

Report to the WSSA Board of Directors:

WSSA On-line membership survey POST 2009 meeting: a summary of the responses

The WSSA Membership and Affiliations Committee was charged to develop a survey to determine the relative satisfaction of the joint meeting between the WSSA and SWSS held in Orlando, February 2009 by the general membership. Nineteen questions were developed and the survey was available through the WSSA web page. Participation by the membership was fair as responses to questions ranged from 292 to 113 on depending on the question. The overall attitude by the membership about the joint meeting was positive, with some exceptions. Importantly, members who participated in the survey provided numerous comments. The survey results and comments accompany this report.

Participants in the survey were primarily members of the WSSA (77.5%) or hold joint memberships in the WSSA and SWSS (21.1%). This result was to be expected. Surprisingly, almost 40% of the participants did not attend the 2009 joint meeting of the WSSA and SWSS. This potentially casts a concern about the validity of the responses about the relative satisfaction of the members to future joint meetings. Regardless, 78% of the survey participants responded favorably about the concept of joint meeting. The question was not answered by 128 survey participants which is approximately 44 % of the total. It may be reasonable thus to suggest that the positive responses were indeed from members who attended the joint meeting. Participants provided 64 comments which varied in tenor; most were positive for the joint meeting but others suggested that this was not the best format for future meetings.

Respondents also indicated (50%) that future joint meetings should have a program completely integrated between the different groups. Approximately 40% of the responses suggested that the programs should be separate and either concurrent or contiguous. It was interesting that 60% of the responses suggested that the joint WSSA/SWSS meeting was too long and 40% suggested the length was just about right. The overall format of the program received mixed reviews; only 24% of the responses suggested that the meeting format was great while 76% if the responses rated the meeting format as fair to not good. With regard to the time of title submission in order to have the meeting program available earlier, 40% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to submit titles one month earlier while 30% would not be willing to submit titles earlier than currently required.

The poster session format that was initiated at the joint meeting of the WSSA and SWSS received mixed reviews. Approximately 40% of the responses were favorable while 60% were less favorable and 32% of the responses suggested that they did not like the poster session format. However, the poster breakout sessions were well attended but the overall experience was mixed. When compared to the traditional poster session, only 44% of the responses suggested the new format was more valuable than the old format.

Finally, 77% of the respondents indicated that the number of tours offered at the joint meeting of the WSSA and SWSS was reasonable. In response to the question about when the tours should be offered, the responses were about equal to spreading the tours across the conference and having them all occur on one day. Most of the respondents, however did not participate on a tour. The reasons for not attending the 2009 meeting were varied but expense and conflicts with schedule were the most consistent answers provided.