The 2022 SSHA Conference in Chicago
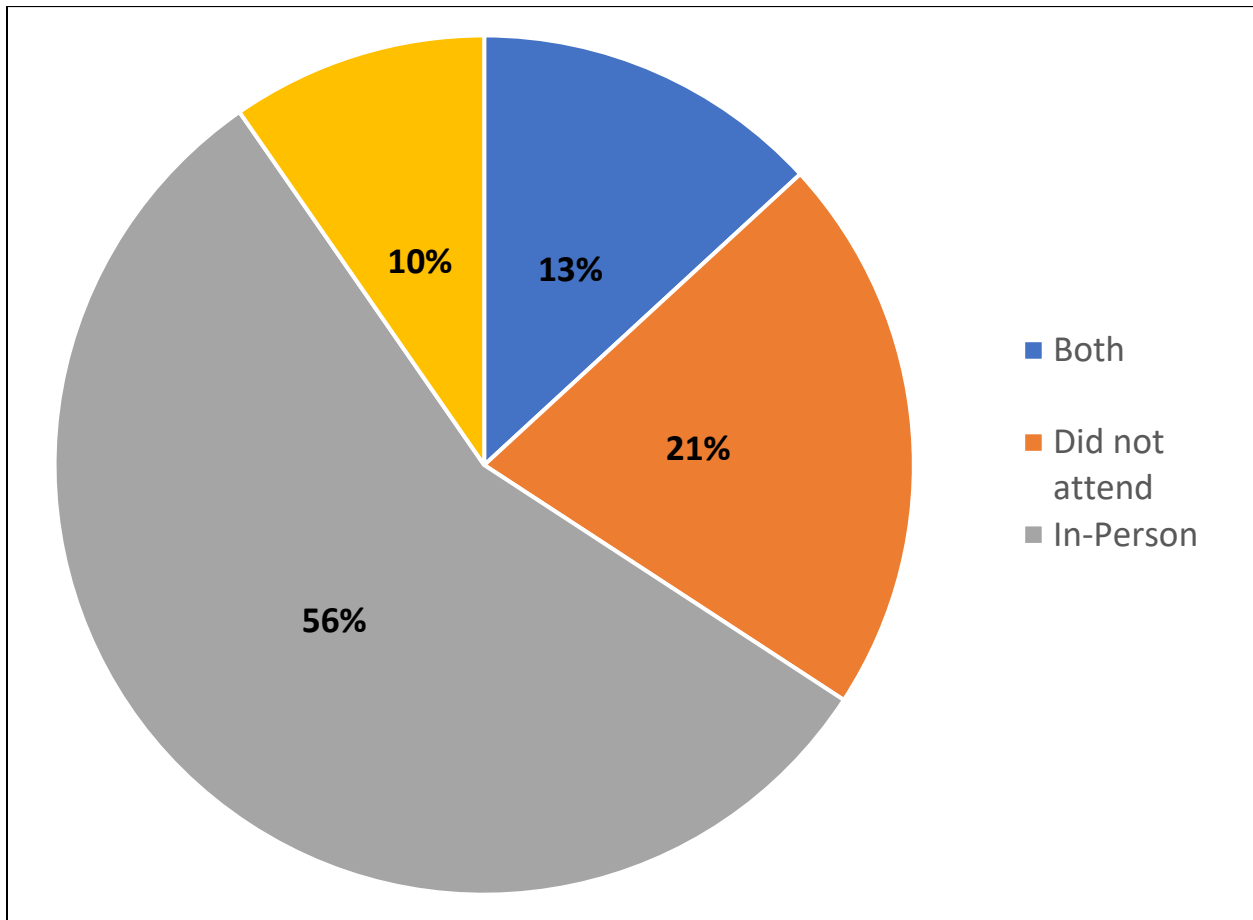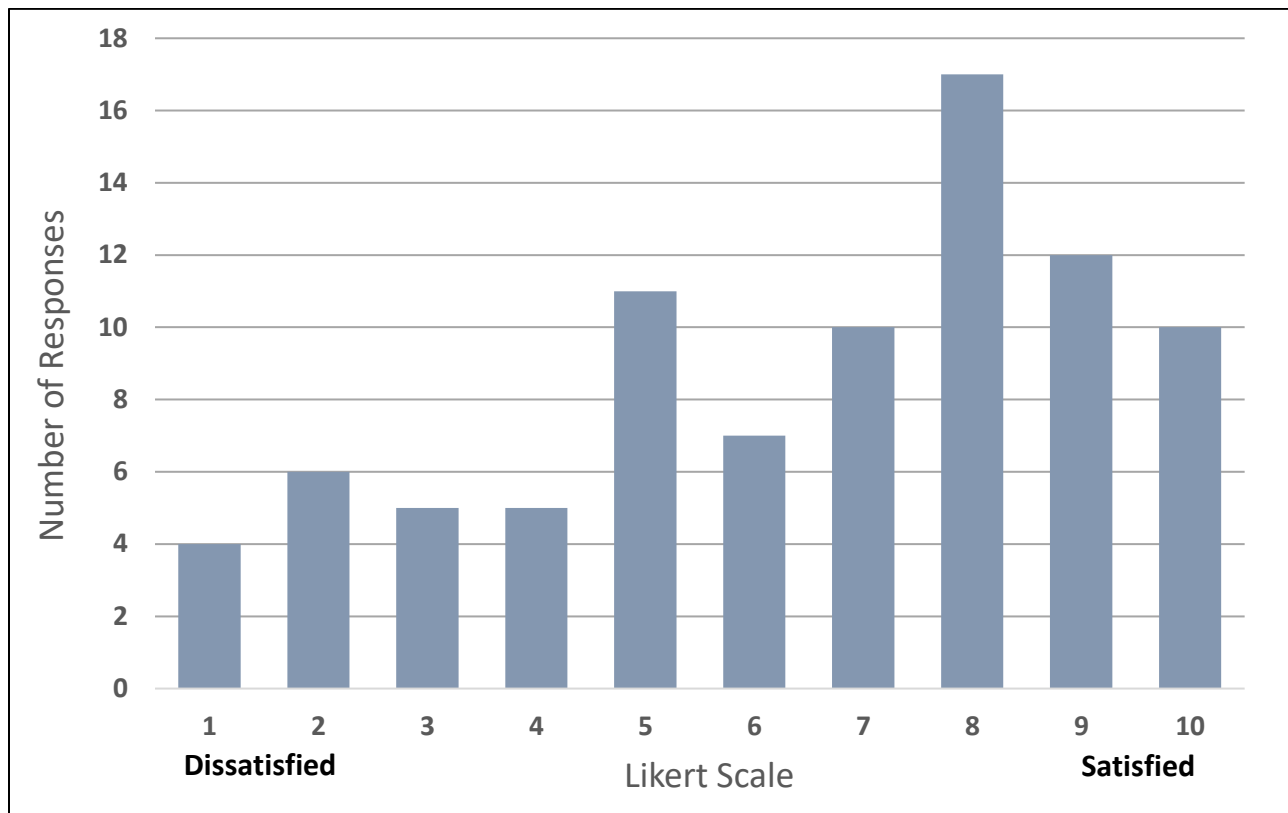
Follow-up Survey Results

Question 1: What modality/modalities did you use for SSHA 2022?

