

HOW DIVERSE IS INFORMS, REALLY



FIRST INFORMS STAFF-LED DEI AMBASSADOR PROJECT FOCUSES ON MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS

BY TRACY CAHALL, MARY LESZCZYNSKI AND MAX LIBERATORE-RESNICK

When the Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan in 2021, they also stated a goal to “advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do.” INFORMS staff started working on several changes, including updating the demographic questions and expanding the answer choices in the join process, online profile, and in the Speakers Program and Mentor Match enrollments. We added the ability to choose multiple answers to some questions as well as a write-in option in case an individual’s personal answer wasn’t represented by any of the provided choices. This was a small step toward inclusivity. One of our tasks in 2022 is to launch a campaign to get current and past members to update their demographic data using the expanded range of answers to gain insight into the question of how diverse our organization is. ¶

Our goal is not only to collect updates – we also need to convince members to simply *provide* their demographic information. Currently, for example, only about 58% of members fill in their race – one of many important dimensions of diversity.

These numbers haven’t improved in recent years, so it’s difficult to gauge the impact of previous efforts. Several groups within INFORMS, including the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Minority Issues Forum and the Forum for Women in OR/MS, have been dedicated to championing underrepresented minorities in OR/MS and analytics. Without member demographic data, we aren’t able to ensure the success of their work. ¶

Fortunately, in building a more diverse and inclusive organization, we have an advantage because our members already understand the importance of data. So, we’re asking for your help. To inspire participation, we decided to create a visual representation of INFORMS member diversity and showcase it within the pages of *OR/MS Today* throughout 2022. We are starting with a blank outline, and in the next five issues as more members provide and update their demographics, you’ll see the graphic fill in with color, shape and texture. By December, what was once a blank canvas will come to life with the vibrancy of our community – but only with your help. ¶

HOW IT WILL WORK

There are eight components of diversity for this project: primary work setting, highest degree, racial identity, gender identity, pronouns, birth year, language(s) spoken and OR/MS activities. Some of these, such as pronouns and languages, are entirely new questions for which we have no existing data. Most of the questions have simply been revised to update terminology and allow different or additional answers. We encourage you to review your previously provided data, contribute any updates and complete the new questions. If you have personal reasons not to share your demographic data, we encourage you to select “Prefer not to answer” rather than leave it blank. ¶

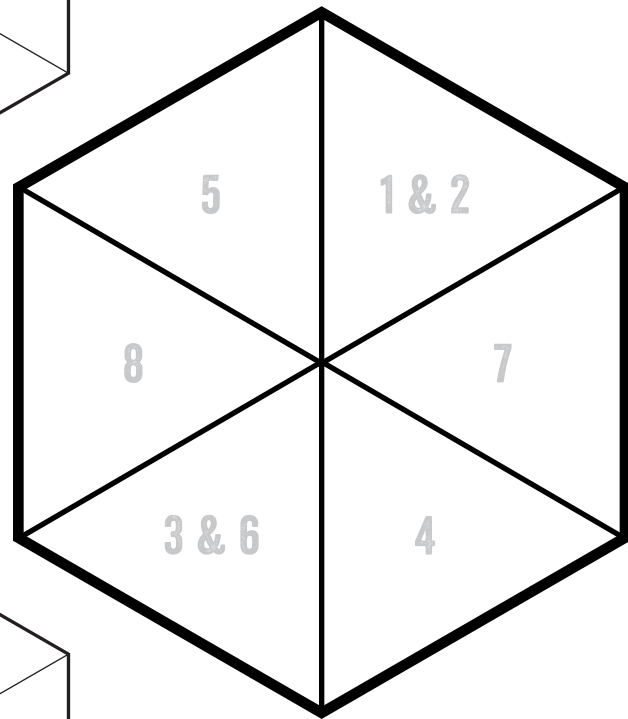
The demographics we are including in the visual representation, and its key, are illustrated on the next page. In a few weeks, all INFORMS members will receive an email with a link to the demographics survey. You can also update this information at any time by logging in to myaccount.informs.org and navigating to the “About Me” section on the My Info page. Our customer service team stands ready to help if you encounter any difficulties or have questions: informs@informs.org. ¶

We’ll remind you of this campaign periodically by email and in our eNewsletters throughout the year. Follow INFORMS on social media, and you’ll see reminders there as well! ¶

This project will include a large interactive art display at the 2022 INFORMS Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, where attendees can contribute their demographic data in person. At the end of 2022, we’ll compare the demographic data we’ve collected to what we had at the beginning of the year. A full analysis of the data and an evaluation of how the results might inform our organizational priorities in 2023 and beyond will appear in the December issue of *OR/MS Today*. ¶

We are excited to kick off this project! But we can’t do it without you. Please help us discover and honor the diversity among INFORMS members.

