

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

2006 ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW NON- ATTENDEES SURVEY

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the 2006 APSA Annual Meeting Review Survey undertaken under the auspices of the APSA Annual Meeting Review Committee. The committee was charged with reviewing the policies and practices of the Annual Meeting in order to make recommendations regarding improvements and changes. The last such review had been done approximately ten years ago. Two surveys were conducted to learn about members' relationship to the Annual Meeting. One survey was sent to members who had registered for the annual meeting and one survey was sent to a sample of members who did not register for the annual meeting. This report focuses on the perspectives of the members who did not attend the 2006 Annual Meeting.

A random sample of approximately one-half of the members of the American Political Science Association who did not attend the 2006 annual meeting was selected to participate in the study. A total of 4450 requests were sent to this subgroup of members via email with a link to complete the survey on line. After the initial mailing and one follow-up mailing, a total of 2208 people completed the survey for a response rate of 49.6 percent.

Participants in the Survey

Demographic characteristics for the non-attendees were gathered from the survey participants as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding and nonresponse to particular questions.

| Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Characteristic | Percent | Number |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 63% | 1383 |
| Female | 32 | 704 |
| Nonresponse | 6 | 121 |
| Education | | |
| Ph.D | 54% | 1188 |
| ABD | 10 | 218 |
| M.A. or M.S. | 19 | 411 |
| B.A. or B.S. | 9 | 187 |
| LL.B or J.D | 2 | 36 |
| Other | 3 | 63 |
| Age | | |
| 29-29 | 19% | 411 |
| 30-39 | 30 | 672 |
| 40-49 | 18 | 405 |
| 50-59 | 11 | 244 |
| 60-69 | 8 | 168 |
| 70 or older | 2 | 36 |
| Nonresponse | 12 | 272 |
| Race | | |
| African-American | 2% | 40 |
| Asian American | 3 | 65 |
| Caucasian | 71 | 1560 |
| Latino/a | 4 | 93 |
| Native American | .2 | 5 |
| Other | 13 | 291 |
| Nonresponse | 7 | 154 |
| Year Received degree | | |
| 2000-2006 | 52% | 1141 |
| 1995-1999 | 12 | 271 |
| 1990-1994 | 7 | 164 |
| 1980-1989 | 9 | 188 |
| 1970-1979 | 8 | 173 |
| 1969 or earlier | 3 | 61 |
| Fields | | |
| American Politics and Government | 32% | 709 |
| Comparative Politics | 38 | 836 |
| International Politics | 35 | 762 |
| Methodology | 10 | 219 |
| Political Philosophy & Theory | 17 | 366 |
| Public Policy | 19 | 411 |
| Public Law and Courts | 10 | 210 |
| Public Administration | 10 | 226 |

Table 2. Current Job

| Job | Percent | Number |
|--|---------|--------|
| Administration | 5% | 115 |
| Business | 2 | 40 |
| Consultant | 4 | 97 |
| Fellow | 2 | 52 |
| Government | 4 | 93 |
| Interest Group, Professional Association, Foundation | .6 | 14 |
| k-12 Teacher | 1 | 29 |
| Lecturer, Instructor | .9 | 19 |
| Media | 9 | 188 |
| Professor-Adjunct | .8 | 18 |
| Professor-Assistant | 5 | 104 |
| Professor-Associate | 15 | 329 |
| Professor-Emeritus | 12 | 271 |
| Professor-Full | 1 | 31 |
| Professor-Visiting | 15 | 332 |
| Researcher | 2 | 38 |
| Student | 8 | 167 |
| Unemployed | 30 | 651 |
| Retired | 1 | 31 |
| Other | 2 | 44 |
| | 2 | 47 |

Other Jobs

| | |
|---|---|
| Artist, mother | organizations |
| Associate Instructor | Graduate student and J.D. student |
| Attorney (4 respondents) | Graduate Teaching Associate |
| Blog Publisher | Graduate/Teaching Assistant |
| College administrator | High School Instructor |
| Consultant | Hospital Group Volunteer |
| Data analyst for small company | Information Technology Professional |
| Director of academic policy research institute | Intern |
| Dogwalker to the Haute Bourgeoisie. Pays more than teaching | IT Analyst at a large public university |
| Editor at an academic press. | Librarian |
| Engineering | NGO |
| Entertainment industry | Non-Profit (Church) Research Analyst |
| Environmental Non-Profit | Philanthropy |
| Executive Assistant - Investment Banking | Political science tutor |
| Full Regents' Professor - Endowed Chair | Post-doc |
| Governor, distribute funds to student | Research Coordinator in a Sponsored Programs Office |
| | Retired U.S. Army officer, partner law firm |

