discussion of Trends

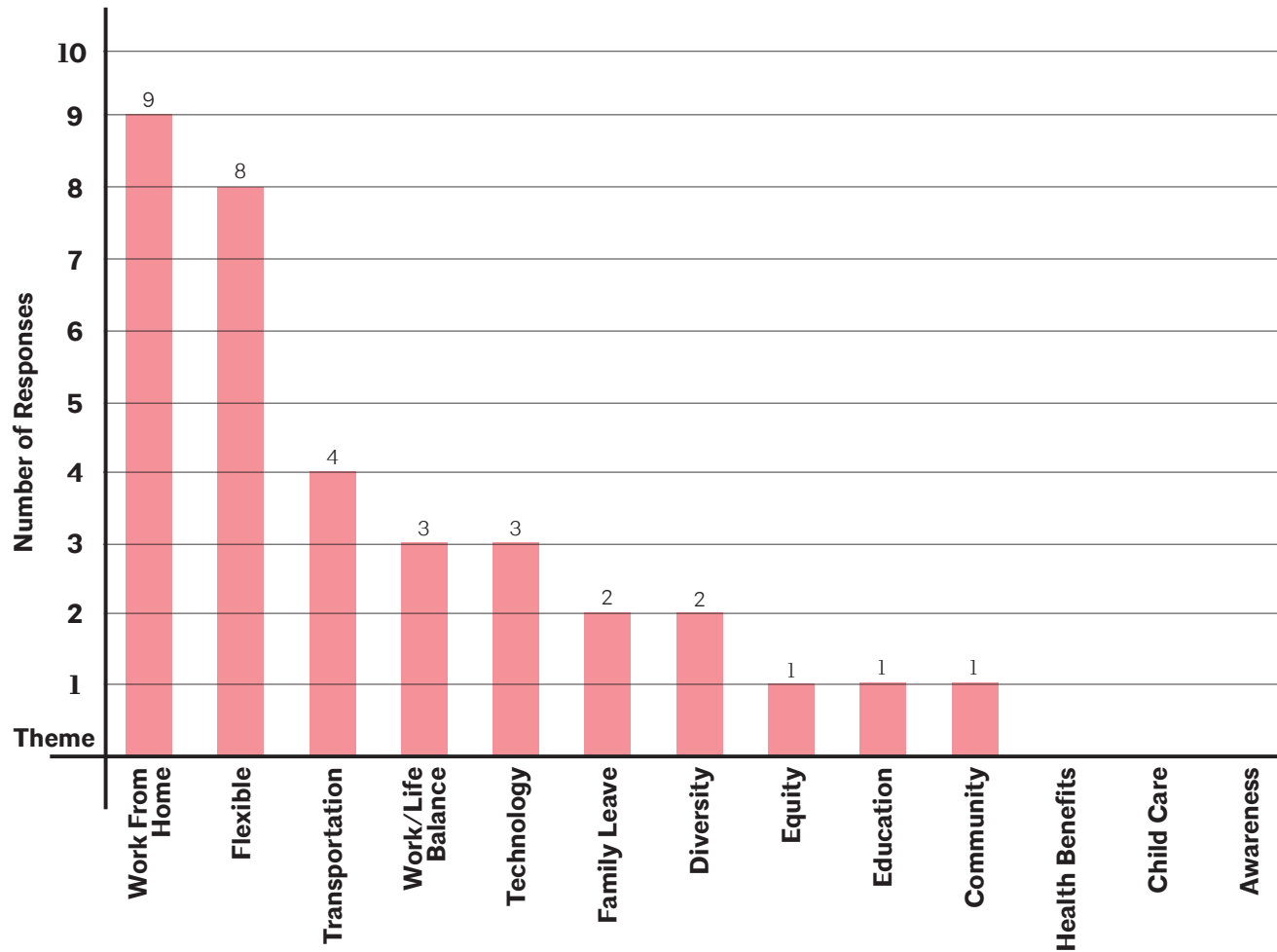
Business of Design: Diversity in Leadership



With in the Business of Design category of practice and Diversity in Leadership Trend, the themes of diversity and equity, followed by education, were mentioned.

Discussion of Trends

Business of Design: Flexible Work Life

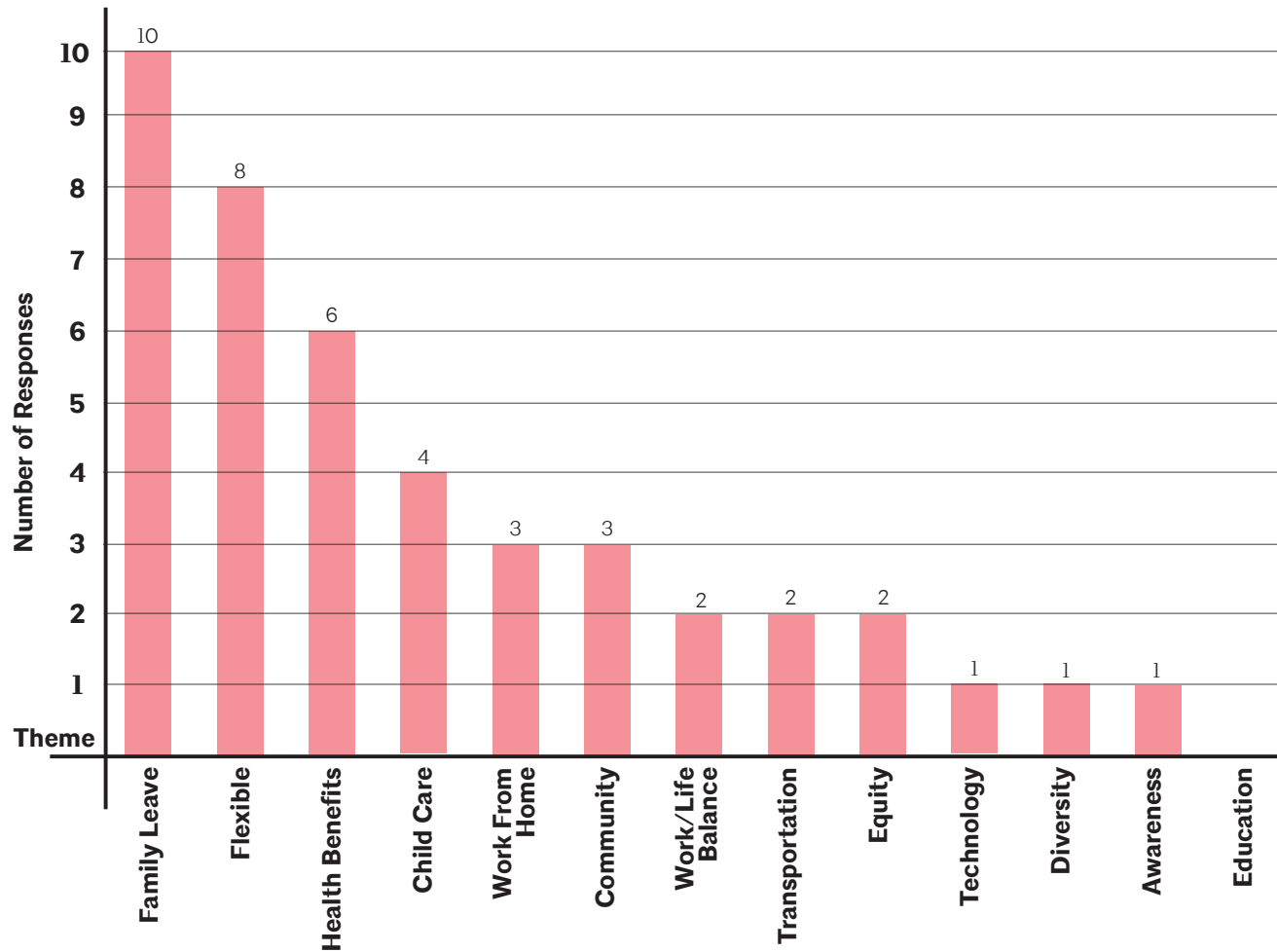


Within Business of Design, Flexible Work Life Trend, common response phrases included Work From Home options and flexibility when performing work.

However similar, this Trend differs from Flexible Work Options in several ways. The Committee felt it was important to recognize that the idea of flexibility appeared not only in Operating Environment Category of Practice but also in the Business of Design Category. This appears to indicate an understanding that flexibility is good for business and also day-to-day task management.

Discussion of Trends

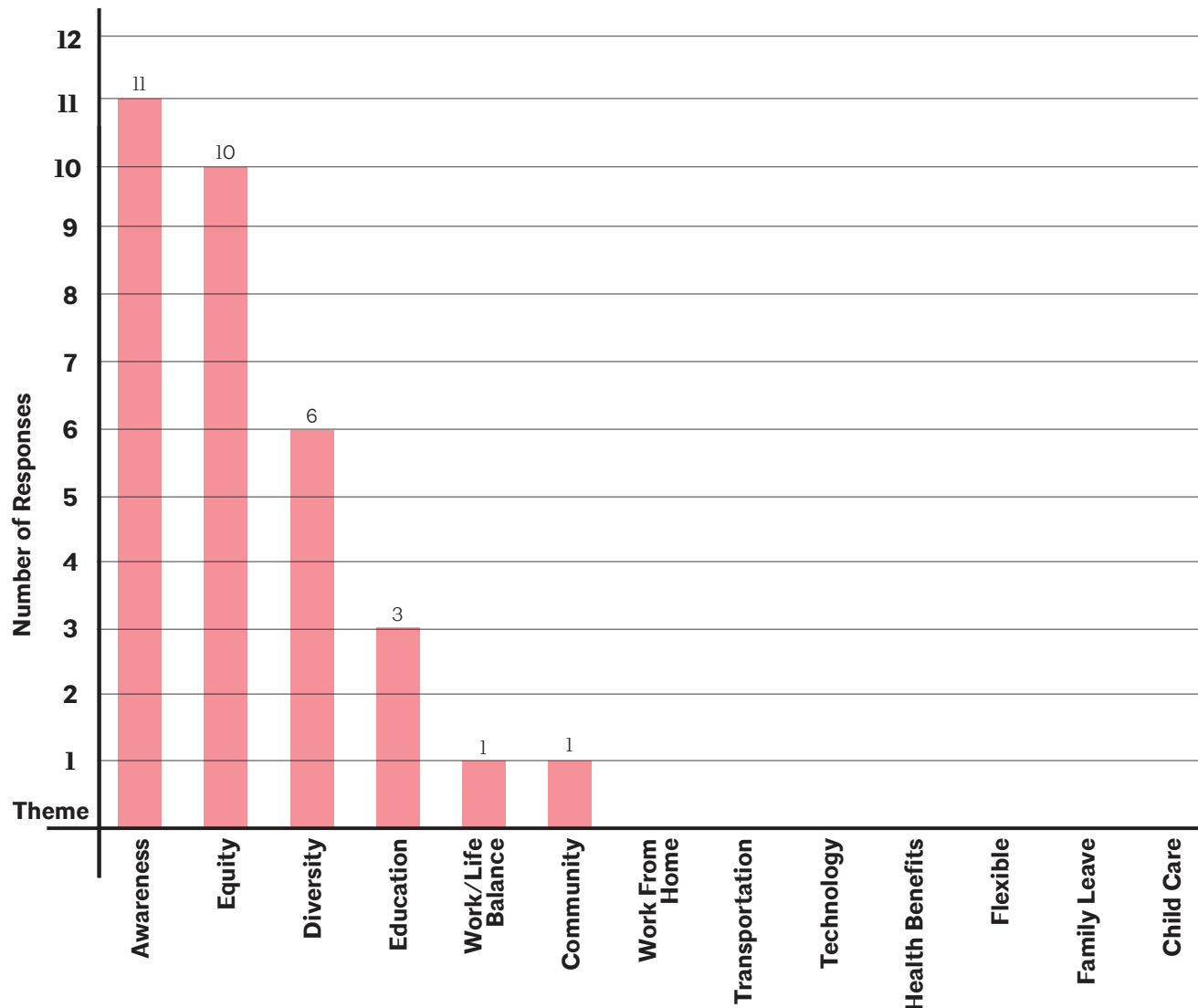
Business of Design: Benefits for Families



The final trend in Business of Design is Benefits for Families. Common responses described more comprehensive and flexible Family Leave policies with provisions for elder care or family members with special needs. Additional comments regarding Health Care included addressing mental health needs and more affordable plans to choose from.

