Annual Report on Membership Demographics

Society for Music Theory

2023

Contents

1. Preface

This document reports the 2023 demographic information for members of the Society for Music Theory (hereafter, SMT). The data was collected from the "My Profile" section in the membership portal on the SMT web site, https://members.societymusictheory.org/. The 2023 data is a snapshot of the web site on October 18, 2023.

Historical data points were manually extracted from previous years' demographics reports, currently available at:

https://societymusictheory.org/administration/demographics

The content of the current report is indebted to the work of previous SMT statisticians, including Gabriel Fankhauser (2014–2016), Jenine Lawson Brown (2017–2019), and Sebastiano Bisciglia (2020–2021).

As noted in the 2022 report, other academic music societies do not appear to produce publicly available annual demographics reports. The latest available demographic report from the American Musicological Society, for example, is still 2017. No comparison data is thus provided here.

This report will be initially shared with SMT's Executive Board and then posted to SMT's web site. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about this report or would like to offer recommendations or suggestions for future reports.

This report was prepared using RStudio (v. 2023.06.2+561), R (v. 4.3.1, "Beagle Scouts"), and LaTeX (v. MacTEX-2022).

Respectfully submitted on December 14, 2023,

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2. Overall membership

2.1. Historical membership data

SMT membership by year since 2014 is shown below in **Table 1**. Although 2022 saw an increase in total members as compared to prior years, total membership for 2023 is lower than any year since 2014 except 2021.

Table 1: SMT membership by year

Total membership	1164	1220	1299	1133	1154	1173	1117	1028	1198	1042
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023

Overall membership counts from 2014 to 2023 are plotted in **Figure 1**. In this figure (as well as the similar plots that follow), a linear regression model has been applied to the data, which is shown as the white line between the two regions shaded in light gray. This middle white line shows the overall trend, presuming the data derive from an underlying linear relationship. The slope of the regression line is indicated by $\widehat{\beta}$, which provides the best estimate for the amount of change in the variable on the Y-axis given a unit change in the variable on the X-axis. The light gray regions above and below the middle white line indicate the 95% confidence interval (95% CI) for values of the regression slope.
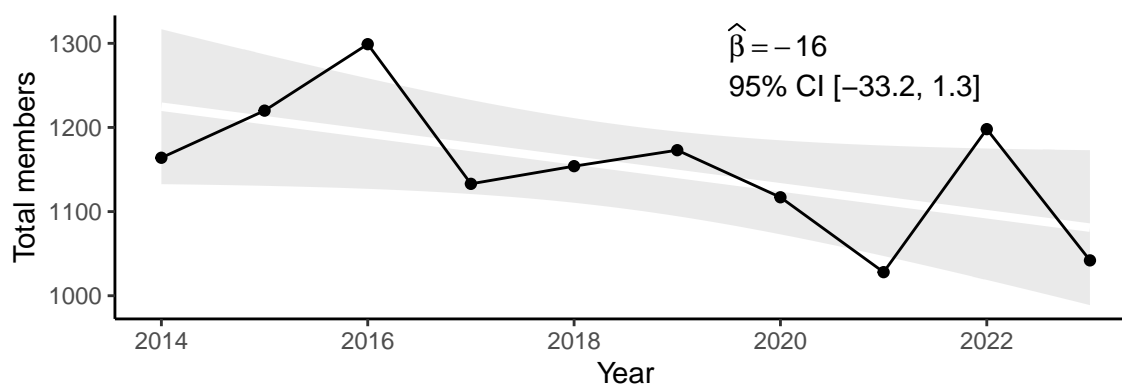

Figure 1: Total SMT membership, 2014-2023

As the regression line in Figure 1 shows, the overall trend for total membership since 2014 has been downward. The best estimate for this trend ($\hat{\beta}$), assuming there is an underlying linear relationship, is −16, i.e., a loss of 16 members per year. That said, the 95% confidence interval shows that slope values between −33.2 and 1.3 would not be rejected by a statistical hypothesis test (with an α level of .05). We thus cannot reject the possibility (at the 95% confidence level) that membership for this period has essentially been flat.

2.2. Membership by professional status

SMT membership by professional status is shown below in **Table 2**. (For the specific methodology used here, see the 2022 report.)

Table 2: SMT membership by professional status, 2023

Professional status	Total	% of responses	% of total
Student	275	27.6	26.4
Associate Professor	166	16.7	15.9
Full Professor	134	13.5	12.9
Contingent, Full-Time	128	12.9	12.3
Assistant Professor	121	12.1	11.6
Not Higher-Ed Faculty/Student	87	8.7	8.3
Retired	69	6.9	6.6
Unclear status	10	1.0	1.0
Contingent, Part-Time	6	0.6	0.6
No response	46	NA	4.4

Comparing this table to the corresponding table in the 2022 report (also Table 2) reveals a decreases in membership across all professional status categories. The largest percentage change is found within the student membership category, which dropped from 349 student members in 2022 to 275 student members in 2023, representing a decrease of 21.2%.

