

2011 SAM Online Survey Summary

Long-Range Planning Subcommittee

Survey Open for 3 weeks in Feb. 2011, #respondents = 265 or ca. 33% response rate

Report shared at SAM 2011 national meeting in Cincinnati

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WHAT WE VALUE: The Consensus test records an overwhelming degree of agreement on items valued (passion 71%, JSAM 71%, mutual respect 70%, conference 69%, friendliness 66%, diversity & inclusivity 66%, performance 58%), with the importance of **scholarship on American music** ranked highest at 95%. The percentage of disagreement with each category was less than 2%, but there were dissenters in each area throughout.

COMMENTS: some respondents stressed their support for “high quality” research, others emphasize the importance of friendliness and collegiality experienced at the annual meetings and the commitment to mentoring. A number revealed that while they value SAM’s current diversity (racial, ethnic, geographic, approaches to and subjects of inquiry, etc.), they see diversity as an element of SAM that could be enhanced.

CHALLENGES: Respondents registered strongest agreement with the **lack of funding for scholarship** (74.9% agreement, 34.8% neutral, 3.6% disagree) and expense of attending the annual meeting (58.6% agreement, 34.1% neutral, 10.3% disagree) as challenges to the society; competition was not a significant issue for most.

COMMENTS: **limited publication options** responses suggest a consensus that more opportunities for publication would be good (53.7% agree, 34.8% neutral, 11.5% disagree). Some respondents who see a threat mention only two journals—JSAM and American Music; others mention the existence of a number of musicology, theory, education, and other journals that accept submissions related to American music. Commentors also reflected on digital possibilities.

In general, respondents agree that **demographic changes/need for greater inclusion in the Society** represent a challenge to SAM (49.8 % agree, 37.9 % neutral, 12.3% disagree). Comments reflect on race and ethnicity, national identity (e.g., North or Latin American as well as U.S.), age and maintaining the focus on bringing in young and new members, as well as including the founding and long-time members. Some feel SAM needs to expand its definition of “American,” others prefer U.S. focus.

There is general agreement that **poor membership growth** is a problem (38.3% agree, 52.0% neutral, 7.7% disagree). Several comments suggest that a further study of SAM’s membership be conducted to better establish it as a problem; others express satisfaction with the size of SAM as it is.

Respondents agree that **misinformation about American music** is a challenge for the society (52.2% agree, 37.5% neutral, 10.4% disagree).

Respondents see **competition from other societies** as the least problematic among the challenges listed (26.9% agree, 48.4% neutral, 24.6% disagree). Many of the comments suggest a positive, collaborative approach to other societies, rather than competitive.

In response to the challenge of the **cost of the SAM annual meeting**, respondents generally agree that it is a problem (55.6% agree, 34.1% neutral, 10.3% disagree). Comments suggest the meeting is relatively affordable, however, travel (especially hotels

and some flights [e.g., Ottawa]) is increasingly expensive while academic funding is increasingly limited. Some respondents recommend SAM provide additional travel funding for graduate students and underemployed scholars.

A number of respondents expressed concern for poor job prospects of graduating PhDs.

COMMUNICATION: In general respondents agree that SAM communicates well with them. They list the following methods as ways to communicate: email, a more active listserv, and an electronic version of newsletter. Most like communication as is.

SUPPORT: There is strong agreement that the society should work to increase funding for research on American music. In line with this emphasis on research, respondents are in favor of the Society supporting the preservation of and access to archival materials. Respondents also realize the complicated nature of copyright permissions and its influence on scholarship and encourage SAM to advocate and educate about copyright and Fair Use. There was support for research into American musics outside the U.S. and in other languages, while peer review was not a concern for 49% but of interest to others.

FUNDRAISING: In general respondents are supportive of or indifferent to most methods of increasing revenue. The most support was expressed for an annual fund, a capital campaign, and increasing membership; Increased conference fees were not favored, while increased membership dues were palatable to some but not others.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: Mentoring of graduate students is cited as one of the most important activities of the Society, with mentoring colleagues close behind. 90% desire to sharing strategies for teaching American music at the college level; there is support, but less so, for undergrad and K–12 initiatives.

PRIORITIES include collaboration (92%), public outreach (91%), copyright & digital media advocacy (90%), and support of American music performance (89%), diversity (membership & research topics) 87%, whereas increasing awareness of SAM & the Society's awards, and the use of social media were ranked consistently lower.

VALUES. Scholarly integrity, collegiality, diversity, inclusiveness, love of American music, friendliness were cited repeatedly as vital to SAM's identity. The annual meeting and journal were seen as our most central activities.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS: the typical respondent was a Caucasian musicologist with U.S. citizenship employed full-time as a tenure-track professor who had been a SAM member for 5–20 years and regularly attended the national conference. Respondents were evenly split between male and female. RACE: white (93%), black 2%, Asian 2%, Latino 1%, multi racial 3%. Employment: 71% musicologist, 8% ethno, 6% interdisciplinary, 5% librarian, 4% theorist, 4% performer, 1% composer; 13% of respondents were graduate students, 10% retired, 5% worked at museums or other non-profits, 3% unemployed, <1% K–12 educators, no amateur historians responded. 36% attend national meeting regularly, while 24% do not attend regularly and 10% have never attended.