

Preliminary Results from SciTech Survey

by Bradley Gulliford, Greg Krewski, Dorothy McGarry and Sue Wainscott

The Science-Technology Division's Strategic Planning Committee is in the midst of a periodic update to the division's strategic plan, which is prescribed every five years (or more frequently as needed). In September, the committee provided a survey to discover more about both division members and non-members, and how Sci-Tech could be more relevant to them. The 41 question survey, administered via SurveyMonkey.com, was advertised via this newsletter in September, announcements to the Sci-Tech listserv (which includes many non-members), and direct emails to Sci-Tech members with valid email addresses in the membership directory.

120 division members and 37 non-members responded to the survey. This is an approximately 20% response rate of Sci-Tech members, using as our population the 578 Sci-Tech Division members listed in the online member directory. Of these 157 respondents, 14 were not members of SLA, although 8 respondents reported that they had been members in the past. Of these 157, 128 responded to a question regarding number of years they have been SLA members (Figure 1). 28% have been members for 1-5 years, and another 4% have been members less than a year. Another 13% had been members for 6-10 years, 29% had been members for 11-20 years, and 27% for over 20 years. A similar question about years in Sci-Tech shows a similar pattern, with 106 respondents reporting that 33% have been members for 1-5 years, and 5% for less than a year (Figure 2). Of the remainder, 18% had been Sci-Tech members for 6-10 years, 20% for 11-20 years, and 25% more than 20 years. We also asked about which other division memberships our respondents maintained, and while 29 (out of 128 total respondents) were not members of another division, we found considerable overlap with the following divisions: Academic, Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics, Chemistry and En-

Years of SLA Membership

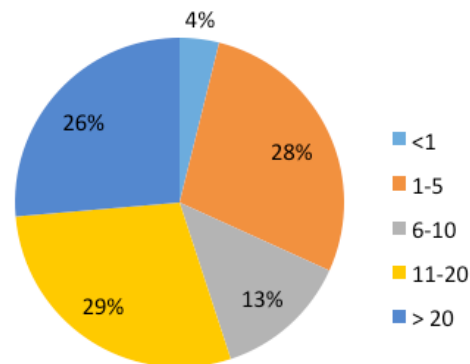


Figure 1. Percentage of 129 responses in each category of SLA Division membership duration.

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Respondents also held memberships in several other professional organizations, with 140 persons responding. No other professional society membership was maintained by 27% of respondents. 36% were also members of the American Library Association, 24% of Association of College and Research Libraries, 14% of Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), 8% of the American Chemical Society, and 6% of the American Society for Engineering Education. Many other professional societies were named, including both library and information science and subject professions.

The survey also revealed that about half of respondents are currently employed in an academic library, with many corporate and government professionals, as well as several respondents working in law firms and not-for-profit organizations. Of those responding to questions about employer support for professional society membership and engagement, 83% of employers encourage involvement, but only 41% of respondents' employers assist with dues payment in whole or in part. Of those 28 respondents who reported that they have ever allowed their Sci-Tech Division membership to lapse, 64% stated it was

Years of Sci-Tech Membership

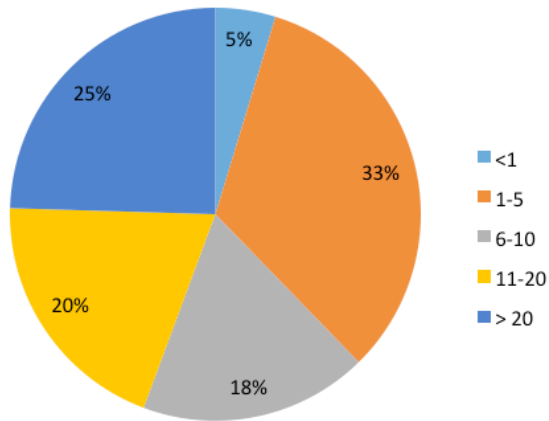


Figure 2. Percentage of 106 responses in each category of Sci-Tech Division membership duration.

primarily due to insufficient funds. 10 of the survey respondents indicated that they were retired, and another 32 were considering retirement in the next 5 years. Of 153 respondents to answer a question about whether they might continue with SciTech after retirement, approximately 56% said they were not sure, and 10% were certain that they would remain active.