Public Opinion Laboratory
Northern Illinois University

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Annual Meeting Review Study

Retired USN officer;P/T community college instructor
 Senior Lecturer (Ireland)
 teaching artist, writer, consultant
 Teaching Assistant (3 respondents)

Temporarily filling position as full professor
 US ranks do not apply in UK. I'm a lecturer here
 Writer

Subfields

Respondents were asked to select the four special subfields that best apply to them. Listed below are the number of respondents who checked each subfield.

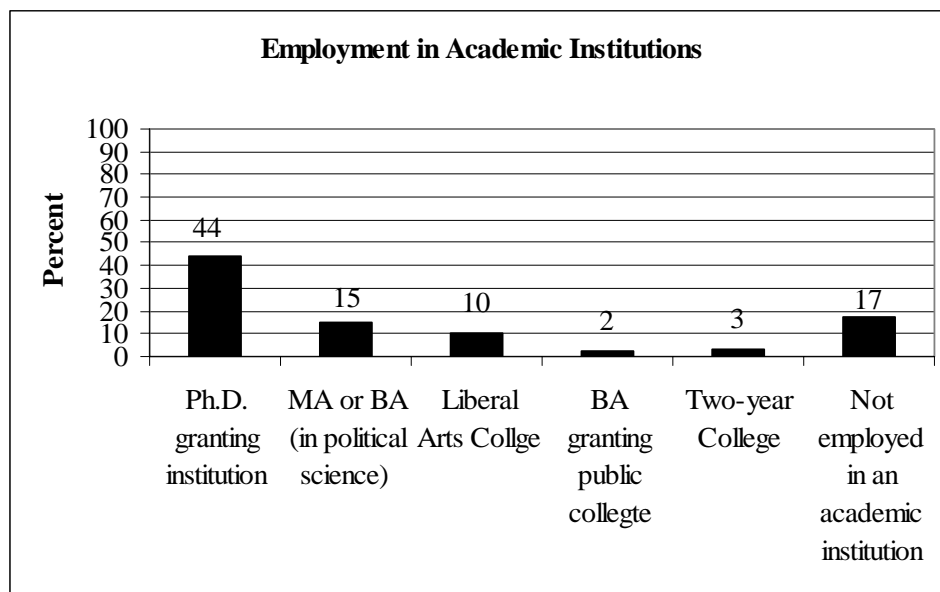
| | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| FOR Foreign Policy | 274 | WEU Western Europe | 123 |
| ISC International Security | 264 | ENV Environmental Policy | 121 |
| NOR Normative Political Theory | 211 | EAS N.E. Asia | 113 |
| PTH Political Thought: Historical | 199 | JUD Judicial Politics | 110 |
| IPE International Political Economy | 191 | BUR Bureaucracy and Organizational Behavior | 109 |
| RES Research Methods | 177 | PSY Political Psychology | 107 |
| ILO International Law and Organizations | 175 | SAM South America | 103 |
| PEC Political Economy | 166 | ETH Ethnic and Racial Politics | 102 |
| CNF Conflict Processes | 166 | MEA Middle East | 97 |
| CNG Congress | 155 | PCM Political Communication | 97 |
| DEV Developing Nations | 155 | GEN Gender Politics and Policy | 95 |
| PDV Political Development | 152 | CIV Civil Rights and Liberties | 91 |
| PBH Political Behavior | 151 | URB Urban Politics | 90 |
| PAR Political Parties and Organizations | 150 | PCE East & Central Europe | 89 |
| ELB Electoral Behavior | 150 | SOW Social Welfare Policy | 85 |
| SMO Social Movements | 147 | PSR Post Soviet Region | 83 |
| EUN European Union | 145 | DEF Defense | 83 |
| CNS Constitutional Law and Theory | 145 | WOM Women and Politics | 82 |
| HIS History and Politics | 143 | ELS Electoral Systems | 81 |
| PRE Presidency | 141 | AFR Africa | 80 |
| FED Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations | 140 | ECP Economic Policy | 70 |
| STA State Politics | 140 | SCI Science and Technology | 70 |
| POP Public Opinion | 138 | AIIS Advanced Industrial Societies | 66 |
| REL Religion and Politics | 130 | LEG Legislative Studies | 59 |
| | | EDU Education Policy | 55 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|
| FEM Feminist Theory | 55 | EXE Executive Politics | 28 |
| SEA Southeast Asia | 52 | LIT Literature and Politics | 28 |
| NAM North America | 50 | LEA Leadership Studies | 27 |
| PPT Positive Political Theory | 45 | LGP Lesbian and Gay Politics | 23 |
| REG Regulatory Policy | 40 | LAP Latino(a) Politics | 22 |
| MM Immigration Policy | 38 | LAB Labor Policy | 17 |
| HEL Health Care Policy | 34 | ENG Energy Policy | 16 |
| CRI Criminal Justice | 33 | LIF Life Sciences and Politics | 15 |
| EVA Evaluation Research | 30 | CAS Central Asia | 14 |
| PFB Public Finance and Budgeting | 30 | CAR Caribbean | 8 |
| TRA Trade Policy | 30 | NAP Native American Politics | 6 |
| CAM Central America | 28 | AUS Australia | 6 |
| SAA South Asia | 28 | HOU Housing Policy | 6 |
| AFP African American Politics | 28 | ASP Asian American Politics | 4 |

