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The CEAL Fellowship Dinner Survey

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THE CEAL FELLOWSHIP DINNER SURVEY

Background

It has been a long tradition to organize the Fellowship Dinner during annual CEAL conferences. Based upon a review of comments received and actual dinner attendance over the past years, the CEAL Executive Board launched a short online survey through SurveyMonkey during late April 2010 (21 - 30). The purpose of the survey was to solicit peoples' perspectives on the CEAL Fellowship Dinner with the intention of improving the CEAL fellowship program in the future.

On April 21, the CEAL President Joy Kim sent an email with a link to the survey questionnaire to the EastLib listserv calling for participation. Meanwhile, the chairs of CJK material committees sent the same email message to vendors for their input. The questionnaire had six questions related to respondents' identity (CEAL member, guest, vendor), CEAL meeting and Fellowship Dinner attendance in the past three years, likelihood of their future dinner attendance, perceived needs of continued Fellowship Dinner program, as well as their suggestions and comments for improving future CEAL Fellowship Dinner. Appendix 1 is a copy of the online questionnaire.

Results

The Distribution of Respondents

In total, 116 responses submitted surveys. Among these respondents, the majority (103, 88.8%) identified themselves as CEAL members. Guest and vendor respondents numbered 2 (1.7%) and 11 (9.5%) respectively.

CEAL Conference and Fellowship Dinner Attendance

Out of the 116 respondents, 112 (96.5%) responded Yes to the conference attendance (CA) question; fewer people (93, 80.2%) selected at least one year from Fellowship Dinner attendance (FDA) question. As shown in Figure 1, while the total number of conference attendees has increased over the past three years with a slight drop in 2009, there has been a steady drop in fellowship dinner attendance, from 67 in 2008 down to 52 in 2010. Additionally, the 19 respondents who responded to the CA question but skipped the FDA question all self-reported as CEAL members. This might indicate that these CEAL member respondents did not attend the fellowship dinners at all in the past three years (i.e., 2008, 2009, and 2010). In comparison vendors and guests tend to be more "loyal" to the Fellowship Dinner, since all vendors and guests who responded to the CA question also answered the FDA question.

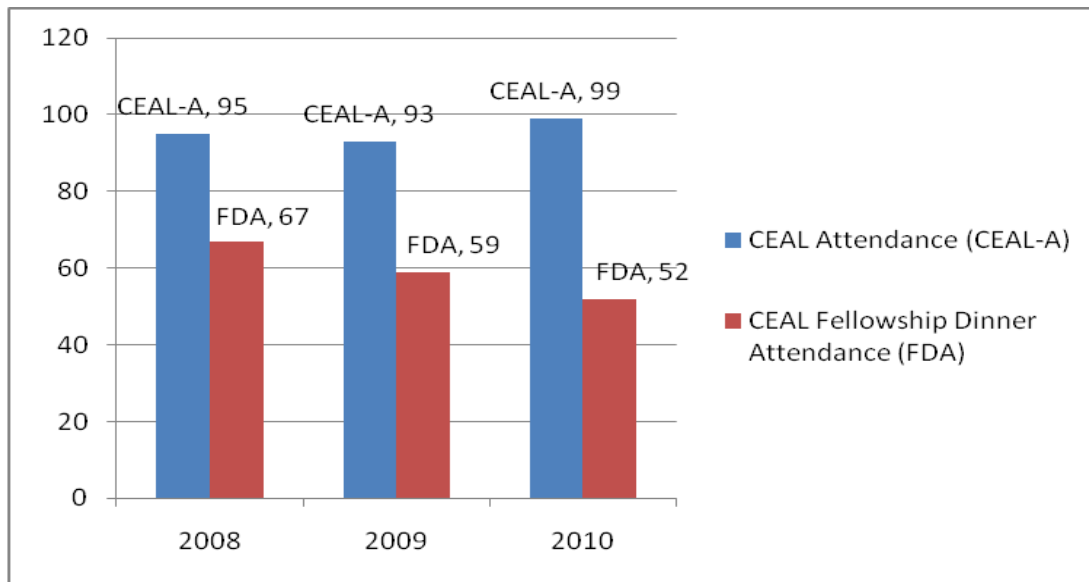


Figure 1 Distribution of CEAL Conference and Fellowship Dinner Attendance (2008-2010)

