WiCyS 2023

Conference Evaluation Report – May 2023

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PREFERRED PROGRAM
EVALUATIONS
"Unlocking Program Potential"

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WiCyS 2023 – Background and Participation

The WiCyS annual conference is regarded as the flagship conference for women and their allies in cybersecurity, and is the nation's largest cybersecurity conference with equal representation of students and working professionals. The conference is organized and held in accordance with the mission of WiCyS: to help organizations recruit, retain, and advance women in cybersecurity – all while creating a community of engagement, encouragement, and support.

WiCyS 2023 was held in Aurora, Colorado, on March 16-18, 2023. From the moment attendees arrived at the Denver airport, they were greeted by WiCyS personnel and volunteers at a WiCyS kiosk stocked with maps, directions, and information. Additionally, WiCyS personnel and volunteers were present at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center throughout the conference to ensure participants and sponsors had a rewarding experience at WiCyS 2023.

This year's event – the 10th annual WiCyS conference – attracted 1,900 registrants and 189 recruiters. The event proudly showcased its 121 sponsors spanning six tiers of financial support. Over 450 volunteers and members from nine conference planning committees contributed to the event in various capacities before, during, and after the three-day conference. Travel stipends were granted to 338 deserving attendees, and 1,004 competitive scholarships were awarded. Participants represented 19 countries, the armed forces, diverse backgrounds, varied credentials, and an array of life experiences. Registration for the much-anticipated event reached capacity a mere four hours after the general registration window opened.

WiCyS 2023 – Theme and Conference Forums

This year's conference schedule featured a variety of tracks and sessions purposely designed to target the interests of attendees ranging from college students and veterans to mid-level professionals and seasoned executives. Four conference tracks framed WiCyS 2023: Best Practices, Career Development, Looking Ahead, and Today's Technology and Challenges.

From morning to evening, attendees were provided both formal and informal opportunities to learn, explore, practice, network, and apply their knowledge and skills to real-world scenarios. The jam-packed conference schedule included 115 speakers/presenters, 19 workshops, 16 lightning talks, 14 meet-ups, seven socials, five panels, and five Birds of a Feather. A student poster session showcased the research of 37 undergraduate and graduate students. Sixteen technical presentations geared toward students, educators, practitioners, and researchers were open to those who registered in advance. The topics included accountability, teamwork, security and ethics, research, vendor management, risk management, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and service learning. Participants were able to scan QR codes provided at the end of qualifying sessions to receive Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit.

The WiCyS annual conference has developed a reputation for its distinguished presenters, diversity of topics related to women in cybersecurity, and collection of conference forums that appeal to a variety of audiences. A number of sessions focused on the novel tools, frameworks, and strategies being employed to address the latest vulnerabilities in our nation's critical infrastructure and defend users against cyber attacks. Also, presenters delved into contemporary topics impacting women in cybersecurity such as cultivating technical and soft skills for success in the cyber workforce, mentorship and allyship. Military and college chapters, WiCyS affiliates, and academic leaders joined curated discussions on best practices for supporting and advancing women in cybersecurity.

Participants were generally pleased with the range of presentation themes, and the various opportunities for individuals with similar levels of experience to connect through socials, luncheons, fireside chats, chapter meet-ups, and hands-on activities like Capture the Flag (CTF) and AWS Game Day. Hundreds of attendees flocked to the First Timers Panel where presenters shared what they found most beneficial about the WiCyS conference and how first-time conference goers could get the most out of their experience.

The conference schedule was available on the WiCyS website and the Whova app. Via this event management app, registrants could browse the conference program, view speaker bios and sponsor information, connect with one another prior to arriving in Denver, and pose questions to the event organizers. The detailed conference program consisted of agendas, session summaries, and a floor map of the Career Fair.

WiCyS 2023 – Career Fair and Career Village

The Career Fair and Career Village are consistently two of the most anticipated elements of the WiCyS annual conference. The Career Fair and Career Village were open to all registrants on March 17, 2023. Exhibitors shared information about their companies/institutions, provided details about job and internship opportunities, collected resumes, and distributed swag to passersby. Several sponsors even conducted on-the-spot interviews in a designated meeting room while others were focused on promoting brand awareness and their cybersecurity divisions.

Conference sponsors transformed a part of the convention center into a bustling scene of hiring, sharing, informing, and inspiring. An impressive lineup of 124 organizations representing Fortune 500 companies, small- to mid-size tech enterprises, government agencies, colleges and universities, financial institutions, retail outlets, and healthcare providers were present during the Career Fair. At Career Village, students were given the opportunity to have their resumes reviewed by their more senior colleagues, sit for professional headshots, and participate in mock interviews to improve their confidence and preparedness. It is worth noting that several attendees and sponsors had difficulty differentiating the Career Fair from the offerings of Career Village.

Future Conference Considerations

<u>Coordination</u>

The conference organizers made every effort to keep participants and sponsors apprised of conference logistics. Through email, social media, and the Whova app, attendees were made aware of expectations, programming, and changes to the schedule and session locations. Many attendees were overwhelmed with the volume of email messages and alerts they received in the weeks leading up to the conference.

For many participants, the wait time for professional headshots exceeded one hour, causing them to miss one of the conference sessions while waiting in line for their turn in front of the camera. Implementing a sign-in process and return time to enter the queue would improve the efficiency of this popular offering at Career Village.

There was some confusion as to which activities required additional registration or RSVP, and whether the Whova app could be used to sign up for sessions. It may be practical to collect RSVPs for invitation-only activities as part of the initial registration process, and/or during check-in on day one of the conference.

<u>Facilities and Staffing</u>

Holding the conference and lodging in a single location was very well-received. This made it easy for participants to attend a greater number of sessions, activities, and gatherings from morning to evening. Some participants suggested increasing the number of tables and chairs available in the convention center for participants to chat, check email, review the conference agenda, etc.

At the conclusion of workshops and some other sessions, volunteers scanned participants' QR codes to verify their attendance. Making additional handheld scanners available for large workshops will ensure attendees are able to gain verification and make it to their next session without delay.

Volunteers at Career Village indicated that additional industry professionals were needed to serve as resume reviewers. Many attendees utilize this service during the conference and recruiting seasoned volunteers who can contribute to the candidates' interview readiness is a win-win for attendees and the companies ready to hire them.

Requests were made for additional signage, as some attendees had difficulty navigating the conference venue and locating their session site in a timely manner. It may be advantageous to have poster-size printed maps of the venue placed at various entrances, and include an interactive map of the venue in the Whova app.

Programming Elements

Several attendees would like the Career Fair to span two days of the conference, and some participants were in favor of extending the annual conference to four days. Sponsors would like access to the designated interview room the day before and the day after the Career Fair to allow them adequate time to interface with promising candidates. Attendees also suggested incorporating designated blocks of time for networking into the conference schedule, and building in enough time between session for a quick bathroom or coffee break.

Some attendees found the emphasis on student-centered sessions to overshadow the content applicable to mid-career and senior-level professionals. One attendee suggested categorizing session descriptions as beginner, intermediate, or advanced, thereby making it easier for participants to browse the schedule and determine which sessions are most applicable to them. Alternatively, color-coding the sessions by specialized tracks, such as technical skill-building, career transitioning, and industry advocacy, may help attendees confidently register in advance for the conference sessions that best align with their current goals.

WiCyS 2023 – Conference Evaluation

WiCyS partnered with Blake Urbach, Principal Consultant of Preferred Program Evaluations, to conduct an evaluation of this year's conference. The evaluation of WiCyS 2023 included a series of focus groups, observations, informal interviews, and anonymous surveys for participants and sponsors. Representing Preferred Program Evaluations on site was Ms. Blake Urbach and Dr. Carmita McCall. The purpose of the evaluation was to better understand the experience, value, and impact of the conference among its stakeholders, and to inform future WiCyS programming.

The participant survey was designed in SurveyMonkey and at the conclusion of the conference the survey weblink was distributed to 1,911 attendees. A total of 255 participants responded to this survey (response rate of 13%). Similarly, a weblink to the sponsor survey was emailed to 142 conference sponsors once WiCyS 2023 concluded. A total of 37 sponsors responded to this survey (response rate of 26%). The findings from the participant and sponsor surveys are provided in the results dashboards starting on page 13 of this report.

During the three-day conference, the evaluation team spoke one-on-one with participants and sponsors to gain insight about their WiCyS 2023 experience. They interacted with students seeking to improve their technical skills, mid-career professionals searching for inspiration, faculty members looking for innovative ways to share their research, and sponsors pursuing talented candidates to join their ranks. Many of the sponsors and industry representatives shared that they are impressed with the growth of the annual conference and the heightened focus on career advancement for seasoned professionals. Select insights and experiences shared by the attendees and sponsors are provided herein.

