

2018 North Texas Society Summit

Evaluation

Introduction

The 2018 North Texas Society Summit was held on Friday, September 28th, at the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library in Dallas, Texas. Eighteen (18) genealogical societies sent 40 representatives. Of these, 23 (58%) completed an online evaluation hosted by SurveyMonkey.

The respondents were somewhat diverse in terms of the number of years they have been leaders in genealogical societies (Figure 1). Three people had 30 or more years' experience, while three (3) had less than one year's experience. Almost half (48%) had between one and nine years' experience.



Figure 1. Years in Society Leadership

Respondents indicated they were quite pleased with the summit, with 91% (21) giving it an overall rating of either Excellent (12) or Very Good (9). (See Figure 2.)

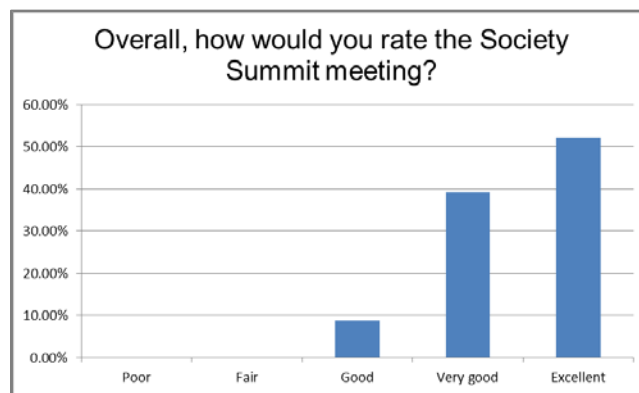


Figure 2. Overall Rating

Morning Session

The morning session included a panel discussion focused on various areas related to society membership. Afterwards each table of participants shared their reactions to the ideas presented by the panelists as well as any other ideas or experiences related to society membership. Following the table

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discussions, one person from each table shared their table’s key discussion points. Twenty respondents (87%) rated the session as either Extremely Valuable (39%) or Very Valuable (48%) (Figure 3).

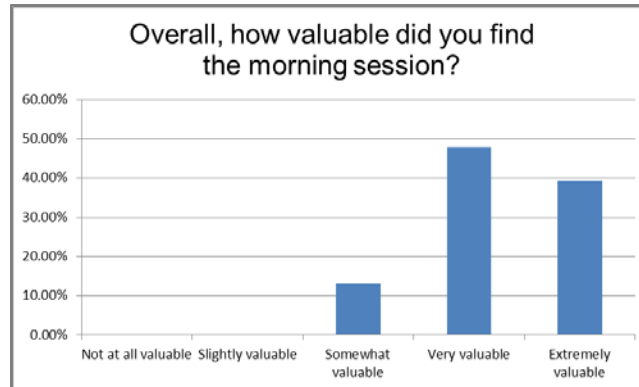


Figure 3. Overall Rating of Morning Session

Several respondents commented that the table discussions were good learning experiences, with many stating everyone at their table contributed to the discussion. One commented that: “All NT [North Texas] leadership need this exposure to new ideas and the need to self-examine our own groups.”

Respondents were asked to think back to the morning discussion and briefly state two ideas they found particularly useful. The most frequently expressed ideas related to *new members* and *fundraising*. Table 1 lists the key ideas for these two areas. Two other ideas mentioned a few times were *mentoring* for beginning researchers and *website development*, in particular Easynet (i.e., easynetsites.com).

New Members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow-up promptly with them: Contact them; Send welcome letter• Welcome them• Assign easier, appropriate-level tasks
Fundraising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local restaurant give-backs from Society meeting/meals at restaurants

Table 1. Key Ideas from Morning Member Discussion

Afternoon Session

In the afternoon participants were asked to either:

1. Create an action plan to address a key issue related to members; or
2. Imagine a new genealogy club and design the club by describing aspects of the club and how it would operate.

Four tables created action plans and three designed a new club. Following the table discussions, one person from each table shared their table’s key discussion points.

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In regard to which exercise they participated in, the respondents were almost evenly split; 11 (48%) were at tables that drafted an action plan for a key issue and 12 (52%) designed a new club. All 23 respondents (100%) found the exercises valuable: Extremely Valuable (9); Somewhat Valuable (8); or Very Valuable (6) (Figure 4).

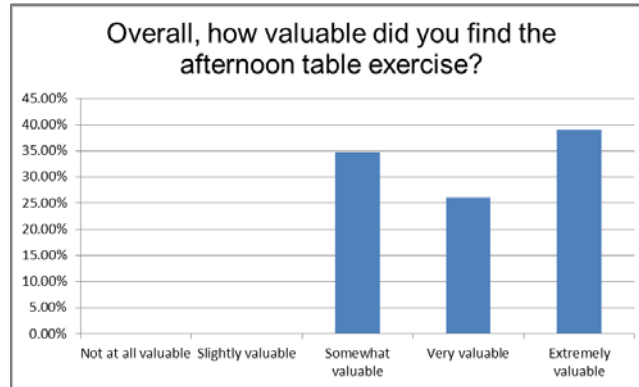


Figure 4. Overall Rating of Afternoon Table Exercise

There was some variance in the ratings between the two exercises. Seventy-two percent (72%) of respondents rated the action plan exercise as either Extremely Valuable (36%) or Very Valuable (36%) compared to 59% of respondents who rated the club design exercise as Extremely Valuable (42%) or Very Valuable (17%) (Table 2).

How Valuable?	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Very		Extremely		Total	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Action Plan	0%	0	0%	0	27%	3	36%	4	36%	4	48%	11
New Club	0%	0	0%	0	42%	5	17%	2	42%	5	52%	12
Total	0%	0	0%	0	35%	8	26%	6	39%	9	100%	23

Table 2. Overall Rating of Afternoon Table Exercise by Exercise Type

Respondents submitted comments about the afternoon table exercises. Most of the comments were positive and indicated that a range of helpful ideas emerged in the discussions.

David Rencher's Presentation

The meeting closed with David Rencher's presentation: *Future Vision for Genealogical Societies*. Eighty-seven percent (87%) found the presentation either Extremely Useful (39%) or Very Useful (48%).

Respondents were asked to describe two ideas from the presentation that most impressed them. The idea most often stated was determining a Society's *cost per member*, along with a related idea of the *value of membership fees*.

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Another idea that was often stated was the concept of *taking an inventory* of a Society's activities and products. Related to this concept was the idea that Societies need to *embrace change*, and as one person stated, examine if "the society still serve[s] the purpose for which it was created?"

Closing

The final two survey questions gave respondents an opportunity to suggest improvements for future summit meetings as well any additional comments they wished to express. Overall, the comments were very positive and respondents were pleased to have participated.

Many expressed that hearing the experiences of other Societies was a key benefit of the Summit. A few participants suggested reconfiguring the table assignments during the day to allow for more inter-society networking. There were also positive suggestions for managing the schedule. These included:

- Starting at 10:00 AM
- Adding another afternoon session
- Increasing the networking time
- Scheduling time for participants from same Society to meet together for a wrap-up session