Future Fellowship Dinner Attendance

As indicated in Figure 2, 54 (46.6%) respondents selected “Undecided” to the future FDA question, whereas 37 (31.9%) answered “Yes”. Only a small proportion (21.5%) - 25 out of 116 including 24 CEAL members and 1 vendor-- answered “No”. The 54 sets of answers to the open-ended question show that three most frequently mentioned reasons for the “No” or “Undecided” answers are (1) perceived lack of support to social networking (e.g., too crowded, and fixed seat arrangement), (2) scheduling conflicts with other activities (e.g., AAS sessions, vendor and friend meetings), and (3) problems with food types (e.g., allergic, unfavorable, dislike of constant one food type). Some other reasons include high cost and low accessibility (transportation).

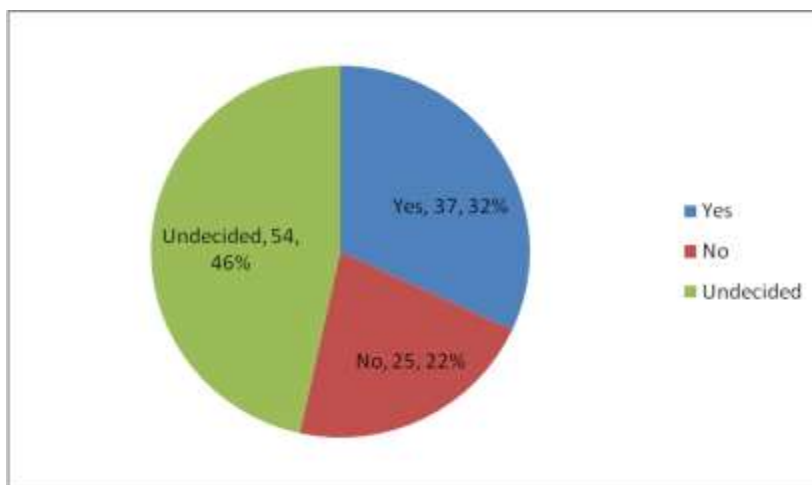


Figure 2 Perceived Future CEAL Fellowship Dinner Attendance

The cross-tab of responses to Question 3 by Question 4 (see Figure 3) indicates the majority of the past Fellowship Dinner attendees might attend future dinners. In addition, more “loyal” dinner attendees are from the year 2010 than the years 2008 and 2009. While 29 out of 52 (55.8%) respondents who attended the 2010 Fellowship Dinner said they would still go to future dinners, 35 out of 67 (52.2%) respondents who attended 2008 Fellowship Dinner were “Undecided” on their future FDA. The “No” responses also drop over the past three years. It is also noted that fewer people who attended all three dinners selected “No” than those who attended one or two dinners. The percentages are 27.3%, 5.7%, 4% for one-dinner, two-dinner and three-dinner attendees respectively.

	Did you attend the CEAL Fellowship Dinners in			Response Totals
	2008	2009	2010	
4. Will you attend future CEAL Fellowship Dinners?				
Yes	35.8% (24)	42.4% (25)	55.8% (29)	38.7% (36)
No	11.9% (8)	6.8% (4)	7.7% (4)	12.9% (12)
Undecided	52.2% (35)	50.8% (30)	36.5% (19)	48.4% (45)

Figure 3 Correlation between Reported Past FDA and Perceived Future FDA

The Needs for Organizing and Improving CEAL Fellowship Dinner in the Future

In response to the question “will the CEAL Fellowship Dinner continue in the future,” the majority of the respondents (88 out 116, 76%) had positive answers, among which 45 said “Yes, but in different formats,” 27 simply said “Yes”, and 16 said “Yes, but less frequently AND in different formats.” Only a few answered “No” (9, 7.8%), or kept “Neutral” (19, 16%). It is noted that all these “No” and “Neutral” answers were from CEAL members.