Many respondents expressed interest in serving on a committee (33), as an officer (22), or in one of several support roles (21), and those names have been given to Helen Josephine and our current Division Chair, Sheila Rosenthal, for follow up – thank you all! We received many suggestions for additional professional development and conference programs, and these ideas have been passed onto the appropriate committees as well. Respondents were split fairly evenly regarding the value they receive from the annual conferences - among 111 respondents, 34% felt they received good value, 31% did not, and 35% were not sure. Many respondents provided detailed comments regarding the value of the annual conference, and these comments will be highlighted in the report to the division board.

A subgroup of the committee (Bradley Gul-

liford, Greg Krewski, and Dorothy McGarry) has begun a deeper analysis of the survey data from Sci-Tech division members, examining how responses to certain questions varied among categories defined by length of division membership. The categories for this analysis are: 0-5, 6-10, 11-20, and 20+ years with division. Of those who responded to the question What are the biggest challenges facing you today in your work?, those in the 0-5 and 6-10 years categories had the most varied array of challenges, with the top being relevance, budget/non-human resources, and time to learn. Those in the 11-20 years category overwhelming responded that budget/non-human resources was the top challenge, while those with more than 20 years with Sci-Tech were concerned about budget/ non-human resources, time to learn, and other challenges unique to their job. Survey questions regarding visibility of the respondent within their organization and internal marketing support from Sci-Tech yielded interesting results. Of the 6 newer members of Sci Tech, in the 0-5 category, who identified as very visible in their organization, all were interested in more support from Sci-Tech for internal marketing. However, the 0-5 category respondents who identified as visible or somewhat visible were not sure or not interested in additional internal marketing support. Also of note, responses to a question regarding the ad-

Years in Information Profession

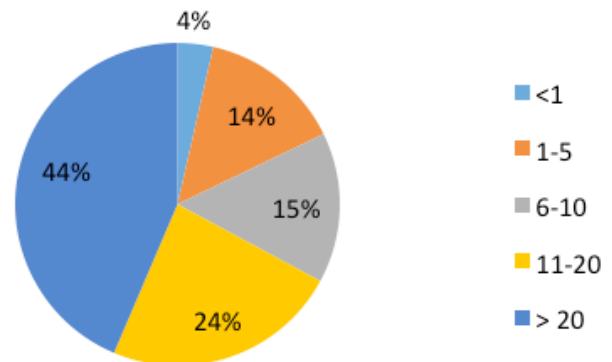


Figure 3. Of 140 respondents, percentage reporting number of years in information profession.

equacy of non-conference communications (listserve, website, newsletter), respondents with 0-5 years in SciTech reported less satisfaction than did other respondents. This may suggest that once personal relationships have formed through conference attendance and other shared experiences, the relationships can be maintained through these asynchronous venues, but are not likely to be formed solely through those venues.

The committee continues to analyze the data and will prepare a report for the division board this winter. This report will include a summary of the programming ideas for future conference and professional development programming, as well as other ideas recommended by or prompted by survey responses. The report will also include the committee's recommendations on content

for the visioning session at annual to more fully inform our recommended strategic plan revision, due to the division board in late 2016. We will also archive a blank copy of the survey, advertisements sent, and the responses.

Next steps for you, dear reader, may include any of the following. 1) Deepen your involvement in this process by emailing additional ideas to the committee chair, Sue Wainscott, or any of the division officers. 2) If you have not already volunteered to serve on a division committee or other roles in the division, contact members of our nominating committee, such as Helen Josephine. 3) Participate in one of the Sci-Tech Division board meetings. 4) Stay tuned for more details in January about a visioning session during the Philadelphia PA annual conference.