Pie chart showing: Both 13%, Did not attend 21%, In-Person 56%, and yellow segment 10%.

Question 2: How satisfied were you with the hybrid conference overall?

Question 3: What aspects (if any) of the hybrid format did you think worked well?

Responses

1. I had missed my flight and I was not aware (only had a day notice) that my session was moved a day earlier so the hybrid format really saved me to present

2. More people can attend.

3. Checking upcoming sessions and events on the phone was quick and easy. I liked attending the sessions in person generally.

4. It was fantastic -- I was jet-lagged and zoomed in from my hotel room for one session but attended all others in person. Whether in person or online, the participation of folks online was easy and smooth -- truly felt "hybrid" rather than the two-tiered solutions that we often encounter, in which online folks are excluded in some way.

5. It made possible attendance which otherwise would not have happened. Also the format which allows written questions and timely responses makes the session in that sense

better than live presentations. On-line sessions invite a certain level of informality among the panelists.

6. Being able to quickly find and join Zoom meetings

7. Accessibility

8. The hybrid setup worked better in 2021 in Philadelphia than in 2022 in Chicago.

9. great support by the IT team at the hotel

10. People who could not attend but were presenting a paper could still participate.

11. It allowed for more participation and engagement

12. We should not be having a hybrid conference, it is a poor experience for both those in person and those online. It is not a technology issue, it is a matter of the purpose of a conference. We use conferences to network with colleagues, meet new ones, establish or build upon research collaborations, plan grants. None of that is supported with a hybrid conference format.

13. I prefer a fully in person conference

14. It is useful to have a way for people who cannot attend in person to participate, but I'm not sure that the trade-off is worth the cost.

15. I think accessibility is crucial, so the hybrid format is important!

16. It allowed people who could not afford to travel, or who had childcare issues, to participate.

17. The mere fact that people could participate from across the world is of course positive.

18. The fact that the sessions could accommodate all modes in any and all sessions. Both sessions I organized were fully hybrid.

19. The in-person component worked extremely well, and that tided over the virtual

20. Inclusion (disabled people, participants who couldn't afford to travel, parents, etc...)

21. I attended sessions that were all virtual, mixed, or all in person. all worked well. tech support was there and prompt in case help was needed.

22. The in-person component.

23. Tech assistants were helpful and easily available at the hotel

24. Computers working well. IT Support always quickly available.

25. None. The hybrid form was horrible. I decided to no longer attend if hybrid continues. Sound was bad, discussions were bad and connections were bad. I might as well have stayed at home.

26. Tech was very good.

27. I appreciate that it allowed people who could not attend in person the opportunity to participate.

28. Overall the tech was well organized and run. I especially appreciated that tech support sat in the hallways so we could grab them as needed.

29. Convenience for those who can't travel

30. Great for allowing some (esp. non-US-based colleagues) to join in, but hybrid discussions are never particularly good (although the tech here was quite solid).

31. Tech/AV pretty seamless given all the complexity.

32. People being able to watch from abroad

33. Focus should be on building back in-person conferences

34. Paper presentations can work quite well.

35. Perhaps more participation--staff to assist

36. I was impressed overall with how well the technology worked to allow real interaction between virtual and in-person attendees. Clearly, that kind of connectivity doesn't come cheap, though!

37. I appreciated the option so many more folks could participate who might otherwise have been unable to travel.

38. Was a good fallback for speakers whose travel was disrupted - but not sure that is worth the cost!

39. Inclusivity of scholars for whom in-person is not accessible.

40. Technology worked pretty well for the most part; tech help was easy to find

41. We had vitrual attendance at our panel, and it worked well. There was staff available to help if it didn't,

42. Who is good to be able to have international gas to couldn't afford to come in person?

43. My preference is of course for in-person participation, particularly for speakers, but hybrid is also good.

44. The conference was MOSTLY in person, with a few attendees virtual.

45. Virtual presenters appeared to work well, at least in some panels.

46. When they were muted

47. The face-to-face aspects were great.

48. It was good that it was available for those who needed it

49. None of the panels I attended used the hybrid format. They were all in-person.

50. Panelists were generally quite attuned to turning cameras and doing sound checks so that remote attendees could participate more fully. That being said, inherently the experiences will differ. The remote option allows scholars with fewer resources to travel to participate. The hotel had staff dedicated to technology issues but these could have been more smoothly managed.

51. The technology generally worked. We could have a discussion between people in the room and people online. The technology is better than other hybrid conferences I have been to.

52. Despite a few connectivity problems in certain sessions, the overall quality of the discussion was very good and I felt included as a virtual participant

53. I was glad to be able to attend somehow. The high cost of registration was sufficiently prohibitive that I could not afford to also fly to the conference and pay for a hotel.

54. I only attended meetings - did not go to sessions.

55. The hybrid format made it possible for me to attend the conference. I could not afford to pay the high registration fees and cover travel expenses within my university's travel budget, so the hybrid panel allowed me to participate in my panel.

56. The technical aspects worked great, and I appreciated the chance to participate virtually while travel was not possible for me.