3. Membership by gender/orientation

3.1. Overall membership by gender

Detailed information for 2023 SMT membership by gender is shown below in **Table 3**. The category of "Other" is a renaming of the category "Another Identity not listed" (as shown in the 2022 report) so as to facilitate fitting the table onto a single page.

Table 3: SMT membership by gender (detailed), 2023

| Gender identity	Total	% of responses	% of total
Man	573	59.1	55.0
Woman	357	36.8	34.3
Gender Neutral	13	1.3	1.2
Gender Neutral | Woman	6	0.6	0.6
Other	6	0.6	0.6
Transgender | Woman	3	0.3	0.3
Gender Neutral | Man	2	0.2	0.2
Gender Neutral | Transgender | Other	2	0.2	0.2
Transgender | Other	2	0.2	0.2
Gender Neutral | Man | Other | Prefer not to answer	1	0.1	0.1
Gender Neutral | Other	1	0.1	0.1
Gender Neutral | Transgender	1	0.1	0.1
Man | Transgender	1	0.1	0.1
Transgender	1	0.1	0.1
No response or Prefer not to answer	73	NA	7.0

A collapsed version of this same data is shown below in **Table 4**, which categorizes any response that was not "Man" or "Woman" alone as "Non-binary." The non-response rate (7.0%) is not negligible, but it is not very high. As this data shows, SMT membership is, as in previous years, majority male, with women accounting for only just over a third of membership overall.

Table 4: SMT membership by gender (collapsed), 2023

Gender identity	Total	% of responses	% of total
Man	573	59.1	55.0
Woman	357	36.8	34.3
Non-binary	39	4.0	3.7
No response or Prefer not to answer	73	NA	7.0

3.2. Historical data on gender

Using previous demographics reports, historical trends in the proportion of different gender categories can be examined. In **Figure 2**, for example, the proportion of members identifying as a man is shown from 2014 to 2023. Assuming a linear relationship between the percentage of men and year, the linear model's estimate for the slope ($\widehat{\beta}$) is −0.9, meaning that the proportion of members identifying as male has decreased about 0.9% per year since 2014. Given that the lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval are both negative (−1.2 to −0.6), there is evidence that the proportion of male SMT members has been declining, even though men still account for the majority of members.
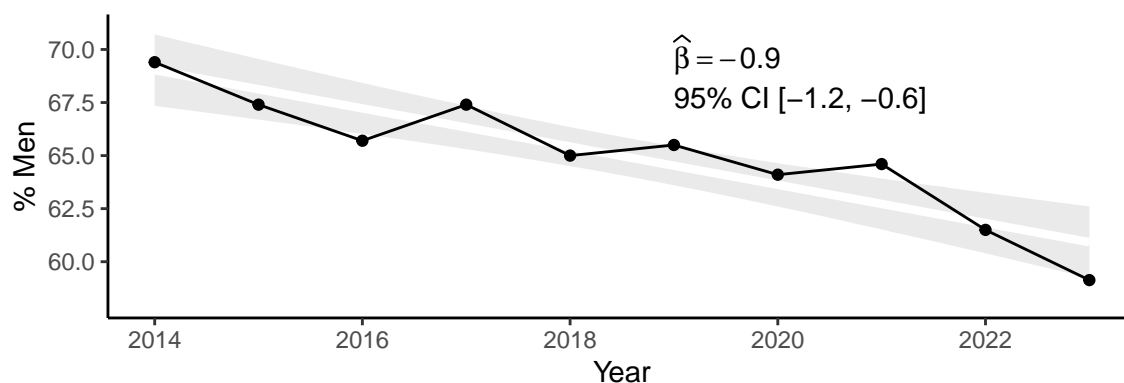
Figure 2: Men as a percentage of all responses, 2014-2023

Conversely, **Figure 3** shows that the proportion of members identifying as a woman has been increasing since 2014, with the slope estimate as 0.5% per year during this period. Both the lower and upper bound of the confidence interval are positive (0.2 to 0.7), which gives evidence that the proportion of female SMT members has been increasing.
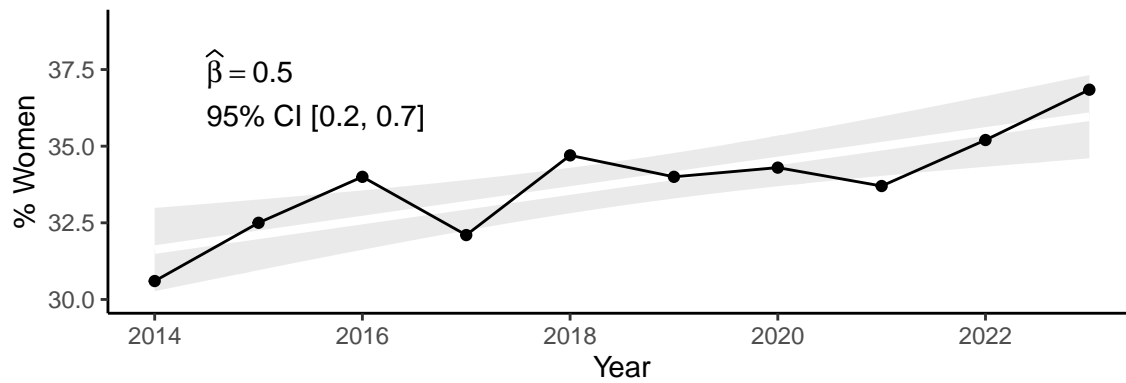
Figure 3: Women as a percentage of all responses, 2014-2023

