

Summary of Evaluations
USAID Alumni Association Annual General Meeting
November 3, 2017

Forty-nine of the 114 members who attended the November 3, 2017 USAID Alumni Association (UAA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) completed an on-line survey evaluating the meeting. This was an increase of three respondents compared to the evaluations of the 2016 AGM. Results were positive overall, with some suggestions for improvements that are included below.

In response to the open-ended question on “**what you liked most about the AGM,**” forty-six participants responded, citing the same three factors as last year the most often:

- The themes chosen for the program offerings and the quality of the panels and individual speakers were mentioned by 52% of respondents, compared to 64% last year;
- The presentation by the Administrator and the discussion that followed were cited by 37% of respondents, which compares with the 52% of respondents who cited the panel of current and former Administrators last year; and
- The chance to meet friends and former colleagues, and the adequacy of time allowed for this important purpose were mentioned by 35% of respondents, an increase of 5 percentage points over last year.

The panel discussion on University partnerships and Private Sector partnerships were also cited by 17% and 13% of respondents. Thirteen percent cited logistics, and 11% cited Awards as what they liked most.

Perhaps most interesting, three comments specifically cited preferring all plenary sessions, so that difficult choices of what to miss were unnecessary. And another mentioned the value of inviting active duty and junior officers to attend the meeting.

In response to the open-ended question on “**what you liked least about the AGM,**” thirty-seven participants responded. The most common comments were as follow:

- Eight (22%) indicated that there was nothing they liked least, which was the most common response for 2016 at 38%.
- Nineteen (51%) commented on the quality of the speakers and presentations or about specific sessions, compared to 36% of respondents for 2016. Of these:
 - Seven (19%) complained about the panel on reform efforts for USAID, including that it should have had representatives from additional organizations, that it lacked detail and substance, and that there appeared to be no agreement on a plan, but one indicated that it was weakest only in comparison to the other panels.
 - Six (16%) complained in general about quality of speakers and presentations, suggesting that more former USAID personnel would have improved the panels, as would have representatives from additional organizations. One noted the extremely difficult task of the moderator.

- One suggested that consideration be given to a format that would engage the audience more actively at some points, for example in small group discussions. This respondent later mentioned (in the section on possible topics/themes for next year) that small groups might be a good way to handle the question of how this administration is going to deal with current programs and the Agency.
- There were 5 (14%) who indicated that logistics was what they liked least, including three (8%) who complained about the early start time compared to 13% for 2016, one who indicated that the meeting was too long, and one whose coffee was cold.

The responses to the **logistics question** were quite positive, as in prior years.

QUESTION	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2014 (N not stated)	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2015 (N = 19)	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2016 (N = 46)	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2017 (N = 49)
CGD was a good location	98%	95%	100%	96%
Date and Time satisfactory	94%	95%	98%	96%
Starting & Ending time about right	NA	NA	NA	88%
Lunch arrangements satisfactory/	92%	100%	94%	94%
Dietary & Taste preferences accommodated/ Menu appropriate	NA	NA	89%	88%
Right amount of time to meet friends	86%	100%	91%	90%
Adequate advance notice/publicity of AGM	96%	100%	93%	86%
Materials distributed were useful	94%	95%	97%	84%

Sufficient time UAA business & information	94%	95%	96%	88%
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However, there were some drops in the ratings for adequacy of publicity for the AGM, materials distributed, and time allotted for UAA business, as shown above.

In responding to **content of the AGM program**, respondents were, as in prior years, quite positive overall, as shown below. However, there was clearly less support for the panel on Reforming USAID, as also came out in the identification of the least liked feature of the AGM above.

QUESTION	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2015 N = 19	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2016 N = 46	AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE 2017 N = 49
The AGM focus was appropriate	100%	98%	80%
The introductory panel on "USAID and its partnerships with the Private Sector" was interesting and relevant.	NA	NA	86%
The panel discussion on "USAID and University Partnerships" was interesting and relevant.	NA	NA	84%
The panel discussion on "Reforming USAID" was interesting and relevant.	NA	NA	71%
The remarks from USAID Administrator Mark Green were interesting and relevant.	NA	NA	82%
The Awards program was interesting and relevant.	NA	94%	88%

In response to the request for **comments or ideas for the Awards Committee**, there were 23 responses, more than a 50% increase over comments received for 2016, including effusive praise for the work of the committee and the selected awardees and suggestions for the Awards program.

The positive comments can be summarized as follow:

- “This was perfect this year. Keep it up.” “Keep up the good work.” “Keep up the outstanding work.” “Excellent job.”
- “Success is worth replicating next year.”
- “The individuals selected were of the highest standards and the rationale for selection was well presented.” “. . . both awardees were outstanding choices,” “I thought the choice of the two . . . was just outstanding, even inspirational.” “The work and contributions of the awardees honored this year were so impressive.”
- Detailing the awardees’ contributions and having them speak made awards more personal and meaningful.

There was one exception to the positive tone of the rest of the comments:

- “Awards are not a top feature of the AGM for me.”

Several suggestions were offered for the 2018 Awards Program:

- Make awards in broader categories, such as:
 - UAA leadership or
 - Follow-up work in the field of foreign aid and international development, rather than just being good public citizens; and
- Run a 60-second video of each winner being honored.
- Four nominees were suggested, with brief rationales.

In response to the request for comments or suggestions regarding **content or possible themes** for the AGM next year, 21 respondents, or 43%, provided comments. These included the following:

- Regarding *content and presenters*:
 - Sixteen respondents suggested a total of sixteen different content areas, which have been shared with the AGM 2018 committee. The most-mentioned, by 9 (43%) of these respondents, related to progress or evolution of policy during the current administration.
 - Two respondents specifically mentioned having the Administrator as a presenter again, and two others made recommendations for additional or alternate presenters, which have been shared with the AGM 2018 committee.
- Regarding the *process of the meeting*:
 - One respondent suggested making use of more of the technology available at CGD; and
 - Another respondent suggested shorter sessions of an hour each, with more time for questions by attendees (40 minutes for panelists and 20 minutes for questions/answers), and went on to suggest we consider 2 panelists of opposing views and 1 moderator?

In response to the request for comments or suggestions regarding **logistics** for the AGM next year, 15 respondents, or 31%, provided comments. These included the following:

- Nine respondents mentioned the overall logistics in very positive terms;

- There were five mentions of specific elements that were positive: meeting in DC (1); Tish kept to schedule (1); CGD as venue (2); and scheduling (1).
 - There were four mentions of logistics items that could be improved: little glitches with microphones; a mess with a broken coffeepot; information on parking and transport near CGD; and more networking time.

Of those responding to the question that asked whether their experience at the AGM inspired them to want **to volunteer for a UAA Committee or activity**, for 2017, 58% answered “yes” or “maybe”; in 2016, 69% answered “yes” or “maybe,” and in 2015 65% answered “yes.” In 2017, 42% answered “no,” in 2016, 30 % answered “no,” and in 2015, 35% answered “no.” A separate question asked in 2017 about whether respondents would like to become a mentor to an overseas-based USAID Foreign Service Officer elicited 41% “yes” or “maybe” answers and 59% “no” answers among the thirty-seven respondents to that question. Those who answered positively were urged to contact the respective Committee Chair(s), and a link was provided to the UAA website listing of their names and email addresses.