- I didn't expect to make this many meaningful connections because it's my first time here, but I've already had great conversations and met colleagues I can stay connected with when I go back home.
- This is our company's second year at WiCyS and it's good to see it's a big conference, but not too big. With this kind of setting, you don't always have to shout.
- It seems like there are many high-quality student applicants coming to our booth.
- Last year was my first year and I encouraged my friends to come with me this time. I'm glad it's more open so they can see everything the conference has to offer.
- I used the Whova app before I got here because I was traveling alone, and I connected with people to meet when I got here so I didn't have to attend sessions by myself.
- I recently moved here from another country. I have not met many women in cyber in the U.S. This makes me feel at home.

Students and Faculty

- This is the most organized conference we've attended as a university. I like how they get local schools and employers to be a part of it.
- I'm in the mentoring program and it was good to see my mentor in person.
- Last year was my first year playing Capture the Flag and my team lost. I don't know if we will win this year, but I know we will have fun since I understand the process better.
- I have more confidence at the conference this year than I did last year. It's ok if I don't get a chance to talk to every single person. I learned to be more selective with my time.
- We had a group of student volunteers this year and they had a blast!
- I loved that there was an American Sign Language Interpreter at the keynotes and you could see them on the large screen at the same time!

Focus Group Summaries

The evaluation team conducted a total of four focus groups with different stakeholder groups: senior leader, sponsor, military, and ally. Prior to the conference, select conference registrants received an invite from WiCyS leadership about the focus groups to be held on March 17 or 18, and were encouraged to report to a designated meeting room for the one-hour engagement. Invited participants were made aware that their feedback would be used to inform the current and future work of WiCyS. Refreshments were provided as an incentive for participation. All focus group volunteers were required to sign an informed consent as a requirement for participation. The focus groups were audio-recorded for the exclusive use of the evaluator, and participant confidentiality was assured.

The focus group for attendees of color was cancelled due to a low participant response. The limited focus group turnout, overall, suggests the need for a more comprehensive recruitment approach for future engagements of this nature. The timing of the focus groups may have been a limiting factor, as one was scheduled for 7 a.m., and another for Saturday morning as attendees were busy packing up and checking out of the hotel.

The participants were unclear as to how they were selected from the pool of individuals representing their company or institution. Future invitations should clarify the selection process so registrants don't feel they have been singled out for participation.

► SENIOR LEADER FOCUS GROUP

General Comments
One participant viewed the conference as a worthwhile recruitment opportunity, and a way for her organization to continue its commitment to attract and employ women and marginalized candidates. Another participant – who is heavily involved in local women's tech groups – looked forward to sharing information about WiCyS programming with the leaders in her local cyber community. The participants indicated that WiCyS membership is affordable.

Affirmations
The participants were excited to attend a conference specifically for women. They noted it was "extremely refreshing" and that the "energy is different." One participant contrasted this tech conference with another she recently attended where the ratio of women to men was roughly 1:100.

One senior leader expressed that the WiCyS annual conference is a terrific venue for highlighting the current work of her agency in the cyber arena. The participants agreed they have taken on a de facto mentoring role for women up and coming in the cyber workforce. "It's gratifying to give back to the next generation and create a space for them to not be the only woman in the room."

One participant discussed how being a WiCyS member provides opportunities for building community, seeking new talent, and creating an entry point for new tech professionals. Her organization is looking to engage a diverse, skilled workforce, and the conference offers a three-day window for real-time idea generation and an audience ripe for employment.

Although there were varying opinions of the Whova app, one participant found it to be user-friendly, and especially liked the feature that displayed the upcoming sessions and their location in the convention center. She mentioned that conference participants reached out to her directly through the app, which was beneficial since recruitment was one of her reasons for attending the conference.

The focus group participants were in agreement that the allyship symposium speaker was excellent, and they were pleased that corporate sponsors were not randomly placed on panels solely for promotional purposes.

Opportunities for Improvement

Participants disliked the daily emails from the conference organizers, adding that it was difficult to navigate and pinpoint the information relevant to their role. One participant mentioned that the frequency of conference emails she received resulted in her agency's email platform sending all messages originating from WiCyS to her junk folder.

Another participant shared that she and her colleagues found the Whova app confusing. It permitted users to select any session they wished to attend, even though they were ultimately denied entry because they had not selected it during their initial registration. They recalled having to locate the original email for access to the online registration portal to review their selections and then create their corresponding personalized agenda in the Whova app. Another issue with the Whova app was that WiCyS connected attendees' logins to the email addresses used at registration. Yet some of the participants' organizations had email security settings that did not allow the app's confirmation request to be sent to their work email.

Recommendations for WiCyS annual conference

When requesting presentation proposals for the annual conference, participants suggested renaming or rewording the categories, and refining their respective descriptions. It was not clear to them which category (e.g., "Birds of a Feather," panel, workshop, etc.) was most appropriate for their presentation.

Participants recommended that WiCyS establish conference tracks that correspond to attendees' academic pursuits, professional standing, or areas of interest. For instance, specialized tracks might focus on technical skill-building, entrepreneurship, leadership, career transitioning, and career coaching. This approach may also help attendees confidently register in advance for the conference sessions that best align with their current goals.

One participant overheard attendees debating if the WiCyS annual conference is meant primarily for students and early career professionals. If increasing senior-level engagement at the conference remains an objective of WiCyS, the organization may want to consider carving out time and guided discussions for these stakeholders to share successes and obstacles, thoughts on hiring and retention, and building a professional network they can benefit from throughout the year.

To expand the reach of WiCyS into underrepresented communities, one participant proposed cross-collaborating with other women's groups not specific to cybersecurity, such as Lesbians who Tech, Black Women in Technology, and other professional associations raising women's voices in the tech sphere. Participants also mentioned having a presence at other women in tech conferences, such as the AfroTech Conference.

Other ways to expand WiCyS' reach are to partner with non-profits that offer scholarships/stipends for training, and coordinating with corporations and government entities willing to disseminate information about WiCyS programming. Per one participant, it is necessary to optimize WiCyS' business listing so it appears near the top of an Internet search, thus gaining the attention of women in tech and prospective members.

▶ SPONSOR FOCUS GROUP

General Comments

One participant was pleased to report that the WiCyS conference has met her company's needs for the past two years. Last year, her company pre-screened 40 candidates from the conference resume database and conducted in-person interviews at the conference. They ended up hiring nine full-time employees on the spot. This year they are recruiting for multiple internship openings. In addition to hiring, their sponsorship goals include brand recognition among future cybersecurity job seekers, and networking opportunities for their current employees.

Affirmations

One participant remarked that the student poster presentations were very impressive. Conference attendees had to pass through the posters on display as they made their way to other areas of the convention center, thus increasing exposure to the students' work.

The allyship breakfast was given high marks among those who attended. It was not clear how the determination was made about which people from their team were lucky enough to receive an invite to the engagement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Prior to the conference:

- This year, the candidate database was missing the option to query, and the nearly 1,000 resumes were not filterable. This made it difficult to search the database and organize candidates for interviews. Also, the sponsors were granted access to the database later this year, and did not have adequate time to review the resumes before the conference.
- When registering for the conference, participants wanted more detailed descriptions of the sessions in order to select the ones best suited to their positions and/or interests.

- Too many emails were sent from WiCyS. Although there is an option to unsubscribe, there is no option to filter the messages.

During the conference:

- One challenge for recruiters was that candidates did not bring resumes to distribute, and/or had limited information uploaded to their Whova profile. WiCyS should encourage students to take these steps before they arrive at the conference.
- Candidates received resume reviews at Career Village but there was not enough time remaining for them to make edits and print copies of the revised resumes.
- QR codes had limited information and the QR readers did not function properly during the Career Fair. One sponsor attempted to scan and upload candidate contact information to her company's internal database (and tag them as "WiCyS candidates" for future consideration). Her intention is to send an informational follow-up email to candidates from the company's cybersecurity lead after the conference.
- Attendees were confused by the overlap in names: Career Village and Career Fair, and oftentimes went to the wrong location.
- The Career Fair was "too chaotic" to interview candidates on-site; thus, the sponsors were pleased to have a separate room designated for interviewing. The challenge, however, is that this room was located far away from the Career Fair, and setting up subsequent meeting times to meet candidates in this room proved difficult.
- Attendees felt that "the keynotes were the same talk" and did not hold the attendees' interest

Recommendations for WiCyS annual conference

Candidate Interaction:

- Participants suggested extending the Career Fair to more than one day, or at least increasing the number of hours in a single day. This may improve the experience for attendees who found the Career Fair overwhelming or overstimulating due to the sheer number of individuals occupying the space simultaneously. Sponsors would also like the interview room to be available on Thursday and/or Saturday of the conference.
- Expand the lanyard ribbon options to include an attendee's motivations. For example, ribbons for "seeking an internship," "seeking entry-level employment," or "seeking senior-level employment" could contribute to more efficient discussions between a Career Fair participant and sponsor.