Employment in Academic Institutions

Seventy-five percent of the non-attendees indicated that they were employed in an academic institution, with 44% in Ph.D. granting institutions. 17% were not employed in academia. Figure 1 shows the distribution of types of academic institutions in which they were employed.

Figure 1. If you are employed in an academic institution, what type of institution is it?



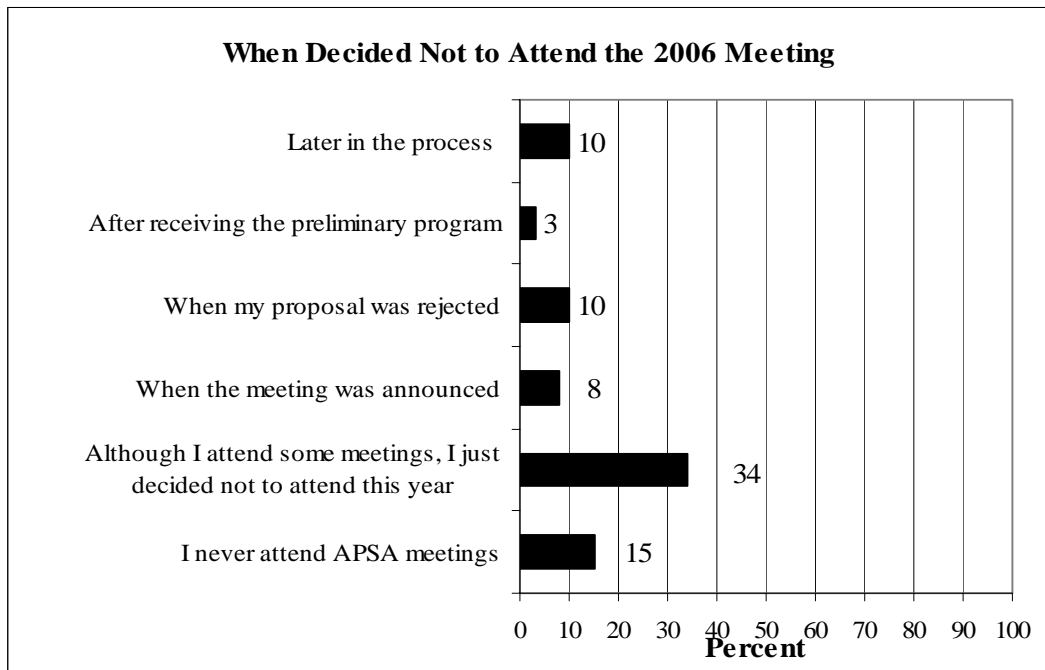
Attendance at Previous Meetings

Sixty percent of the non-attendee respondents reported that they had attended an APSA annual meeting in the past. In answer to a second question about when they had decided not to attend the 2006 annual meeting, 15 percent reported that they never attend these meetings, but another 20% gave no response.

Having a paper proposal rejected was not the major reason for not participating in the 2006 annual according to these respondents; only ten percent cited it as their reason for nonattendance. The most common answer, given by 34% was that they “just decided not to attend this year.”