The discrepancy between the annual decrease in men (0.9%) and the annual increase in women (0.5%) during this period relates to the increase in members identifying as neither solely male or female, i.e., as non-binary. The historical trend for non-binary responses is shown in **Figure 4**, which estimates an increase per year of about 0.4% (assuming a linear relationship). Here again, this appears to be a statistically significant finding given the positive lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval.
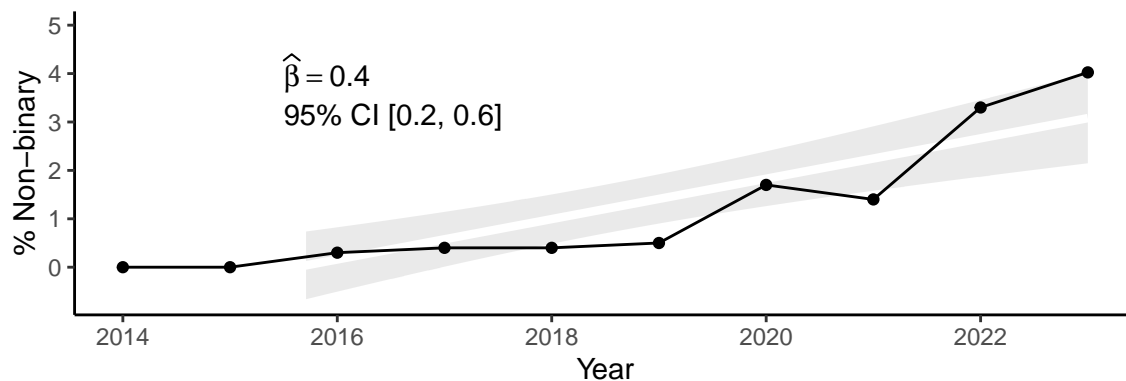

Figure 4: Non-binary as a percentage of all responses, 2014-2023

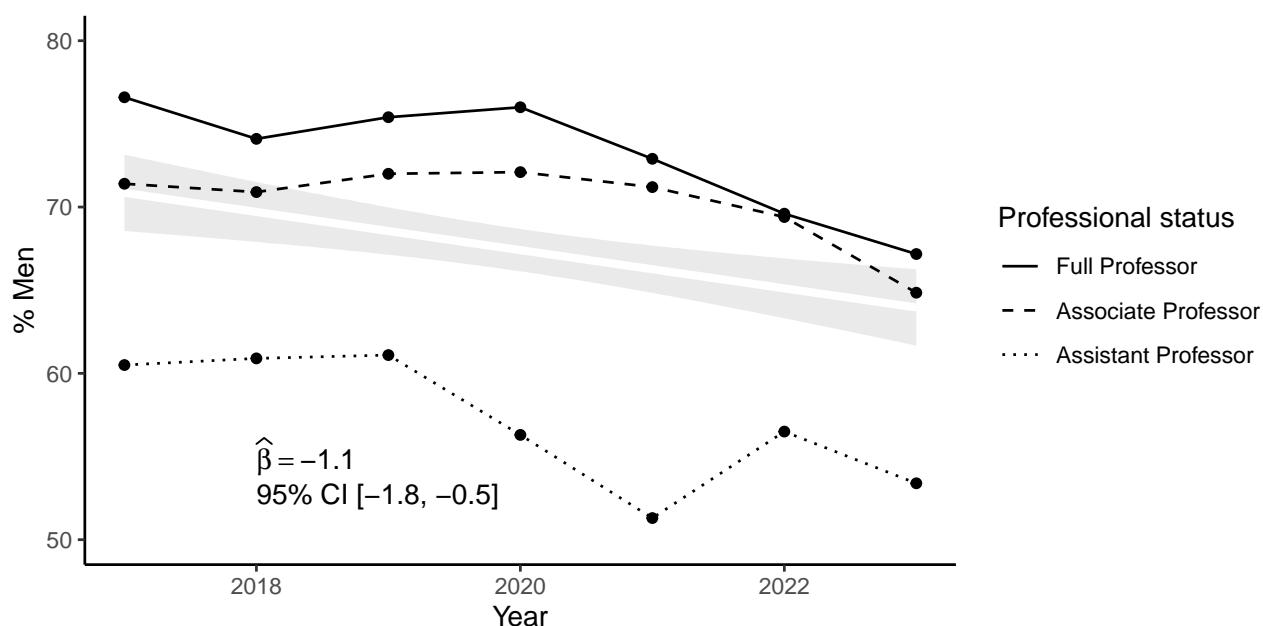## 3.3. Professional status by gender

A contingency table (or cross tabulation) of professional status versus gender for the 2023 demographic data is shown in **Table 5**, using only member data that includes responses for both questions. In this table, the categories of professional status are ordered by decreasing percentage of male membership. Retired members, for example, have the highest proportion of men (76.1%), whereas student membership in SMT is less than 50% male. As also seen in the 2022 report, the order of professional statuses in Table 5 generally follows the hierarchy (or career trajectory) within academia, with the Assistant Professor level having a higher proportion of men than the Student level, the Associate Professor level having a higher proportion of men than the Assistant Professor level, and so on.