Logistics:

- Career Fair sponsors requested power outlets closer to their booth for charging exhibition laptops or displays. Additionally, dollies should be readily available for transporting materials to the Career Fair.
- Locate the mothers' suite closer to the hub of activity. Outfit the space with basic supplies like paper towels and tissues.
- Secure more rooms in the hotel block so all attendees have the opportunity to lodge at the host hotel/convention center. Sponsors typically arrive the day before the Career Fair, so it would be appreciated if the negotiated conference room rate is available the day before (and the day after) the scheduled event.
- The "Career Fair only" staff expressed interest in the option to add meals to their registration, thereby eliminating the need for them to seek food elsewhere during the conference.
- WiCyS should ensure all presentations/slide decks adhere to accessibility guidelines.
- There were insufficient places for attendees to sit and check email in between sessions. Many attendees sat on the floor because seating was limited in the corridors and other common areas.

► MILITARY FOCUS GROUP

General comments

One respondent indicated that she is on the leadership team of the WiCyS Pride-LGBTQ+ affiliate which officially launched this year. As of March 2023, this specialty group had approximately 100 members. She explained that while this affiliate focuses on education and personal growth, it also serves as a much-needed safe place for the LGBTQ+ community to connect and cultivate a sense of belonging.

One focus group participant shared that she stays apprised of WiCyS news via email and LinkedIn. She mentioned that the conference Whova app is satisfactory but finds the near-constant alerts become overwhelming quite quickly.

Affirmations

Per one participant, 2023 represents her third year attending the WiCyS annual conference and she finds this event to be an unmatched opportunity for networking. She is a small business owner and reported that the annual conference offers "global connectivity" with other affiliates in the region and specialty groups. Even more importantly, the annual conference grants her access to the cyber talent pipeline. Her LinkedIn connections have grown every year since her initial involvement (in 2021) and have proven helpful when she has job postings to advertise. As a

collateral benefit, her participation in the Career Fair has helped her craft "on brand" job descriptions that better align with the skills and experience she is seeking in applicants.

Opportunities for Improvement

Per one participant, there is not a small business tier for WiCyS sponsorships, and at the current levels, these sponsorship opportunities are simply too expensive for most small businesses to entertain. She expressed that WiCyS is missing out on showcasing the "entrepreneurial spirit" of individuals who may be considering branching out on their own, either now or in the future. Moreover, given that the executive leadership of most international cybersecurity firms is almost exclusively men, the lack of female representation sends a clear message to conference attendees.

The veteran participant would like to encourage WiCyS to secure keynote speakers that identify as female entrepreneurs and solopreneuers. Hearing from women in self-made positions of prominence taking charge of their professional advancement instead of climbing the corporate ladder should be a consideration for future conferences.

Recommendations for WiCyS Annual Conference

The conference sold out really fast, meaning that many of those who would have liked to attend were unable to do so. One focus group participant inquired about the possibility of having two WiCyS conferences per year: one focused on leadership and development, and one on education. This approach would provide access to the conference for a much greater number of individuals who wish to attend, and offer a more focused track specific to students, educators, and industry professionals.

► ALLY FOCUS GROUP

General comments

The participants of this focus group were very pleased that WiCyS values the opinion of "allies" and included them in this effort to solicit feedback from WiCyS stakeholders. They reiterated their support for and individual contributions to building a gender-diverse cybersecurity workforce.

Two participants shared that their institutions have a WiCyS chapter and students are eager to learn about the student-facing initiatives of WiCyS. One faculty member typically brings seven or eight students to the conference each year, and he shared that after experiencing the Career Fair these students begin to see themselves in this profession. He has requested that the conference scholarship eligibility is broadened to include college freshmen. The other faculty member was joined in Denver by 12 students from his college. He was able to cover their conference expenses from the profits he made hosting a cyber competition in 2022.

Affirmations

The participants commended the mentorship program and experiential learning opportunities offered by WiCyS throughout the academic year. Two particularly valuable sessions at this year's conference were identified as the faculty meeting with federal funding agencies, and the Dialogue for National Cyber Strategy.

The participants were in agreement that WiCyS successfully makes cyber science more attractive to a generation and population that does not currently see it as a viable career path. WiCyS grants them access to a greater variety of resources and the sharing of success stories.

Opportunities for Improvement

A recommendation to improve the user experience on the Whova app is to include an interactive map of the conference hotel and convention center. One participant acknowledged that he declined to download the Whova app because he was opposed to its terms of service. With regard to effectively interfacing with students, one of the allies pointed out that today's undergraduates prefer Discord and other instant messaging social platforms over email.

Recommendations for WiCyS Annual Conference

One of the participants had volunteered to review attendees' resumes at Career Village. He spoke about the ongoing "identity crisis" between Career Village and the Career Fair. He is of the opinion that students are uncertain about the difference between these two offerings, and frequently show up "at the wrong location" because they have mixed up their desire to participate in Career Village with the Career Fair, or vice versa.

Actively engaging faculty could be accomplished by arranging a "faculty social" at the conference for these attendees to "get together, over a glass of wine, perhaps," and have a dialogue about a relevant topic facing academics. The participants thought that encouraging this type of informal conversation will provide the faculty an opportunity to make connections, form interdisciplinary partnerships, and even spur the sharing of resources, recruiting strategies, and pedagogical best practices.

Ushering in a more diverse lineup of speakers beyond industry leaders was thought to be a valuable consideration for future WiCyS annual conferences. The participants unanimously agreed that they would like to see keynote speakers representing academia in order to highlight teaching and research as a rewarding career path for today's student.

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

The WiCyS 2023 participant survey was designed to assess the experiences and perceptions of conference participants, and to inform future WiCyS annual conferences and programming. The survey weblink was distributed to 1,911 participants at the conclusion of this year's conference. A total of 255 conference participants responded to the anonymous survey in whole or part. Ninety-four percent of respondents were women; males accounted for 5% of the survey sample, and non-binary participants totaled 1% of those surveyed.

RESPONDENTS BY ROLE

One-half of respondents identified as students, and 43% identified as working professionals outside of the education sector.

Role	Percentage
Student	50%
Security professional	34%
Educator	7%
Other	4%
HR professional	3%
Career transitioning	2%
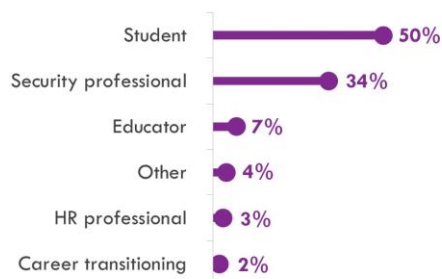
RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATIONAL STANDING

Forty-three percent of student respondents were pursuing a bachelor's degree, and another 43% were enrolled in a graduate program.

Educational Standing	Percentage
Bachelor's degree-seeking student	43%
Master's degree-seeking student	40%
Cybersecurity training program student	7%
Associate's degree-seeking student	4%
Doctoral degree-seeking student	3%
High school student	3%
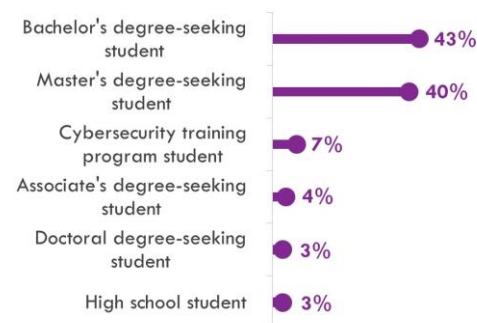
WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

The conference attendees were evenly split between students and professionals. The academic standing of student participants ranged from high school to graduate school. Thirty-six percent of respondents had attended at least one other WiCyS annual conference prior to participating in this year's conference in Denver, CO.

RESPONDENTS BY CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

For nearly two-thirds of respondents, WiCyS 2023 represented their first time participating in a WiCyS annual conference.

No, 2023 was my first time in attendance	64%
Yes, on more than one occasion	21%
Yes, on one occasion	15%
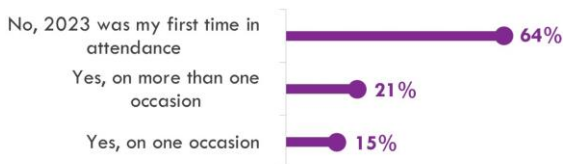
ADEQUACY OF LEVEL-SPECIFIC SESSIONS

Fourteen percent of respondents indicated that the variety of sessions offered at the conference did not sufficiently meet the needs of participants at their level (i.e., student, entry-level, senior-level, etc.)