57. The attendance rate would be good due to the flexibility of online meeting.

58. The ability to participate in spite of financial and geographic limitations.

Question 4: What aspects (if any) of the hybrid format do you think need improvement?
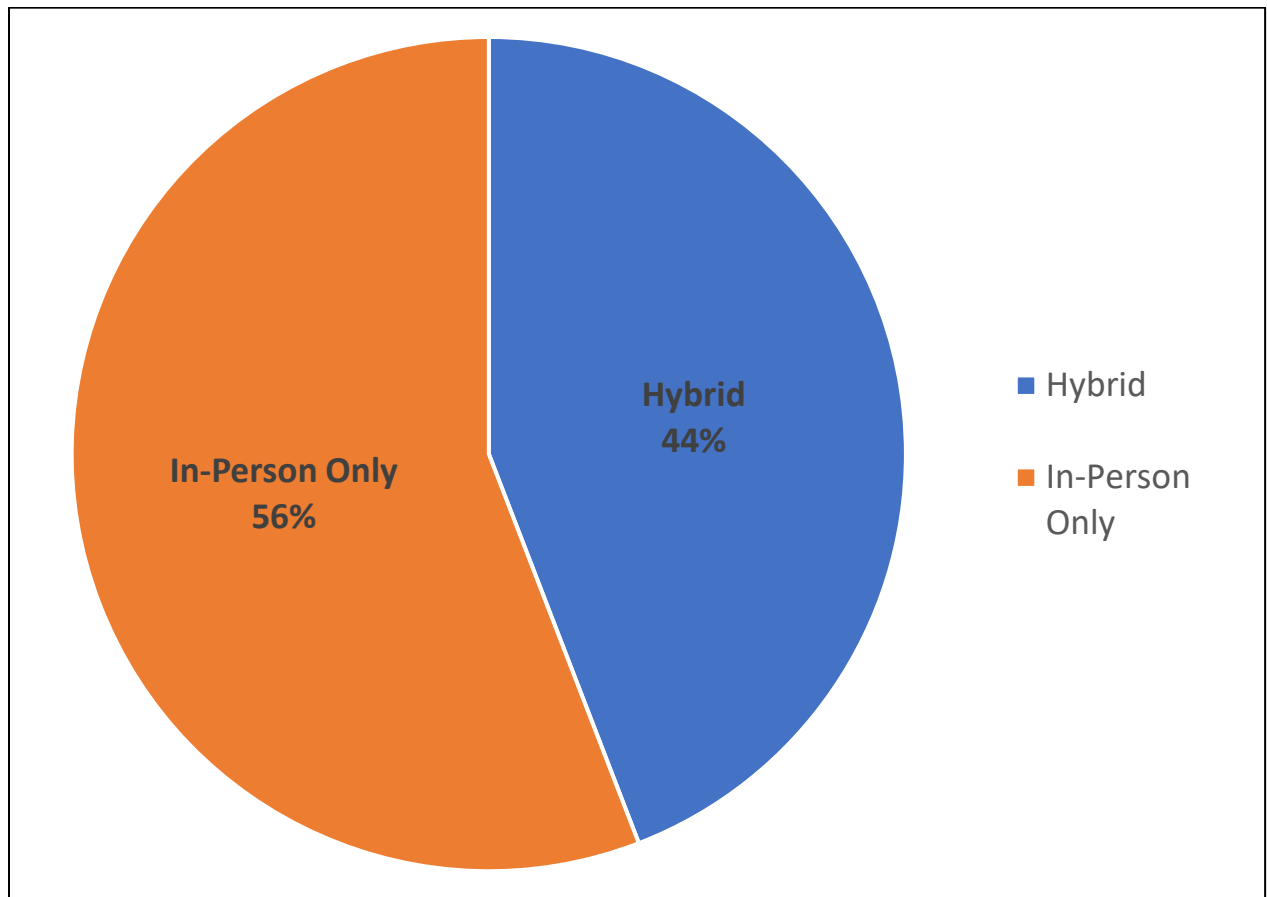
Responses

1. Technical assistance.

2. The hybrid format is inherently unsatisfying because people who attend remotely and those present in person cannot connect.

3. Would like to be able to see full abstracts on the smartphone app. Needed easy power plugs in the rooms since I was using phone and computer all the time ; that often worked out but not always.

4. I know it was hideously expensive, so that's the downside I see.

5. As with live presentations, papers being presented should not be read.

6. SSHA registration fees are very high. After the conference, we learned that the recordings of most sessions are not being made available due to technical problems. The Whova team really let us down. I will likely not be attending again.

7. Q&A participation is challenging online.

8. Professional A/V services that know what they are doing, the Chicago union guys lacked in this regard.

9. Nothing about technic more about discussions: it is difficult if chair or discussant is virtual and presenters real. Awkward, because they can not see audience, reactions. So discussant and chair should be for sure real.

10. The in-person Zoom link got separated from the virtual-only one in our session so we had to simply split our session into 2 and I didn't get to interact with many other professors. The tech workers I think were on strike or something(?) or were anyway not available to help.

11. Technical assistance.

12. The recording/slides/questions from the virtual participants interface was incredibly difficult to use, and often just did not work. Every room needed an expert standing by to make sure slides advanced in both places, people could hear and see, etc. And the recordings were a mess anyway.

13. The audio was not great - most of the time the Zoom presenters could not hear the questions and seemed isolated.

14. Drop it completely.

15. I saw multiple problems getting remote speakers set up. The biggest problem was confusion between presenting through the Whova app and joining through Zoom as an audience member. The problems in Chicago seemed to be much worse than in Philadelphia a year earlier.

16. I didn't learn there were any hybrid possibilities prior to the conference, so I had my panelists pre-record their presentations. I believe a hybrid format would have been more interactive. So, in that sense, better upfront communication about the hybrid format would have been helpful.

17. Having to repeat everything the audience says so that one person can attend on zoom breaks the flow of discussion. We should have some all zoom sessions, and then the rest all in person that is recorded for those who want to listen after the fact.

18. There were the usual problem with time lost (re)establishing connections.

19. They could can the attempt to be Facebook, and the other "engagement enhancements."

20. The major difficulty with all virtual conferences -- virtually impossible for the in-person speakers to orient themselves to the virtual folks as well.

21. Discussion participation is still uneven across the room and the virtual attendees. It can make small sessions feel even less active. But I'm not sure what recommendations to make on that front!

22. I am glad I was not a session chair, I am not a technophile.

23. The Zoom attendance option wasn't used at any of the panels I attended and seemed to have required a lot of work and money with very little payoff.

24. Horrible panels where everyone is online except one or two people in an otherwise empty room. Bad experience and does not encourage real life audiences either. Should be planned as one or the other, online or in person panels decided from the start (as ISA has been doing).

25. Sound, connection. But mostly: choose! Have an online conference or an in-person conference. Do not combine both. The whole idea of a conference that you can talk to a person before, after and between session. If a person pops in from somewhere, gives a talk and disappears that is not a conference. Making new contacts is the idea of conference.

26. The cost of this service is, I think, too high for the association to sustain.

27. Not the fault of the organizers, but the low online participation (at least in the sessions I attended) meant that there was little dialogue between the two groups.

28. Unless you knew how to move the camera, the people online could not see the audience.

29. The conference needs to be a primarily an in-person event if the institution is going to survive but is far too expensive to attend, and thus discourages in-person participation (or indeed participation in general).