Discussion of Trends

Operating Environment: Bias

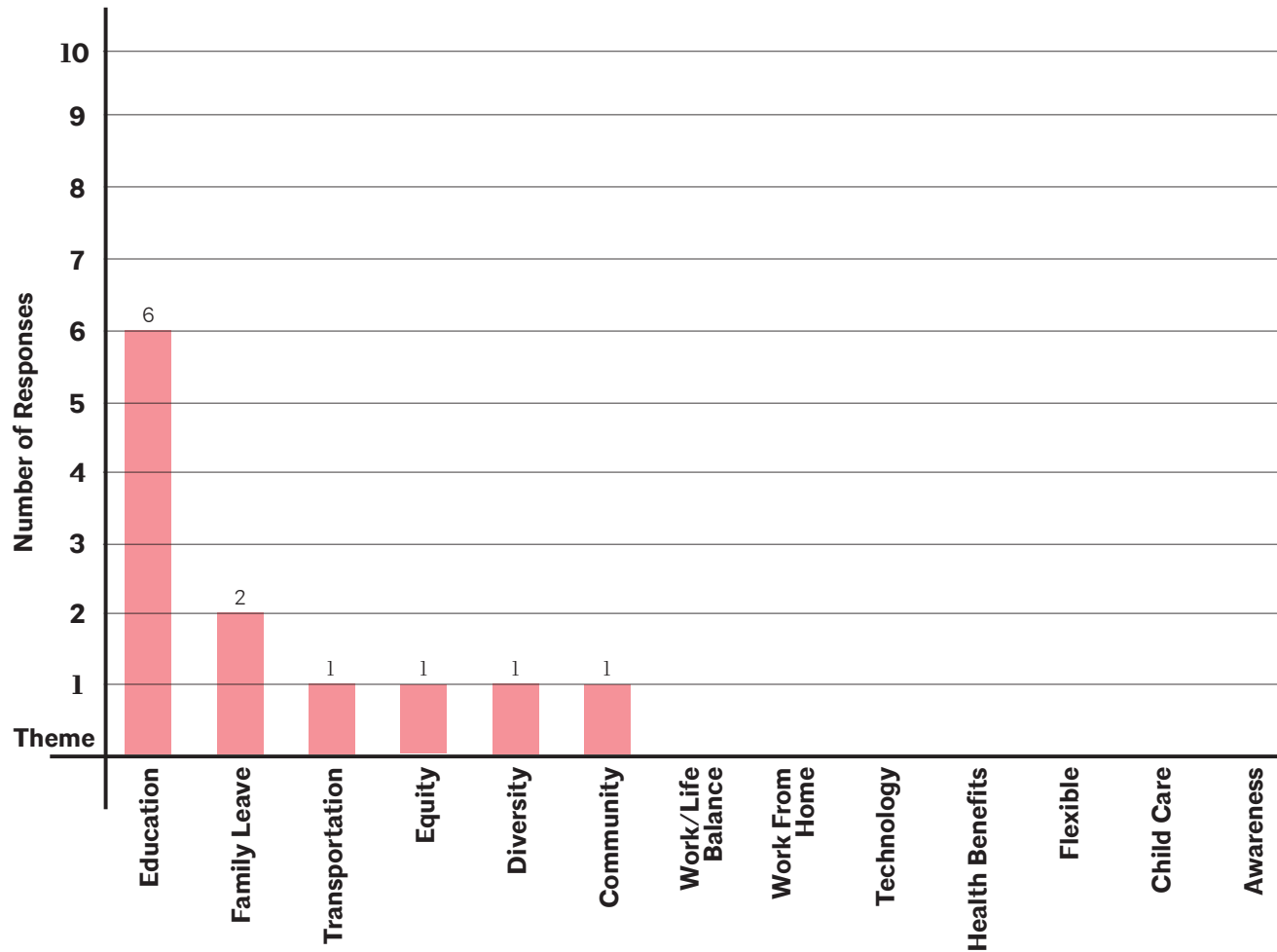


Awareness of Bias itself was the most common theme among the trend. Awareness is the first step to overcome bias. This committee infers that respondents may be experiencing unconscious bias in the workplace.

Recognition of unconscious bias and bias training is a fairly new concept, making the emergence of the theme of Awareness significant. With more education comes greater awareness and the ability to reduce gender bias and creates a positive feedback loop to benefit the industry as a whole.

Discussion of Trends

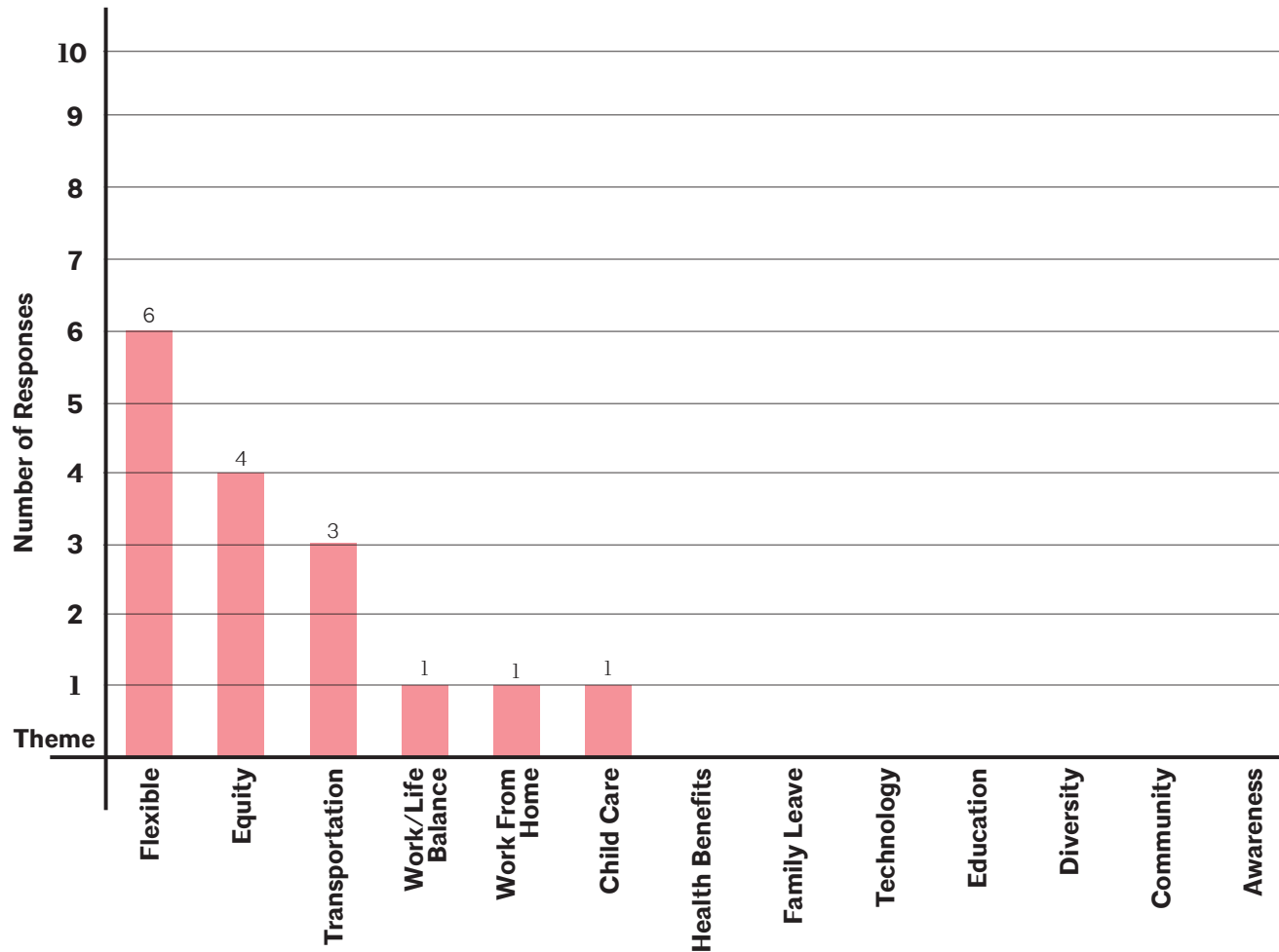
Operating Environment: Professional Development



Mentorship and training were the themes most prominent in the Professional Development trend within Operating Environment. This Committee infers that respondents care about growing in their knowledge as well as their career and may not be getting the support they need or desire.

Discussion of Trends

Operating Environment: Flexible Work Options



Flexibility, equity, and transportation were the major themes mentioned in the Flexible Work Options trend. This committee infers that flexibility when it comes to work options allows for flexibility in schedule in order to provide adequate time and space to handle personal and family matters which can vary greatly from individual to individual.

Additionally, expecting all employees to have peak performance at the exact same time, place, or set of conditions every weekday seems unrealistic upon review of the findings.

Discussion of Themes

A Deeper Dive

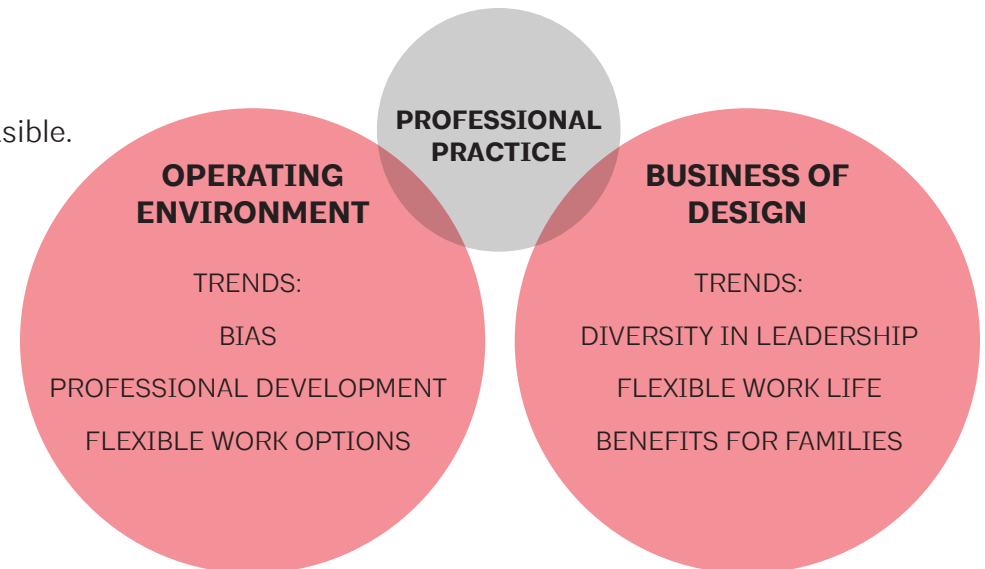
The next portion of this document dives deeper into the thirteen themes discovered through the analysis of responses taken during the February 2020 Chapter meeting. The following graphs depict each theme and how many times that theme was discussed in each of the six trends.

As a reminder, the themes are listed below. The trends and their relationship to the Categories of Practice are shown at the bottom right of the page.

1. Increased **awareness** of unconscious bias and assumptions.
2. Improved **child care** resources and support.
3. Stronger and more supportive **community**.
4. Increased **diversity** in the workplace, including leadership, talent, recruits, owners, and stakeholders.
5. More **education** or mentorship opportunities.
6. **Equitable** and inclusive opportunities available for employee promotion, recognition, and benefits.
7. Paid **family leave** for mothers and fathers.
8. **Flexible** work hours.
9. More equitable **health benefits** for employees.
10. **Technology** available to make work from home feasible.
11. More efficient **transportation** available.
12. Ability to **work from home**.
13. Increased emphasis on **work/life balance**.