Strongly agree	28%
Agree	42%
Neutral	15%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	7%
Unsure	1%
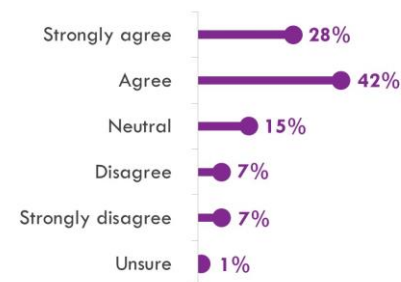
WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

WiCyS represents a global community of women, allies and advocates dedicated to bringing talented women together to celebrate and foster their passion and drive for cybersecurity. The attendees at WiCyS 2023 certainly represented an ethnically diverse group of attendees from the U.S. and abroad.

RESPONDENTS BY ETHNICITY

Fifteen percent of respondents identified as Hispanic/Latine.

Category	Percent
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latine	78%
Hispanic/Latine	15%
Prefer not to answer	5%
Other	2%
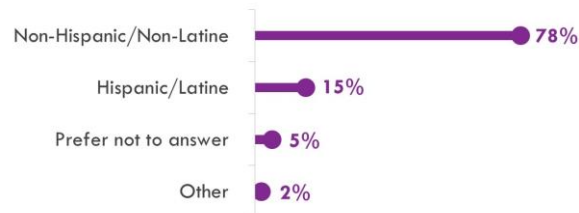
RESPONDENTS BY ETHNICITY

Among those that identified as Hispanic/Latine, over 40% indicated they are Latin American/Latine.

Category	Percent
Latin American/Latine	46%
Mexican/Mexican American/Chicano	37%
Other Spanish/Spanish American	17%

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

The mission of WiCyS is to help build a strong gender-diverse cybersecurity workforce by facilitating recruitment, retention, and advancement for women in the field. The attendees of WiCyS 2023 represent a racially diverse group of women and allies. The geographic representation of respondents was also impressive, with over three-quarters of states having at least one resident in attendance.

RESPONDENTS BY RACE

Over 40% of respondents self-identified as a racial minority.

Race	Percentage
White	51%
Asian	18%
Black or African American	16%
Prefer not to answer	6%
Bi/Multiracial	4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%
Other	2%
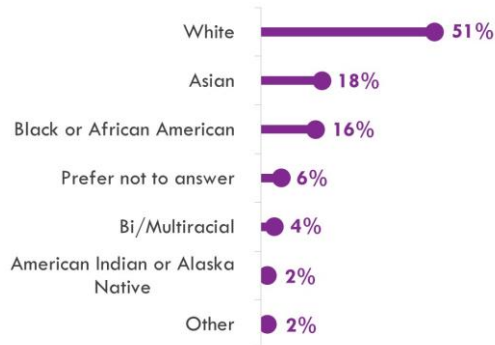
RESPONDENTS BY LOCATION

Respondents from 38 states and Washington, D.C., attended the conference. Thirteen of those surveyed were international conference attendees. The five states with the most attendees are rank-ordered.

State	Attendees
California	18
Texas	15
Colorado	13
New York	12
Tennessee	11

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

STUDENT-CENTERED CONFERENCE UTILITY

Respondents who identified as students were asked to rate the influence of attending WiCyS 2023 on their academic pursuits. Over 90% of respondents reported feeling inspired by the role models they encountered at the conference. Ninety-six percent of respondents experienced a gain in self-confidence, and 90% learned about careers in cybersecurity or a related field. Sixteen percent of those surveyed did not consider WiCyS 2023 to be a technical conference.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I was inspired by the role models I encountered at WiCyS 2023.	1%	3%	3%	25%	68%
WiCyS 2023 increased my confidence to pursue a career in cybersecurity/related field.		1%	3%	39%	57%
WiCyS 2023 helped me learn about career opportunities in cybersecurity/related field.		3%	7%	40%	50%
WiCyS 2023 increased my commitment to complete my current degree program.		3%	16%	39%	42%
WiCyS 2023 inspired me to start or join a WiCyS student chapter.	4%	6%	33%	27%	30%
WiCyS 2023 helped me learn about academic programs in cybersecurity/related field.	2%	4%	16%	50%	28%
I consider WiCyS 2023 to be a technical conference.	4%	12%	16%	52%	17%

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

PROFESSIONAL-CENTERED CONFERENCE UTILITY

Respondents who identified as professionals were asked to rate the influence of attending WiCyS 2023 on their professional pursuits. Ninety percent of respondents reported feeling more connected to professionals in their field and more enthusiastic about their work. Nearly 80% of respondents intend to share ideas/resources acquired at the conference with their colleagues. Seventeen percent of those surveyed did not feel that the conference advanced their knowledge/skills in cyber security.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
WiCyS 2023 helped me feel more connected to other professionals in my field.	1%	3%	7%	34%	56%
WiCyS 2023 helped me feel more enthusiastic about my work.	1%	1%	9%	41%	49%
WiCyS 2023 provided ideas/resources that I intend to share with my colleagues.	2%	5%	15%	47%	31%
WiCyS 2023 inspired me to start or join a WiCyS affiliate in my area.	3%	6%	44%	27%	19%
I consider WiCyS 2023 to be a technical conference.	4%	23%	24%	34%	14%
WiCyS 2023 advanced my knowledge and/or skills in cyber security.	3%	14%	29%	41%	13%

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

ATTENDEE PERSPECTIVES ON CONFERENCE ELEMENTS AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Ninety-five percent of all respondents would recommend the WiCyS annual conference to a colleague or peer, and 97% indicated that attending the conference contributed to their feelings of belonging to the cybersecurity community. Nine out of 10 respondents improved their professional and networking skills. One-quarter of those surveyed did not feel that the conference helped advance their technical skills.
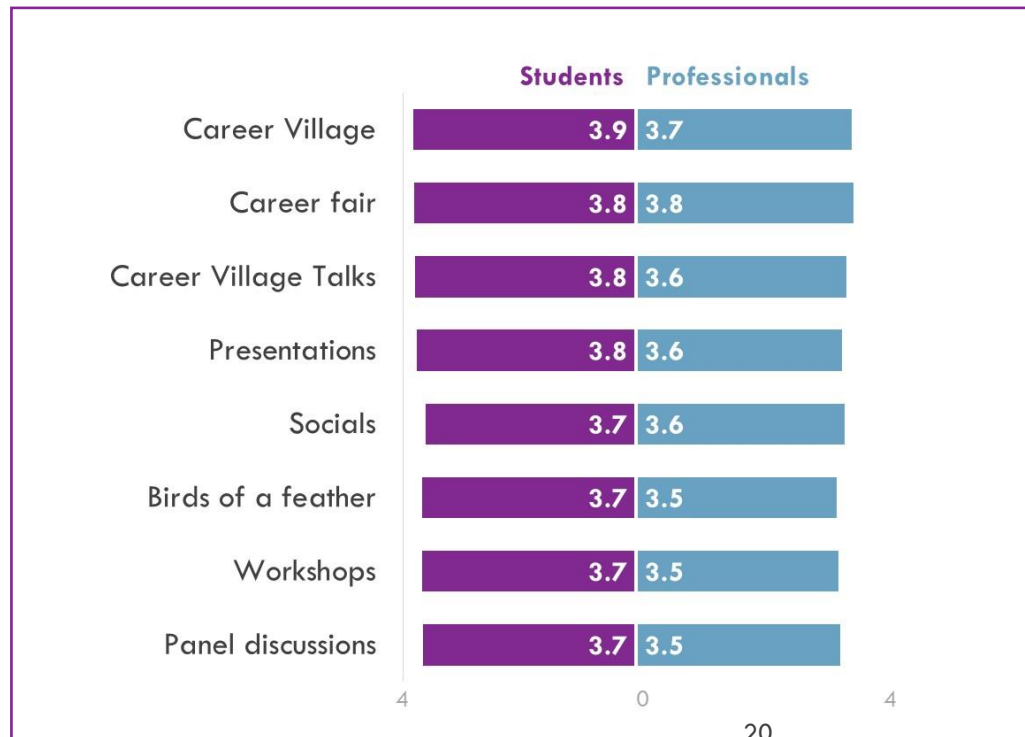
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I would recommend the WiCyS annual conference to a colleague or peer.			4%	28%	67%
Attending the conference was a worthwhile use of my time.	1%	1%	4%	28%	66%
The conference helped me feel part of the larger community of allies, advocates, etc.			2%	33%	64%
I felt a sense of belonging and inclusion during the conference.		2%	5%	35%	57%
My attendance helped reaffirm that I belong in cybersecurity.	1%		7%	42%	50%
The conference website and/or Whova app helped me navigate the schedule.	1%	5%	6%	41%	47%
The conference helped me advance my professional and networking skills.		2%	8%	45%	46%
The diversity of topics presented was sufficient to meet my interests.	3%	9%	9%	38%	42%
The conference registration process was easy to complete.	3%	4%	9%	48%	36%
The pre-conference communications via email met my needs.	1%	4%	10%	52%	32%
The conference helped me advance my technical skills.	8%	18%	28%	30%	16%

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

ATTENDEE PERSPECTIVES ON WICYS 2023

Using a scale of "very valuable" (4) to "not at all valuable" (1), respondents were asked to rate the value of conference forums offered as part of WiCyS 2023. The weighted average for students and professionals highlights the preferences of these two groups of attendees. ("Not applicable" was eliminated from the calculation.) The five highest ranked forums among students and professionals include Career Village, Career Fair, Career Village Talks, presentations, and socials.