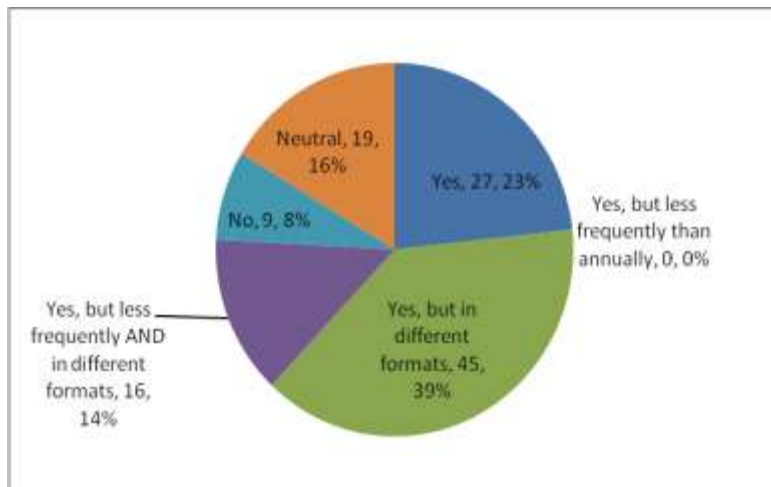


Figure 4 The Needs for Organizing Future CEAL Fellowship Dinners

People's responses to the open-ended questions, including 17 sets to Question 5 and 54 to Question 6, contain rich and diverse suggestions and comments. A content analysis on these 71 sets of responses reveals that additional programs, food type and price, and fellowship formats are three of the issues of highest concern. The number of people who favored additional programs (15) is slightly more than the number of people who disliked such programs (12). A number of responses specifically mentioned not wanting further talent shows. Meanwhile, three most favored Fellowship Dinner formats are buffet, reception, and cocktail because they are regarded to be able to engage people and empower social interaction (walking around). Additionally, people tended to prefer diversified food types with right amount (no left-overs), high quality and cheaper price. Several respondents suggested that the Fellowship Dinner should be located in or close to conference hotels, and/or be brought forward to an earlier time slot (e.g., 5:30 -7:30pm) or a different date (e.g., Wednesday) to accommodate other professional and/or personal activities.

Discussion and Conclusion

In general, the survey results put the CEAL Fellowship Dinner in a situation of either undergoing some change or facing a loss of interest of CEAL members, friends and vendors. On the one hand, the number of people who attended the dinners in the past several years or would like to attend Fellowship Dinners is decreasing. On the other hand, those who opposed all future Fellowship Dinners were only a very few survey respondents (9, 7.8%). We hope that future CEAL Fellowship Dinners and Fellowship Dinner attendance can be improved by taking serious account of the comments and suggestions provided by the 116 survey respondents.

Appendix 1 the CEAL Fellowship Dinner Survey Questionnaire

CEAL Fellowship Dinner

* 1. Are you a

CEAL member guest vendor other

If "other," please specify:

2. Did you attend the CEAL Meetings in

2008

2009

2010

3. Did you attend the CEAL Fellowship Dinners in

2008

2009

2010

* 4. Will you attend future CEAL Fellowship Dinners?

Yes

No

Undecided

If "No" or "Undecided," please briefly explain the reason(s):

* 5. Should the CEAL Fellowship Dinner continue in the future?

Yes

Yes, but less frequently than annually (e.g., biennially)

Yes, but in different formats (e.g., cocktail, buffet)

Yes, but less frequently AND in different formats

No

Neutral

Add additional comments here, if any:

6. What changes would you like to see to improve CEAL Fellowship Dinner (e.g., lower price, additional programming, such as a talent show, etc.)?

Done

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