But paper rejections were cited as a reason for non-attendance by those who were rejected. Fifteen percent of non-attendees submitted a paper or panel proposal for the 2006 annual meeting (335 individuals). Only 23% of those said their proposal had been accepted. Among those whose papers were rejected (279 respondents), 73% said they decided not to attend the meetings when their proposal was rejected.

Figure 2. When did you decide not to attend the 2006 meeting?



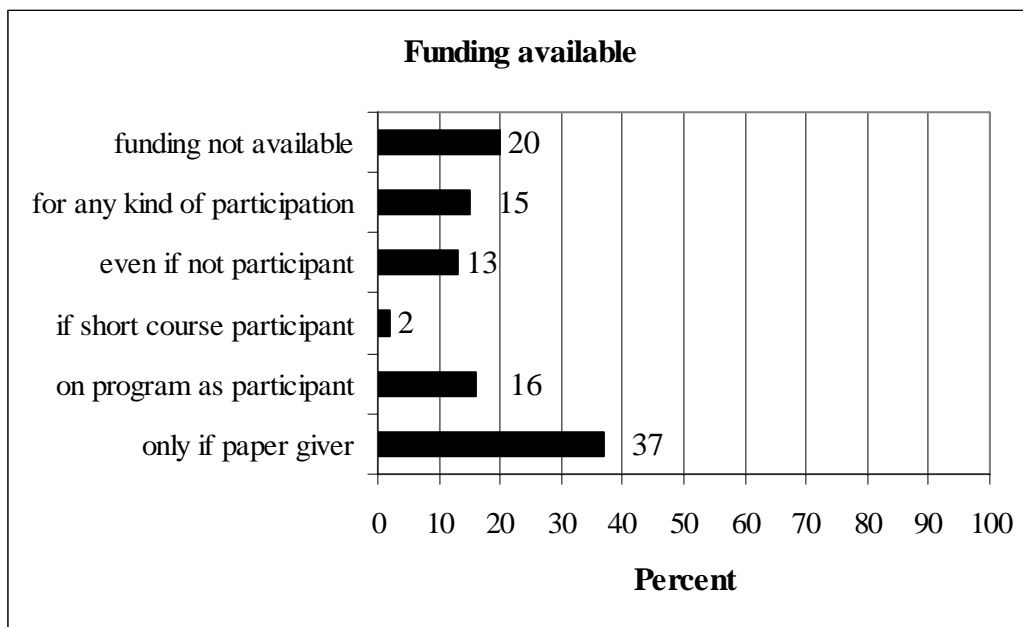
A major bloc of non-attendees consists of those individuals who never attend. They tend to be younger members, and students, suggesting that many of them will become meeting attendees at some point later in their careers.

Among those who have attended before, more than a third were there in 2005. Nearly a third last attended in 2004 or 2003. But one in six say they last attended an APSA meeting before 2000.

Financial Support for Attendance

Over one-third of the non-attendees reported that their institution only funds attendance at conferences if one is a paper giver and an additional 20 percent reported that there was no funding available from their institution (Figure 3). Non-attendees were only slightly less likely than attendees to report institutional funding in non-paper giver situations.

Figure 3. What is your institution or funder’s policy for reimbursement of meeting expenses?



Important Factors for Attendance

Non-attendees who had previously attended annual meetings were presented with 13 factors that might have been important to them for attending the conference and asked to rate their importance. Learning about new research, hearing discussions about their subfield, and about the discipline, seeing friends, working with people in their subfield and hearing discussions about their subfield, and making contacts tended to be either very important or important to the respondents.

Those responses were similar to those given by attendees.

Table 3. How important were each of these reasons for your attendance at the APSA conference?

| Reasons | Very important % | Important % | Not important % | Not important at all % |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| To learn about new research | 45 | 47 | 7 | 1 |
| To see friends | 30 | 44 | 20 | 6 |
| To find a book publisher | 6 | 25 | 45 | 24 |
| To find a job or fill a job | 10 | 21 | 32 | 38 |
| To make contacts | 20 | 56 | 16 | 7 |
| To be involved in professional governance | 2 | 12 | 49 | 37 |
| To work with people in my subfield | 17 | 56 | 19 | 8 |
| To gain new insights into teaching | 8 | 34 | 37 | 21 |
| To hear discussions about my subfield | 39 | 53 | 6 | 3 |
| To hear discussions about the discipline | 20 | 54 | 21 | 5 |
| To hear discussions about politics | 13 | 40 | 33 | 14 |
| To travel to the conference city | 9 | 36 | 36 | 20 |
| To add participation to my vita | 8 | 31 | 30 | 31 |

