

Results of the 2012 Retiree Interest Survey

In early summer 2012 the Retiree Initiative Group constructed a web-based survey to assess the level of interest among Skidmore retirees in remaining connected to Skidmore, and to determine the types of interaction that seemed most attractive. An email with a link to the survey and an invitation to respond was sent to all Skidmore retirees for whom HR has an address. The survey collected 107 responses of which 51% were from faculty and 49% from staff; most of the respondents had retired between 2000 and 2009. As promised in the initial invitation, the following is a brief summary of the survey results.

The survey included questions in a number of categories, along with opportunities to include suggestions for activities or events that could appeal to retirees. The questions offered a choice of responses from 1 (low) to 5 (high) or 'Unsure' to indicate the level of interest in the option.

Interest in Continued Contact

81% of respondents indicated a 4 or 5 interest level in staying connected, with little difference between faculty and staff group responses. Both groups had a strong interest in keeping in contact via email lists, mailings, the website and Scope. Email was the preferred method of contact for the majority of respondents. Faculty respondents had a stronger interest in campus visits than did staff respondents, while the desire to hear from friends was higher among staff than among faculty. Other contact types mentioned in the comments included reference to attendance at arts events, library assistance and benefits updates.

Skidmore Website

Frequency of visits to the Skidmore website ranged from daily (21%) to once a week (24%) to occasionally (36%), and there was little difference between faculty and staff responses. The most favored website items were the calendar of events and campus news, with the directory and benefits information less popular. Use of the website for library information was higher among faculty than staff.

Over 90% of respondents indicated that they never or only occasionally visit the website's Retiree page. Those who did visit it mentioned these areas as the most important (listed in ranking order): Post-retirement benefits; Medicare and prescription drug information; statement from President Glotzbach; IPPC – Retiree Health Care; Scope Weekly. About three quarters of respondents indicated that they would look for a list of retiree events on the page. Suggestions for additional types of information on that page included: financial and estate planning information; news of retiree achievements; opportunities for participation in Skidmore classes; travel and lecture opportunities; and a tips and ideas exchange.

Local Activities

Interest at a 4-5 level in attending Skidmore-wide events ranged from music (81%), lectures (65%), theater (64%), Tang (63%), dance (60%), retirement and recognition luncheon (40%) to sports (23%). For retiree specific events, responses at the same interest level were highest for President Glotzbach's reception (54%), followed by informal lunches (49%), tours of new facilities (43%), and special interest groups (39%). There was a variation in response level between faculty and staff to interest in

informational workshops, with 64% of the staff and 29% of faculty indicating a 4-5 level of interest. Suggestions for workshop topics included in ranking order: travel; new technologies; Medicare and other health issues; elder law; senior living.

Getting Involved

The majority of the respondents (84%) live within 50 miles of campus, with little difference between faculty and staff respondents. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that activities for retirees could be scheduled anytime, although there was a clear preference for fall, followed by summer and spring.

The survey asked for the level of interest in events that might be organized specifically for retirees. Favorites among these suggestions were: SPAC events; bus trips to cities within 3 hours of Saratoga; visits to area museums or historical sites; Home Made Theater performances.

Follow-up

The Retiree Initiative planning group will use these results to plan future events and enhance resources such as the website. Additional suggestions are always welcome and may be addressed to Terry Diggory, tdiggory@skidmore.edu.