	Students	Professionals
Career Village	3.9	3.7
Career fair	3.8	3.8
Career Village Talks	3.8	3.6
Presentations	3.8	3.6
Socials	3.7	3.6
Birds of a feather	3.7	3.5
Workshops	3.7	3.5
Panel discussions	3.7	3.5

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WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
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Overall, attendees were pleased with the conference program and variety of conference forums offered at WiCyS 2023. Requests were made for a greater variety of technical workshops, and less redundancy among the keynote speaker topics. Creating unique tracks for students, professionals, and executives, or arranging the sessions by cybersecurity domain was recommended. Several attendees requested additional time in the conference schedule for networking, and spreading the career fair across two days instead of one.
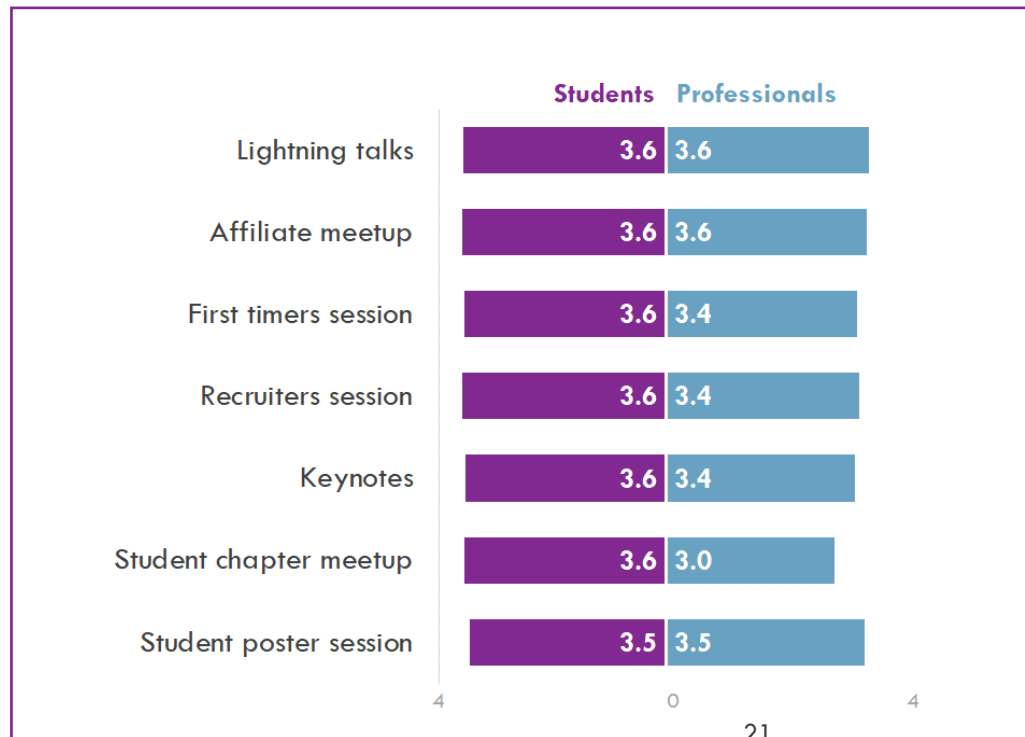
	Students	Professionals
Lightning talks	3.6	3.6
Affiliate meetup	3.6	3.6
First timers session	3.6	3.4
Recruiters session	3.6	3.4
Keynotes	3.6	3.4
Student chapter meetup	3.6	3.0
Student poster session	3.5	3.5

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Among respondents who have participated in the annual conference more than once, their opinion of the growth and direction of the conference is:

"I'm very glad that the conference has gotten bigger and that we've seen so much interest from companies for recruiting"

"Love the support, positivity and inclusion!"

"The growth has been tremendous in terms of attendance. But it seems more like a student development/empowerment conference."

"The growth is very inspiring. The difficulty getting tickets is a shame. While at the conference it did not feel too crowded, we did not run out of room at any of the talks I attended."

"Love the support, positivity and inclusion!"

"A good size conference with a good mix of content. I think the organization/conference is heading the right direction and meeting expectations."

"I attended the 2022 and 2023 conferences. I felt that the conference last year was amazing. This year it was good but I felt like the key note speakers kind of repeated the same theme. I absolutely love the workshops. They were amazing this year."

Among respondents who have participated in the annual conference more than once, their opinion of the growth and direction of the conference is:

"I love that the number of attendees has grown, more students were able to submit posters and and that both students and professionals were invited to play the capture the flag."

"I was also really bummed about the headshots, the gentleman gives one for free, but then wants us to pay $45 a piece for additional, when last year in 2022, we got all our headshots for free."

"I see both the successes and challenges of the growth over the last several years. As a diverse group I see WiCyS working towards better accommodations for a variety of needs."

"I have been pleased to see growth and like the inclusion of hands-on workshops, the career fairs, etc. I was not as happy to see males competing in the poster sessions."

"I think it has done well with expanding the availability of workshops and panels"

"It felt that is becoming just a job fair. The quality and number of presentations and workshops dropped drastically."

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

Among respondents who have participated in the annual conference more than once, their opinion of the growth and direction of the conference is:

"The growth is seriously exponential. This is now my favorite conference of any year."

"I liked the speaker variety, and opportunities to network."

"I think the growth overall is great. I enjoy getting to meet so many students wanting to explore cybersecurity. I feel there is a gap in providing richer content to the senior leaders in the industry to make it worth attending for our own development."

"Great! Could use more talks for mid and senior level"

"As far as the direction, I do wish there was more technical content and less 'Here's how I got my title' talks."

"I thought it was less technical than in years past."

"Great growth with a focus on career development, little to no growth in technical skill building."

Personal and professional benefits of attending WiCyS 2023

"Meeting new people at all stages of life and career inspired me to pursue my passions. I am now
interested in going into a career in cybersecurity."

"I got the opportunity to network with top cybersecurity professionals and this enlightened me on the
various pathways available for me once I graduate. Personally, I felt very empowered and confident
in my capabilities as a young brown woman venturing into a specialized career."

"I met a lot of great women and allies at the conference this year. It also gave me some ideas for
continuing my education and potential collaborations between my work and academic institutions."

"I was very motivated and inspired that I have decided to pursue my Masters in Cybersecurity. The
challenge I have is to find the right college for this at an affordable price because of recession it is a
little difficult to make this decision."

"I participated in my first CTF and it really helped to build my confidence in my ability to advance my
technical skills"

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

Personal and professional benefits of attending WiCyS 2023

"Attending this year's conference encourages me to apply for internships and reach higher to accomplish my goal of transitioning from academia to industry. Personally, I felt accepted, celebrated, and welcomed by women from around the world by representatives of companies and by other students"

"Provided valuable tools"

"I got practice with public speaking"

"It was an excellent experience. I loved having the opportunity to meet other women professionals/aspiring professionals in the field."

"I was able to connect with other women in the industry and build bonds"

"Had the opportunity to both attend the conference and also support my company at our career fair booth. Met a lot of really wonderful women (and men)."

"Helped me understand the needs of cyber professionals and how my organizations can assist them"

Personal and professional benefits of attending WiCyS 2023

"I was able to connect with the next generation of cybersecurity professionals and also other industry professionals that I probably would not have connected with otherwise."

"WiCyS provided me with a networking opportunity and has left me empowered with a sense of belonging."

"I feel more confident now that I can pursue a career in cybersecurity while also focusing on starting and maintaining a family."

"I am so motivated to learn more and improve my skills. It also helps to reduce the impersonator mindset."

"Growth mentality and pushing my comfort zone"

"Connecting with inspiring cyber pros from diverse fields and sharing our goals, finding solutions, and encouraging each other"

"I got together with a group of ladies and we will start an affiliation!"

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

Personal and professional benefits of attending WiCyS 2023

"I currently work in the tech field, but all of my team members have been males. Coming to WiCyS really helped me see that there are many women in my line of work that I could one day work with and help grow in my own teams."

"Helped energize my role beyond ally & closer to activist. As a neurodivergent (ND), it was also great to see so many ND women and men throughout the conference."

"I love that WiCyS affords the opportunity to meet and talk with female CISOs."

"It allowed me the opportunity to network with government agencies, hopefully it results in a job offer."