Table 5: Professional status of SMT members by gender, 2023

Professional status	Man	Woman	Non-Binary
Retired	76.1% (51)	22.4% (15)	1.5% (1)
Unclear status	70.0% (7)	30.0% (3)	0.0% (0)
Full Professor	67.2% (88)	32.8% (43)	0.0% (0)
Associate Professor	64.8% (107)	34.5% (57)	0.6% (1)
Contingent, Full-Time	62.9% (78)	35.5% (44)	1.6% (2)
Not Higher-Ed Faculty/Student	56.2% (45)	37.5% (30)	6.2% (5)
Assistant Professor	53.4% (63)	43.2% (51)	3.4% (4)
Student	48.6% (123)	41.5% (105)	9.9% (25)
Contingent, Part-Time	16.7% (1)	83.3% (5)	0.0% (0)

3.4. Historical data on professional status by gender

Using past demographic data, the relationship of professional status to gender can be examined over time. For example, **Figure 5** plots historical data since 2017 for the percentage of men within the three levels of professorship (Assistant, Associate, and Full).[1] The best-fit regression estimate, shown as a white line between the two areas shaded in gray, is modeled from the overall percentage of men within the three levels of professorship. As this shows, the percentage of men within any professor-level rank has declined at a rate of about 1.1% per year (assuming a linear relationship). Both bounds of the 95% confidence interval are negative (-1.8 to -0.5), which gives evidence that the percentage of men holding a professorship has decreased during this period.

Figure 5: Professional status by percentage of men, 2017-2023

[1]Unfortunately, cross tabulated data on professional status versus gender is not available prior to 2017.

Conversely, **Figure 6** shows a plot of historical data for the percentage of women within the three levels of professorship since 2017. As this plot shows, the model estimates the slope for women holding some level of professorship to be 0.9, meaning a 0.9% increase per year since 2017. The 95% confidence interval includes a positive lower bound (0.1) as well as a positive upper bound (1.7), which gives evidence that the percentage of women holding a professorship has increased during this period.
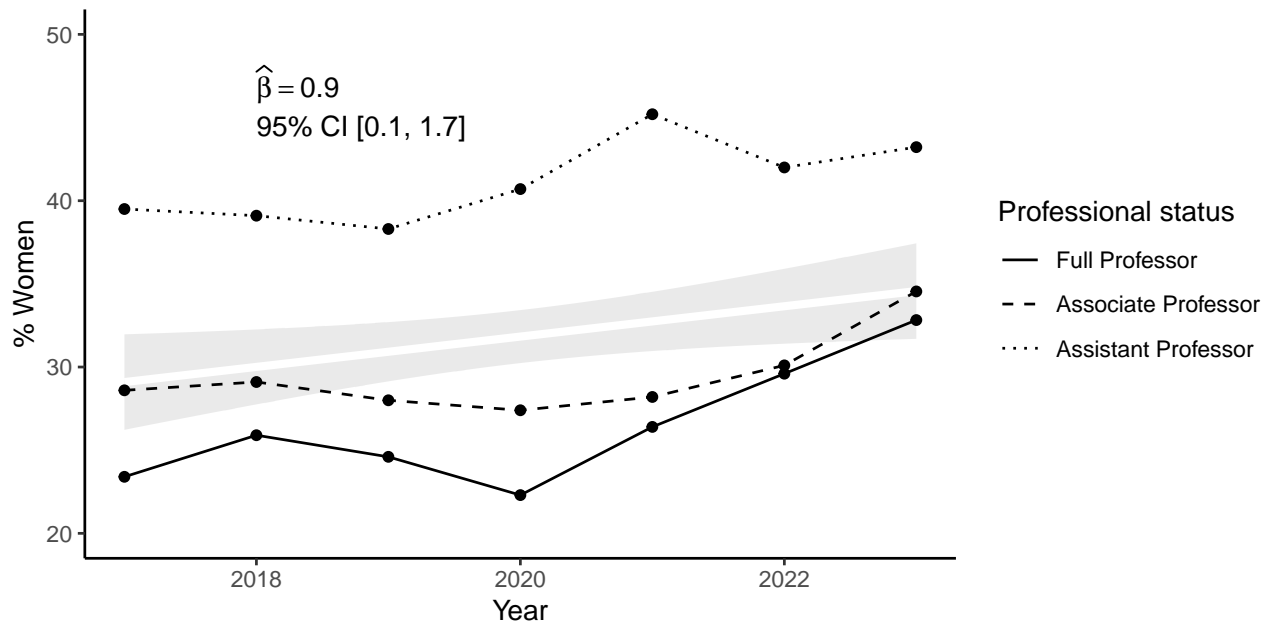

Figure 6: Professional status by percentage of women, 2017-2023

Generally speaking, Figure 5 and Figure 6 are mirror images of one another, since as the proportion of men decreases, it is mostly counterbalanced by an increase in the proportion of women. That said, the slope estimates are not exactly opposite. This is due to an increase in members who identify as non-binary during this period within the three levels of professorship. As in the 2022 report, however, the frequency counts for non-binary members holding a professorship are too low to attempt to model historical trends since 2017 using regression methods.

