

Rush Women Mentoring Program: Supporting women faculty to achieve career goals

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Introduction

Rush University consists of four Colleges (medicine, nursing, health sciences, and the graduate college). Of about 1,800 total full-time faculty members, slightly more than 50% are women. Targeted faculty mentoring is fundamental to career success, productivity, and satisfaction in academic medicine. With that in mind, Academic Affairs and the Office of Mentoring Programs established the Rush Women's Mentoring Program (RWMP) in May of 2014.

Purpose

We aim to create a comprehensive program that facilitates women faculty members’ pursuit of specific career goals within a supportive and engaging environment at Rush.

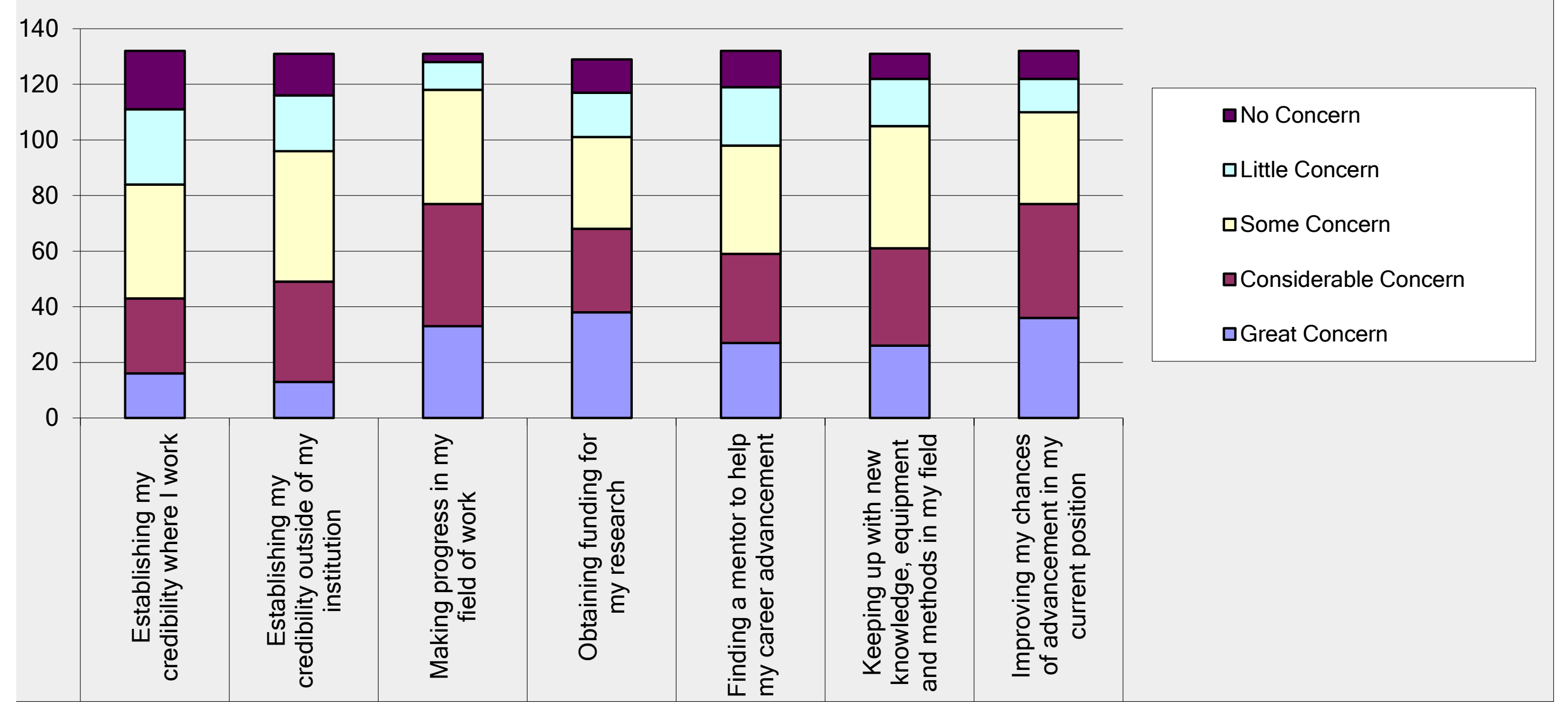
Methods

To assess the needs of the participants, a survey containing 35 questions was composed and inquired about women faculty concerns with their careers, their confidence level regarding general leadership experience and their willingness to engage in the program as a mentor or mentee. The survey was sent to 500 women faculty of all ranks who had a Rush’s email account. After three reminders, 29.4% (n=147) responded the survey.