"Job opportunities and networking with my fellow women in cybersecurity and meet people in the cybersecurity field and industries."

"I was able to network with other Africans, be inspired to start an African Affiliate, encouraged by the keynote talks to keep applying myself in the field and help others."

Personal and professional benefits of attending WiCyS 2023

"I came back with the assurance that I was where I wanted to be and that I belong here in the world of cybersecurity."

"I learned a lot about different topics that I was interested in and made lots of connections with companies at the career fair. I also just had a lot of fun and enjoyed being around people like me."

"This year my priority was the career fair to see who was hiring entry level, learn their processes & time frames, and to network with representatives from those companies."

"I met a handful of people who are directing me towards a career in technology. I also met a mentor at the conference."

"Inspired me to do the poster projects next year as well as I got to see a presenter who is following the same track as me and that gave me new motivation to keep striving for what I want to do since someone had completed what I strive to do"

"As a more senior academic, I'm very impressed with the students attending the event and their commitment to the profession."

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Form a neurodiversity, disability, accessibility working group or similar to exclusively handle members who require adjustments, supports, and accommodations throughout the conference. This specialized group needs to include individuals who have working or personal knowledge of various disabilities or differences - if none are available, consult with external SME's for input."

"Improved flow/process in setting up accommodations. I noticed that this second time for me, I couldn't find the interpreters and there weren't enough interpreters to accompany individuals who had different agendas. I had an interpreter only for the meals and a few of the presentations."

"I feel that it would help some advising on which path to take in cybersecurity based on current skills perhaps some sort of assessments to decide if it is better to go to college or get certifications instead."

"'Maybe have a few more sessions regarding Cyber Security resilience and how Cyber Security and Business Continuity preparation walk hand in hand."

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"I would recommend having all presentations available to the attendees so everyone doesn't have to worry about trying to take pictures of the slides as they are being presented. I would also recommend extending the career village availability as it was so well received."

"Formatting of presentations should be like a standard template WiCyS provides all presenters. There were presentations with black backgrounds and purple text super difficult to read even if we used a zoom on phone. The presentations really took away from the experience."

"It would be great if the sessions had the option to receive the slides/presentation for each one."

"Bring back the affiliate table. It helped newer members understand what the affiliates are and how they can join them."

"I will suggest that required support should be given to the student chapter as a lot of Student chapter are struggling. Especially students outside the US."

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Use scheduling app to schedule appointments to avoid participants wasting a lot of time waiting in line for headshots, resume review, mock interviews"

"I would suggest a reservation system for resume reviews/headshots so that we don't take away too much time from attending sessions by waiting in line"

"Whova app isn't very intuitive - hoping there is a better app next year. The QR codes on the badges let everyone to believe it went to LinkedIn/Whova profile, is there a way to incorporate this?"

". . . registering for the workshops need to be handled differently. For example, making it clear that you don't register on the Whova app. Also, making the workshops on a separate application, rather than having to go back to your registration page."

"It would be great if we could view our workshops sign-ups somewhere separate from the registration website because it's cumbersome to go through the registration process each time. The registration site needs help. It's very confusing and does not work well on all browsers."

WiCyS 2023 Participant Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"More diverse keynote speakers. Most women had the white privilege where there was a disconnect with the audience. Also it would be nice to have had male keynote speakers, ally."

"Have more diverse keynotes, the speakers all ended up sounding the same by the end and were less and less valuable. Continue having the CTF and have a longer student chapter meet up."

"I would recommend spreading out some of the workshops/presentations more so volunteers can better attend some, or listing the conference schedule alongside the volunteer shift schedule so people can know what and how much they're missing when they select a certain shift."

"I also think it would be good to give participants a heads up for the events taking place before the conference. Before buying my plane ticket, I heard that there may be events Thursday afternoon, but because I did not know what that would even include, I chose a flight that did not have me arriving until mid-afternoon. Due to this, I missed some cool events, including the first timer session, which I think could have been super helpful."

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Maybe having tracks for students/industry/academia? Attending this conference as a student a few years ago, I found it to be a lot more technical than it currently is. I'm not sure if that's because I am now an industry professional or if the conference overall is less technical."

"Have defined tracks for presentations, lighting talks, workshops, hands-on-experience etc. based on cybersecurity domains. Record other talks so participants won't have to miss a topic of interest."

"Providing more opportunities for senior-level and executive level leadership to engage in more targeted ways. Perhaps a focus on challenges and opportunities with securing new technologies."

"I think there needs to be multiple learning tracks - students, professionals, executives."

"The different career focus breakfasts were great! Make sure to keep supporting the full pipeline of mid career and executive level women to stay in the industry!"

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Have more targeted time slots for job seekers: early career, mid level, executive recruiting time slots so the floor is not so chaotic, quieter for actual information sharing about openings"

'Would like to see the career fair last longer than 1 day."

"Career fair split into 2 days."

"My biggest disappointment was that I ended up forgoing some of the workshops I was looking forward to the most in order to spend adequate time at the career fair."

"The Career Village talks need to be listed individually in Whova, not seeing the timings made it hard to know what was when unless you went down to get schedule each morning. Consider the special needs of those coming from overseas."

"Keep the career village talks! I LOVED them they were the best part of the session!"

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Provide more technical talks! A lot of the technical presentations and workshops seemed very introductory level. It would be great to provide a workshop that was super in-depth into a topic and one meant for more mid-career or senior-career professionals."

"I would really love to see more technical content. I also felt that the conference days were jam-packed and I was always on my way to the next thing. An additional conference day and less concurrency would be nice."

". . . as women, if we want to show that we can be technically savvy, we should do that by having technical sessions at our conference. I went to a workshop billed as intermediate and as a student with little domain knowledge in that area I found it way too rudimentary. Even some of the more technical topic talks that I went to mostly barely brushed the surface of the topic. We can and should do better on this front."

"I wish that there had been more technical talks. I also think that there were too many Keynotes."
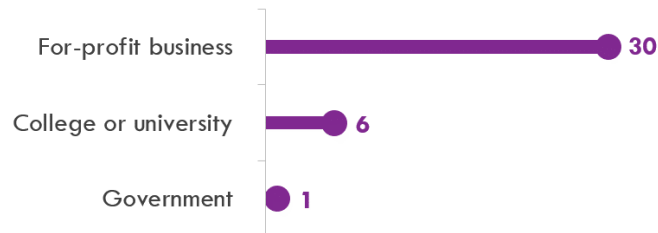
WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

The WiCyS 2023 sponsor survey was designed to assess the experiences and perceptions of conference sponsors, and to inform future WiCyS annual conferences and Career Fairs. The survey weblink was distributed to 142 sponsors of WiCyS 2023 at the conclusion of the conference. A total of 37 conference sponsors responded to the anonymous survey in whole or part.

RESPONDENTS BY TYPE OF COMPANY

Eighty-one percent of respondents were affiliated with a privately held for-profit business.

For-profit business	30
College or university	6
Government	1

YEARS OF CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP

Twenty-four percent of respondents represented a company participating as a WiCyS annual conference sponsor for the first time.

Yes, on more than one occasion	25
No, this was our first time	9
Yes, on one occasion	3
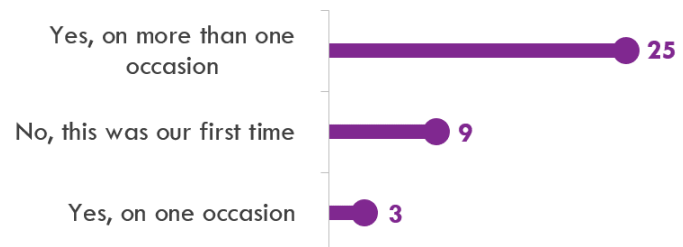
WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
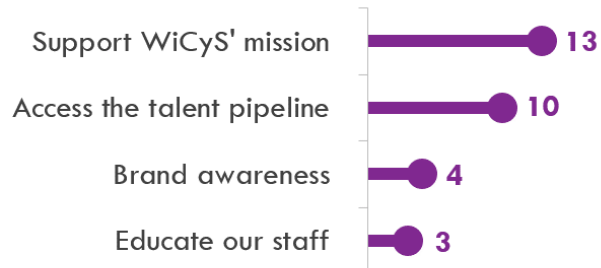# Results Dashboard – May 2023

Fifty-three percent of those surveyed indicated they have recruited from a WiCyS event on one or more occasions. Among the respondents that identified as repeat sponsors, one of their motivations is to gain access to the talent pipeline. However, the most frequently cited reason is to champion WiCyS' and their organization's complementary missions of supporting gender equity in technology.

MOTIVATION FOR REPEAT SPONSORSHIP

Among the repeat sponsors of this event, their motivation for continuing to participate in this capacity is multi-faceted.