3.5. Overall membership by orientation

In addition to gender, the "My Profile" page on the SMT web site asks members a question related to their sexual orientation. Specifically, the question is phrased as: "Do you identify as part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, intersex community?" Responses to this question are shown below in **Table 6**. Note that the non-response rate for this question is relatively high, with 38.4% of members choosing not to answer this question.

Table 6: SMT membership by question of LGBQI identity, 2023

Do you identify as part of the LGBQI community?	Total	% of responses	% of total
No	485	75.5	46.5
Yes	157	24.5	15.1
No response or Prefer not to answer	400	NA	38.4

3.6. Professional status by orientation

A contingency table (or cross tabulation) of professional status versus the response to the question regarding sexual orientation for the 2023 demographic data is shown in **Table 7**, using only member data that includes responses for both questions. In this table, the categories of professional status are ordered by increasing percentage of members responding "Yes" to the question of sexual orientation. The highest percentage of members responding "Yes," for example, are students, with 41.7% of student respondents saying they identify as part of the LGBQI community.

Table 7: Professional status by question of LGBQI identity (responses only), 2023

	Do you identify as part of the LGBQI community?	
Professional status	No	Yes
Contingent, Part-Time	100.0% (3)	00.0% (0)
Full Professor	88.3% (68)	11.7% (9)
Contingent, Full-Time	88.1% (74)	11.9% (10)
Unclear status	87.5% (7)	12.5% (1)
Retired	85.7% (36)	14.3% (6)
Associate Professor	79.1% (87)	20.9% (23)
Assistant Professor	78.2% (61)	21.8% (17)
Not Higher-Ed Faculty/Student	76.0% (38)	24.0% (12)
Student	58.3% (109)	41.7% (78)

As mentioned above, however, the non-response rate to this question is fairly high. Accordingly, **Table 8** shows the relationship between professional status and the question of sexual orientation as a percentage of all members, including responses and non-responses.

Table 8: Professional status by question of LGBQI identity (all members), 2023

Professional status	Do you identify as part of the LGBQI community?		
	No	Yes	Unanswered
Unclear status	70.0% (7)	10.0% (1)	20.0% (2)
Contingent, Full-Time	57.8% (74)	7.8% (10)	34.4% (44)
Associate Professor	52.4% (87)	13.9% (23)	33.7% (56)
Retired	52.2% (36)	8.7% (6)	39.1% (27)
Full Professor	50.7% (68)	6.7% (9)	42.5% (57)
Assistant Professor	50.4% (61)	14.0% (17)	35.5% (43)
Contingent, Part-Time	50.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (3)
Not Higher-Ed Faculty/Student	43.7% (38)	13.8% (12)	42.5% (37)
Student	39.6% (109)	28.4% (78)	32.0% (88)

4. Membership by race/ethnicity

4.1. Overall membership by race/ethnicity

Detailed information for overall SMT membership as of 2023 by race, ethnicity, and citizenship is shown below in **Table 9**. (Refer to the 2022 report for an explanation of the simplified categorization scheme used here for display purposes.)

Table 9: SMT Membership by race, ethnicity, and citizenship (detailed), 2023

Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship	Total	% of responses	% of total
White	719	77.3	69.0
Asian	81	8.7	7.8
Hispanic or Latino | White	30	3.2	2.9
Hispanic or Latino	23	2.5	2.2
Black	18	1.9	1.7
Asian | White	16	1.7	1.5
Middle Eastern or North African	7	0.8	0.7
Native American | White	7	0.8	0.7
Other	6	0.6	0.6
White | Other	6	0.6	0.6
Middle Eastern or North African | White	4	0.4	0.4
Black | White	2	0.2	0.2
Hispanic or Latino | Native American | White	2	0.2	0.2
Asian | Middle Eastern or North African	1	0.1	0.1
Asian | Middle Eastern or North African | White	1	0.1	0.1
Asian | Pacific Islander | White	1	0.1	0.1
Black | Hispanic or Latino	1	0.1	0.1
Black | Hispanic or Latino | Native American	1	0.1	0.1
Hispanic or Latino | Middle Eastern or North African	1	0.1	0.1
Hispanic or Latino | Native American | Other	1	0.1	0.1
Hispanic or Latino | White | Other	1	0.1	0.1
Native American | White | Other	1	0.1	0.1
No response	112	NA	10.7

As Table 9 shows, the majority of SMT members (77.3% of those who responded) currently identify as White alone. The non-response rate for race, ethnicity, and citizenship (10.7%) is higher than the non-response rate for gender but lower than for orientation. The "My Profile" portal also asks members, "With how many racial or ethnic groups do you identify?" The data for this question are shown below in **Table 10**. The non-response rate to this question is high (at 35.6%), so it seems preferable to work directly with the data on race, ethnicity, and citizenship shown in Table 9.