30. In the sessions I attended, there were only a handful (if any) people attending virtually. We should rethink the expense of supporting every room with this technology -- perhaps one set of rooms could be equipped and reserved for panels with virtual presenters? That cuts out those who want to attend virtually, but my sense is that this was not a large group.

31. Online participation was low, worked well for network meetings.

32. Hybrid option seems to lower in-person attendance rather than expand overall attendance.

33. I don't like watching speakers on the screen (I can just do that in my hotel room), it didn't always work to mute attendees (not sure if this was a Zoom issue?), I felt like with only 1-2 sessions I attended, most sessions only had a handful of virtual attendees.

34. All moments that involve discussion work less well. Chairs should have to be present in the room. Chairing a session via Zoom should not be an option.

35. Cancel it. Got back to an IRL conference.

36. Not easy to mix in-person and virtual--not ideal.

37. There were issues with sharing screens, the audio levels when the audience spoke (and weren't right next to the microphone), and with moderators/presenters monitoring the chat and dealing with tech in addition.

38. I think there needed to be someone assisting in the technology set up. Several sessions never unmuted or turned on the camera or shared their screen for virtual attendees.

39. Delays in starting sessions due to tech problems, low take-up (did not see more than 1 or 2 people attending online in any of my sessions), can't really engage with online presenters.

40. Tech glitches were common, and the Whoova set-up made sharing slides a bit complicated.

41. The technology was often not functional at all. This is, of course, the fault of the guest services at the Palmer house, hotel, and not the SSHA, but it is absolutely crucial, if want us to have these kinds of high-performance.

42. It was less efficient to have ALL panelists on screen in a session. It made the discussion more difficult and engaging the live audience more challenging.

43. It is important that we return to the in-person format as the social networking and getting to know new people and see old friends cannot take place in any other way. The virtual format does allow people who cannot make it to the conference to participate. However, it is never the same, so we should not promote it.

44. Virtual participation in general discussion.

45. End it. Disrupts real exchange.

46. Some of the tech start-up at the beginning of sessions was awkward.

47. Advance notice and training.

48. I'm not sure, since I didn't experience the hybrid format at this year's SSHA.

49. It's just not the same if people aren't there in person. It's harder to meet people.

50. Once session chairs get the hang of it, room set-up etc. will be less of a problem. But some better intro for session chairs to maximizing the technology/quality for in-person and virtual participants would help.

51. The tech set up was pretty poor. Hard to hear anyone who wasn't immediately next to the computer.

52. The tech set up was really poor. It was hard to hear anyone that wasn't close to the microphone, the camera seemed to just a laptop camera and someone had to be there to move it around to face other panelists, audience, etc. It made meaningful participation quite difficult.

53. There's room for improvement in making virtual participation more engaged. My panel was fully virtual and that made it difficult to engage with the audience. Perhaps assigning in-person moderators for fully virtual panels is one way to amend that. Creating virtual coffee breaks and receptions could be another one.

54. The sounds was not working for those in the room, in spite of the moderator's efforts to communicate with the tech team and get another speaker. We lost most of our audience and those who remained had to gather around a small laptop computer.

Question 5: Putting aside cost issues, would you prefer in-person only or hybrid for future SSHA meetings?

Question 6: Why in-person or hybrid?

Responses from those who preferred an "in-person only" conference.

1. Less potential for technical glitches.

2. Debate and discussion.

3. Hybrid is just too hard to manage, especially for session chairs who are left with the burden of making the connections work. I would only allow the special circumstance (illness, family emergency, visa problem) for remote presentations, but expect people attending the conference to just attend.

4. Less interruption in the sessions.

5. Hybrid is hard for good feedback.

6. Hybrid meetings lack the informal contacts that are often the most productive part of a conference.

7. I appreciate the accessibility that a hybrid format gives to some participants. However, the interactions are challenging.

8. I think the real value in the conference is meeting people in person. If, say, 800 people attend in person and 100 on-line because they cannot make it, it is no problem.

9. Hate hybrid conferences, they are expensive and the people you want to network with are online and disappear after the session.

10. The hybrid component isn't yet technically workable. Maybe the tech will improve in time for future years. Meantime, the expense to the assn. isn't worth it.

11. Just as with classroom teaching, going fully in-person or fully online means everyone's on the same plane and using the same medium, thus facilitating discussion and enhancing its quality. Hybrid is in theory inclusive but in practice divides attendees and doesn't make for good discussions.

12. Because the point of a conference is to be together!

13. Not motivated to attend virtually, very tedious. Hybrid lowers the value of in person attendance at conferences too. For those unable to travel there are plenty of other opportunities online, and perhaps SSHA could promote regular panels online explicitly for that purpose.

14. As I said in the previous field; the hybrid sessions were horrible. It took much too long to establish a connection, sound was horrible, every question from the audience had to be repeated.

15. I enjoy the in-person conversations that occur in sessions. I think they allow for a more effective sharing of ideas by encouraging others to participate and "piggy-back" on previous comments. I found that when a zoom participant presented, asked a question, or provided feedback, it was easier for the audience to tune out.

16. For me, the point of a conference is in-person exchange.

17. It's not clear to me that the hybrid option adds very much considering the high cost (it could be different if more people participated online; perhaps a much lower fee would incentivize this?).

18. In-person allows for that one-on-one interaction that is at the heart of SSHA.

19. Even when it's well run, hybrid is annoying. But I recognize it's a good option for people who can't otherwise attend the conference.

20. attending the conference virtually is a poor substitute for real participation and seriously detracts from the quality and experience of the event.

21. The purpose of a conference is to connect with other scholars/researchers and it's not possible to do that over zoom. The informal conversations in the hallways and the chatting before panels, along with dinners and lunches are far more important than listening to the presentations. The hybrid format was also annoying as an in-person presenter this year because it was easy to forget the people on the zoom call until they'd interrupt because the camera was pointed the wrong way or some other technical error. None of the zoom attendees asked questions and it was awkward to have them just there.

22. Too difficult to continue doing hybrid.

23. The more important part of the SSHA is not the presentations themselves but the in-person follow-up and small talk. It is very difficult to get to know someone from a virtual interaction and to discuss work in a meaningful way.

24. Because of the cost involved in hybrid; it's always second-best to be hybrid, stratifies participation. Perhaps events that are -either- in person -or- hybrid.

25. Online participation is too low, no contribution to scholarly discussions. Keep hybrid for network meetings though.

26. It's about lively discussions and exchange besides panels. This needs reality. Virtual formats can provide different kind of conferences, more one-way informations.

27. Networking, exchanging ideas spontaneously is just not possible in an online setting. Hybrid option does not increase overall attendance, rather, it lowers in-person attendance, and thus the possibility of informal intellectual exchange.