THE VISUAL



1. MY PRIMARY WORK SETTING:

- Academia
- Industry
- Consulting
- Not Listed
- Government

2. MY RACIAL IDENTITY:

- White
- Indigenous American
- South Asian or South Asian American
- Middle Eastern
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Eastern Asian or East Asian American
- Prefer Not to Answer
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Not Listed

3. MY GENDER IDENTITY:

- Female
- Prefer Not to Answer
- Male
- Not Listed
- Gender Expansive or Nonbinary

4. MY PRONOUNS ARE:

- He/him/his
- Prefer Not to Answer
- She/her/hers
- Not Listed
- They/them/theirs

5. MY HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED:

- None
- Master's
- High School
- Ph.D.
- Associate
- Doctor of Medicine
- Bachelor's
- Other/NA

6. MY AGE GROUP:

- 10-19 Years
- 60-69 Years
- 20-29 Years
- 70-79 Years
- 30-39 Years
- 80-89 Years
- 40-49 Years
- 90-99 Years
- 50-59 Years

7. I FLUENTLY SPEAK:

- Arabic
- Korean
- English
- Mandarin
- Farsi
- Portuguese
- French
- Russian
- German
- Spanish
- Hindi
- Turkish
- Italian
- Not listed
- Japanese

8. MY PROFESSIONAL OR/MS ACTIVITIES:

- Analytics
- Healthcare
- Artificial Intelligence
- Info Systems & Tech
- Behavioral Science
- Manufacturing
- Career Development
- Marketing
- Computing
- Military/Security
- Data Mining
- Optimization
- Data Science
- Revenue Management & Pricing
- Decision-making
- Simulation
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Supply Chain
- E-commerce
- Teaching Methods/Improvement
- Economics
- Telecommunications
- Environment & Natural Resources
- Transportation/Warehousing
- Finance/Insurance
- Not Listed
- Government & Public Policy

THE KEY

Each demographic is represented within segments of a hexagon. Four of the segments represent one demographic each, and two segments represent two demographics each, for a total of eight demographics being displayed in this project.

The segments representing two demographics include color and pattern to distinguish them. The demographics that were combined were chosen randomly: primary work setting with race, and age with gender. Wherever colors are assigned to answers, the tones were chosen randomly.

