



2016 WISE Membership Survey*

Part 2

Part 1 of this survey reported the results for questions that could be quantified. This part provides summaries of answers to questions that required narrative replies. There were numerous answers that were only mentioned by one person and/or were very general in nature. In most cases, those are not reported here. However, some of the once-mentioned suggestions were significant enough that they are included.

CURRICULUM

A number of members addressed the value of holding face-to-face classes. Of importance to them are the “easy give and take in the classroom” and “the social aspect of being with friends and learning together.” In addition, “WISE does a tremendous job offering a variety of courses at a variety of times and at a variety of locations.”

(See Part 1 of the survey results, pages 6-12, for data related to members’ responses to specific questions about the current, and possible future, curricula.)

Courses Members Would Like to See Offered

This topic generated enormous interest. More than 100 distinct course topics were suggested. The categories of classes of most interest were:

GENERAL TOPIC	# DISTINCT SUGGESTIONS
History	30
Literature	21
The Arts (Music, Art, & Film)	18
Medicine, Science, & Technology	11
Comparative Religion	6
American Politics	5

*Of note, 53.5% of the 282 members surveyed completed the survey.

Additional academic topics suggested were American English, Food, Current Events, Architecture, Sports and Sports History, Philosophy, Consumerism, and Other Cultures. Seven suggestions were made for “how to” classes in computers, bridge, and writing.

General Comments Related To the Curriculum

Offer some of the usual afternoon courses in the morning and some of the morning courses in the afternoon.

Expand the 5-week sessions into 6-week sessions for courses that would benefit from more class time.

For those who live some distance, cancelling morning classes due to bad weather or other causes the morning of the class is not enough notice. Consider cancelling the night before.

Offer “more classes appealing to the male population.”

Mini-courses might be good to offer in the summer.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Many members expressed their appreciation of the value of our special events. They noted, in particular, the interesting speakers, the variety of speakers, and the social aspect of events.

The Brown Bag series received numerous kudos, both for the speakers and for the committee that did the work to present them, e.g.: “The special events are an added plus to being a WISE member.” “They...bring the membership together in a social setting to hear an interesting speaker. Both achieve very positive results.”

While a number of members commented on how much they like trips related to art and music, several people were concerned about the cost of trips; others were enthusiastic about day trips but a few thought too much time was devoted to lunch during the trips.

(See Part 1 of the survey results, pages 14-16, for data related to members’ responses to specific questions about special events.)

Suggestions For Future Events and Speakers

History was suggested the most number of times as a topic for speakers. In addition, topics of local interest (e.g., authors, a TV weatherman, someone from the Chamber of Commerce, development of downtown Worcester, the Worcester tornado) were prevalent. Specific presenters suggested were Cecily Marshall (wrote *Happy Life Blues*), Mona Ives, Mr. Museong (the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies), Steve Collins (An Evening with Walt Whitman), Peter Grigg (pesticides) and Rev. David Miller. Someone offered to give a talk on Suzanne Valadon.

Trips suggested were Nova Scotia, the Peabody Museum, Berkshire's museums and historical country estates, plus musical plays and events.

Additional suggestions: repeat some programs that are oversubscribed, resume having a speaker at the annual meeting, and implement a suggestions box.

COMMUNICATIONS

WISE communications include:

- three monthly publications--President's Blog, Technology Blog, and WISE Bulletin
- notices about special events
- general informational emails

(See survey results, Part 1, pages 12-15, for data related to members' use of WISE communications.)

General Comments about Communications

Overall, members reported that they are very satisfied with the types, number, and periodicity of WISE communications with its members, e.g., "The communications I receive from WISE are interesting and entertaining." "I find them interesting and informative."

Publications

The three publications received quite a lot of praise, e.g., "(They)...provide a good mix of entertainment, information about WISE members and group leaders, WISE-related general information, and information that stimulates us to think outside the box." Particularly appreciated are spotlights on members and course leaders.

Internet-Provided Information

No comments indicated use of WISE's website or Facebook page. The only comment regarding the registration website asked us to improve it, without any specific suggestions.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Consider having an option of "maybe" for the yes-no questions in the survey.

"Distribute a communication listing and explaining the function/purpose of all the WISE officials, council, committees, etc., and how one gets to serve as an official or participate as a member."

"It may help publicize and increase WISE membership if the words 'Adult Education,' when typed into a search engine, would lead a viewer to WISE."