Table 10: SMT membership by question of number of racial or ethnic groups, 2023

With how many racial or ethnic groups do you identify?	Total	% of responses	% of total
With a single racial or ethnic category	574	85.5	55.1
With more than one racial or ethnic category	85	12.7	8.2
With no racial or ethnic category	12	1.8	1.2
No response or Prefer not to say	371	NA	35.6

Since Table 9 includes a variety of specific responses, it is helpful from a statistical perspective to collapse this data into fewer categories, as shown in **Table 11**. In this table, any response other than "White" alone has been categorized as a "Person of Color," including those members who identified as White plus some other race, ethnicity, or citizenship.

Table 11: SMT Membership by race, ethnicity, and citizenship (collapsed), 2023

Race, Ethnicity, Citizenship	Total	% of responses	% of total
White	719	77.3	69.0
Person of Color	211	22.7	20.2
No response	112	NA	10.7

4.2. Historical data on race/ethnicity

Using previous demographics reports, historical trends in the proportion of these two larger categories of race and ethnicity can be examined. **Figure 7**, for example, shows the proportion of SMT members identifying as White alone from 2015 to 2023. The linear model estimates an overall decrease over time, with a slope of -1.8, i.e., that the percentage of members identifying as White alone has declined 1.8% per year since 2015. The lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval are both negative values (-2.3 to -1.4), which indicates that there is significant evidence of this downwards trend over time.
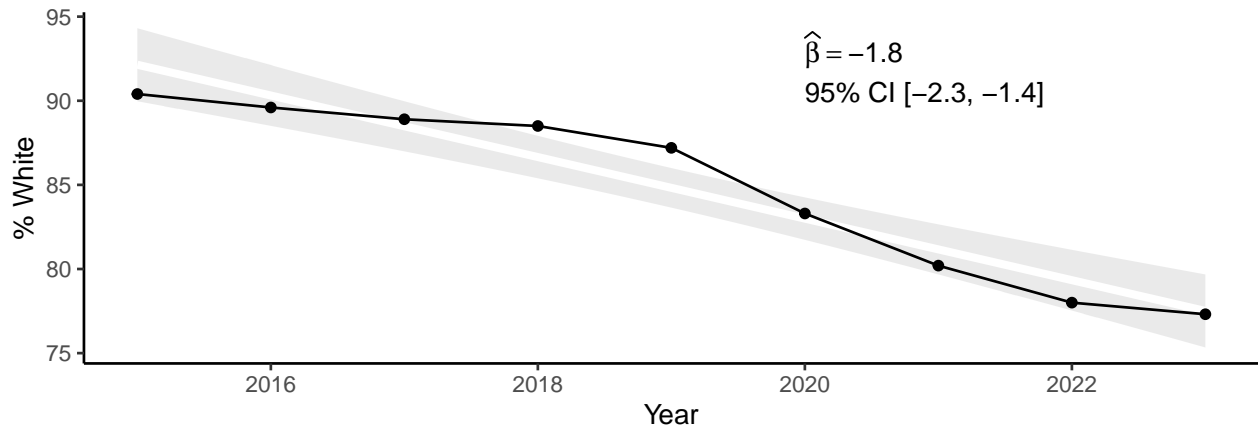
Figure 7: White as a percentage of all responses, 2015-2023

In contrast, **Figure 8** shows a plot of the percentage of members during the period 2015 to 2023 who identify as a Person of Color. Since the categories of "White" and "Person of Color" are (as defined here) mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, the plot and statistics shown in Figure 8 are an inverse of the plot and statistics shown in Figure 7. In particular, the linear model shows an increase over time for the percentage of members identifying as a Person of Color, with an estimate of 1.8% per year. The bounds of the confidence interval are both positive (1.4 to 2.3), which indicates that there is significant evidence of this upwards trend over time.
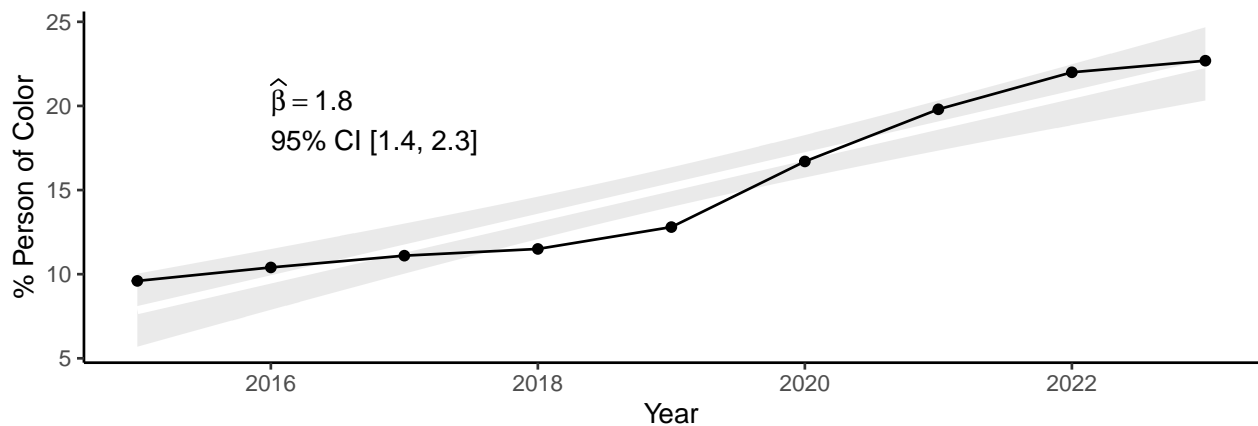

