



# USAID Alumni Association

## 2018 UAA Membership Survey – Report on Results

The USAID Alumni Association sent the link to the Annual Membership Survey in the January 2018 newsletter, which was distributed to all 982 registered alumni in its Constant Contact database. A follow-up email was sent on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. There were responses from 134 members, a 14% response rate, and an increase from the 9% response rate in the 2017 survey. The number of respondents has fluctuated over the years, as follows:

Year	# responses	% change, year over year
2014	124	
2015	45	-64%
2016	94	109%
2017	88	-6%
2018	134	52%

The proportion of responses from the Washington, DC metropolitan area has continued at about half of respondents to this question: 53% (66 persons) in 2018, 49% in 2017 and 2016, 53% in 2015, and 63% in 2014. Forty-seven percent (58) of respondents answering this question were from outside the DC area.

Questions focused on the UAA newsletter; UAA website; UAA 2017 events in the DC area; opportunities outside the DC area; public speaking on international development; UAA mentoring program; reasons for not continuing to contribute; interest in participation in UAA activities related to our goals, the AGM Committee, and serving on the Board of UAA; our system for election of Board members; and other comments and recommendations for UAA activities. This report is organized according to these categories.

Overall, the tenor of comments was positive and constructive, reflecting a high level of participation by those who are engaged with the association.

### UAA Newsletter

Of respondents to the survey, 75% reported reading the newsletter, about the same as the 76% in 2017; another 21% sometimes read it, an increase over 18% in 2017; and 4% either do not read it or didn't respond to this question, compared to 5% last year. Upcoming Events, Alumni Profiles and News were each favorites of 50-64% of the 121 respondents to this question, with Event Recaps and Committee Updates favored by 26% each.



Among the 32 who identified newsletter feature(s) as their favorite, 28, or 84% indicated that it is the In Memoriam section. Two individuals mentioned articles, and there were single mentions of USAID evaluations, the Forum, books, USAID news, jobs and opportunities, and Where in the World (no longer published because not available from USAID).

There were 30 respondents who made a total of 35 comments about other topics to be covered in the newsletter. Of these, eight were expressions of satisfaction or complements for the current newsletter. Principal ideas mentioned were: current policies, programs, and organization at USAID (10) also the most frequently mentioned last year, and influence of the current administration on USAID (6). There were six suggestions for connecting UAA members better to each other: provide information on who should receive condolences for those who've died; a feature for UAA members major changes, like the "Where in the World" that used to be in Front Lines; updates from the field by UAA members who've recently worked for USAID; links to our oral histories; and information about UAA activities outside the DC area (2). Two mentioned development issues information, and one asked for reader feedback.

### UAA Website

Visits to the UAA website have dropped off somewhat, with 75% of survey respondents visiting "often" or "sometimes," compared to about 80% in 2017, 2016, and 2014, and a high of almost 90% of respondents in 2015. In all years, the preponderance of respondents fell into in the "sometimes" category.

Respondent to this question are most interested in news about colleagues—the Alumni Directory (73%) and In Memoriam (69%) were the best-liked features on the website, followed by UAA News (56%) and the UAA Calendar (49%). In addition, Development links (37%), and Forum, UAA Profiles, and Job and Volunteer Opportunities (24% each) received the bulk of the responses. Overall, this is consistent with last year.

There were 14 respondents who made a total of 14 comments about other topics suggested to be covered in the website. Of these, five were expressions of satisfaction or complements for the current website. Four echoed ideas mentioned for coverage in the newsletter: current policies, programs, and organization at USAID; influence of the current administration on USAID; development issues information; and providing information on who should receive condolences for those whose deaths are reported. There were also single requests for legislative updates, live webinars, and book reviews. Most of these were consistent with comments from prior years.



## UAA 2017 Events

Fifty-four, or 40% of respondents indicated they participated in UAA events during the 2017 prior year; this is 82% of the 66 who indicated they are in the DC area. 52% did not, and 7% did not respond. This is essentially the same as in 2016 and 2017.

Among those able to attend events in person and ranking each event, the relative rankings have not changed. The Annual General Meeting and the DACOR Development Dialogues were ranked as being of the highest interest (4 or 5 out of a possible 5) by a considerable margin; 83% and 78%, respectively. This is consistent with prior years' surveys, although a little lower for each compared to last year, when they were so rated by 94% and 83% of respondents, respectively. Other events received ratings of 4 or 5 for a substantial number of respondents: 40% for the Spring Reception (a drop of 25 percentage points) and for Winterfest (6 percentage point decrease). The event of "least interest" continues to be the Summer Picnic—29% ranked it as a 4 or 5, and 16% indicated it was of no interest, showing a continuing reduction in unfavorable rankings from 18% in 2017, and the 26% who so rated it in 2016, and 20% in 2015 and 2014.

Among the 101 responses to the question of what were the two most important factors in decisions to attend UAA events, the topic is the one that remains the most important, mentioned by 69% in 2018, a drop from the high point of 86% in 2017, 59% of 2016, 75-76% of respondents in 2014 and 2015. In 2018, location was second most important at 50% of responses, compared to 32% in 2017, 51% in 2016, and 43% in 2015. The opportunity to see friends was the third most important factor, at 31% of responses in 2018, compared to 43% in 2017 and 35% who cited it in 2016. All other factors were cited by fewer than 12% of respondents in 2017. Among the 10 "other" responses, being away for far from DC was cited by 5; caregiving and health reasons were also mentioned.