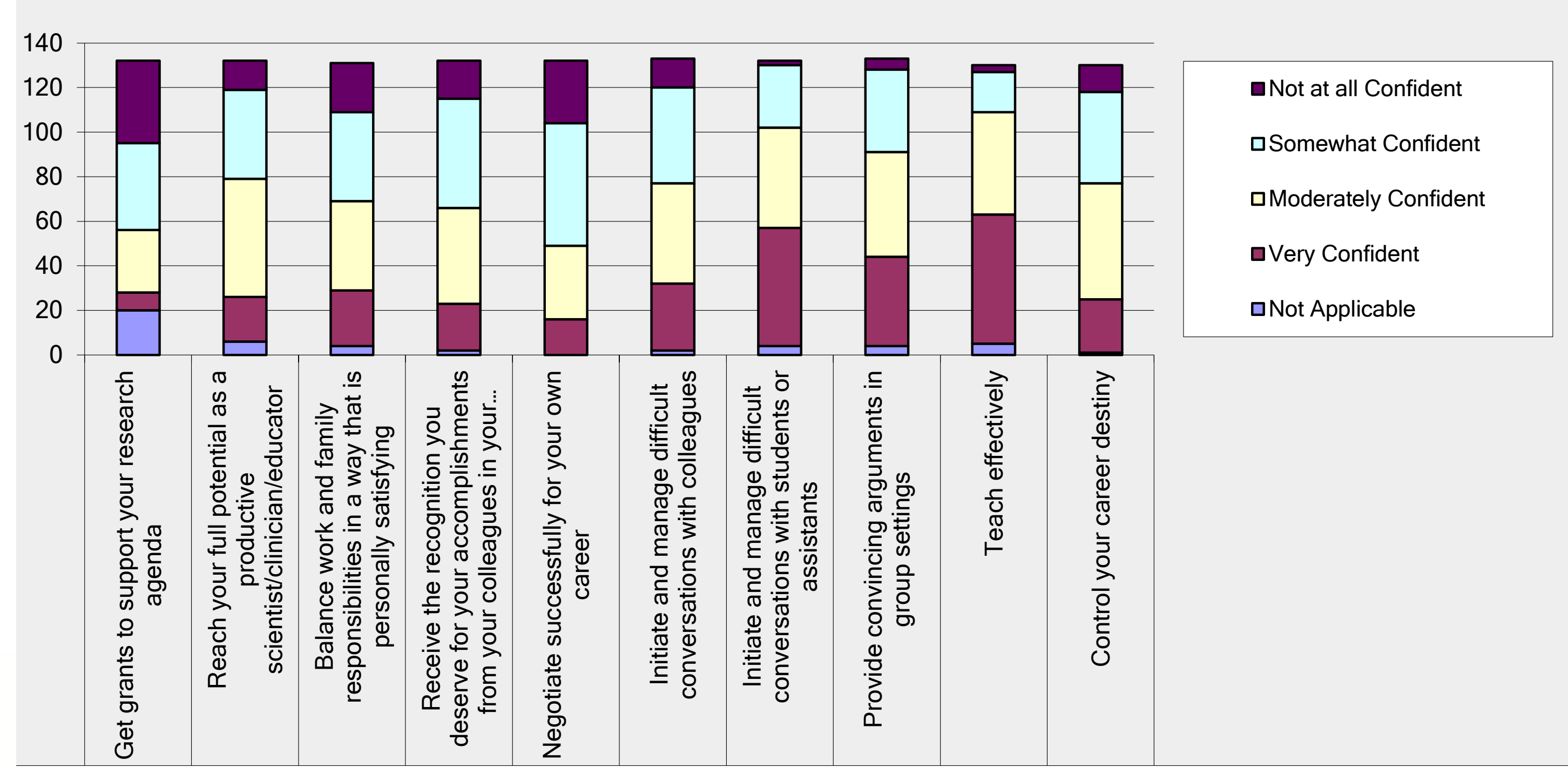
Results

Sixty percent of the responders were assistant professors (n=88), followed by 20% (n=29) associate professors, 13% (n=19) full professors, and 7% (n=11) postdoctoral fellows/ instructors. The average tenure at Rush for this pool was 9.5 years.