Figure 8: Person of Color as a percentage of all responses, 2015-2023

4.3. Professional status by race/ethnicity

A contingency table (or cross tabulation) of professional status versus race/ethnicity for the 2023 demographic data is shown in **Table 12**, using only member data that includes responses for both questions. In this table, the categories of professional status are ordered by decreasing percentage of members identifying as White alone. Retired members, for example, have the highest proportion of White members (93.3%), whereas student membership in SMT has the lowest proportion of members identifying as White alone (66.7%). As in Table 5, the order of professional statuses in

Table 12 follows the hierarchy (or career trajectory) within academia, with the Assistant Professor level having a higher proportion of members identifying as White alone than the Student level, the Associate Professor level having a higher proportion of members identifying as White alone than the Assistant Professor level, and so on.

Table 12: Professional status of SMT members by race/ethnicity, 2023

Professional status	White	Person of Color
Retired	93.3% (56)	06.7% (4)
Full Professor	87.4% (111)	12.6% (16)
Contingent, Full-Time	82.8% (101)	17.2% (21)
Associate Professor	80.0% (128)	20.0% (32)
Contingent, Part-Time	80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)
Not Higher-Ed Faculty/Student	74.7% (59)	25.3% (20)
Assistant Professor	74.3% (84)	25.7% (29)
Student	66.7% (162)	33.3% (81)
Unclear status	44.4% (4)	55.6% (5)

4.4. Historical data on professional status by race/ethnicity

Using past demographic data, the relationship of professional status to race/ethnicity can be examined over time. For example, **Figure 9** shows a plot of historical data since 2017 for the percentage of members identifying as White alone within the three levels of professorship (Assistant, Associate, and Full).[2] The best-fit regression estimate, shown as the white line between the two areas shaded in gray, is modeled from the overall percentage of White members within the three levels of professorship combined. Assuming a linear relationship over time, this model shows that the percentage of White members within any professor-level rank has declined at a rate of about 2.5% per year. Both bounds of the 95% confidence interval are negative (−3.3 to −1.7), which gives evidence that the percentage of White members holding a professorship has decreased during this period.

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[2]As with gender, cross tabulated data on race versus professional status is unfortunately not available prior to 2017.
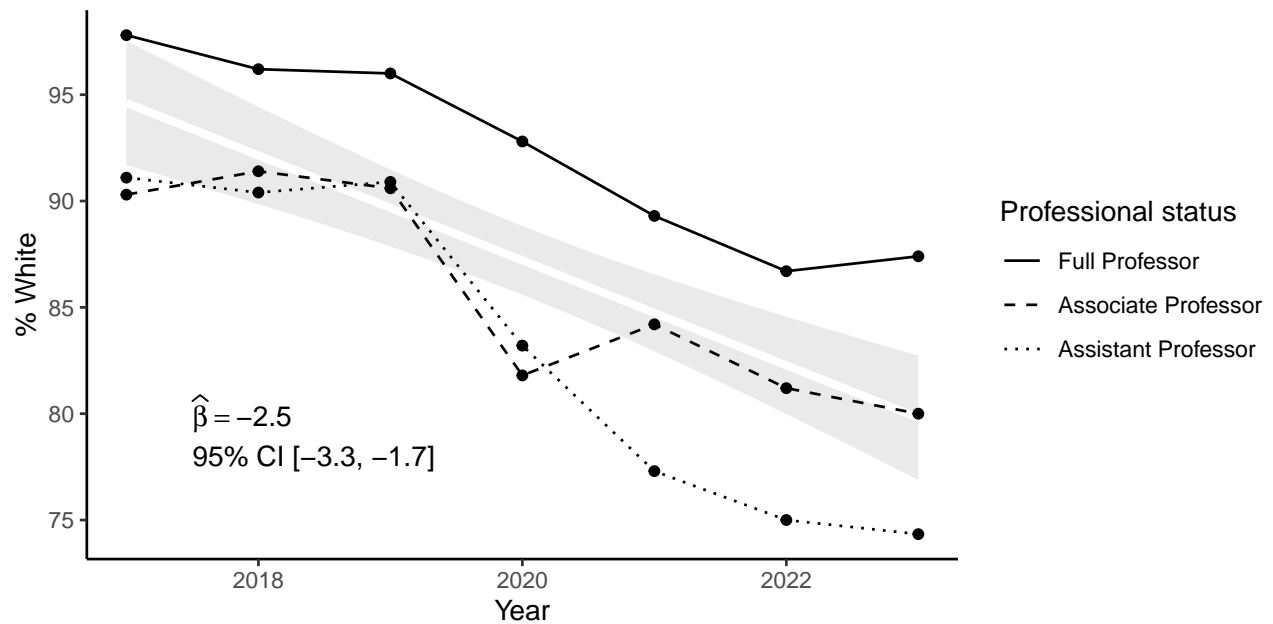
Figure 9: Professional status by percentage of White members, 2017-2023