TO SHARE YOUR DEMOGRAPHICS, VISIT: INFO.INFORMS.ORG/DEMOGRAPHICS

HOW DIVERSE IS INFORMS, REALLY



HELP US UNDERSTAND OUR MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS

BY TRACY CAHALL, MARY LESZCZYNSKI,
AND MAX LIBERATORE-RESNICK

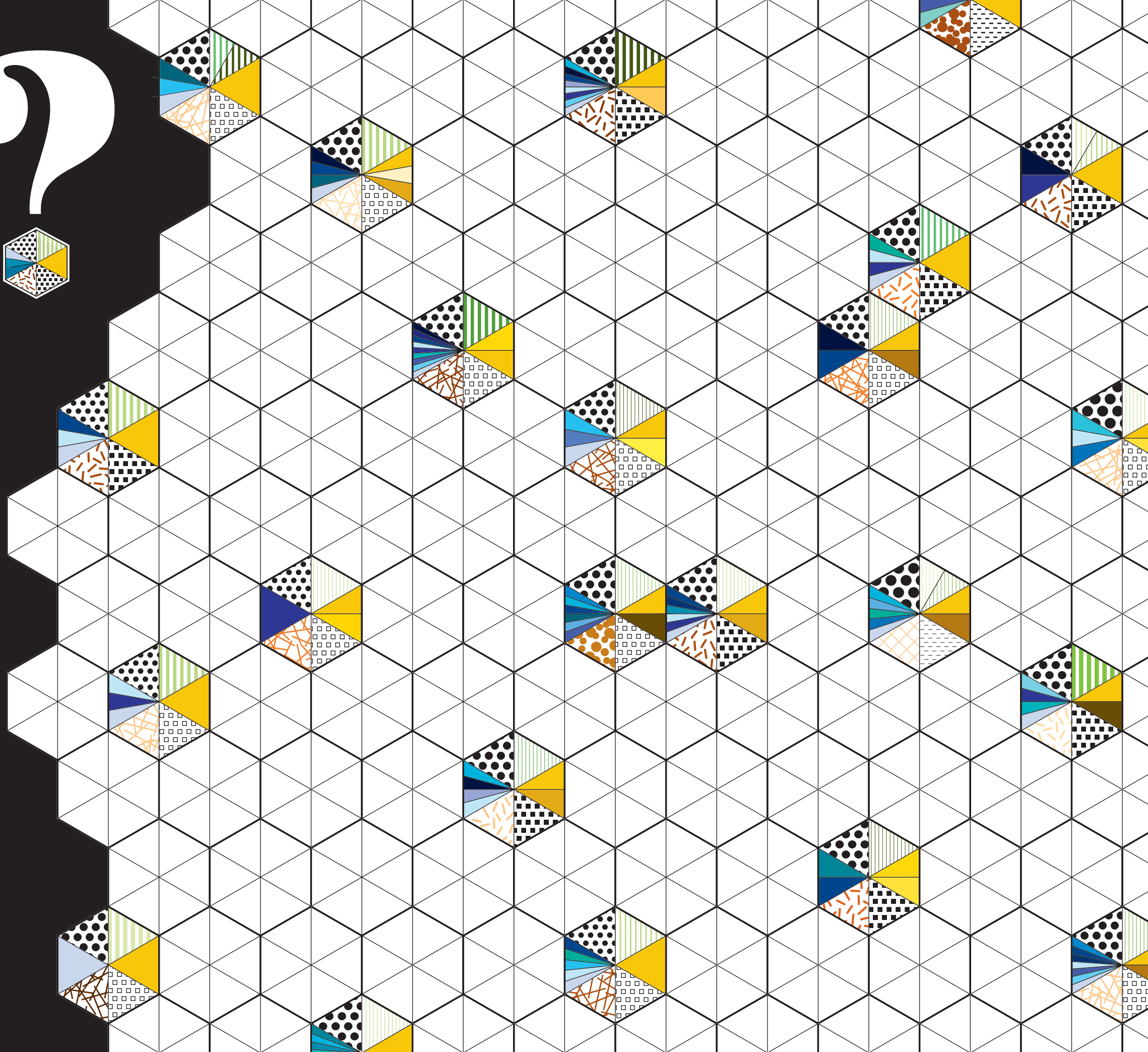
On these pages you are seeing a visual representation of INFORMS member diversity. As part of INFORMS goal to “advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do,” this year we’re campaigning for members to add or update their demographics so that we can better understand how diverse our organization is. Throughout 2022, you’ll see blank outlines start to fill in with color, shape and texture representing our INFORMS members. The key to the meaning of each piece of the hexagons can be found at informatics.org/demographics. ¶

We’re counting on your help to complete the full picture! Simply go to info.informs.org/demographics and answer a few questions. Please note that even if you already submitted this information when you joined INFORMS, or updated your profile later, some of the questions and answer choices have recently changed. Some now allow for multiple answers or write-in answers in case the choices we provide don’t describe you. The information you submit via this form will replace what’s in your member profile now. ¶

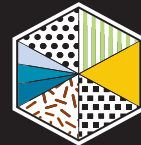
Questions or comments? Contact informatics@informatics.org. ¶



TO SHARE YOUR DEMOGRAPHICS,
SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT:
[INFO.INFORMS.ORG/DEMOGRAPHICS](https://info.informs.org/demographics)



HOW DIVERSE IS INFORMS, REALLY



UPDATE YOUR DEMOGRAPHICS

BY TRACY CAHALL, MARY LESZCZYNSKI,
AND MAX LIBERATORE-RESNICK

One of INFORMS strategic goals is advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do. We're asking for all members to add or update their demographics so that we can better understand the diversity within INFORMS. As 2022 proceeds, you'll see the blank outlines on the opposite page continue to fill in with color, shape and texture representing the diversity of INFORMS members. ¶

We're counting on your help to complete the full picture! Go to <https://info.informs.org/demographics> to update and submit your information. We have recently updated questions to allow for multiple answers or write-in answers in case you don't identify with the choices we provide. The information you submit via this form will replace what's in your current member profile. ¶