Please remember!:

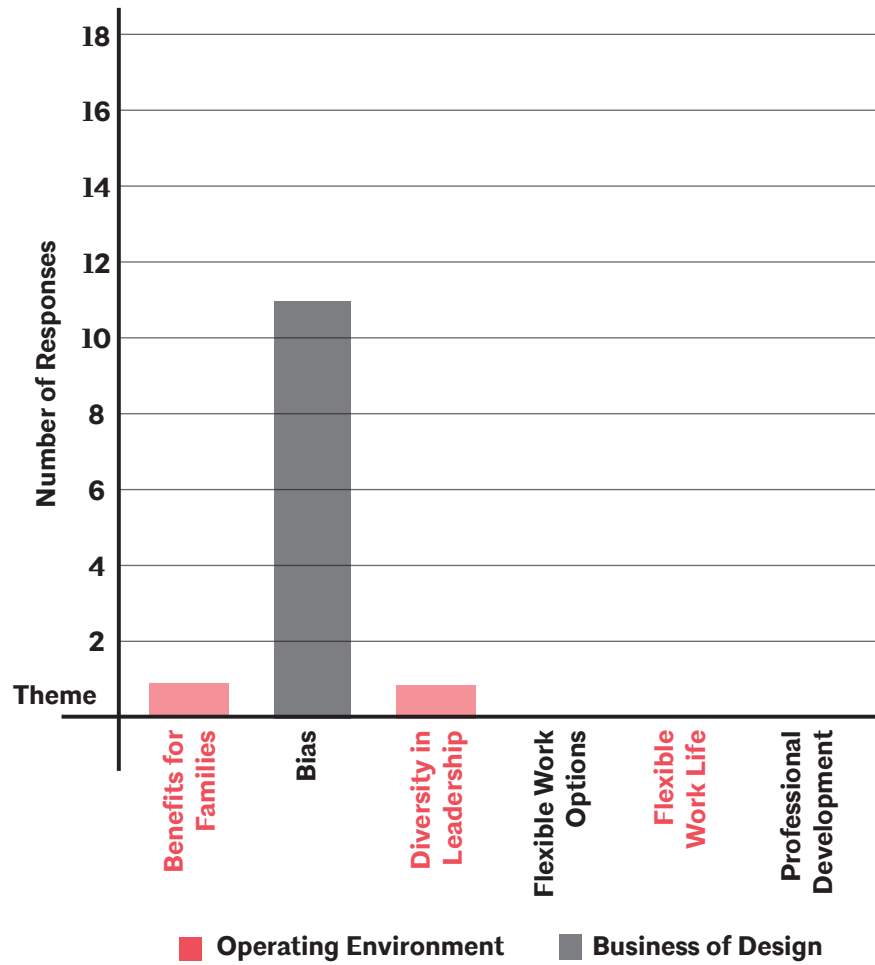
As previously stated, it is important to understand while reading this document that the resulting themes and findings were inherently explored through a gender lens. We recognize that by seeking feedback from primarily women through a committee titled as such, voices of other identities may not be represented.



Discussion of Themes

1. Awareness

Increased awareness of unconscious bias and assumptions.



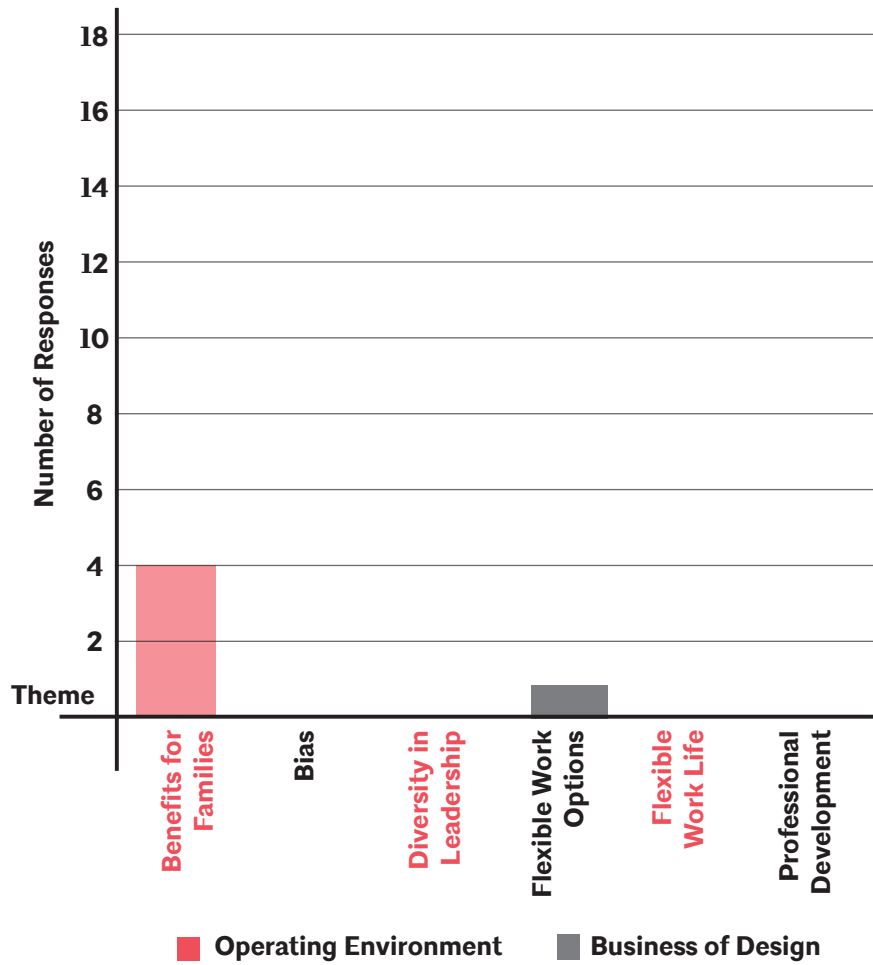
Responses Included:

1. Shift in thinking required management positions can only be held by full-time employees
2. Lack of inclusion in achievement acknowledgment:
 - a. Linking successful projects to those who influenced it creates an open-dialogue environment which can help build each other up
3. Breaking down assumptions surrounding women and young talent:
 - a. Assuming women of the office handle the materials, write the specs, do the 'interior stuff', and cannot practice architecture
 - b. Men in charge, women must choose work or home life
 - c. Assumptions could alienate designers and cause them to leave the profession
 - d. If new hires were automatically placed on projects that are 'higher stake' giving them not only the opportunity to learn, but the opportunity for consultants to see the shift in the profession
4. Unconscious bias training:
 - a. Have everybody engaged in intentional conversation
 - b. More specific training

Discussion of Themes

2. Child Care

Improved child care resources and support.



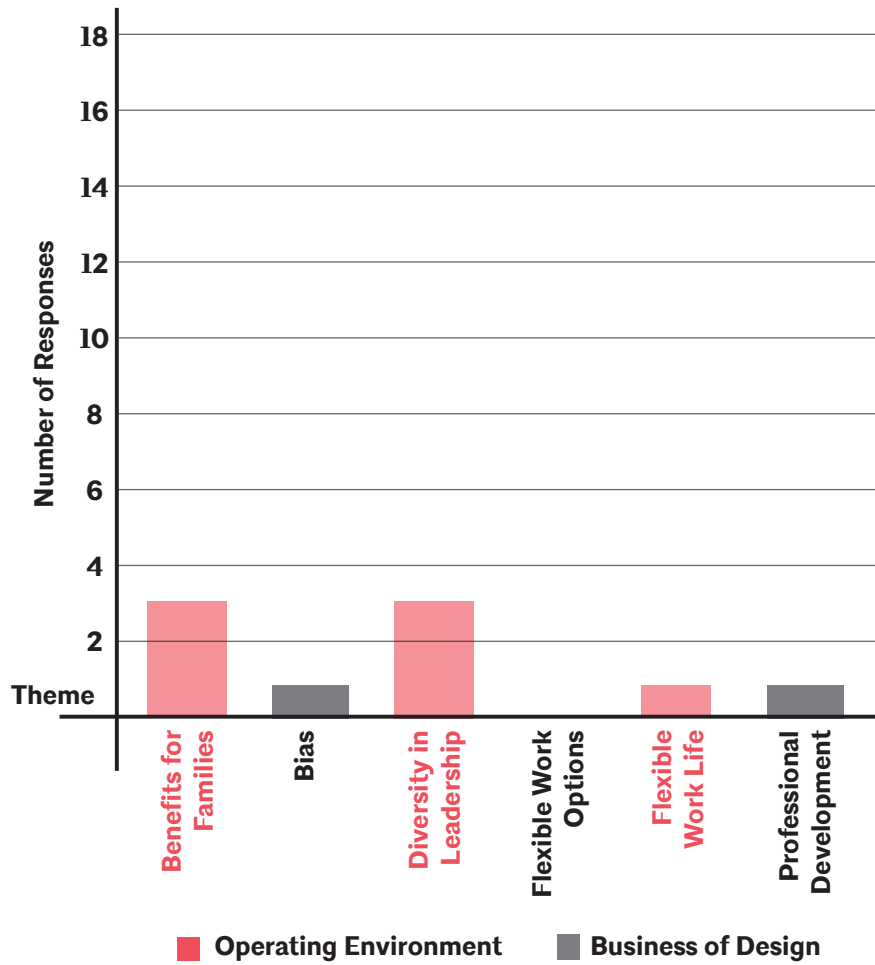
Responses Included:

1. Support of child care centers.
 - a. Well cared for kids make parents more relaxed and set up for a positive future
 - b. Creates greater productivity
2. Dependent care tax breaks
3. Increased child care options
 - a. Without such a long wait and hours available outside 9-5
4. Better transportation options for children
 - a. Would allow parents to get to the office more quickly, spend more time with family and less time in the car
 - b. It is more costly and less feasible

Discussion of Themes

3. Community

Stronger and more supportive community.



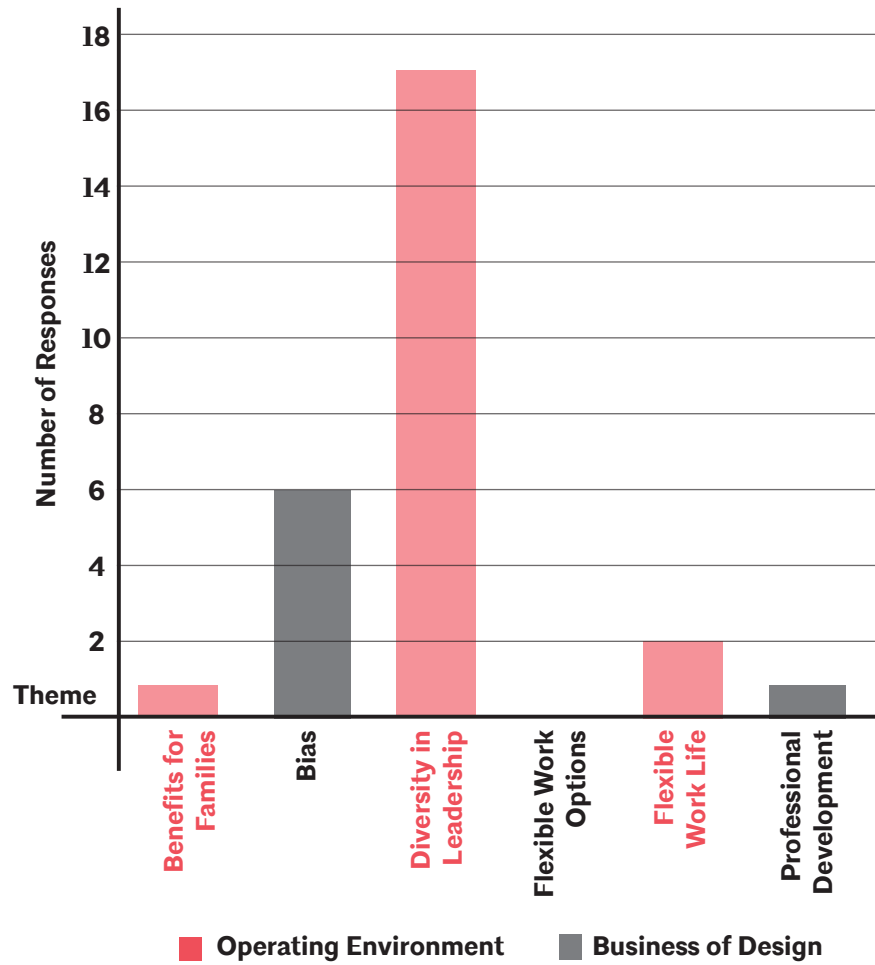
Responses Included:

1. More organizations/events; Women in Architecture
 - a. More collaboration
 - b. Networking gives people the opportunity for emerging professionals to get their feet wet and meet potential business leads
 - c. Act as safe environments for people to collaborate and address issues
 - d. Group environments help individuals find support and refine ideas into strategies
2. Increased soft skills and communication between groups
 - a. Seniors and young workers often have a hard time working together
 - b. Work issues could become easier and more manageable

Discussion of Themes

4. Diversity

Increased Diversity in the workplace, including leadership, talent, recruits, owners, and stakeholders.