Support WiCyS' mission	13
Access the talent pipeline	10
Brand awareness	4
Educate our staff	3

RECRUITING FROM WICYS EVENTS

Over half of respondents have recruited from a WiCyS event (conference, Career Fair, or local meet-up) on at least one occasion.

Yes, on multiple occasions	11
Not yet	8
Unsure	6
Yes, on one occasion	5
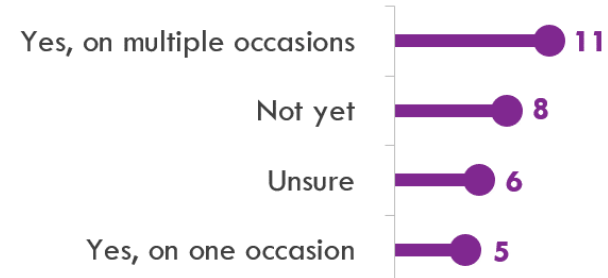
WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
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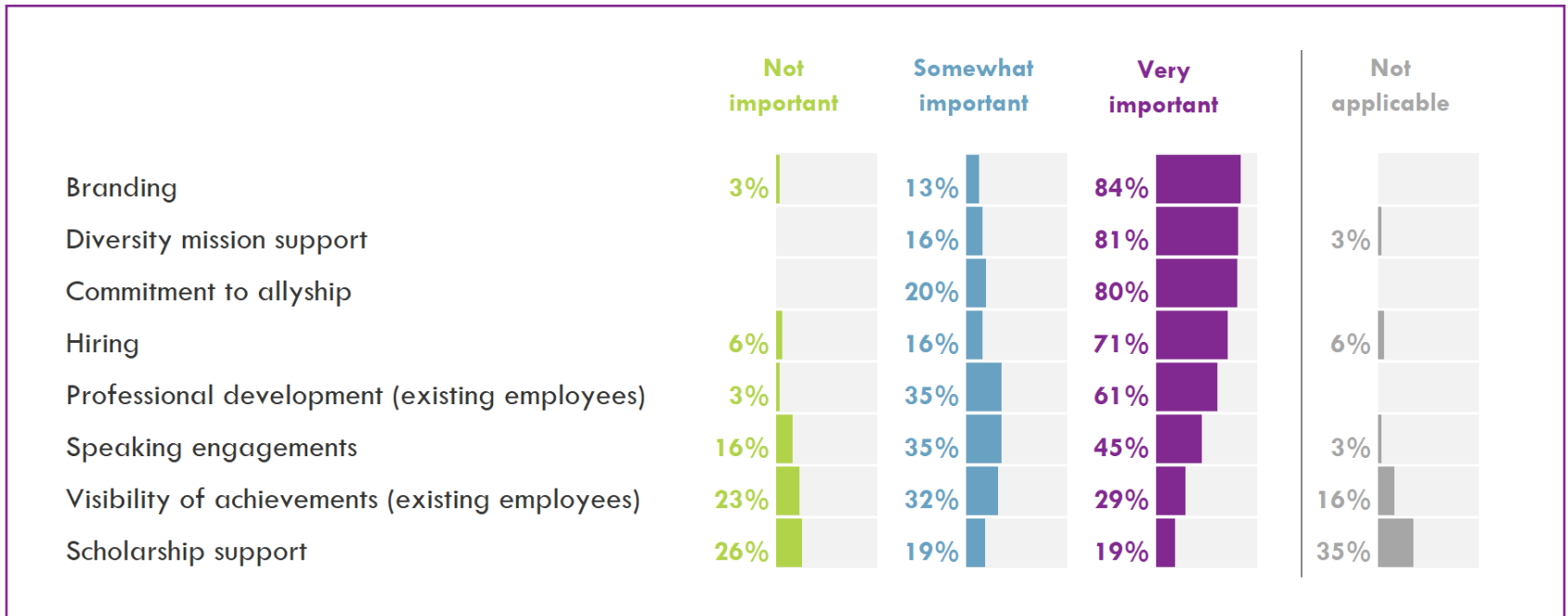Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several benefits related to their company's WiCyS 2023 sponsorship. The top three benefits rated "very important" were branding, diversity mission support, and a commitment to allyship. One-quarter of those surveyed deemed scholarship support an unimportant benefit of their sponsorship.

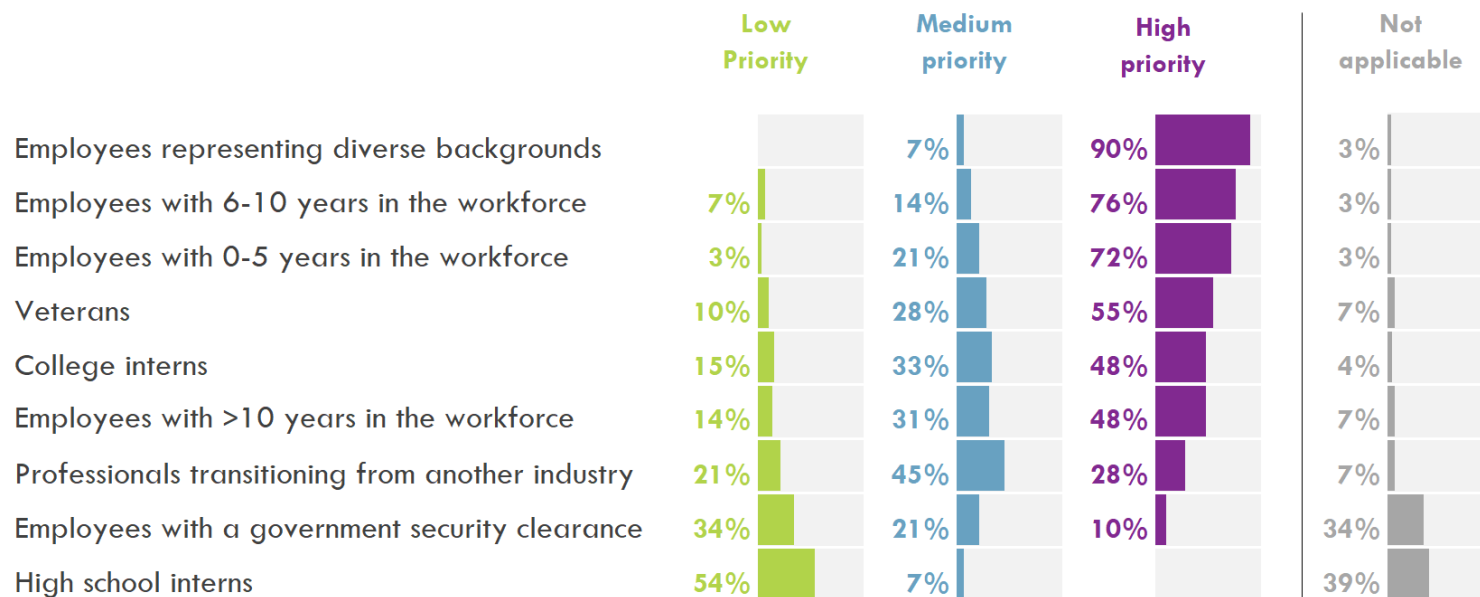|	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Not applicable
Branding	3%	13%	84%	
Diversity mission support		16%	81%	3%
Commitment to allyship		20%	80%	
Hiring	6%	16%	71%	6%
Professional development (existing employees)	3%	35%	61%	
Speaking engagements	16%	35%	45%	3%
Visibility of achievements (existing employees)	23%	32%	29%	16%
Scholarship support	26%	19%	19%	35%

WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
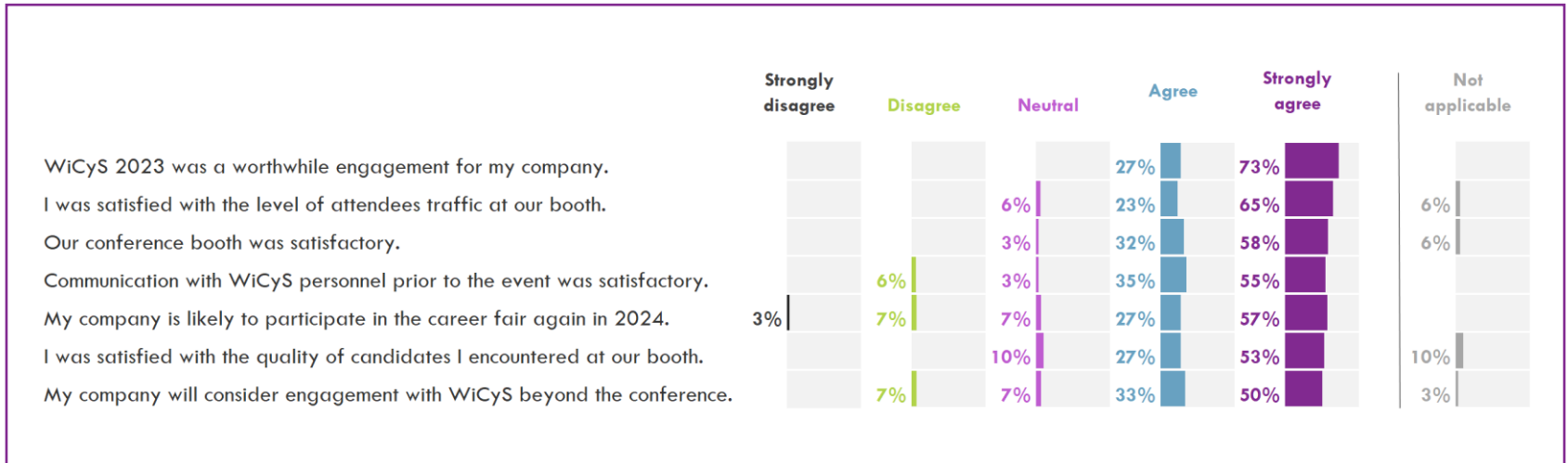# Results Dashboard – May 2023