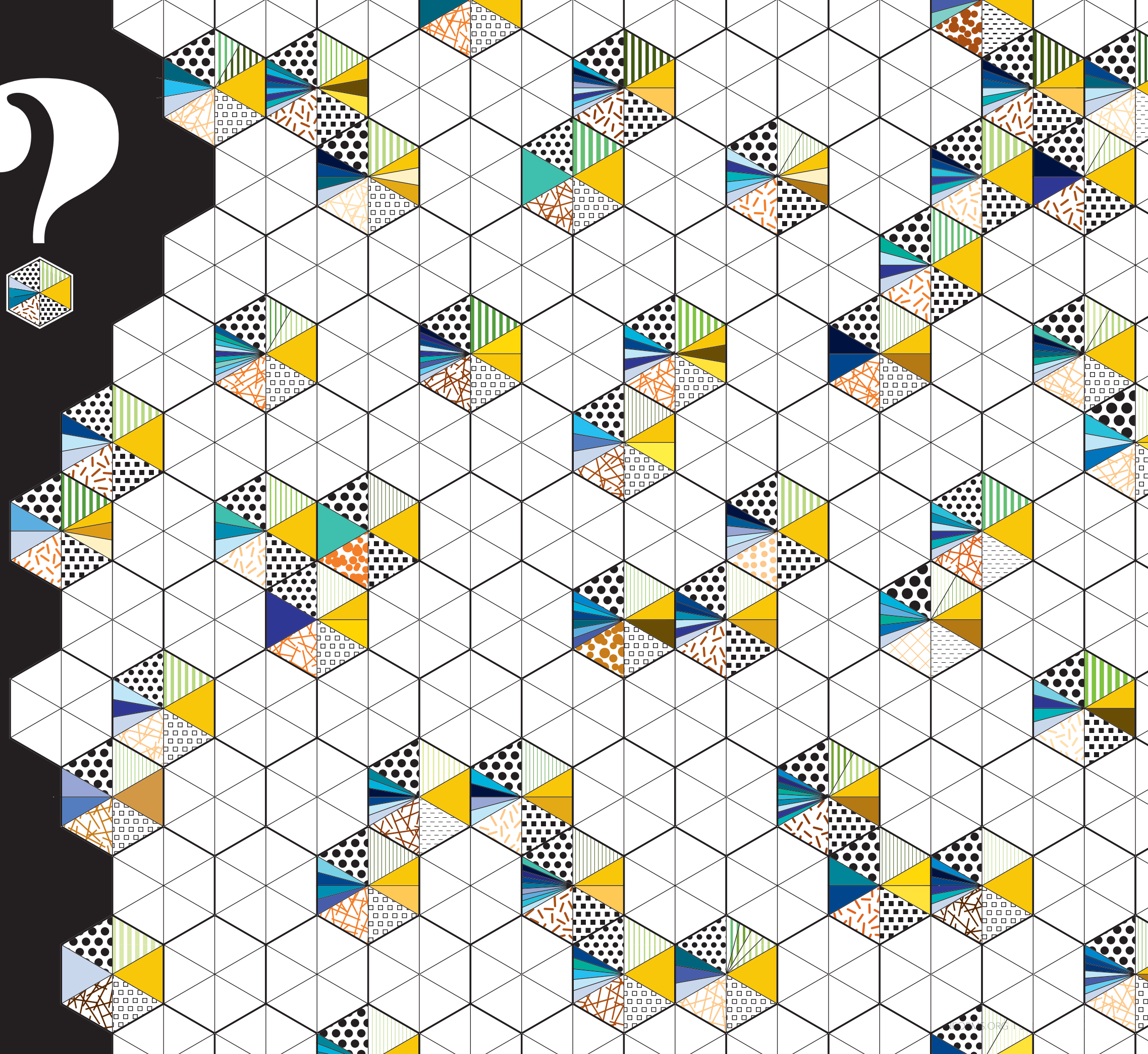
Questions or comments? Contact informs@informs.org. ¶



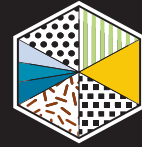
PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE TO PARTICIPATE
BY SCANNING THE QR CODE OR VISITING:

<https://info.informs.org/demographics>

Note: INFORMS is committed to respecting member privacy. INFORMS staff have access to this data, which is governed by our Privacy Policy. ¶



HOW DIVERSE IS INFORMS, REALLY



STILL TIME TO UPDATE YOUR DEMOGRAPHICS

BY TRACY CAHALL, MARY LESZCZYNSKI,
AND MAX LIBERATORE-RESNICK

One of INFORMS strategic goals is advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do. We're asking all members to update their demographics so that we can better understand the diversity within INFORMS. Thanks to the members who have already participated, our data is more complete. This year, you've seen the blank outlines on the opposite page fill in with more colors, shapes, and textures representing the diversity of INFORMS. ¶

We still need your help to complete the full picture! Go to <https://info.informs.org/demographics> to update and submit your information. In case you don't identify with the choices provided, the form now allows for multiple answers or write-in answers. The information you submit via this form will replace what's in your current member profile. ¶