28. I have mixed feelings on this. On the one hand, offering hybrid is better for people to attend who cannot get fully reimbursed (institutions without the funds to reimburse, graduate students, etc.) and is better environmentally (less air travel), but networking and attending in person is more enjoyable and while exhausting a nice change of pace from my normal day to day work of Zooming with people.

29. I think the interaction erodes, and it's too easy for people (myself included) to only attend/participate in the things they are obligated to do.

30. The hybrid format makes you miss out on some of the most important elements of a conference; meeting colleagues, participating in discussions (that sometimes continue far beyond a session), widening your network, making plans for future collaborations etc. This kind of personal meetings have for a long time been at the heart of the SSHA and if

we can't come back to an in-person conference where people actually are present, I am doubtful if The SSHA annual meetings actually will have a future. This is based upon my own opinion and experience, but also upon comments from others: "if SSHA will be a hybrid meeting next year, I will not attend". Paying more for something that has less value is not a very good selling point. I understand that the hybrid format is valuable for those that for different reason can't attend, but it surely diminishes the value of the actual meeting.

31. To meet. Many more people attending the sessions were there IRL anyway. Those online, were many times doing other stuff and disappeared.

32. To meet people--the networking gets lost in virtual space.

33. In-person, if it reduces the fees for attending.

34. Hybrid conferences are costly - as a first-time attendee I was astonished at the registration fee for this year's conference - and create more problems than they solve. Online attendees can't engage in meaningful debate and discussion, and a hybrid option often serves as an excuse for more senior scholars to limit their attendance, thus reducing the value of the conference for more junior scholars.

35. Hybrid meetings are much less well-attended in person, and which makes the in-person aspect of the meeting much less appealing.

36. Because only in an in-person conference and the social networking among intellectuals that is supposed to take place at a conference really happen.

37. Meeting people outside of sessions is also very important and possible only in in-person format.

38. Human exchange requires presence because networking is impossible in an online version!

39. A hybrid conference is kind of like a combination of the worst of in-person and the worst of online conferences. I'd prefer if, instead of a hybrid conference, virtual events or colloquia outside of the regular conference. With a hybrid conference I worry about junior scholars and graduate students attending the conference virtually and not getting the same networking benefits. That said, I understand the concerns about the pandemic and access for people with disabilities.

40. Better networking.

41. Social connection is important for our community.

42. I had a very poor experience as a virtual participant. There were very few opportunities to meaningfully engage.

43. I think the informal conversations after the sessions are an important part of the conference experience.

44. No real preference but more attendees in-person means the publishers will send their reps for the book exhibits, instead of outsource it to someone selling books for all publishers.

Question 6: Why in-person or hybrid?

Responses from those who preferred a "hybrid" conference.

1. Many scholars face economic and visa difficulties when participating in conferences; hybrid allows for international participants and scholars with no funds to benefit from the conference.

2. Hybrid widens access and avoids carbon busting transatlantic flights for Europeans.

3. The SSHA is my favorite conference. That said, I'm unwilling to travel to Chicago in the winter during a pandemic. If we moved the SSHA to September or October, I would be willing to make the trip from Los Angeles. November is a hard month. Since the SSHA is unlikely to move the conference, hybrid might work for me (if it is affordable).

4. Hybrid to allow for overseas/distant participation, limit air travel for those who wish to do so. But virtual can NEVER fully replace in-person ... I felt that this year even though I appreciated the virtual option.

5. I do prefer in person but also appreciate the accessibility hybrid offers.

6. I would like the conference to include a broad spectrum of participants, including remote participants who are short of money to travel or are very far away or logistically disabled for some reason. Hybrid can mean some people are not really participating, but rather just show up to one session. I don't see how to fix that. SSHA might offer some sessions that are in-person only or remote-only, in order to reduce costs or complexity of running so many simultaneous sessions. Evening events are already like that.

7. Accessibility is important.

8. The majority of sessions should be in person. Perhaps we could have one session in each time block as zoom? This would allow one room to be high tech with support vs. all rooms with high tech and support. It should cut down on costs and allow for better discussions.

9. I think that hybrid allows for greater accessibility. However, I think that a different hybrid structure would be preferable. Another conference I attend had two days fully

online and two days fully in person. Registration covered the costs for all of it, so anyone could attend. This apparently substantially reduced costs, and it created a nice environment for online sessions and in person where you had full attendance in each independently.

10. A wider variety of people can present. First session had two hybrid presentations, and three in person and an in person discussion, and great discussion from both online and in person participants.

11. Honestly, I probably won't attend SSHA meetings in the future in person -- I can't afford two major conferences per year and I pretty much *have* to go to my discipline's (AAG) annual meeting. I was able to attend 2019 and 2022 because I was on sabbatical (thus - flexibility) and also because I was serving on Council of the AAG so they paid for my travel. I really like the interdisciplinary sessions, but the social side of SSHA is fairly isolating for me, which means the in-person value is low.

12. I think we have to stick with hybrid for the issues of inclusion, although I do think it isn't as great an experience as the in-person only conference.

13. optimize participation, minimize dropouts/sessions collapsing.

14. Hybrid better reflects the direction of the profession. Even when it is safe to travel and meet in person (and that moment does not yet seem fully at hand), scholars are reevaluating the practice of attending multiple in-person conferences per year. Hybrid would potentially increase participation from occasional SSHA members and be more equitable to scholars based outside the US and those with limited travel budgets.

15. I'd be more likely to attend virtually.

16. For everyone convenience and footprints .

17. Enables overseas colleagues to attend even if they do not have time/availability to come in person (this was the case of some of my French co-authors this year and it was great to have them on zoom).