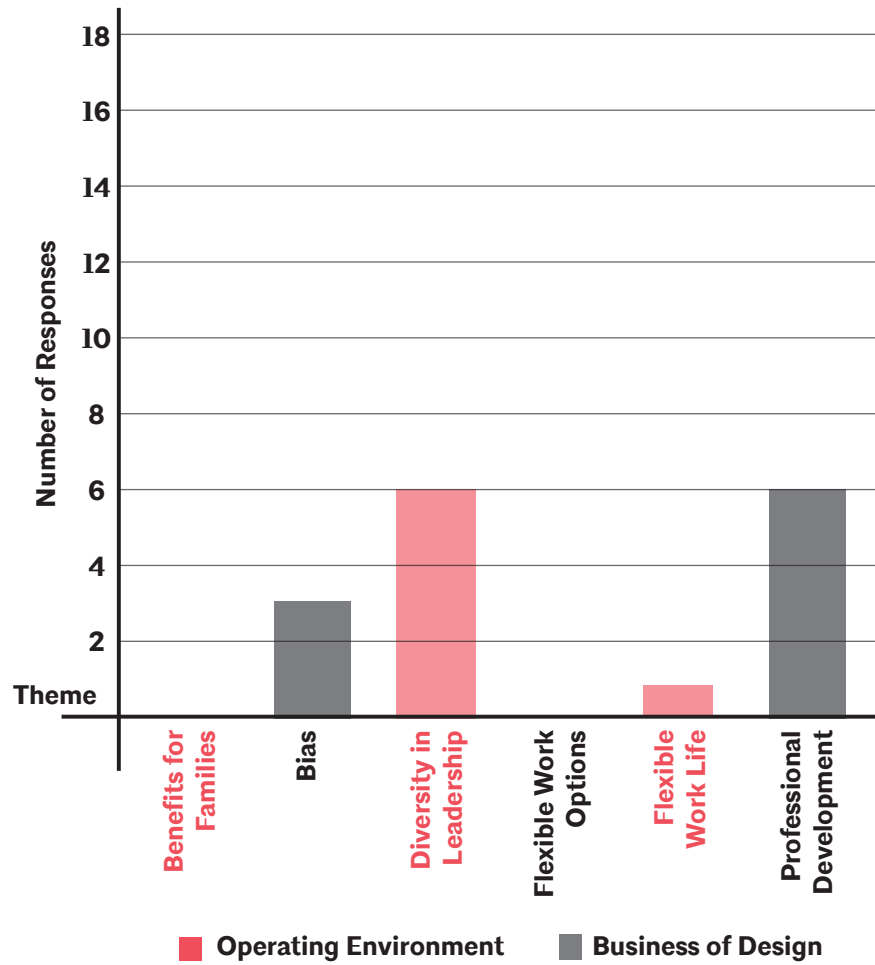
Responses Included:

1. Attracting and hiring diverse talent in Nashville:
 - a. A diverse group of people – female, race and ethnic differences and lifestyle differences are bringing new ideas
 - b. Actively recruit under-represented students and graduates
 - c. Diversity leads to a broader perspective
 - d. Encouraging diversity in high school and college
 - e. More graduates that are diverse in race and gender
2. Diversity in leadership opportunities and promotion
 - a. Include more diverse mix of people on project leadership teams
 - b. More cultural diversity in leadership
 - c. Development opportunities for different people
 - d. Fair and balanced; inclusive
 - e. Give younger individuals the opportunity to lead
3. Diversity in stakeholders and ownership
4. Place higher importance on diversity
 - a. Reward and recognize increased diversity

Discussion of Themes

5. Education

More education or mentorship opportunities.



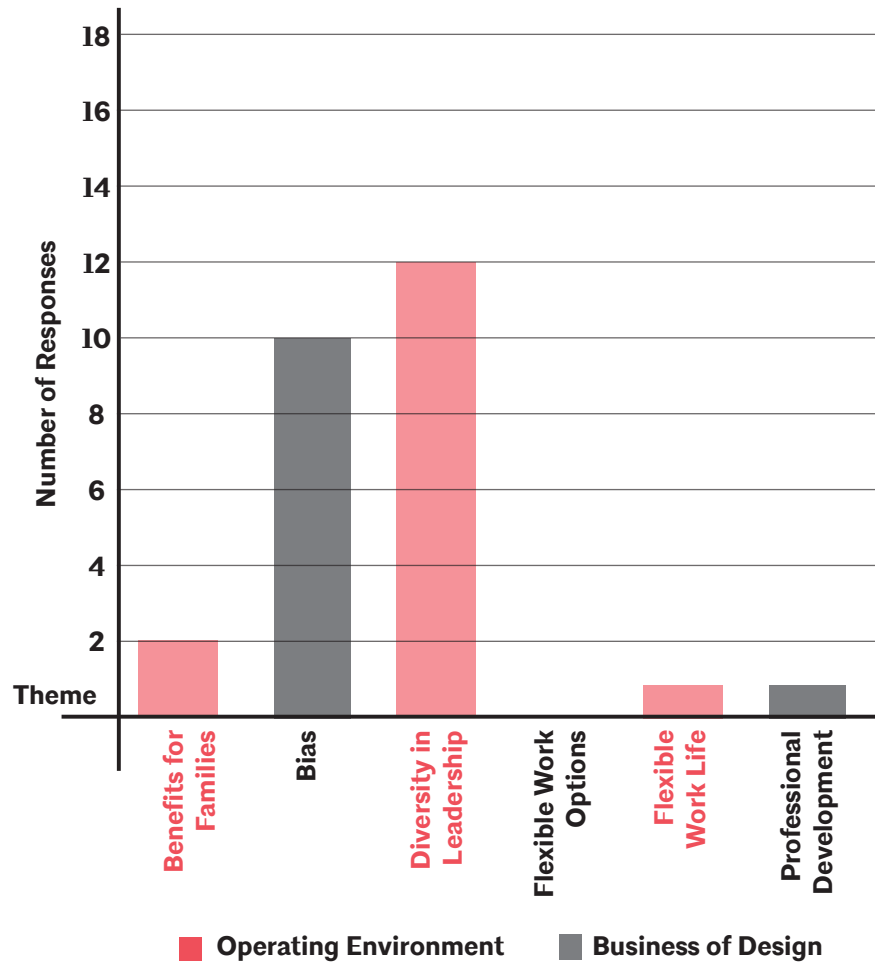
Responses Included:

1. Mentorship opportunities
 - a. Both internal mentors and external mentors
 - b. Inclusive mentorship opportunities
 - c. Champion programs; mentorship programs are big but champion programs are not
 - d. Strengths include sharing knowledge, creating legacy, creating a supportive environment across the industry
 - e. Mentorship in firms for all rising staff
 - f. Multiple mentors to gain different outlooks; new ideas to implement
 - g. External mentors; creating connections and development of local relationships within the industry
2. Mentorship opportunities for young professionals
 - a. Threats include generation gap and bias in both directions prohibiting mentorship
 - b. Intentional mentoring of young employees
 - c. Mentorship of developing professionals
3. Intentional training
 - a. Leadership training

Discussion of Themes

6. Equity

Equitable and inclusive opportunities available for employee promotion, recognition, and benefits.



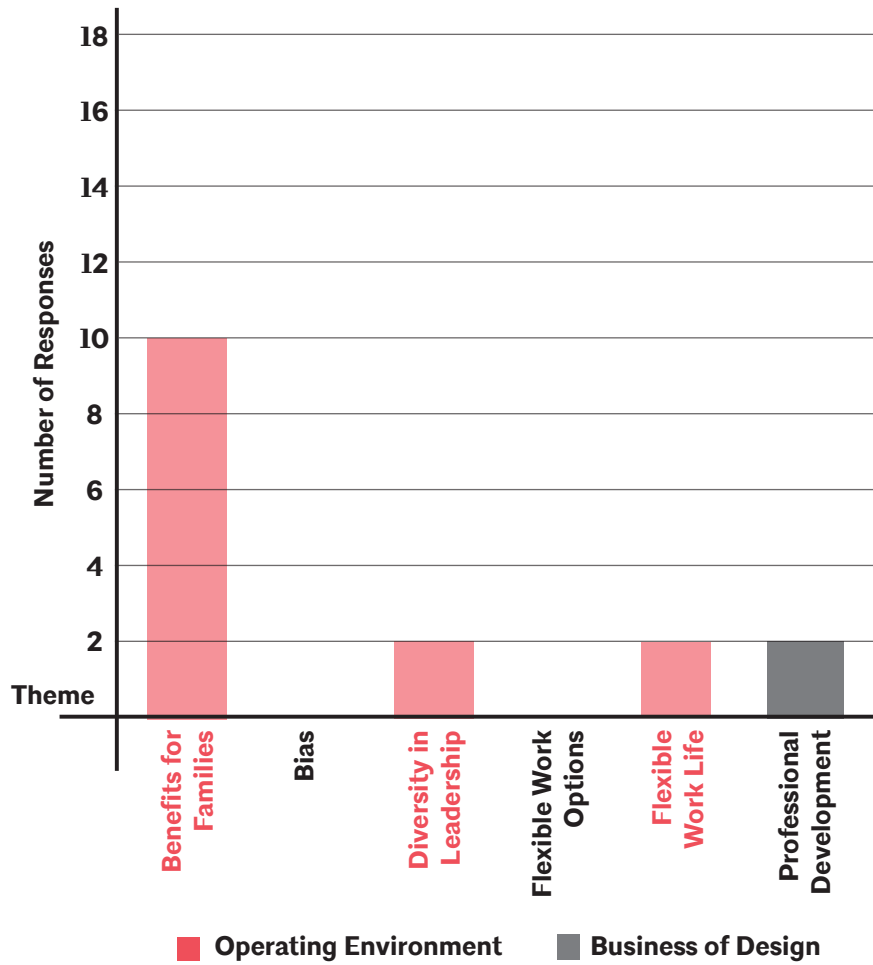
Responses included:

1. Same benefits for males and females
 - a. Maternity leave and an equal option for men with children
2. Equal pay for men and women
 - a. More women have the opportunity to work and possibly be main contributor to their family (finances)
 - b. Transparency in pay
 - c. Weaknesses include industry discourages discussion of compensation
3. Equal opportunities for leadership and promotions
 - a. Increased mobility and flexibility related to management activities
 - b. Advertise the opportunities to all and for all
 - c. Opportunities include increasing diversity
 - d. Clear promotional paths published to staff and recruits
 - e. Steps in place to advance within a company
 - f. Open design so that any designer can contribute to a project within a firm; more collaborative designs, weaknesses include too many cooks in the kitchen
4. Place new hires on projects that are higher stake

Discussion of Themes

7. Family Leave

Paid family leave.



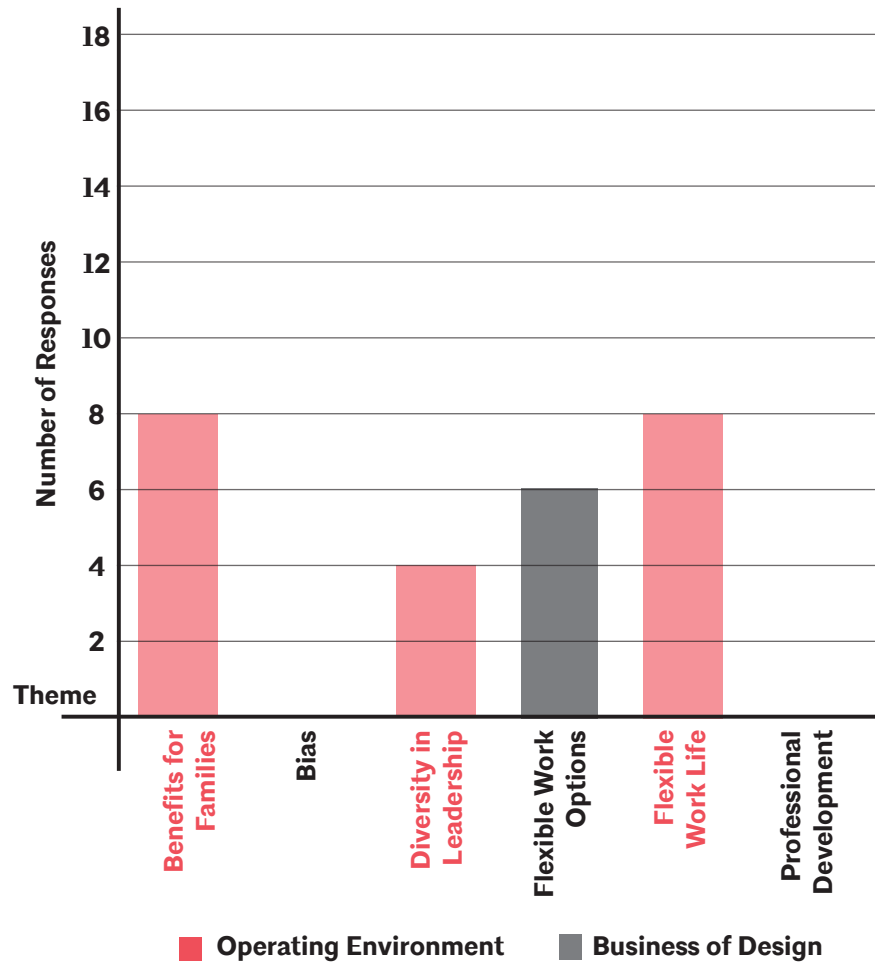
Responses Included:

1. Paid Family Leave
 - a. Retention, recruitment, and more women (with families) in workplace and leadership roles
 - b. Consistency across firms; firms share successes and failures with plans
 - c. Weaknesses included the need for additional resources and the loss of a key leader or C-suite employee momentarily
 - d. Threats include benefits being taken advantage of
 - e. Caregiving/health-related leave
2. Family Leave for mothers and fathers
 - a. If policy is not inclusive, could be discriminatory
 - b. People shouldn't have to choose between work and family

Discussion of Themes

8. Flexible

Flexible work hours.