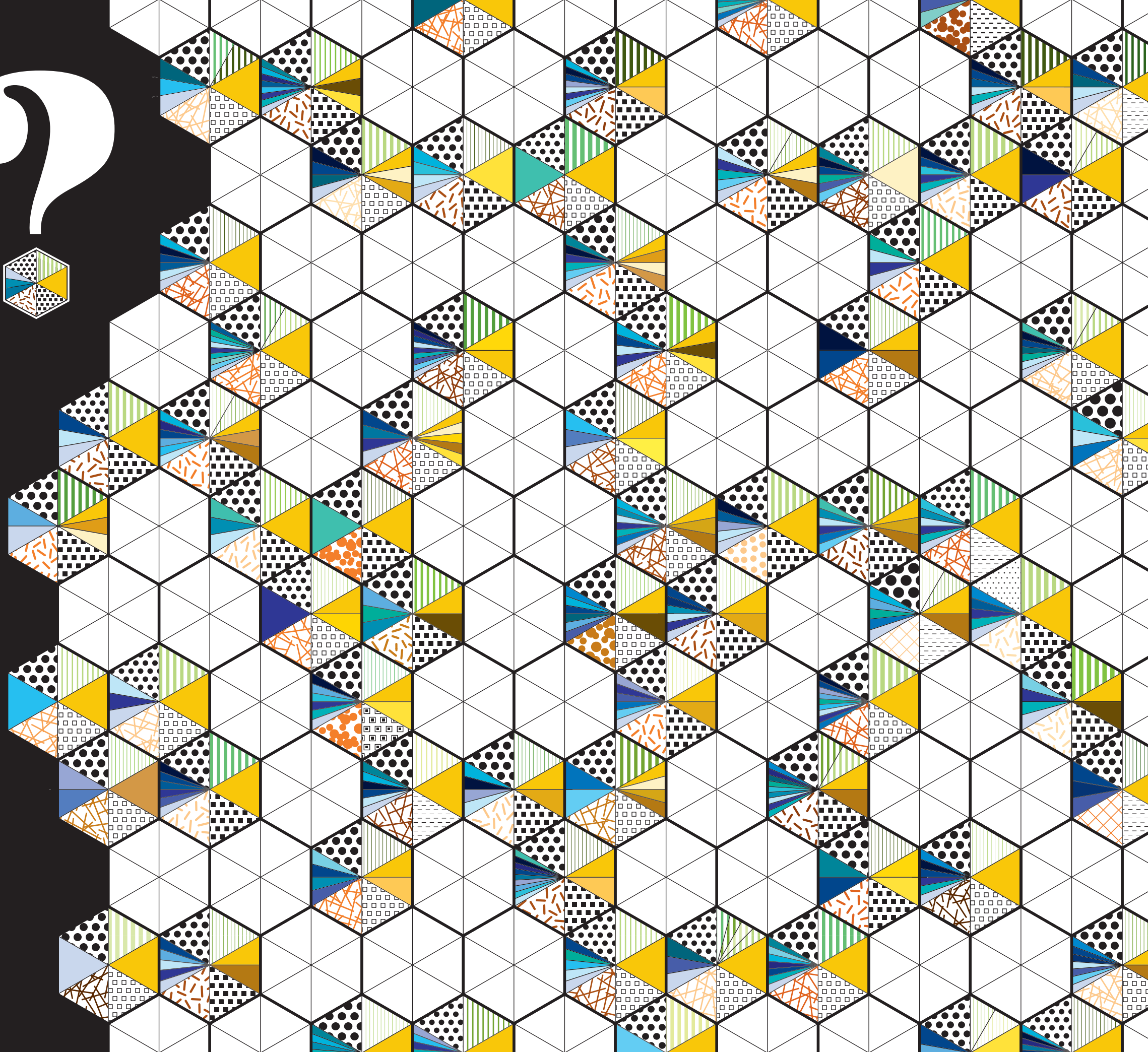
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HOW DIVERSE IS INFORMS, REALLY



SHOWCASING DIVERSITY AT #INFORMS2022

BY TRACY CAHALL, MARY LESZCZYNSKI,
AND MAX LIBERATORE-RESNICK

One of INFORMS' strategic goals is advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do. All year we've been asking members to add or update their demographics so we can better understand the diversity within INFORMS. We're enjoying showcasing that diversity on these pages, noting the colors, shapes and textures. We have big plans to display this design in large form at the Annual Meeting this month in Indianapolis. If you plan to join us there, we hope you'll stop by the INFORMS Center to see it. You'll also be able to submit your information there, if you haven't already. ¶