Attracting Non-attendees To Annual Meetings

Over one-third of non-attendees (36%) said that a change in the time of the year would attendance more attractive to them. Cost was named as a factor for one-third of the respondents and changing the program to include work that was important to them was a factor checked by 31 percent of the respondents. Nearly as many said changing the program to allow them to meet people doing work similar to theirs would make a difference (Table 4).

Table 4. What would make APSA annual meetings more attractive to you?

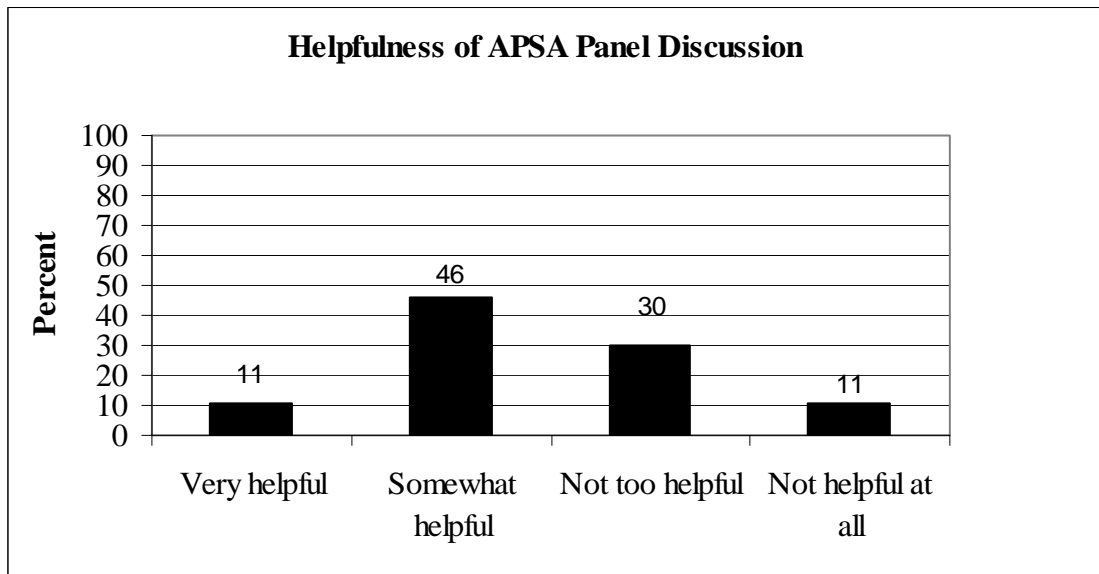
| Change | Percent | Number |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Change in time of year | 36 | 796 |
| Change in venue | 13 | 275 |
| Change in cost | 33 | 731 |
| Change in the program to include more work that is important to me | 31 | 681 |
| Change in the program to focus better | 10 | 225 |
| Change to allow me to meet other people doing work similar to mine | 28 | 608 |
| Other | 10 | 226 |

Previous Participation and Interest in Future Participation

Forty-two percent of non-attendees reported that they had participated as a paper giver at an APSA annual meeting. Like their colleagues who had attended in 2006, most said they usually expected to publish papers that they presented at APSA, and 69% had their last APSA paper published as an article or as part of another work. Twenty-five percent of those who had said the research they had presented previously at an APSA meeting had not been published (79 individuals) reported that they had continued to work on the paper.

Previous paper presenters were asked how helpful the APSA panel discussion had been in guiding them in revising their paper. Fifty-seven percent responded that the discussion had been either very or somewhat helpful (although only 11% said it had been very helpful), but 41 percent felt it had not been too helpful or not at all helpful (Figure 4). Slightly more of the 2006 attendees (65%) found such discussions at least somewhat helpful in revising their papers.

Figure 4. How helpful was the APSA panel discussion in guiding you in revising the paper?