18. Hybrid gives a chance to people who are not in the US or do not want to incur in travel expenses to participate.

19. Hybrid allows for attendance at more sessions. The problem with in-person is that there is too much over-lapping.

20. More flexibility and fewer barriers to access content and networking opportunities for all

21. Need to do our part to curb carbon emissions, not to mention financial difficulties//inequities of conference travel for grad students and contingent faculty that
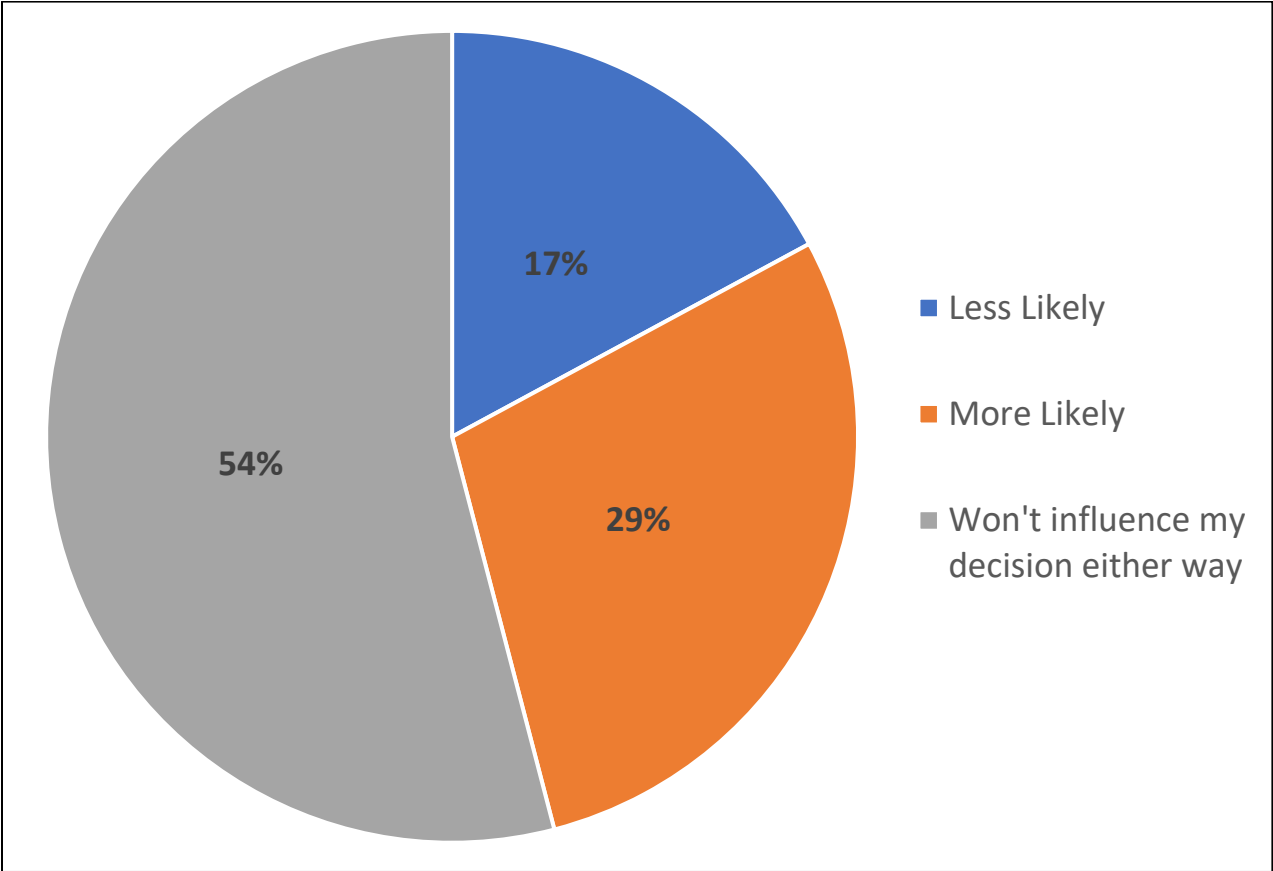
have long been a problem for academe. In person every other year and virtual the others could be worth experimenting with.

22. I don't like fully hybrid, but the option for people to zoom in is very helpful when last minute problems with travel arise. I would prefer same rates for in person and distance to encourage in person though.

23. Because there are many people who cannot afford to or do not want to travel in person.

24. COVID changed expectations with regard to virtual participation in meetings. Plus, hybrid would allow pregnant scholars, or scholars with young children, or those too sick to travel, or grad students and early career scholars with no funding to participate in the conference.

25. Travel often costs a lot and is environmentally bad, so it can be nice to participate virtually from home.

26. I love to connect with people in person but I understand that we are still in an active pandemic and we should consider other people's health also scholars with disabilities may find a hybrid model more accessible.

27. If the cost isn't an issue, I think having hybrid or virtual options is important for accessibility reasons. Not just the pandemic, but other illnesses caregiving responsibilities, and lack of travel funding or time off of teaching cause structural barriers to attendance. Having hybrid or virtual options make the conference more accessible.

28. More attendees.

29. To provide options for those who may not be able to attend in person. For example, a member of my panel had an emergency and could not fly to Chicago, however, was still able to present virtually.

30. As long as COVID is a reality, immunocompromised folks and caregivers of those immunocompromised will face barriers to in-person participation. Hybrid is also a great way to include scholars that cannot attend in-person due to visa restrictions and international travel.

31. hybrid allows more possibilities for participation by people who might not be able to attend in person

32. Travel is not always possible. Hybrid allows attendance even if I cannot take time off for travel.

33. Hybrid = We are still in the middle of a global pandemic with little public health measures. Having hybrid conferences means that scholars and researchers who are

themselves immunocompromised or who care for family/kin are able to participate. It is a simple matter of equity.

34. Conference travel is exhausting & expensive

35. In person has its advantages but hybrid is economical and is much more inclusive for people for whom travel is difficult for whatever reason.

36. Everyone, you can calm should be encouraged to come in person, which obviously is better. But the hybrid format makes it possible to bring in international guests, and people who have health reasons for not traveling. He has a chain, needs to remain international in scope, and many international casts increasingly cannot afford to come for the

37. Meetings in person are great, but there can be travel challenges. Hybrid provides opportunities for participation, without always travelling.

38. I usually prefer hybrid, but it's good to have hybrid option if you cannot attend the conference or even a particular day of the conference.

39. I'm 50/50 on this. I like the hybrid potential for more international participants that are early career scholars. But, socializing and networking is more difficult with and for virtual participants and they can miss out some in the discussions.

40. "Putting aside the issue of cost" is a big caveat here. Honestly, if the cost of conference registration was lower, I likely would have been able to attend in person. I think that from an environmental standpoint, a hybrid option is better, but the current structure for the hybrid conference seems to undermine both the online and in person elements. I think that hybrid is important, but that it's important to reconsider how this can be done effectively.

41. The increased accessibility that the hybrid format provides is an undeniable advantage.

42. Hybrid is, all else equal, more accessible, both in terms of individual cost (travel, etc.) and in terms of availability for international participants (thinking chiefly of access to visas).

43. Proving more options of the format of participation would be more motivating for people to participate.

44. I strongly favor in-person meetings but having a hybrid option for greater accessibility is a good idea, assuming SSHA can afford it.

45. See my previous statements. The in-person experience is definitely more valuable, but hybrid is more inclusive and works reasonably well. That is, the in-person dynamics still function well and are not negatively impacted by the hybrid formats.

Question 7: If SSHA were to offer a hybrid conference again next year, would it make you more or less likely to attend?