Conversely, **Figure 10** shows a plot of historical data for the percentage of members identifying as a Person of Color within the three levels of professorship since 2017. As this plot shows, the model estimates the slope for a Person of Color holding a professorship to be 2.5, meaning a 2.5% increase per year since 2017. Since the categories of White and Person of Color are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, the plot and statistics in Figure 10 are an inverse of the plot and statistics in Figure 9. The bounds of the confidence interval in Figure 10 are now both positive (1.7 to 3.3), which gives evidence that the percentage of members identifying as a Person of Color holding a professorship has increased during this period.
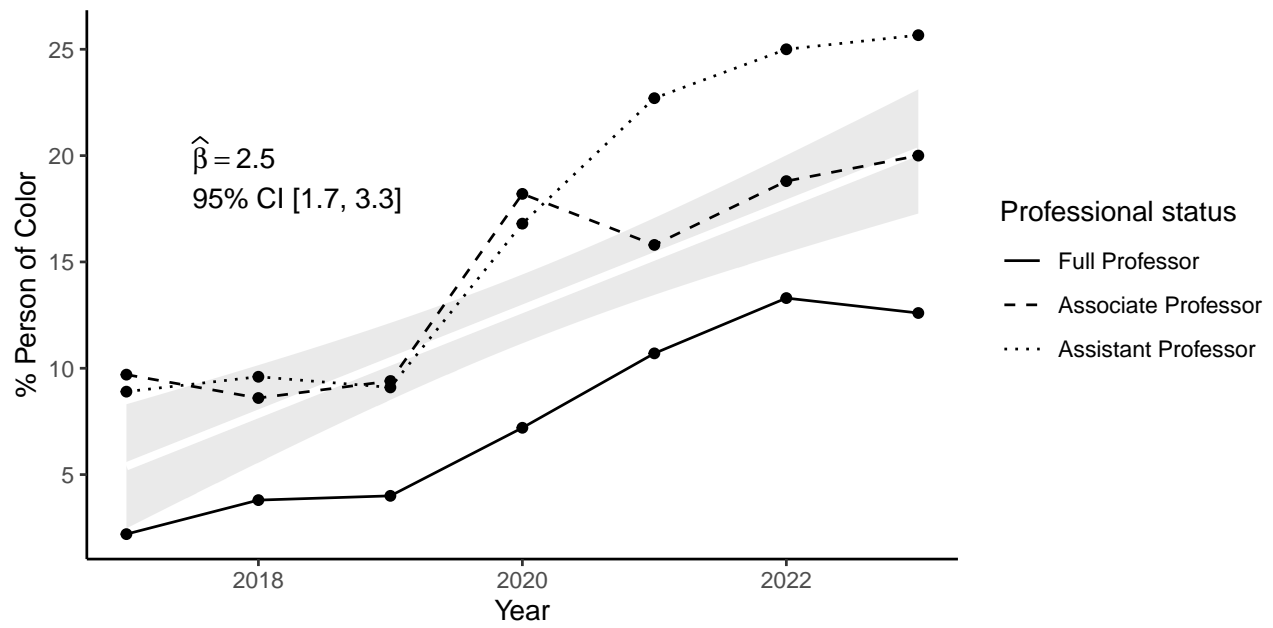
Figure 10: Professional status by percentage of Person of Color, 2017-2023

5. Summary

As noted in the 2022 report, demographic data collected through a web site of members inherently suffers from at least two types of bias: 1) response bias, which refers to the tendency to provide misleading or false answers to self-reported questions; and 2) non-response bias, which refers to the correlation between the responses to a question and whether someone responds to that question or not. With that disclaimer, the 2023 demographic data for SMT membership continue the trends observed in the 2022 demographic data, specifically:

In terms of gender and sexual orientation:

- Overall membership remains majority male, although the proportion of male members overall appears to be decreasing over time.
    - The proportion of men increases with an increase in academic rank, although male membership appears to be decreasing over time within the three levels of professorship.
- While women account for a minority of members, the proportion of female members overall appears to be increasing over time.
    - The proportion of women decreases with an increase in academic rank, although female membership appears to be increasing over time within the three levels of professorship.
- The proportion of non-binary members overall appears to be increasing over time.
- A substantially high proportion of members, especially students, identify as part of the LGBQI community.

In terms of race, ethnicity, and citizenship:

- Overall membership remains majority White, although the proportion of members overall identifying as White alone appears to be decreasing over time.
    - The proportion of members identifying as White alone increases with an increase in academic rank, although the proportion of members identifying as White alone appears to be decreasing over time within the three levels of professorship.
- While members identifying as a Person of Color account for a minority of membership, the proportion of members overall identifying as a Person of Color appears to be increasing.
    - The proportion of members identifying as a Person of Color decreases with an increase in academic rank, although the proportion of members identifying as a Person of Color appears to be increasing over time within the three levels of professorship.