Respondents were asked to rate the priority level of recruiting several classifications of worker for their company. The top three worker groups given a "high priority" rating were employees representing diverse backgrounds, employees with 6-10 years in the workforce, and employees with 0-5 years in the workforce. One-third of respondents assigned a "low priority" to recruiting employees with a government security clearance.

	Low Priority	Medium priority	High priority	Not applicable
Employees representing diverse backgrounds		7%	90%	3%
Employees with 6-10 years in the workforce	7%	14%	76%	3%
Employees with 0-5 years in the workforce	3%	21%	72%	3%
Veterans	10%	28%	55%	7%
College interns	15%	33%	48%	4%
Employees with >10 years in the workforce	14%	31%	48%	7%
Professionals transitioning from another industry	21%	45%	28%	7%
Employees with a government security clearance	34%	21%	10%	34%
High school interns	54%	7%		39%

WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
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Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with several components of WiCyS 2023 using a scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Sponsors were overwhelmingly pleased with the level of attendee traffic at their booths, and the quality of attendees they encountered. Every respondent indicated that participating in WiCyS 2023 was a worthwhile expenditure for their company, and 83% will consider a year-long engagement with WiCyS.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
WiCyS 2023 was a worthwhile engagement for my company.				27%	73%	
I was satisfied with the level of attendees traffic at our booth.			6%	23%	65%	6%
Our conference booth was satisfactory.			3%	32%	58%	6%
Communication with WiCyS personnel prior to the event was satisfactory.		6%	3%	35%	55%	
My company is likely to participate in the career fair again in 2024.	3%	7%	7%	27%	57%	
I was satisfied with the quality of candidates I encountered at our booth.			10%	27%	53%	10%
My company will consider engagement with WiCyS beyond the conference.		7%	7%	33%	50%	3%

Among respondents who have participated in the annual conference more than once, their opinion of the growth and direction of the conference is:

"The networking events and career village/fair have been great areas with positive growth and feedback from the team."

"The growth is tremendous. We have hired in previous events and it's great to see leaders join the conferences as well."

"Going in the right direction. However, given how quickly this year sold out, it seems like there may be some growing pains and also opportunities for making future conferences bigger and better."

"I think the growth is amazing. The interest in attending the conference has far outpaced the capacity of the conference, an issue that should be the top priority for future conferences. The direction is particularly impressive as WiCyS leads the charge in inclusion and diversity."

"This year's conference was fantastic and we are so glad to have been part of it."

Among respondents who have participated in the annual conference more than once, their opinion of the growth and direction of the conference is:

"Fantastic upward trend!"

"It is fantastic to have an opportunity to witness this conference's growth."

"We love the growth that has happened the last few years."

"Attendees are well prepared and ready to engage. The numbers continue to grow."

"Seeing the growth of the conference has made us happy with not only more attendees but better candidates to interview and hire. However, with more attendees having the career fair on just one day does hinder the process of talking to as many candidates as possible."

"Growth is fantastic, but it's increasingly hard to get passes as it sells out so quickly, and our sponsorship doesn't get us many. Big[g]er venues with more attendance possible is critical."

"We have an ongoing commitment to promoting education for our employees, recruiting veterans and underrepresented groups wherever we can."

How did sponsoring WiCyS 2023 benefit your company's mission and goals?

"Strategic Partnership"

"Networking, connecting with past, present and future students"

"We are committed to diversity and inclusion and helping to train to contribute to the cybersecurity workforce."

"By sponsoring WiCyS 2023, we found that we were able to share our company mission to a larger group of diverse candidates than other in-person career fairs."

"We received many candidates, which was one of our goals"

"We had the opportunity to meet and engage with amazing women in tech."

"Shows our commitment to underrepresented communities in InfoSec."

"Employees beyond security could attend the conference. Brand recognition at the event was great."

WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
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How did sponsoring WiCyS 2023 benefit your company's mission and goals?

"The talent level that attends is high, and meets or exceeds what we are looking to hire."

"As a cybersecurity company, we are thrilled to support the future of the industry and the professionals who contribute to it."

"Demonstrates our support for a diverse and inclusive workforce through our commitment of time and money."

"As a new hiring system, branding and awareness is extremely important right now and the first step to build a pipeline of interested talent and applicants."

"I have been very successful in getting diverse candidates for my openings."

"We were able to engage with women from across the country, while at the same time allowing current employees the opportunity for professional development."

"DEI opportunity and ability to support our students/faculty professional development and grow their network."

WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
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What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Less overlap of sessions, or repeat of sessions, or recording of sessions"

"I heard a comment from other attendees they wished there were more technical discussions/sessions and less focus on growth and soft skills but they also said 'but then what would differentiate WiCyS from becoming RSA?' - food for thought."

"All in all the conference needs more technical talks/sessions"

"It is a very student focused conference. You could significantly increase practitioners attendance if more tickets were available. I wanted to attend but could not because they sold out so fast."

"Would love to see deeper technical sessions offered to professionals. A lot of the content seems aimed at the students. In 2022, there were keynotes done by non-sponsors that were amazing and we missed that this year."

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Improve the clarity of course content as Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced. Increase Career Village, perhaps getting it closer to Career Fair."

"More sessions and things for professionals - mid-level career and CISOs. A leadership track would be great."

"Lightening talks more presentations from mid-senior and or tracks"

"Have the FBI do more sessions and explain paths to work for them."

"Increased capacity or rolling registration openings/lottery."

"Would like to see more vetting of keynote speakers. I heard feedback from several attendees (not just from our company) that several of the keynote speakers were not engaging."

WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"It would be great if there was a pre-conference information session on suggestions and process for new sponsors."

"Communicating more clearly about shipping and receiving guidelines would have been helpful."

"Better communication to vendor event managers. Preshow emails only went to those registered for the show, and didn't go to those managing their teams. Have an option to add people to emails that aren't registered for the show to receive those email communications."

"We hosted a breakfast and although it was great, there was some room [for] improvement regarding the communication on logistics. Our location changed a couple of times, communication on how many swag items were given to us at the last minute. Lastly, give the sponsors a more time to speak."

"Ensure that your partners have first dibs on career fair booths. Do not let booth space sell out unless partners have the right of [first] refusal."

WiCyS 2023 Sponsor Survey
Results Dashboard – May 2023

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"Did NOT like conference scheduled on a Saturday; Would have loved for the career fair to be on one day and the interviewing opportunities to be on another day; add scheduling for headshots taken onsite to optimize people's time; loved speed talks and would like to see more of this; loved allyship symposium content; Whova app improvement - can workshops you register for auto populate on your schedule; nice balance between technical and non-technical sessions; keynotes were repetitive; felt that the senior leaders breakfast was a glop, as it could have been more structured with opportunities to network"

"I wish there was more onsite branding for high level sponsorship. I do understand there is a cost to printing things but it would have been nice to see our logo in other spots aside from on screen during the meals with everyone else's logos."

"We would have liked to see a banner listing all sponsors and logos displayed prominently at the conference. We did not have a booth, so we did not feel like our sponsorship was properly displayed anywhere else in the conference venue."

What suggestions do you have for improving the WiCyS annual conference and/or career fair?

"I believe having the career fair on more than one day would help, especially considering the mid day break for lunch that occurs. Not enough time for not only attendees to make it around to each booth, but our employees working the booth do not have time to fully engage with everyone."

"Extend the career fair time. In addition to one full day, perhaps hold an opening night expo kickoff (i.e. 5-7 pm with small bites/beverages) or a half day on day 2."

"Separating the cocktail tables into their own booth on the career fair floor would be very helpful."

"I loved the themes [of] past conferences (#seeherasequal). I suggest "you're simply the best" for next year's conference. Also, INCREASE THE CAPACITY and let more women have the experience of a career/student lifetime!"