Legend:
- Less Likely
- More Likely
- Won't influence my decision either way

Pie chart values: 17%, 29%, 54%

After two years of experience in different cities (with dissimilar labor regulations affecting Audio-Visual service costs and two-way sound/camera technology preset in every room), we now know that offering a full-hybrid option is considerably more expensive than the stand-alone Audio-Visual costs of previous years. To effectively utilize full-hybrid options, it is essential to have some kind of tech support or trouble-shooter in every room to ensure full functionality of the equipment. That person should NOT be the session chair but someone who is capable of monitoring and fixing remote connections, making sure that microphones are not muted, slides are advancing both in the room and remotely, and session recordings are proceeding properly.

Question 8: Given this context, do you believe SSHA should continue to offer a hybrid option into the foreseeable future, for reasons beyond pandemic-related global travel restrictions?
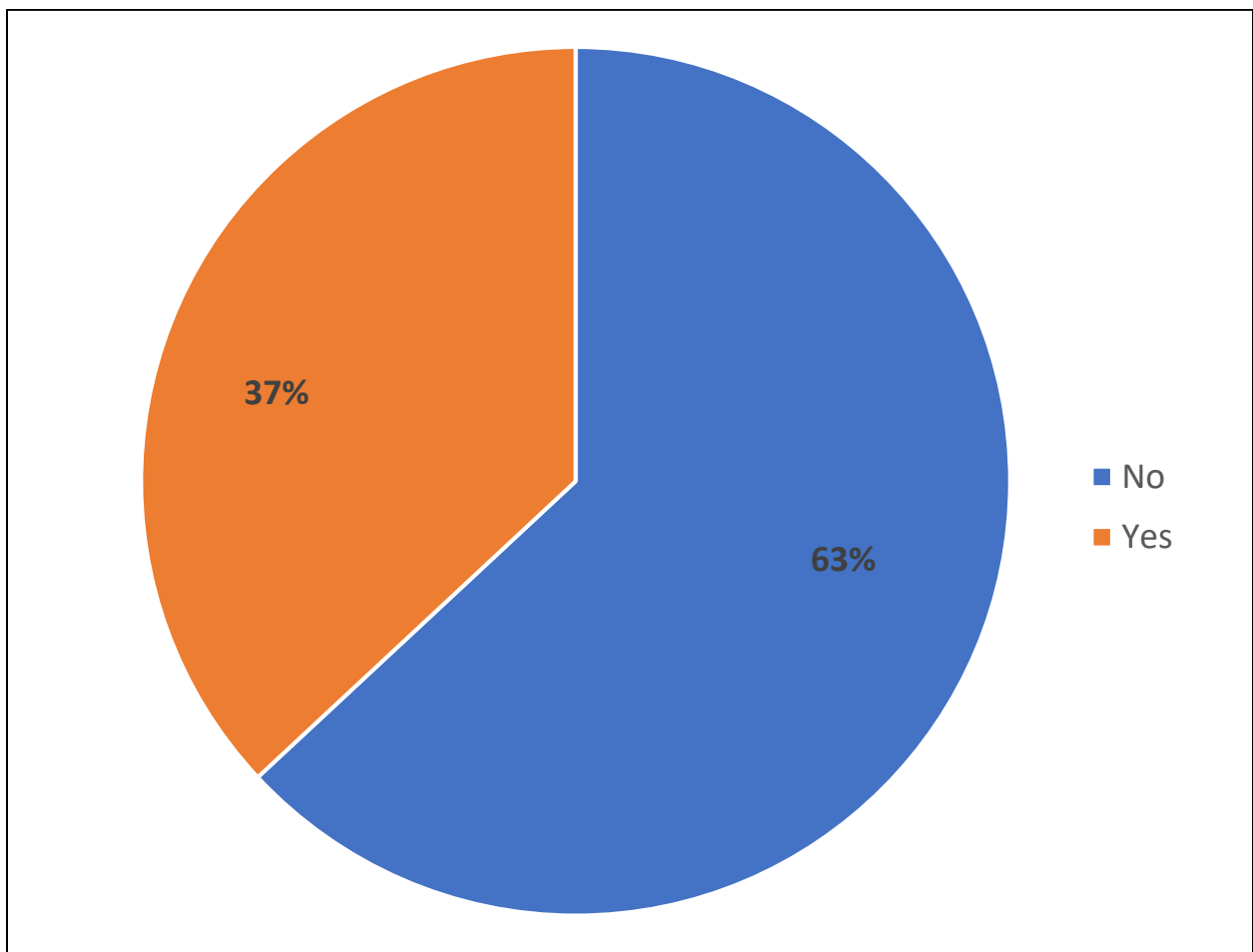
Question 9: Do you have other feedback you would like to share?

Responses

1. I would give a week notice or just a heads up when sessions move because i was hoping to present in person but there was a last-minute change to my session, and I was unable to present in person due to my flight -I would appreciate those changes be communicated ahead of time.

2. It all sounds good hypothetically. But unless the majority are virtual, as in Philadelphia, that aspect just does not work. And that was so strange for the few people in the room. Everyone likes to think we can do two things at once, but as with the rest of life, it really does not work.

3. Chicago in November the week before Thanksgiving is not appealing to me for many reasons. I will attend the conference when it comes out west or when Covid is no longer a threat.

4. I think that the hybrid format exacerbates the problem of no-shows. Most of the sessions that I attended lost someone who was listed in the program. SSHA has faced this problem for many years. IMHO the only approach that works is strictly enforcing the rule that people must have paid registration by the end of July to appear in the program. When I was a program co-chair, this policy eliminated a number of people who would not have attended anyway. I am very unsympathetic to people who refuse to pay, because they are only involved in one session. These people have no attachment to SSHA, and in my experience, their presentations tend to be very disappointing, even when they have major reputations.

5. what about limited hybrid options (the old-fashioned kind where the chair would just zoom in a speaker/audience member or two)? We occasionally did that informally pre-COVID. It's not as elegant as fully hybrid, but maybe there is something in between?

6. I agree that offering remote service does require staff help, a lot of it, and equipment, and so it's expensive. Some sessions or events might be in-person only or remote-only to reduce cost.

7. I think all conferences should offer a hybrid option.

8. The Gorilla in the room is simple. How certain can we be that there will be no virus running rampant next November. What is the alternative if that happens. With hybrid you are taking out insurance that the meeting can go forward with little disruption.

9. I canceled my participation in Chicago (even though I was on the program) in protest against the outrageous registration fee (which was presumably driven by your ill-fated decision to go hybrid).