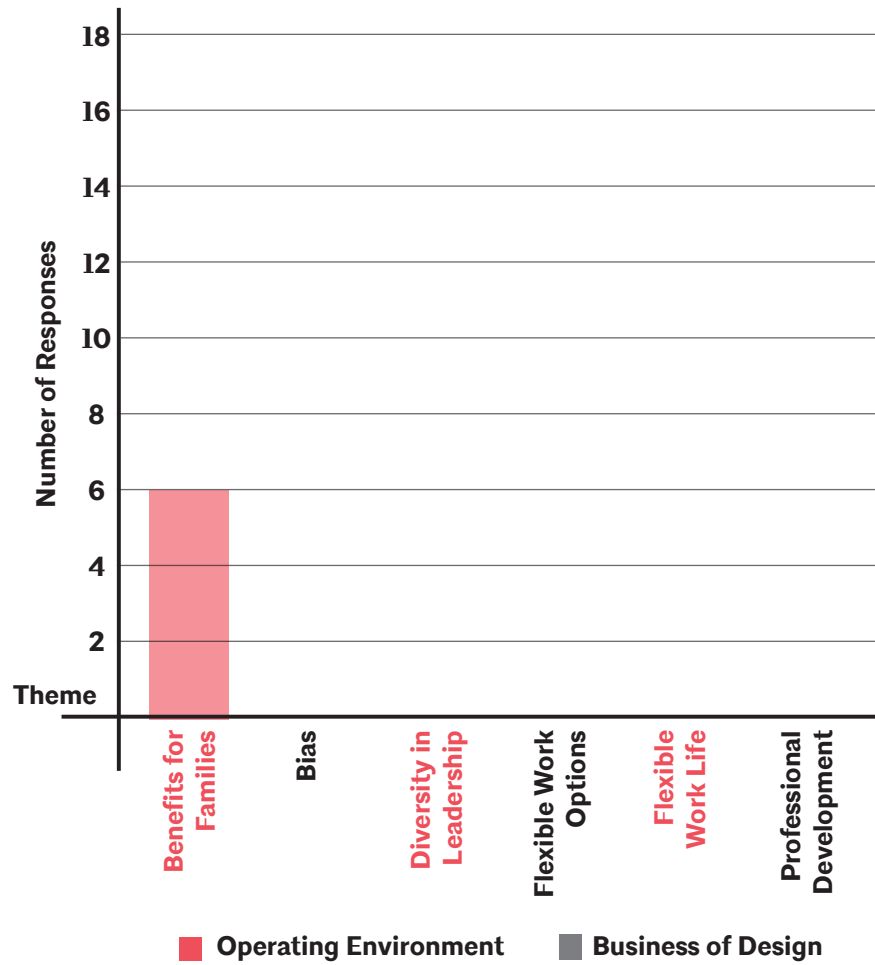
Responses Included:

1. Flexible work hours and environment
 - a. Allows individuals to work outside of office, provides a better work life balance
 - b. Weaknesses include the individual may not be available when the design/construction/owner/client needs them, less team building and collaboration
 - c. Individuals must be trusted to manage their time and tasks
 - d. Eliminate workaholic culture
 - e. Work life balance, helps with scheduling appointments
2. Ability to choose work hours
 - a. 40 hours within 7am-6pm M-F window; have core office hours
3. Flexible work hours for family needs
 - a. Keep more people in the industry with families, make it a norm to have flexibility
 - b. Morale increases for those trying to find work/life balance
 - c. Allow caretakers to take care of children or those in their care
4. Four day work week
 - a. Spend time at work more efficiently

Discussion of Themes

9. Health Benefits

More equitable health benefits for employees.



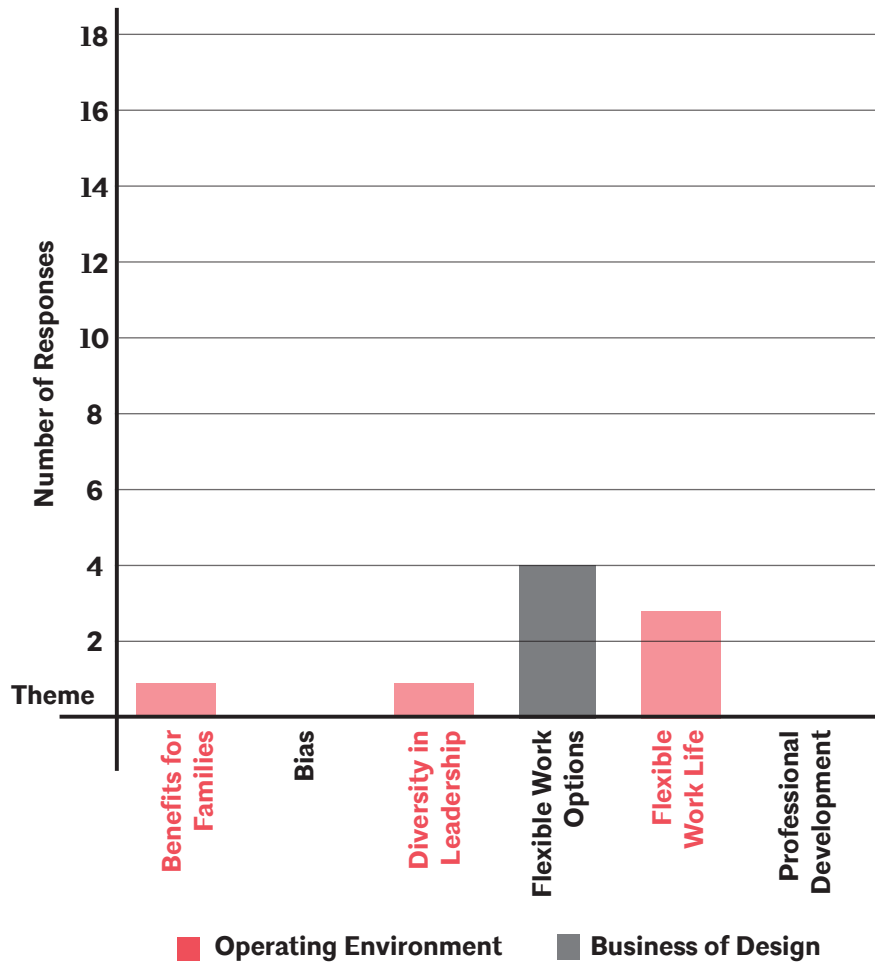
Responses Included:

1. Health Insurance
 - a. Health insurance paid for family, not just individual
 - b. Ability to choose from different options when it comes to health insurance and health benefits
 - c. Affordable healthcare and health benefits
2. Mental Health Days

Discussion of Themes

10. Technology

Technology available to make work from home feasible.



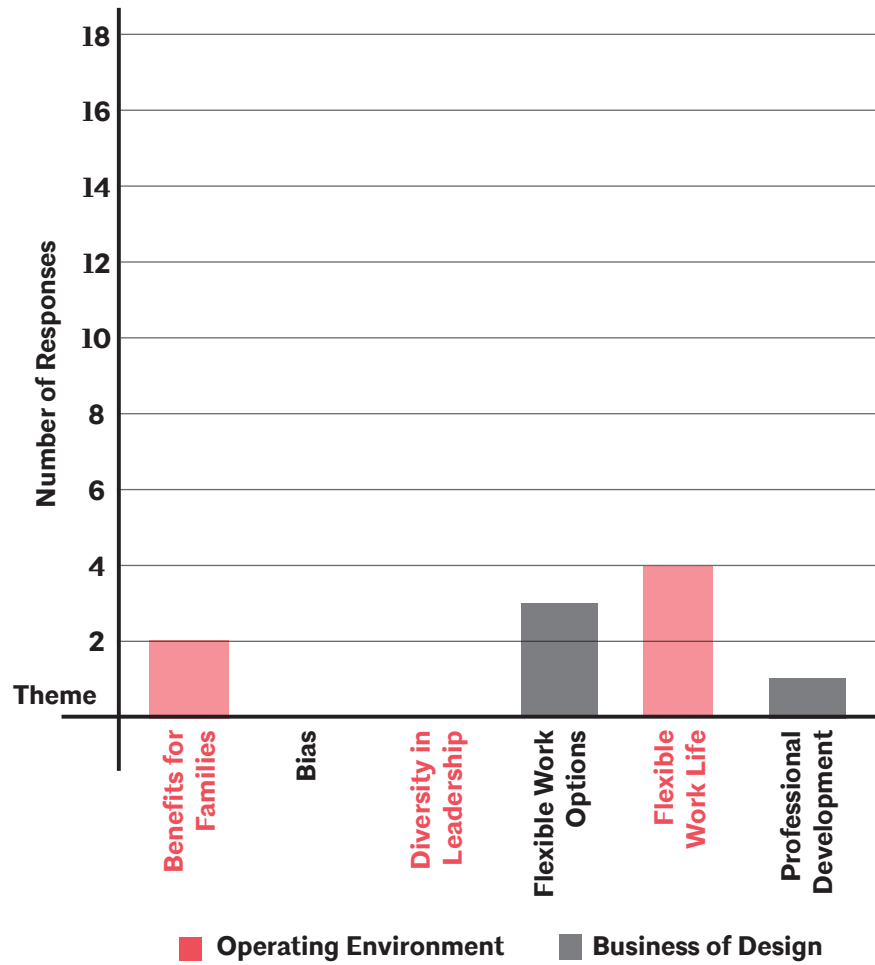
Responses Included:

1. Technology to make remote leadership viable
2. Better internet
 - a. Google Fiber
 - b. Internet speed
 - c. Weaknesses included not accessible to everybody
3. Laptops and virtual meeting options made available
 - a. Docking stations
 - b. Laptops to take home for work at home

Discussion of Themes

II. Transportation

More efficient transportation available.



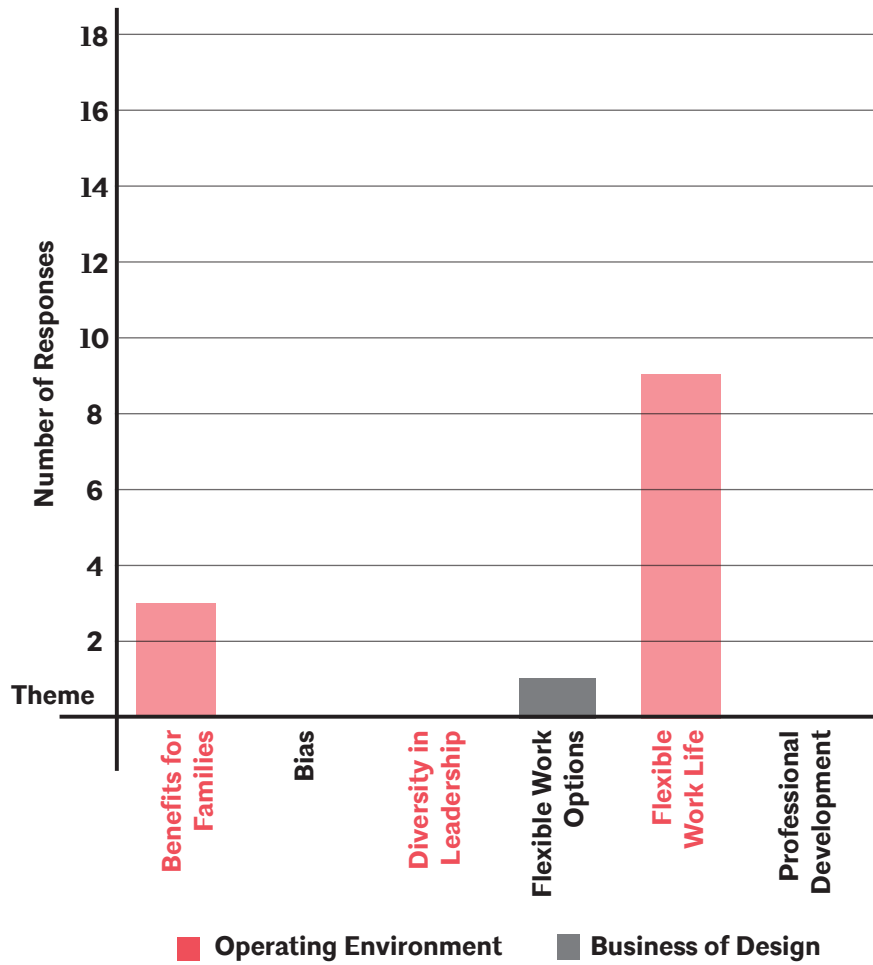
Responses Included:

1. Public transit
 - a. Public transit for middle schoolers and teens, good day care options for families in Nashville
 - b. Better public transit to support flexibility needed when caring for a family
 - c. Transit solutions and/or greenways
 - d. Easy and affordable
2. Traffic
 - a. Living near work and limiting commute time
 - b. Flexible business hours for avoiding traffic
 - c. Hours that allow dropping off kids at school
 - d. Community groupings - having work, home, school, etc. closer to each other

Discussion of Themes

12. Work From Home

Ability to work from home.