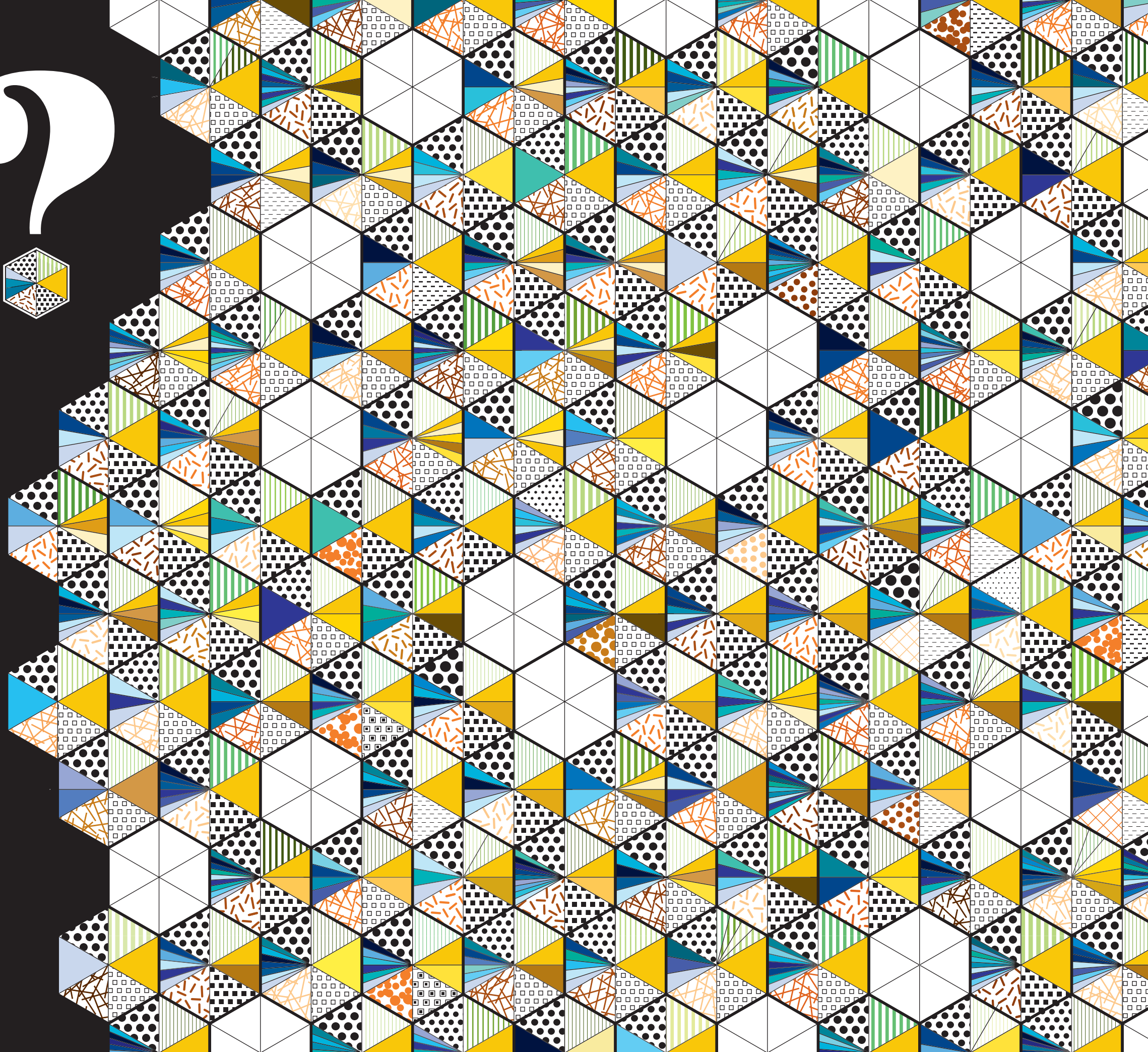
In the meantime, or if we won't see you at the meeting this year, please use <https://info.informs.org/demographics> to update and submit your information now. The data you submit via this form will replace what's in your current member profile. ¶