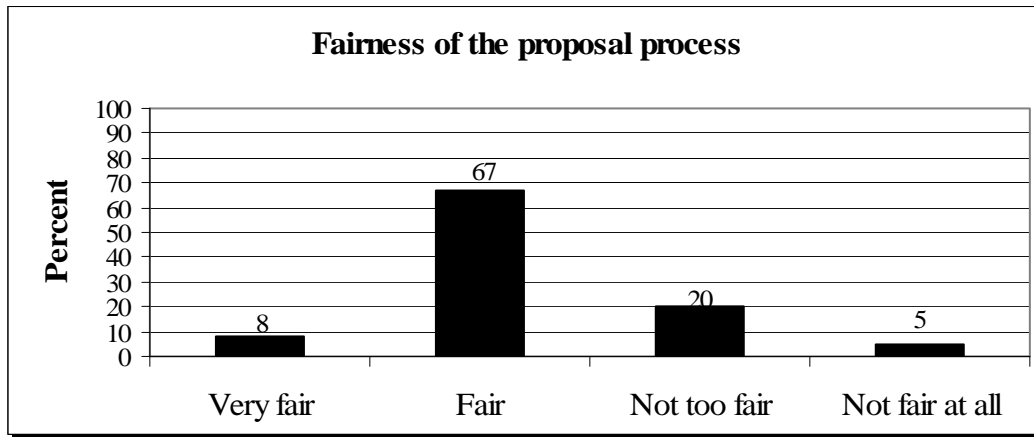


Non-attendance does not mean lack of interest in attending. Fifty percent of the non-attendees said that they would be interested in participating in a short course, 41 percent were interested in participating in a working group and 34 percent were interested in presenting a poster (Figure 8).

Proposals and the Submission Process

Just about half of the non-attendee respondents (52%) answered the question asking them to rate the fairness of the proposal process. Three out of four of those who did (75%) rated the process as either being very fair or fair (Figure 5). Among attendees, 81 percent believed the process was fair. Those who had a proposal rejected were less likely to say the process was fair.

Figure 5. How would you rate the fairness of the proposal process?



Among the 74% of respondents who gave their opinion of whether the proposal submission deadline was too early, 58 percent responded that it was too early while 42 percent replied that it was not too early. About as many of the attendees (60%) felt the deadline was too early.

Twenty-eight percent of the non-attendees favored setting the deadline for proposals later but also requiring full papers at the time of submission, while 48 percent opposed this idea and 25 percent did not respond to the question.

Trends in Program Quality

Respondents who had attended APSA meetings in the past were asked to rate five aspects of those meetings as to whether they had become better, not changed, or had become worse over time.

On each of the five items approximately three-quarters of non-attendees who had attended before indicated that they thought the quality had not changed. A small percentage each thought the quality of each item had gotten better and had gotten worse (Figure 6), with slightly more choosing the negative answer. Although most of those who attended the 2006 meetings also said the quality hadn't changed over time, those who saw changes in program quality and the convention experience were twice as likely to say things had gotten better than to say they had gotten worse.

Non-attendees were also asked about the intellectual quality and the number of panels of interest to them. Like attendees, most saw little change. Nearly 80 percent felt that the intellectual quality of the meetings had not changed (Figure 7). This figure was slightly higher the 71% recorded by attendees. But one quarter of the non-attendees felt that panels of interest to them had decreased; among attendees 32 percent believed they had increased.

Figure 6. In your opinion, from the time you began attending APSA annual meetings:

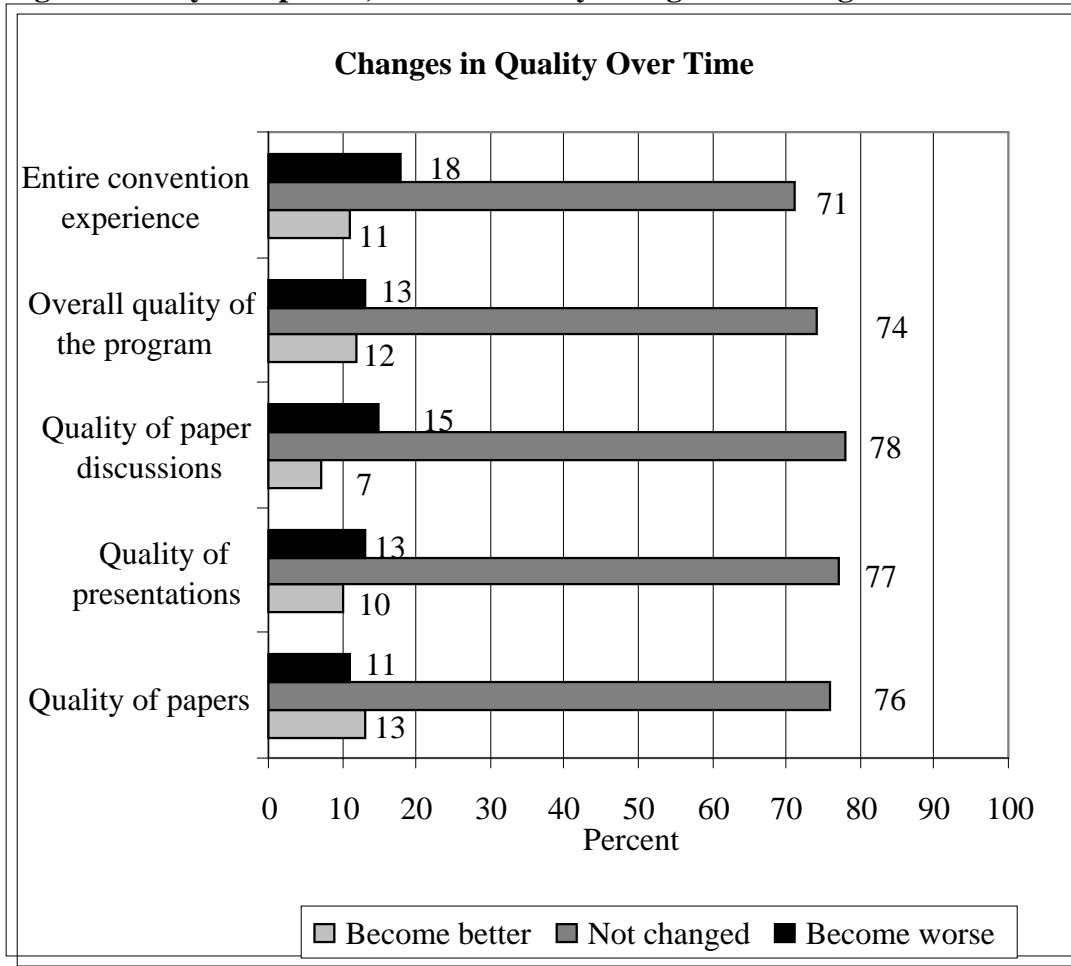
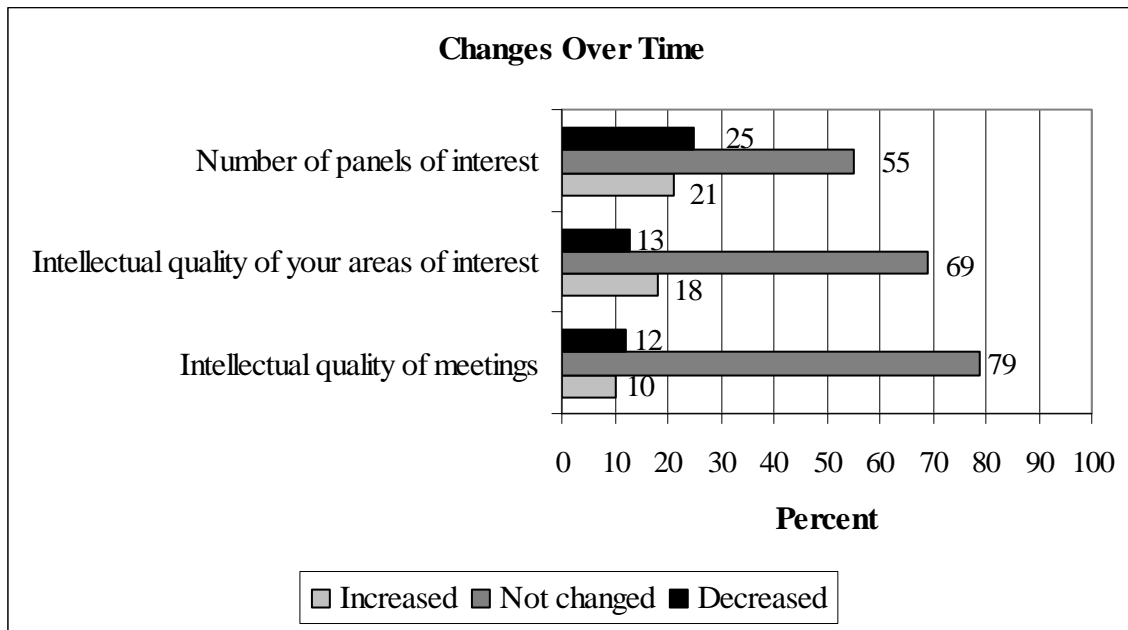