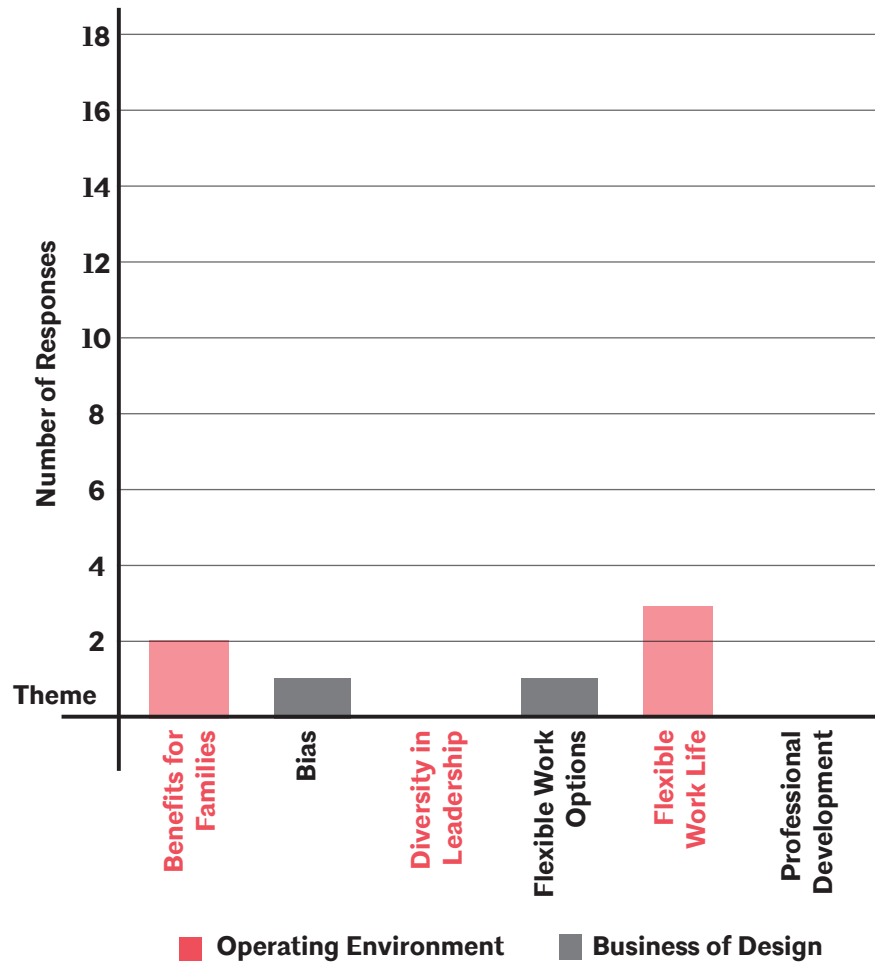
Responses Included:

1. Eliminate commute time
 - a. Ability to spend more time with family and less time in traffic
2. Work from home options available
 - a. Weaknesses included less collaboration and face-to-face communication, learning less from casual conversation
 - b. Opportunities include happier employees, incentives used to recruit
 - c. Threats include disconnected employees, less mentorship, less accountability
 - d. Better work/life balance
 - e. Could lead to more productivity, or more distractions
 - f. Retention, better feeling of fulfillment
3. Acknowledgment that work can get done at home
 - a. Parents can feel more valued

Discussion of Themes

13. Work/Life Balance

Increased emphasis on work/life balance.



Responses Included:

1. Emphasis on family life
 - a. It would provide architects/employees with peace of mind about prioritizing and accessing family in an emergency
 - b. Weaknesses include that it could be distracting to the work day
 - c. It provides the opportunity that families can benefit from the work life of an architect
2. Emphasis on flexibility with work hours and environment
 - a. Have work accommodate life for family or other purposes
 - b. Weaknesses include more difficulty coordinating with others, work quality may deteriorate without face-to-face communication
3. Eliminate workaholic culture
 - a. Reduce stress and promote health and wellness
 - b. Weaknesses include need productivity to be profitable
 - c. Opportunities include bigger firms taking the lead and setting the standard

How WIA Responded

A Conclusion... of sorts

From WIA to EDI

After a year and a half of listening and learning from those within our own community, as well as reflecting on the national conversation catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd and so many others, the members of the Women in Architecture Committee decided it was appropriate to expand the commitment of AIA Middle Tennessee's role in the EDI conversation. As of July 8, 2020, the WIA Committee for this Chapter will sunset and a new Committee will take on a broader mission under the title of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

The topics discussed in the above findings are not just issues faced by women. We hope that by refocusing, transferring the conversation to include more "differences that make a difference," and using our findings as a launching point and source of reflection, we can shift our efforts to be more inclusive.

Next Steps

Steps 3 and 4 of the Foresight Exercise

Do you accept the challenge?

This document is a collection of local data revealing trends AIA Mid TN members feel must be addressed in order for the region to become the most equitable place to practice architecture in the country. The eyes of the nation are fixed on the growing “it” city. We have a responsibility to be nationwide leaders in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion conversations. Nashville and the surrounding region are known for their generosity of spirit and attitude of collaboration. Let’s show the nation how it’s done.

The Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee challenges you to take this tool and use it to facilitate change in your firm or practice. We encourage you to discuss amongst colleagues how you can raise awareness around Bias, provide more comprehensive or creative Benefits for Families, explore Flexible Work Options and Work Life through technology and policy, and discover ways you can diversify your leadership pipeline either in your firm, or the profession as a whole. May this document serve as a tool and guide for those impactful discussions.

The EDI Committee will always be a resource to help you continue the conversation and make Nashville the most equitable place to practice in the country. When that day comes, we will celebrate a regional profession so diverse that the need for an EDI Committee will be rendered obsolete.

The rest... is up to you!



Credits and Acknowledgments

Sources

Equity by Design and AIA San Francisco

AIA CACE Foresight Workbook

AIA Guidelines for Equitable Practice

Girl UNinterrupted and AIA Boston

Thank You!

AIA Middle Tennessee Members

Tanner Landbolt (Data Analyst)

Ann McGauran and the State of TN

Tuck Hinton Architecture + Design

Hawkins Partners

TMPartners, PLLC

Earl Swensson Associates, Inc.

Belmont University

Daniels + Chandler Architects

Megan Glenn Architecture



Continued Discussion in a Post-COVID 19 Environment

A CACE Foresight Exercise Examining
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Trends through
the Lens of Gender in Middle Tennessee

Appendices

Continued Discussion in a Post-COVID 19 Environment

Appendices

Summary of Activities

Town Hall Series

Trend Results and Discussion

Benefits for Families + Professional Development

Diversity in Leadership + Bias

Flexible Work Life + Flexible Work Options

Credits and Acknowledgments

Summary of Activities

Town Hall Series

As a follow up to the February Chapter Meeting, the Women in Architecture Committee hosted a series of town hall meetings to discuss how the trends discovered at the February Chapter Meeting may have evolved since the onset of the global pandemic.

Each session was held via Zoom video conferencing with the purpose to present the analysis of the meeting and posed polling questions to investigate if the findings were still accurate through the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn. All questions were posed to capture the current climate for women in the field of architecture in Nashville. The sessions were held as follows:

Wednesday, June 3 | 12:30pm – The first town hall discussed the trends of Flexible Work Life and Options in the context of the Business of Design and Operating Environment.

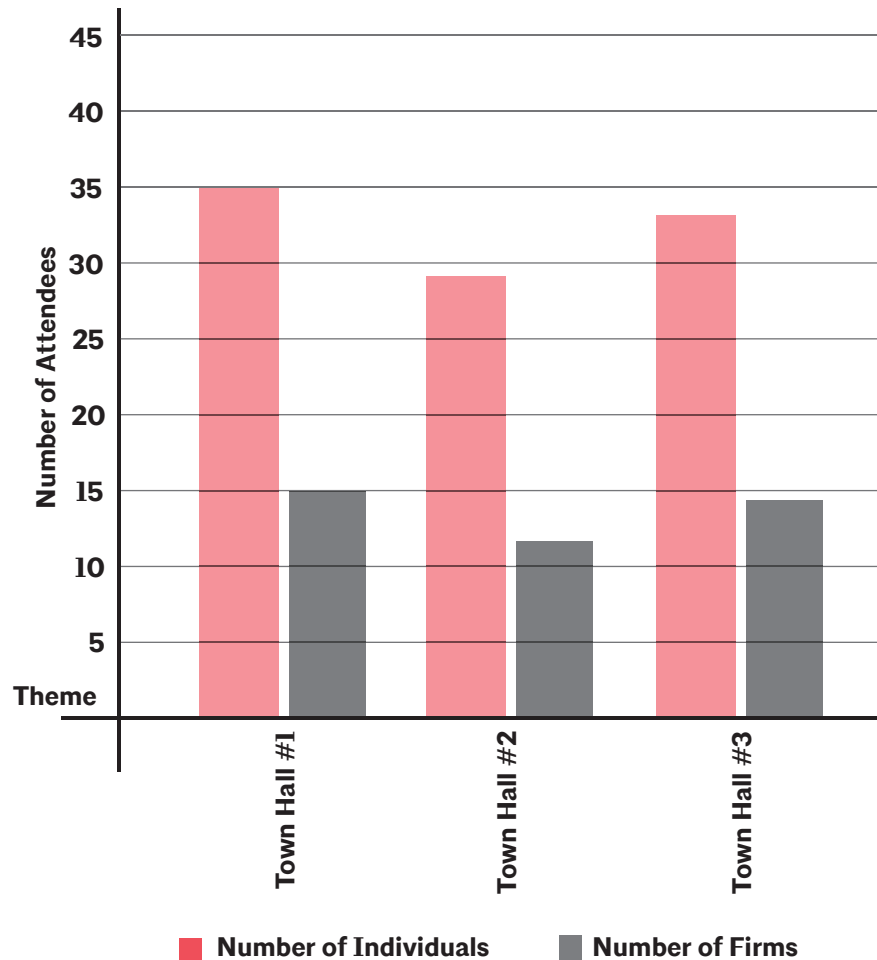
Wednesday, July 1 | 12:30pm – The second town hall discussed the trends of Benefits for Families in the context of the Business of Design as well as Professional Development in the Operating Environment.

Wednesday, July 8 | 12:30pm – The third town hall discussed the trends of Diversity in Leadership in the context of the Business of Design as well as Bias in the Operating Environment.



Summary of Activities

Meeting Demographics



Demographic Conclusions

In total, 97 individuals attended the town hall series encompassing 41 local firms.

It should be noted that the information shown does not include demographic data from non AIA members who attended the meeting.