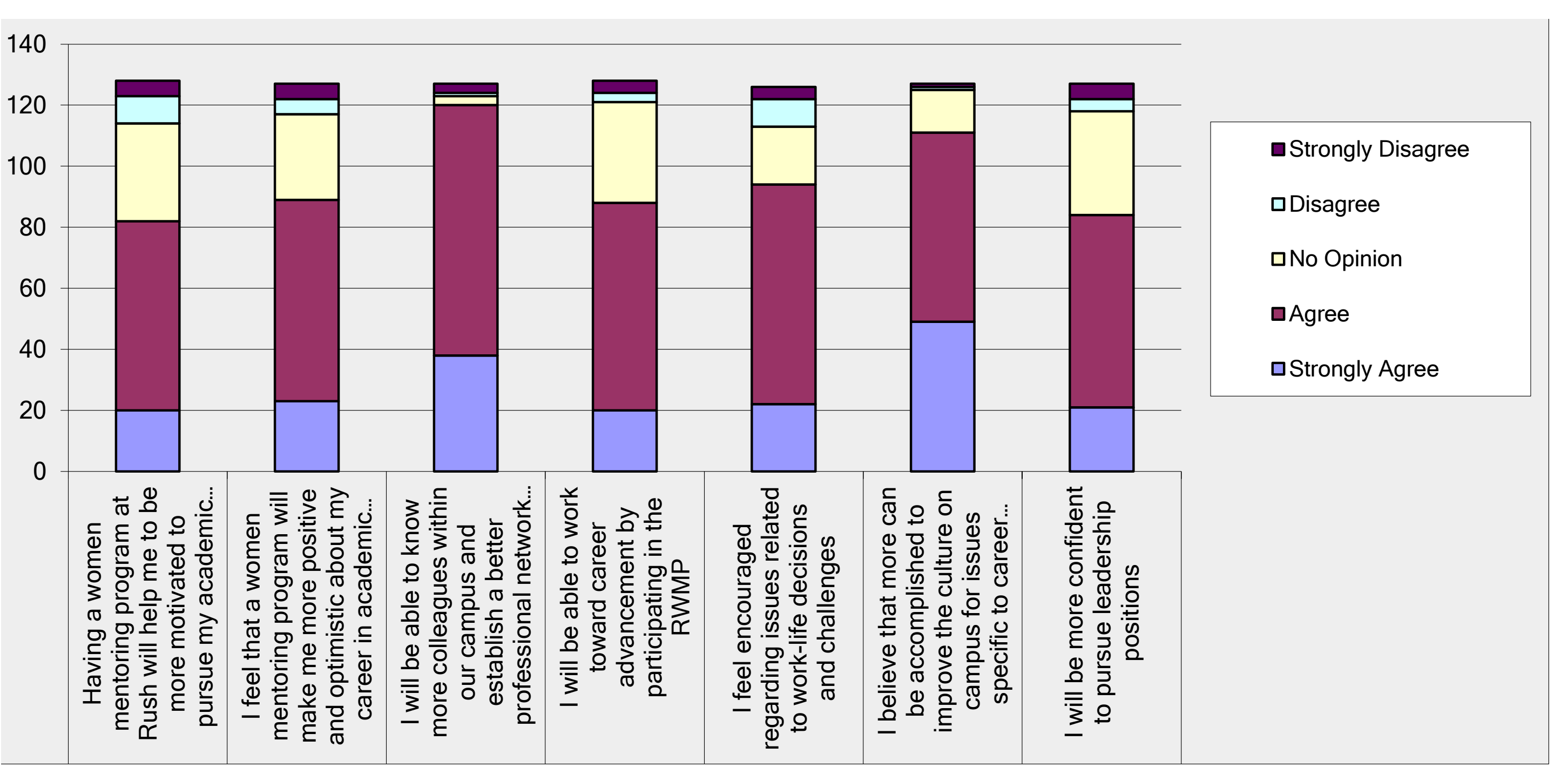
How concerned are you with each of the following career issues?