10. I think an environmental audit would also show that hybrid (or even entirely online) is the only responsible path forward. My prof organization did one of these and having even half of the attendees virtual was a massive savings in carbon emissions. If SSHA has any commitment at all to social justice, environmental futures, and responsible intellectual citizenship, this should be taken in to account.

11. I strongly agree with the need of tech support. Could we consider alternating hybrid conferences every other year?

12. ... if financially feasible. SSHA is already pretty pricey....

13. why not just offer a virtual/zoom conference every other year or an in-person conference every 3rd year given those issues? i just can't justify attending SSHA after the expense and hassle of the other conferences I go to, esp. around Thanksgiving, but I appreciate the panels there a lot.

14. See comment above. Maybe some sweetener for those unable to travel, like a separate committee organizing an online event at another time.

15. I understand the problem actually of hybrid session as I've no technical skills myself.

16. Possibility to lower fees for persons attending only virtually?

17. Costs were high. If cost would be even higher, then I think attendance will be even lower (it now already was low, for a Chicago conference). Mind you, have come to this conference for 20 years.

18. Reading papers at conferences became obsolete after Gutenberg. All presentations should be summaries.

19. I'm glad you are making the SSHA decision making process participatory and transparent.

20. This is the best professional conference I normally attend. The hybrid format in 2021 was disappointing, and I did not attend 2022 as a result (and I refused to pay hundreds of dollars to watch talks on Zoom. No way.).

21. SSHA needs to be bold and embrace high quality hybrid participation going forward. Explain the cost, and the benefits, and the Association will grow and thrive.

22. Save the money ! We're a cash-poor organization. Affordable participation is more important than hybrid support IMO.

23. Why not putting all online sessions on one day or on one spot every day without real session: like 1. day totally online, or everxday online session during lunch time from

11:00 to 13:00 and all are participating online using own laptop from the hotel lobby or own hotel room.

24. SSHA should focus on recovering and improving the in-person conference experience, which feels less vibrant than it did before Covid. This should be our priority. Sessions could still be recorded and shared later. However, building a full hybrid conference experience, in my view, is not warranted, and is a distraction.

25. I do think that hybrid offers medically vulnerable people an opportunity to participate, as well as those from under-resourced institutions. I'm not sure what the right answer is!

26. I'll strongly believe that the conference will die if an online version is used.

27. Chicago was way too expensive.

28. I think having hybrid or virtual options are important, but the cost of this conference is not sustainable and is far outside the norms of the humanities and social sciences. Given that, I don't think hybrid is sustainable, but there are other options, such as allowing some hybrid sessions, offering a mix of virtual and in-person sessions (the MLA did this for their conference), or adding an all-virtual conference into the location (for example, every third year the conference is online only).

29. I would prefer to contribute funds to supporting in-person attendance by graduate students or early career scholars. That will have a much bigger impact in terms of developing networks within the field than paying the high costs of tech support required for a fully hybrid conference. If there is strong support for a virtual option, this can be done as a separate event (as, for example, the AHA did in 2022) at much lower cost.

30. Thank you for trying to provide the best and most inclusive version of the conference given the many constraints.

31. Hybrid is more valuable than more expensive venues. SSHA should consider least expensive locations with hybrid capabilities.

32. Ideally switch to virtual only, but that's not an option on the survey.

33. I attended the conference in Philadelphia in 2021 and did not get covid. It was a very quiet conference; at one presentation I was the only one in the room, so I sat at the presenter's computer to participate in discussion with the remote attendees! It made the conference less worthwhile, and I wondered if I should have also attended remotely, though I haven't been terribly satisfied with other remote-only conferences I've attended, either. Partly as a result I didn't attend in 2022. On the flip side, I attended another conference in Boston in July 2022, where everyone was supposed to be vaccinated or negative-tested shortly before arrival, and unfortunately this time I *did* get covid even though I was fully vaccinated (probably the new omicron variant which is more transmissible). I think this may have been due to spending significant time with people

not part of the conference (family of attendees), but I'm not sure. So covid does continue to be a problem. My advice for future in-person conferences is to encourage everyone to continue to practice masking, especially outside of the conference itself. (Though few people seem to care anymore.).

34. There may be alternative ways of engaging in Hybrid. For example, my understanding is that the ISA in Melbourne will have some sessions that are in-person only, and others that are hybrid. If only some sessions are open to hybrid, that might: (a) incentivize people to attend in person; (b)while still allowing people to attend virtually on a limited basis; and (c) help keep costs more manageable. Another conference is having a virtual "pre-conference" the day prior to the in-person conference. This might be another format that could serve similar goals of allowing hybrid on a limited basis, while prioritizing in-person.

35. The increase in cost that this hybrid option entailed has made it impossible for many old members and visitors to participate. Now that the pandemic is over with, we should do away with the hybrid option and insist that were are having the conference in-person only.

36. I'd be happy going to cheaper cities. The cost did seem very high this year. If that's unavoidable, we should grade membership dues not by rank but by self-reported income. Given academia, there are probably some post docs who earn as much as full professors, and the post docs have conference funding to boot whereas faculty at many institutions get no or inadequate conference travel grants. The current pay structure basically is biased against more senior faculty at less well-endowed institutions.

37. While hybrid can potentially increase participation, the cost is prohibitive and could be reducing participation.

38. Please go back to a conference in presence!

39. Unfortunately, I think something has to give. As noted above, I think that a hybrid option is important for a variety of reasons, but the added costs and low quality make it hard to vote strongly in favor of continuing with the hybrid option. Perhaps a set up where panels were either fully in person or fully online (with just zoom, and no in-person room for online panels) could manage this? People who attend in person could still attend online panels via personal computers, and perhaps people who opt to attend online could be charged a reduced rate for fully online attendance/participation. Then, focus the energy of tech to live streaming major panels/keynotes, etc. I'm not sure the answer, but I think that it's important to get creative.

40. At the end of the day, the in-person conference format is better for several reasons. The advantages and accessibility of a hybrid conference could be captured by encouraging different SSHA networks to host small virtual events.

41. A separately scheduled online-only annual conference might be a good alternative here. Zoom only is comparatively cheap. The International Studies Association is going this way, and I believe the Central Eurasian Studies Society is considering it. There are still equity issues here—separate is not equal—but it seems considerably better than nothing. I would think SSHA's membership is large and diverse enough to support at least a small second conference.

42. The priority should be on maintaining in-person meetings, while also ensuring accessibility through hybrid formats. But it's important to recognize that the vast majority of the benefit of participating in SSHA comes from attending in person.

43. It would be helpful to see a cost breakdown of how the hybrid costs then affect registration costs. I have heard many complain about the high registration cost and this was definitely a deterrent to attending.