Trend Results and Discussion

Benefits for Families + Professional Development Poll Results

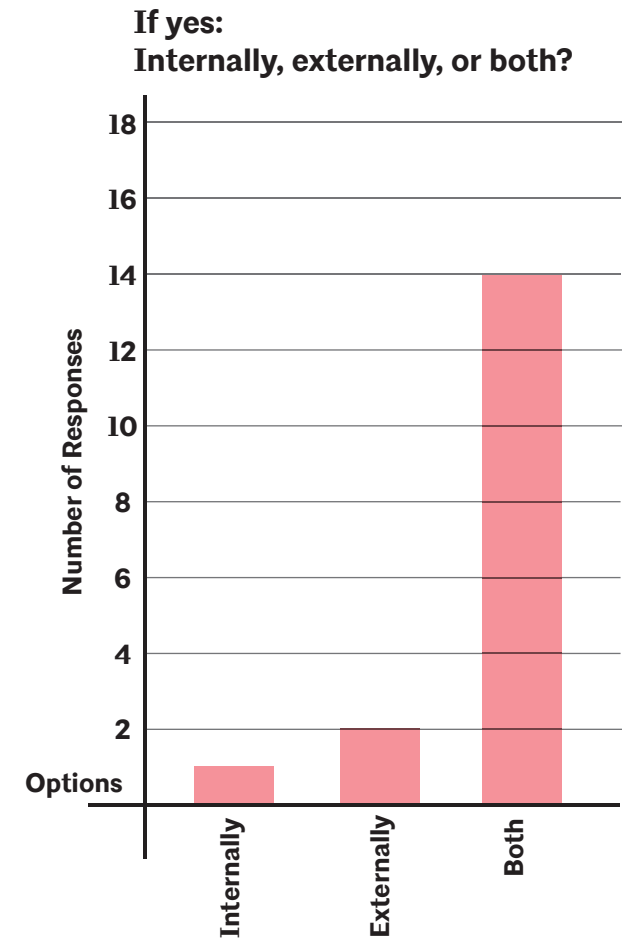
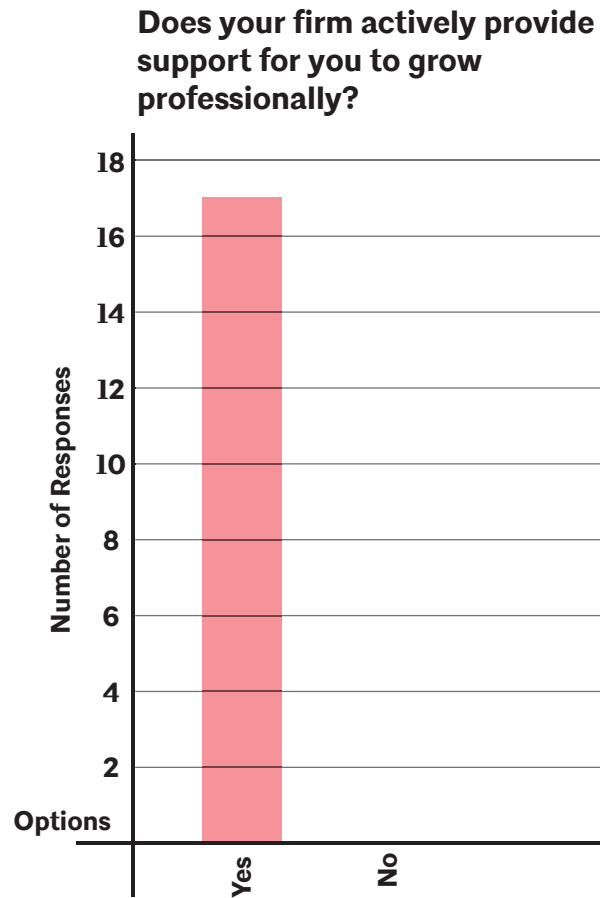
Town Hall Overview

As firms were encouraging safer at home practices, it left individuals with more time spent with family and less opportunities for professional development in the workplace.

The analysis from the February Chapter Meeting noted the need for clearer family leave policies, stronger health benefits, and greater access to educational opportunities.

The polling questions were created with the intention of understanding how firms have supported professional development in women and cared for, not only the individual, but the family through this unprecedented era.

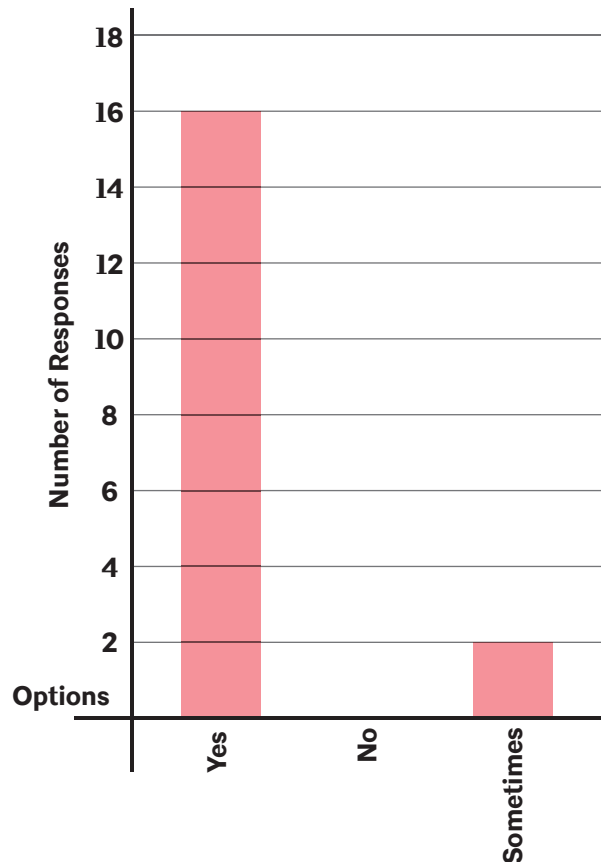
Many of the items discussed were based on company policies which led the committee to engage a human resource professional as a guest speaker. Heather Sells is a CPA and Assistant Controller at TMPartners and contributed to the discussion regarding government standards and mandates.



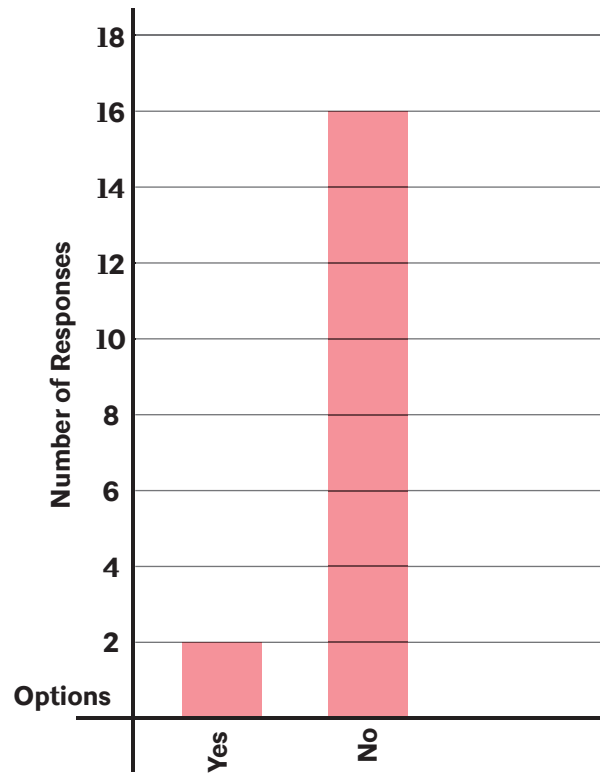
Trend Results and Discussion

Benefits for Families + Professional Development Poll Results

Did you feel that you had the autonomy to take care of unforeseen family needs as they arose Pre COVID-19?



Did that change during COVID-19?



All attendees reported feeling supported in their professional growth both internally and externally. A majority of respondents confirmed a sense of autonomy to take care of unforeseen families needs Pre COVID-19. Those who answered “Sometimes” in this category clarified that they received autonomy during COVID-19, answering “Yes” in the subsequent question.

Additional conversation included the importance of an established family leave policy. Many attendees noted their employer’s current policy required use of vacation or sick time to supplement family leave or the lack of a paternity leave policy. One firm principal stated that through providing full, paid family leave, employee satisfaction has increased and they’ve seen an overall cost benefit due to employee retention after returning from family leave.

Trend Results and Discussion

Diversity in Leadership + Bias Poll Results

Town Hall Overview

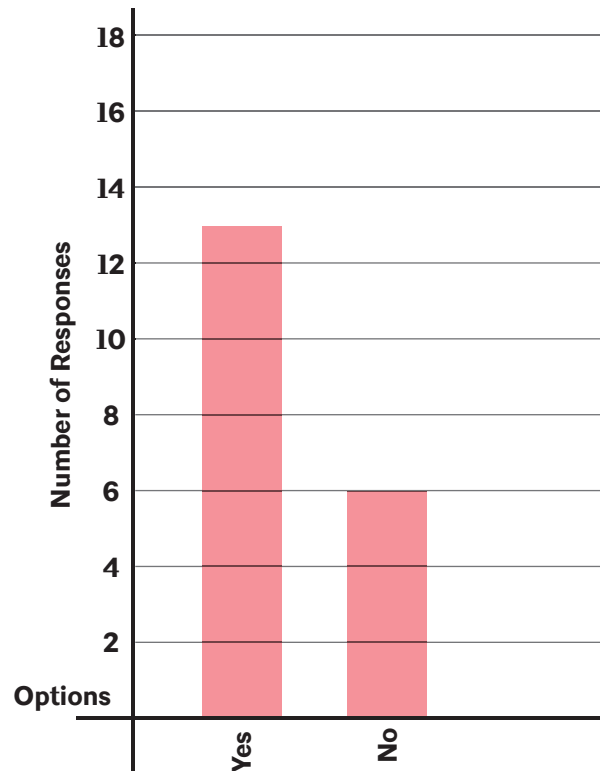
The nation was not only going through a pandemic, but also seeing citizens across the country advocating for social justice.

The analysis from the February Chapter Meeting implied a greater need for awareness of bias and increased diversity and equity in firms. These questions were specifically targeted towards gender diversity in the workplace.

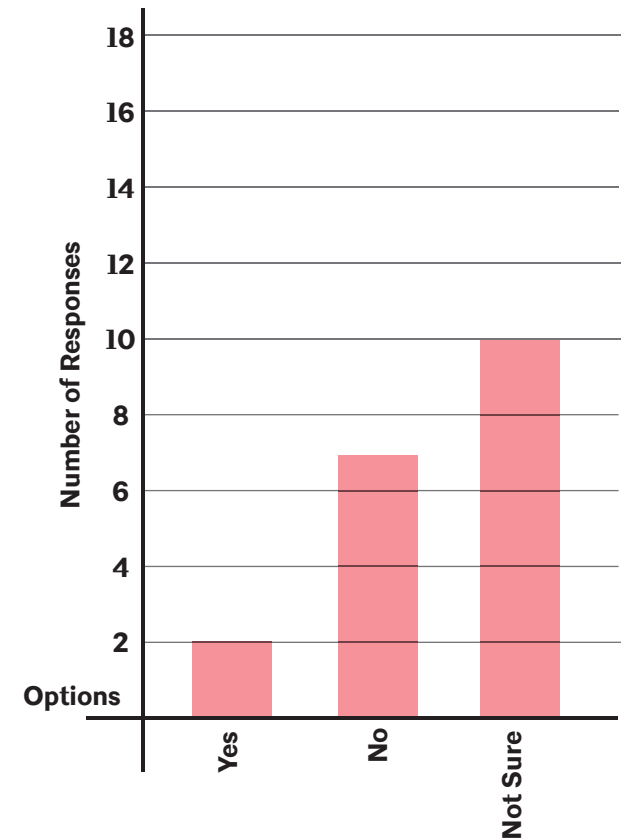
The polling questions focused on understanding how firms address equity, diversity, and inclusion through education and policies.

With the current political climate and growth of the social justice movement, the committee called upon a guest speaker to lead conversation regarding bias and equity. Dr. Sarah Gardial is the Dean of Belmont Massey School of Business and has spent her career advocating for equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace as a means of developing stronger and more profitable companies.

Are you comfortable talking about Bias in the workplace?

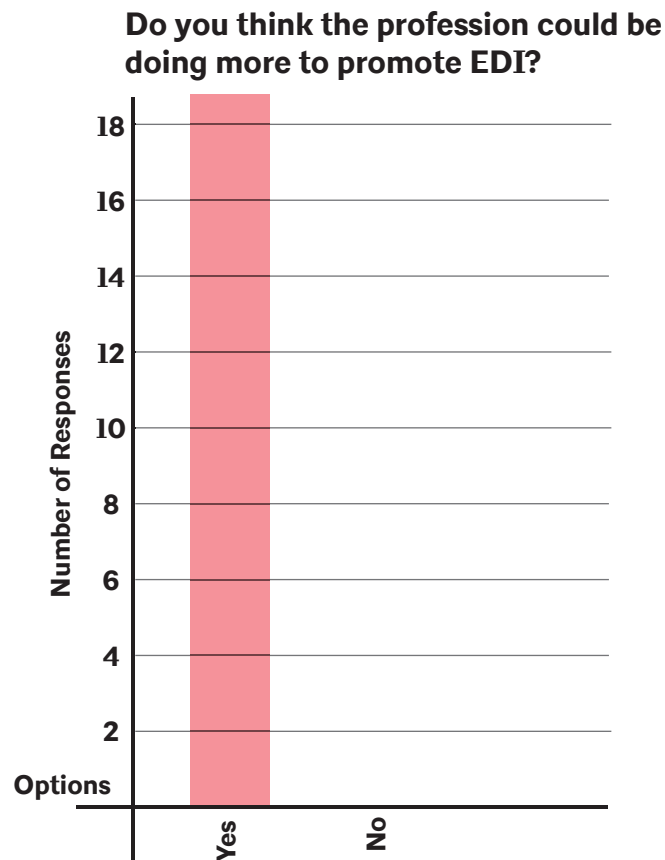


Does your firm have a formal, written EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) initiative?