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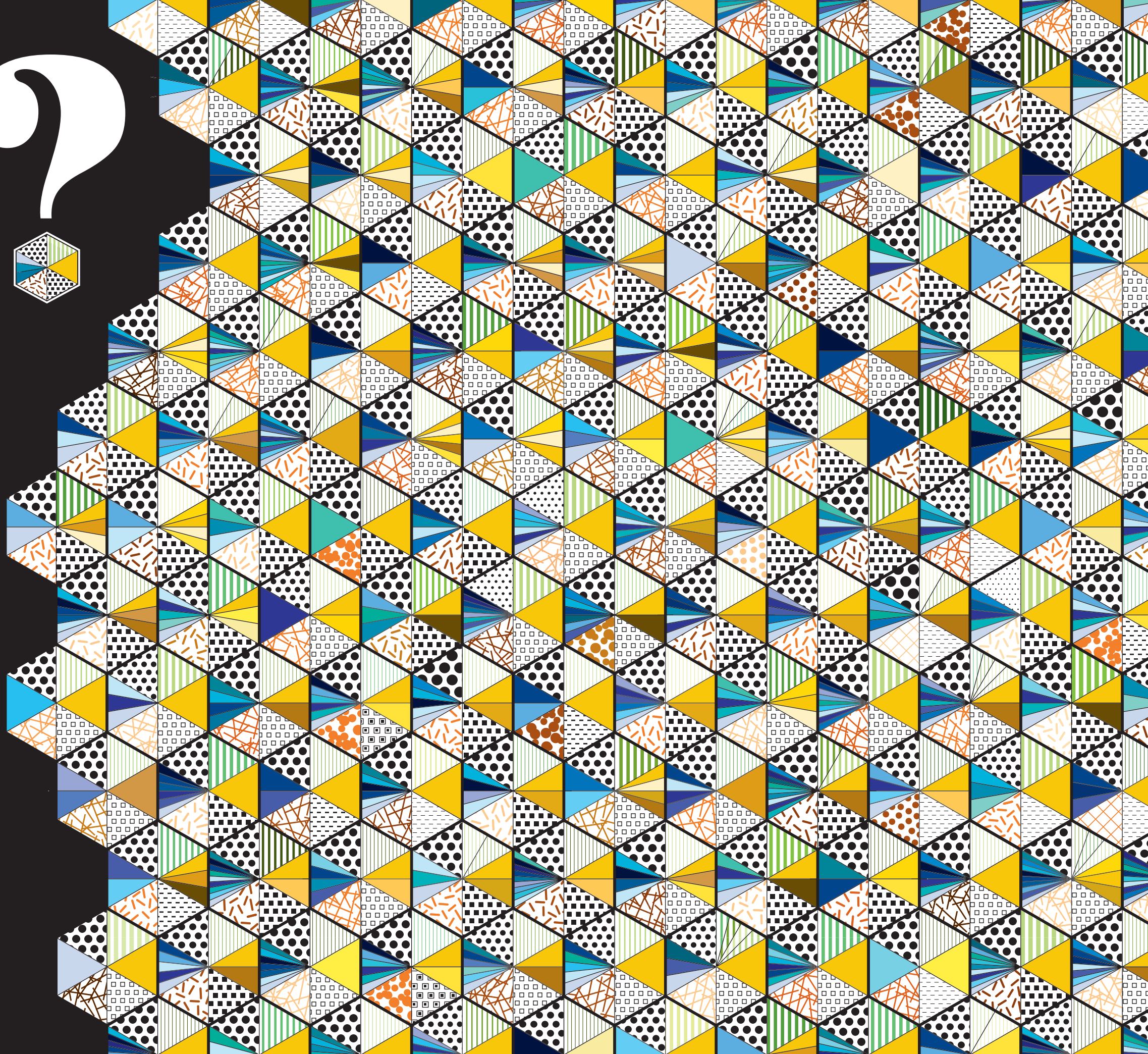
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED AS INFORMS DEI AMBASSADORS

BY TRACY CAHALL, MARY LESZCZYNSKI,
AND MAX LIBERATORE-RESNICK

We started our project with a question – how diverse is INFORMS, really? – and the idea of using artwork to highlight the answer. After spending the year encouraging members to update their demographics and illustrating their diversity in this magazine, we’re closer to that answer. However, we are seeing that there are many possible answers to our question, depending on your perspective. ¶

The graphics on the following pages show the progress we’ve made in understanding how our members identify themselves. Undoubtedly, our data is more complete than it was, and holds insights we’ve only begun to uncover. What we present here doesn’t capture everything: the write-in answers that some members used to describe their identities more accurately and personally, the interesting conversations we’ve had, or the valuable feedback we received. Now we work to put the measurable and immeasurable together. What must change in our forms and processes? How do we best communicate with members about demographic data – about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)? How and when will we use this data to measure the impact of our DEI efforts? We feel like scientists, in that we asked *one* question and ended up with far more. ¶

Work in this space is evolutionary by nature and INFORMS’ organizational goal to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion remains. You’ll hear more from us in the future. As always, we welcome your thoughts. ¶



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED.