## Opportunities outside DC area

Of those for whom this question applied (58 respondents who live outside the DC area and the 12 who live in the DC area but did not attend UAA events), 30% (21) reported in 2018 that they have listened to or viewed presentations or discussions posted on the website. This compares with 33% of the 48 so reporting in 2017, 31% of the 54 in 2016, and 23% in 2015.

Of the 15 respondents who made a comment about opportunities outside the DC area, five indicated that either the question didn't apply to them or they misunderstood it<sup>1</sup>, and 3 more used it as an opportunity to express their praise or

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<sup>1</sup> One overseas respondent expressed puzzlement that there were only 2 options (DC area and outside DC area), apparently not understanding that outside of the DC area was intended to include non-US locations also.



satisfaction for the availability of presentations on the website. Of the other comments, three expressed dislike for recorded presentations, two cited health/family care reasons, one was not aware of the recordings, and one cited lack of time. These were generally consistent with comments from prior years.

Six (4%) of the 62 respondents to a question about organizing UAA event(s) outside the DC area are interested doing so in their areas, compared to five of 41 (12%) in 2017, or the 7 of 47(16%) in 2016. An additional 21, or 16%, responded that they'd maybe be willing to help to organize a UAA event in their area, compared to 17, or 41%, in 2017 and 16, or 36%, in 2016. There were more answers to this question than respondents who reported living outside the DC area, and there were twenty relevant comments about organizing such events, weakening the conclusions that can be drawn from the initial (intended to be sorting) question.

Among the 29 comments about interest in helping organize non-DC area local events, sixteen respondents provided information regarding where they are, and 2 more indicated interest but did not provide a geographic location. One indicated potential interest later, and another indicated that health concerns would prevent him from doing so. (There were also 9 responses that did not apply.)

### Public Speaking

Fewer of this year's survey respondents, 40%, expressed interest in speaking publicly about international development compared to last year's 47%, and 2016's 48%. With only 19% not responding to this question, 42% are not interested, a little less than last year's 45%, but more than 2016's 39%. Forty-seven of the 53 interested in speaking, or 88%, indicated a willingness to participate in person or virtually in a training program by USAID/LPA on the use of its public affairs manual.

### Mentoring Program

We added a question last year about willingness to participate in the UAA-USAID Mentoring program; 44 respondents, or 39% of those who answered this question, indicated that they are interested in participating. This compares to 20 respondents, or 54% of those who answered the question last year. Twenty-one survey respondents did not reply to this question.

### Reasons for Not Continuing to Contribute

Another new question last year asked those who contributed two years ago, but not last year, what the primary reason was. There were no responses to this question this year.



### Participation in Priority UAA Activities.

Interest in participating in the work of UAA standing committees was significant—there were 73 expressions of interest in working with the 6 committees—some participants may be interested in more than one committee.

The activities with the highest expressions of interest were:

- Goal 5, Inform and prepare alumni interested in public speaking on development themes;
- Goal 3, Organize discussion programs focused on current development issues of interest to alumni;
- Goal 5, Strengthen UAA collaboration with organizations such as the AFSA, CGD, Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, Peace Corps, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition etc.; and
- Goal 5, Collaborate with ADST to expand the number of USAID oral histories in the ADST collection.

There were only two of the thirty-seven listed activities for which there was no interest expressed by respondents.

In addition to the activities of the standing committees, respondents were also asked about participating in the AGM Committee or being considered for the UAA Board. Thirteen respondents were interested in the AGM committee, and three indicated interest in being considered for the UAA Board.

Most respondents indicating interest provided a name and contact information. Individual UAA standing committees, the AGM committee, and the Nominating committee are reviewing these expressions of interest and will be contacting respondents directly.

### System for Board Election

This year, respondents were asked whether they preferred the current system for selecting nominees and electing UAA Board members. Half of the survey respondents answered this question. Of those, 91% (61 persons) preferred the current system, and 6 indicated they'd prefer an alternate system. Among them, there were 5 relevant comments, each of which indicated a preference for a more open election vice having a pre-determined, pre-approved slate of candidates. Three specifically mentioned not having Board recommendations (to avoid it appearing cliquish), and one suggested that there be a run-off between the top 2 candidates (presumably for each position on the Board being elected).



## Other Comments and Recommendations

There were 17 responses to the question about additional activities for UAA, covering a very wide range of topics. Committees will review all comments and suggestions for potential action or response.

Those comments which related to UAA's interaction with those outside our association included:

- Advocate for USAID and its budget, acknowledged to be problematic for a 501c3 (which we are);
- Increase interaction with USAID staff to assist them to solve problems;
- Advocate for a USAID retiree badge<sup>2</sup>; and
- Create and maintain a USAID Wikipedia entry (also mentioned last year).

Other comments related more to our own activities and included:

- A call for more visioning; and
- Expansion of those employment categories eligible for membership and lower membership contributions requested from those in DC who do not participate in activities.

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<sup>2</sup> This respondent mentioned State or USAID retiree photo id; he apparently is not aware that USAID retirees are eligible for a photo id issued by State department, renewable at 5 year intervals.