Trend Results and Discussion

Diversity in Leadership + Bias Poll Results



This town hall discussion identified one of the largest areas of growth for the architectural industry. One third of respondents did not feel comfortable discussing bias in the workplace.

The majority of respondents indicated there was no formal written EDI initiative or they were unsure. Dr. Gardial heavily emphasized that establishing a stance on equity, diversity, and inclusion is crucial to ensure there is both accountability and a strategy towards developing a more equitable workplace.

There was a unanimous agreement amongst attendees that the profession as a whole has opportunity to promote EDI and continue the conversation regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Trend Results and Discussion

Flexible Work Life + Flexible Work Options Poll Results

Town Hall Overview

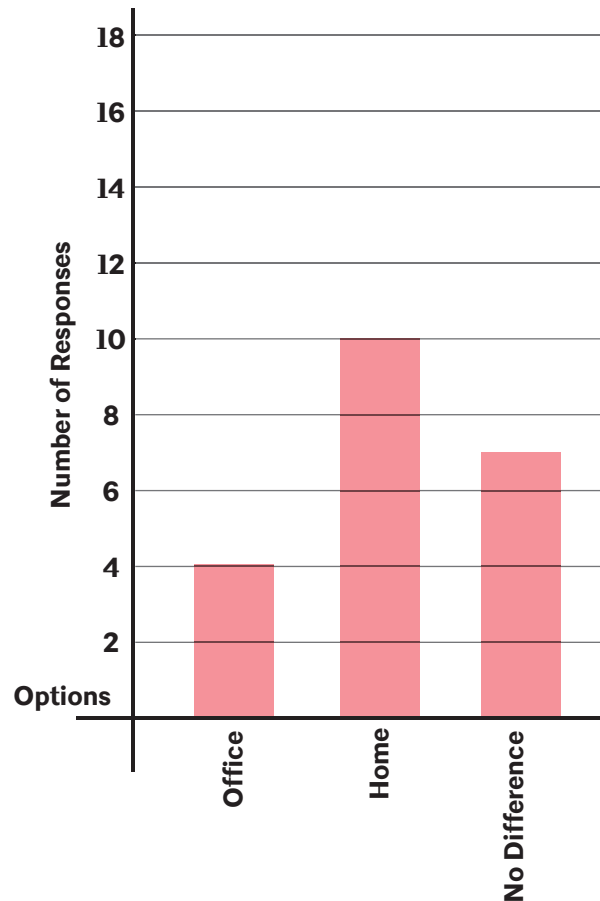
As individuals shifted to working at home through the COVID-19 pandemic, the topic of remote working capabilities and virtual technology was prevalent in all industries.

The analysis from the February Chapter Meeting stated the potential for growth in the industry towards a better work / life balance including flexible hours, the ability to work from home, and the technology to support doing so.

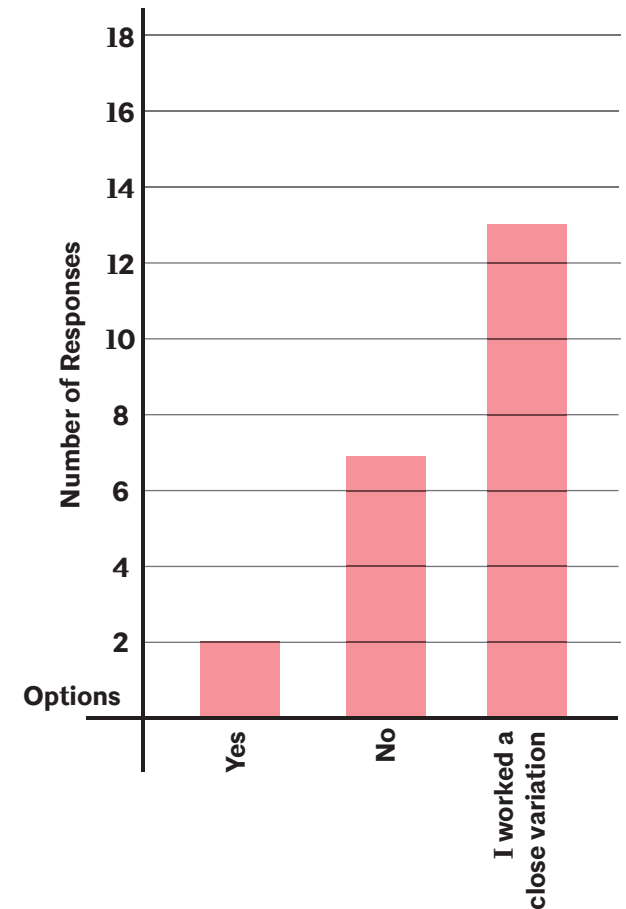
The polling questions were targeted towards understanding if these issues were still apparent or if the obligation of staying safer at home alleviated these stressors.

Throughout the town hall discussion, attendees spoke to the dramatic change in the industry to provide opportunities to work from home through COVID-19 and the overall change in attitude towards productivity in working from home.

Were you more productive at home or at the office?

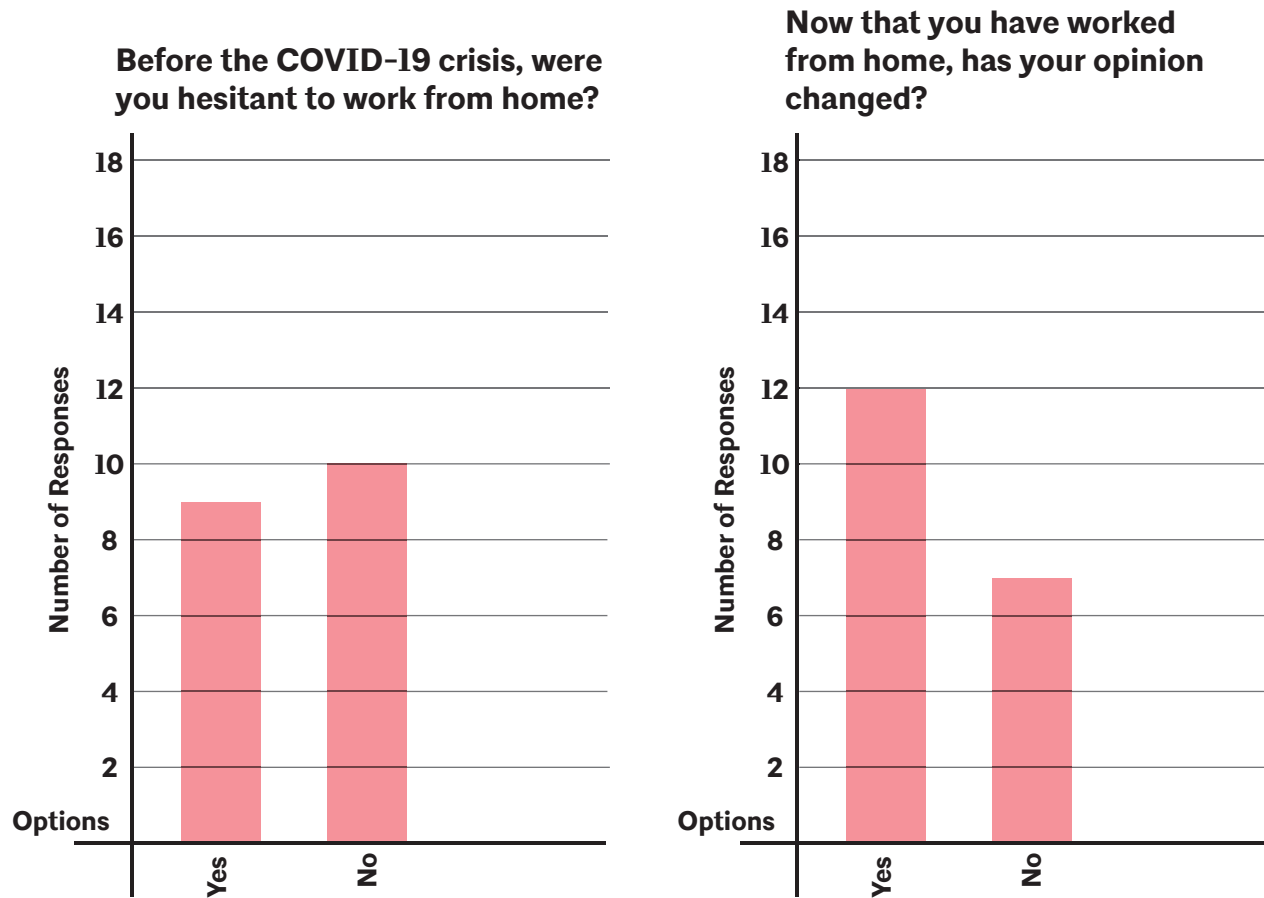


When you worked from home, did you work the same regular office hours?



Trend Results and Discussion

Flexible Work Life + Flexible Work Options Poll Results



The main concern of employers regarding staff working from home is the issue of productivity. A majority of respondents stated they saw no difference in productivity or were more productive at home due to less interruptions throughout the day.

It was clear that, when working from home and potentially having family needs closer at hand, it was more difficult to work during specified hours. However, many held a close variation to accommodate their changing needs.

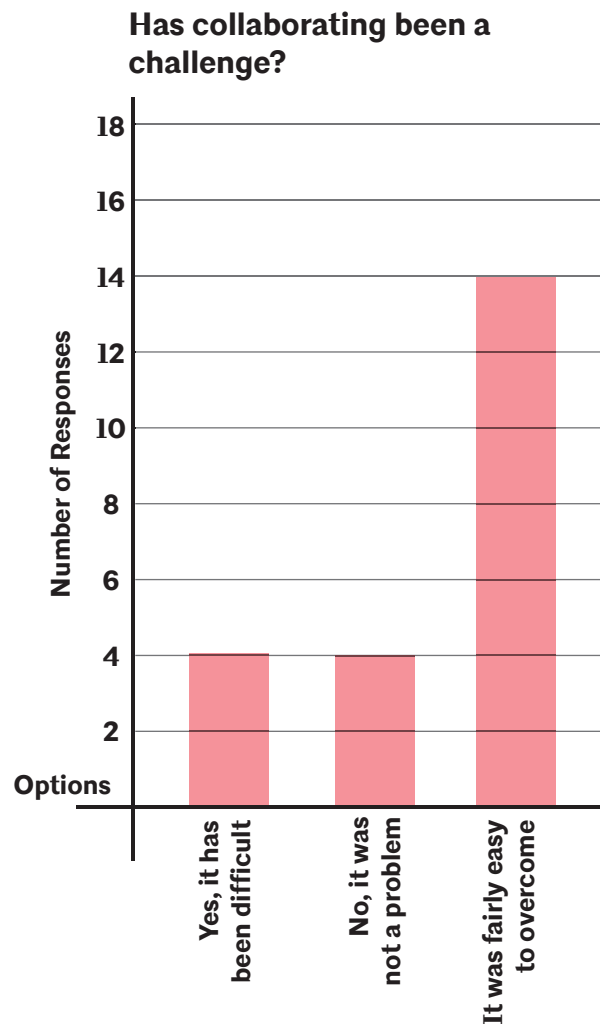
We had three respondents admit their feelings toward working from home shifted as a result of the “great work from home experiment” and they would be more open to working remotely in the future.

Trend Results and Discussion

Flexible Work Life + Flexible Work Options Poll Results

Collaboration continues to be an important topic of conversation in all industries and, in particular, creative industries. The majority of our respondents admitted that collaborating was difficult at first, but easy to overcome after being forced to adjust by finding new technologies.

For instance, the barrier of in-person meetings through the pandemic was overcome by the use of video conferencing. However, some attendees noted that in person collaboration will always be essential in the creative process, specifically in providing mentorship to young professionals. A mixture of in person and remote working styles may be feasible in the future.



Credits and Acknowledgments

Guest Speakers

Many of the topics discussed at the town hall series extended past the purview of the members of the committee. We invited members of the community to elaborate on their expertise of their dedicated field to provide additional insight into the topic at hand.

We thank them graciously for supporting the mission of the Committee on Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

Heather Sells, CPA, Assistant Controller, TMPartners, PLLC

Dr. Sarah Gardial, Dean of the Jack C. Massey School of Business, Belmont University