As of the end of October, 66% of INFORMS members have updated their demographic profiles in 2022. In the data presented here, the light green represents the percentage of INFORMS members who had provided an answer to each demographic question prior to the start of our demographic campaign; the dark green represents the percentage who have done so since. In some categories, we started at or near zero, because we didn't ask that question at all until recently. In those categories, as expected, we see greater progress than in the ones where a large percentage of members had already answered the demographic question. ¶

Throughout this project, we've learned lessons related to both data collection and data visualization (i.e., DEI Ambassador project). As we pushed to collect more member demographic data, we received feedback from members who supported this effort as well as those who did not, or who had suggestions for improvement. We were impressed with the thoughtful, constructive quality of the feedback, which served to emphasize the importance of inclusion. As we move forward, we will take all this feedback seriously, make changes as we learn, and always ensure that our members have a way to opt out of answering demographic questions and/or withdraw their consent for storing and using their data in compliance with the GDPR law. We also learned to broaden our thinking about the many different dimensions of diversity. We are only measuring 11 categories for now, but individuals see so many more aspects of themselves that may not be represented in the mainstream, or within their communities. ¶

We started with the hope that it would be inspiring to see the artwork in this magazine finally complete, showing the vibrance and diversity of our membership. For us, it is inspiring. Although the graphical representation piece of the project is done, our work is not. INFORMS is committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion over the long term. Our goal is to ensure every member is included and welcomed within INFORMS. ¶

Questions or comments? Contact informs@informs.org. ¶

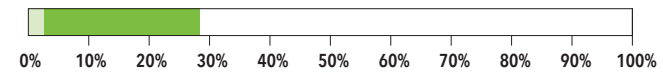


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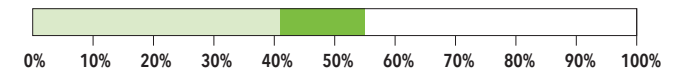
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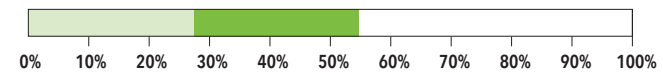
LANGUAGES SPOKEN: +25.9% (2.5% to 28.4%)



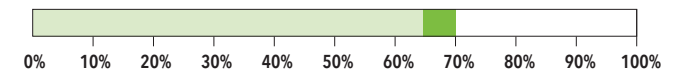
RACE/ETHNICITY: +13.4% (41.5% to 54.9%)



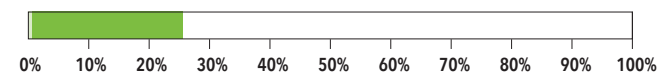
OR/MS ACTIVITIES: +27.4% (27.5% to 54.9%)



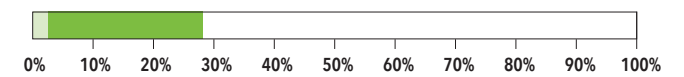
GENDER IDENTITY: +5.4% (64.6% to 70.0%)



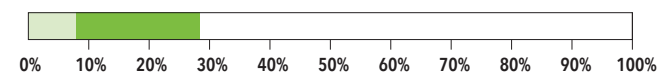
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: +25.6% (0.2% to 25.8%)



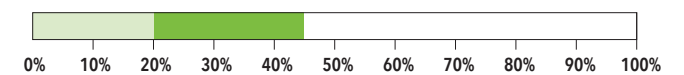
PRONOUNS: +24.6% (2.7% to 27.3%)



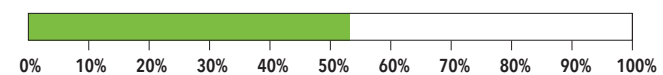
CAREER STAGE: +20.5% (7.8% to 28.3%)



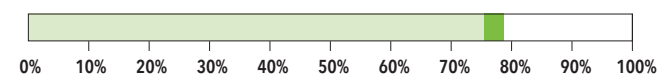
BIRTH YEAR: +23.2% (20.9% to 44.1%)



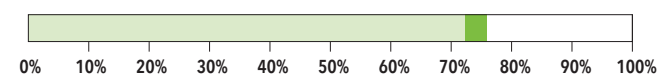
ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS: +53.3% (0.0% to 53.3%)



PRIMARY WORK SETTING: +2.9% (75.9% to 78.8%)



HIGHEST DEGREE: +4.4% (72.0% to 76.4%)



2022 MEMBER DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATES: +66% (0.0% to 66.0%)