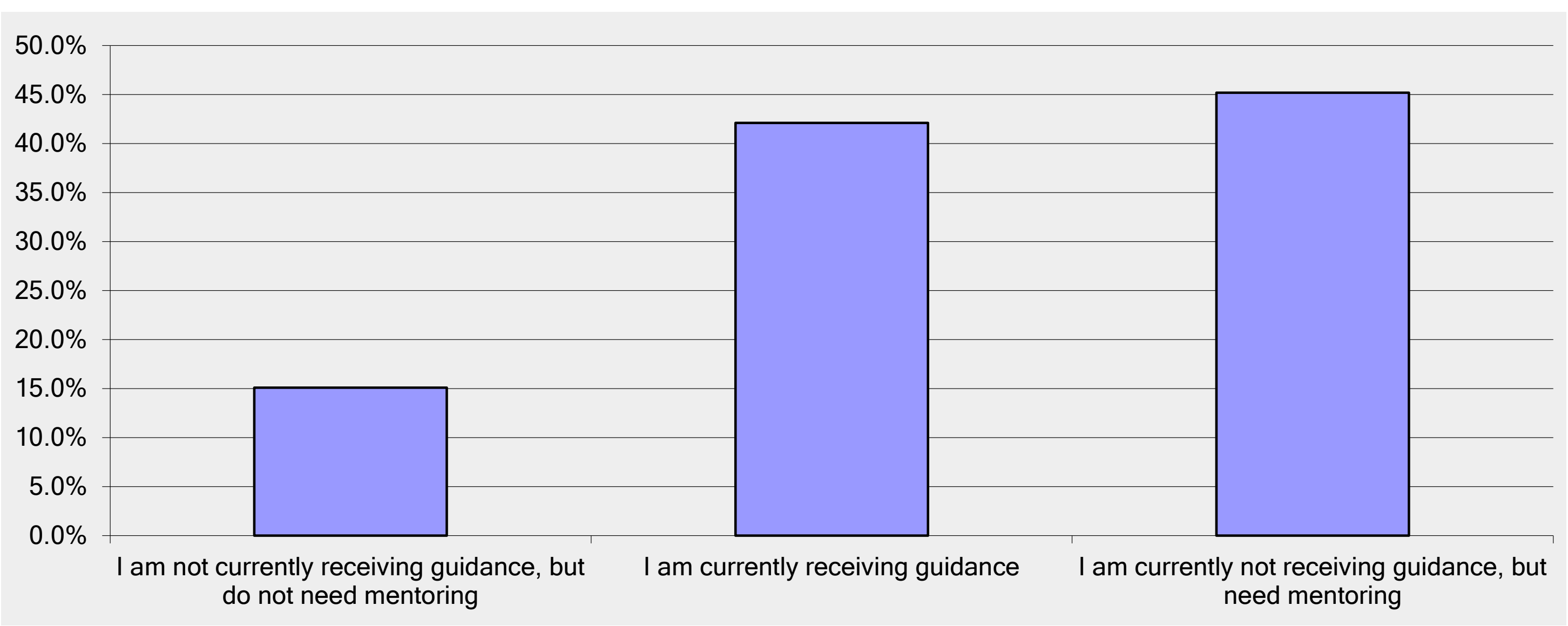
How confident are you that you can?