Figure 7. In your opinion, from the time you began attending APSA annual meetings:

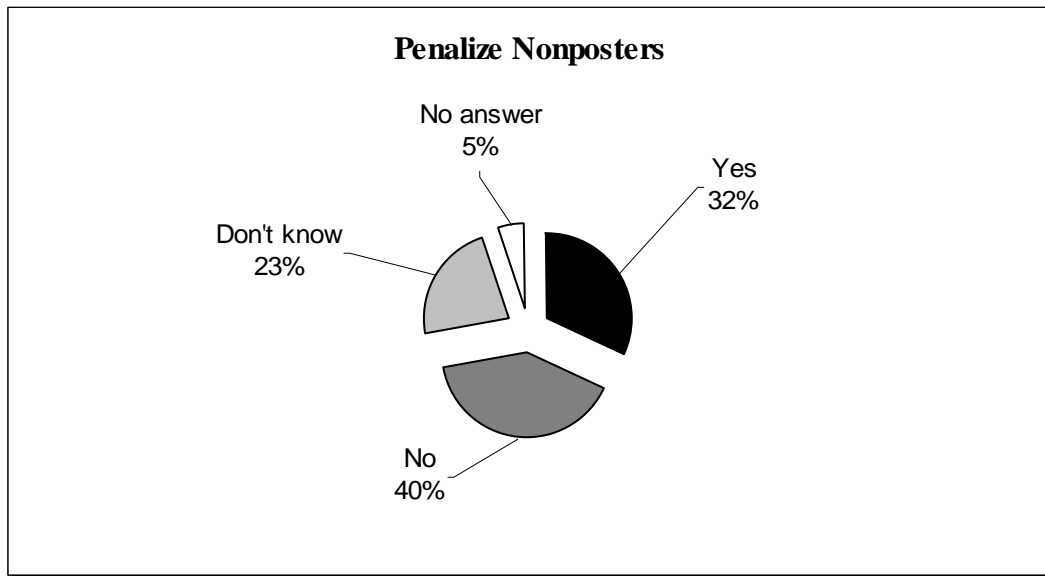


Posting Papers on Proceedings

Forty-seven percent of the respondents believed that participants should be required to post their papers on the proceedings site before the meeting, 66 percent believed that participants be required to post their papers on the proceedings site after the meeting, and 32 percent thought that those who don't post their papers should be penalized by not being allowed to present a paper the following year. . Forty percent did not think paper presenters should be penalized and 23 percent said they didn't know (Figure 8).

These percentages are very similar to those for the attendees; 52 percent of attendees believed paper presenters should post their papers before the meeting and 65 percent felt they should be required to post their papers after the meeting. 33% of attendees thought those who did not post their papers should be penalized.

Figure 8. Should those who don't post their papers be penalized by not being allowed to present a paper the following year?



However, few non-attendees actually have downloaded papers from the Proceedings from the 2006 meeting; 20 percent have downloaded one to two papers and 15 percent have downloaded more than two.

Thirty-seven percent of the non-attendees said that they would be interested in hearing podcasts of APSA sessions, but only five percent would be willing to pay to hear such podcasts.

Participation in Other Professional Meetings

Most non-attendees do sometimes attend other meetings. Table 5 shows the distribution of responses to this question. Regional political science meetings were often cited.

| Table 5. Other Meetings Attended | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| | Percent | Number |
| State Political Science Association | 14 | 299 |
| Regional political science | 45 | 982 |
| Other national political science | 28 | 623 |
| Other international political science | 31 | 683 |
| International studies | 24 | 528 |
| Economics | 5 | 111 |
| Philosophy | 5 | 115 |
| Sociology | 6 | 129 |
| Area studies | 19 | 410 |
| Environmental studies | 4 | 90 |
| Gender studies | 4 | 84 |
| Other social studies | 26 | 572 |
| Other humanities | 8 | 176 |
| Other natural science | 2 | 44 |
| College/university focused meeting | 21 | 458 |