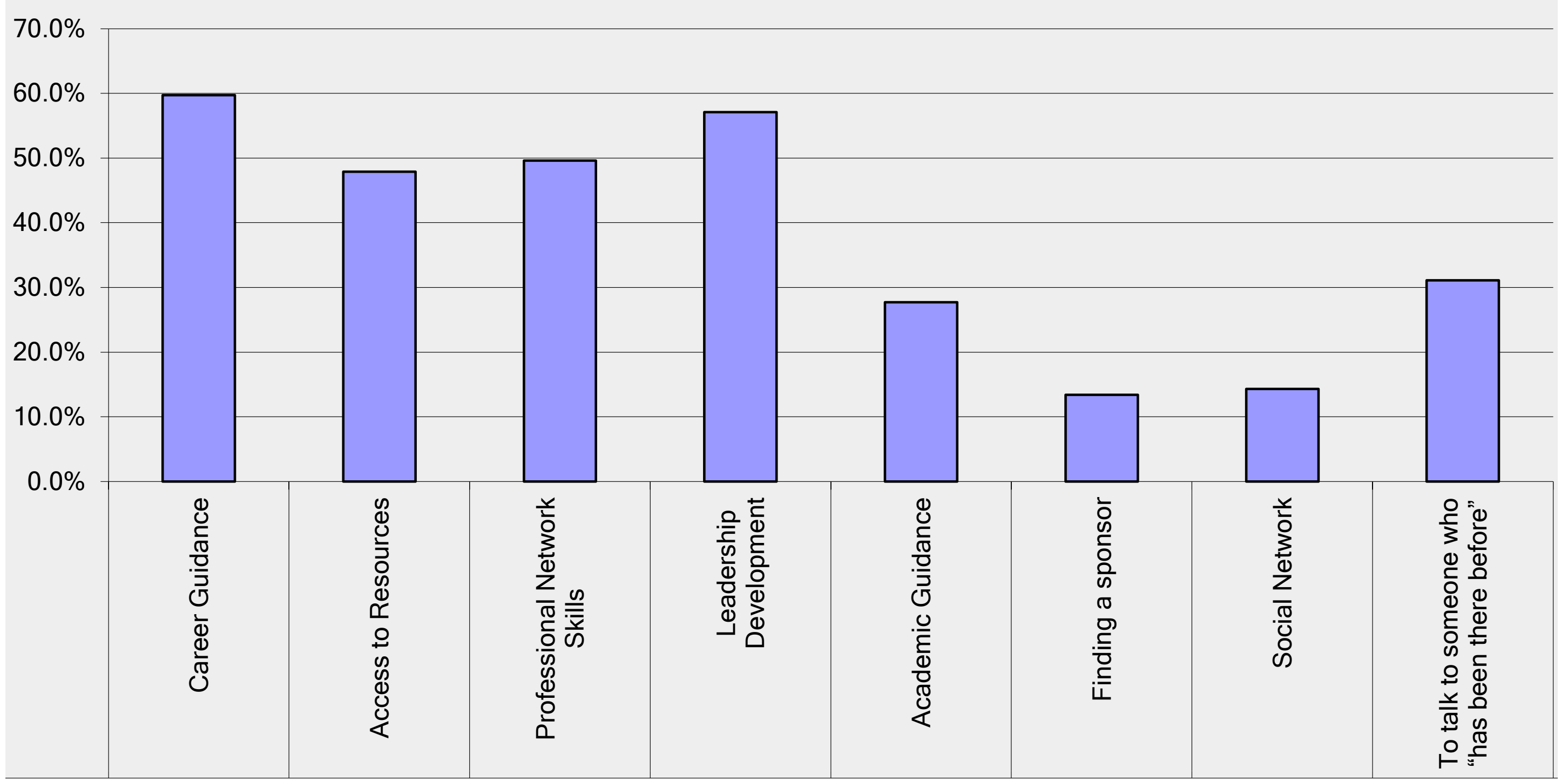
Value of the RWMP



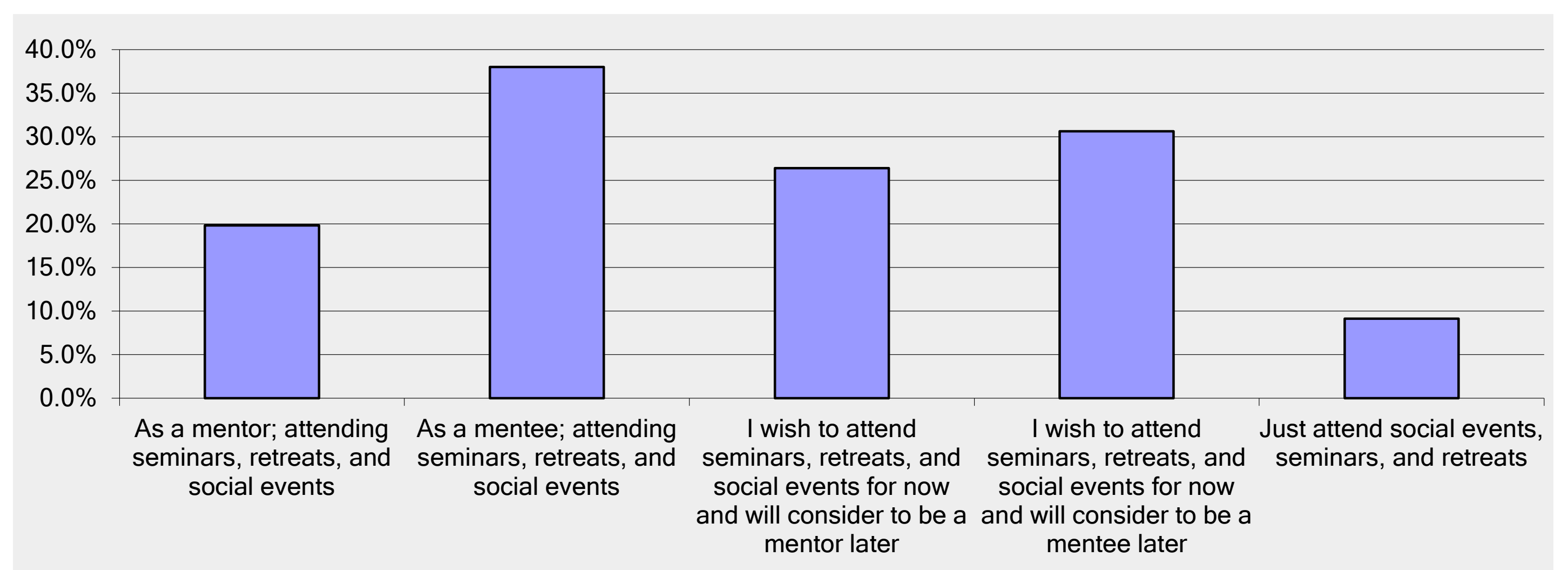
Most accurate statement for your current professional situation



Top three needs for mentoring



How will you be participating in the RWMP?



Program Effectiveness

Based on the survey results, two areas were chosen to focus on during the first year: leadership development (including professional networking) and facilitating senior mentor-junior mentee pairs based on mentees’ interests to assist them with career advancement. The table below summarizes the activities and the level of participation in the past year.

Activities during first year of the program	Metrics
# of senior mentor-junior mentee pairs	35
# of meetings and surveys to get feedback from mentor-mentee pairs	2
Seminars and workshops on leadership and professional networking	13
Total number of participants in events	435
Average number of participants per event	31
Program Satisfaction	

Conclusions and Next Steps

- Assistant professors, postdoctoral fellows, and instructors are most concerned with obtaining funding for their research, whereas associate and full professor are most concerned with making progress in their field of research and establishing their credibility internally and outside Rush.
- Assistant professors also indicated great concern regarding the possibilities of advancements to the next level.
- Although women faculty indicated receiving more mentoring than male faculty (30% formal and 65.4% informal vs 25.9% and 54.5% respectively for men), the top three priorities for mentoring were career guidance, leadership development, and professional networking.

To address these priorities, Academic Affairs and the Office of Mentoring Programs:

- Paired junior with senior faculty based on their field of expertise and career goals.
- Provided opportunities for grant writing workshops, manuscript editing, and communication skills.
- Created opportunities to meet as a group with other mentor/mentee pairs to discuss ideas and reflect on the direction of the program.
- Created guidelines for mentors and mentees to facilitate their interactions and maximize meeting productivity.
- Started leadership development workshops and meetings to facilitate networking and create the “sense of belonging”, especially important for junior faculty.