

WMA 2022 Annual Meeting Evaluation

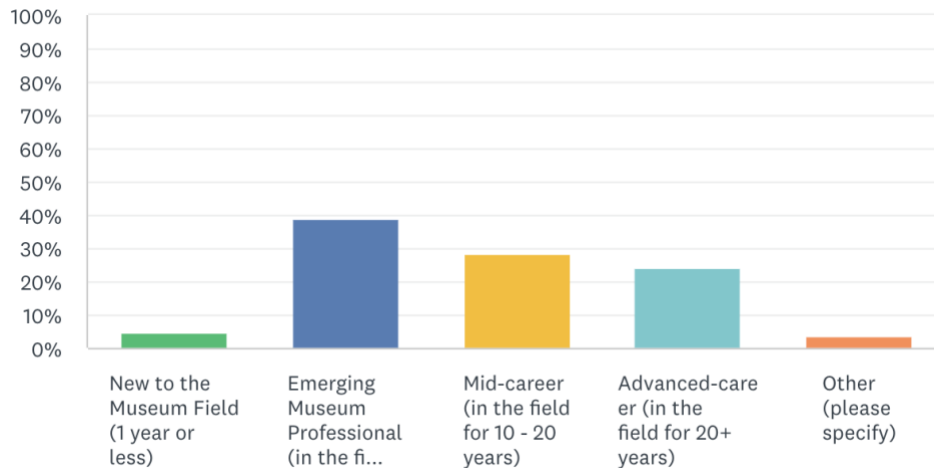
PURPOSE

The Western Museums Association's (WMA) 2022 Annual Meeting was held October 6-9 in Portland, Oregon in partnership with the Oregon Museums Association (OMA). More than 400 attendees from across the West and beyond, came together to reconnect, learn from professionals in a variety of sessions, and attend fun networking events. To understand, evaluate, and improve upon the 2022 attendee experience, WMA sent out an Annual Meeting Evaluation. A total of 133 people responded. The results are shared below.

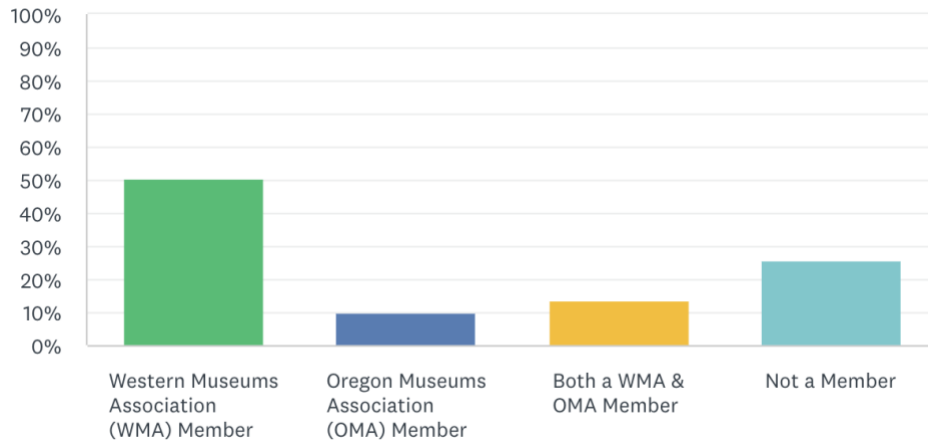
GENERAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

To get to know the survey respondents better, WMA first asked a few generalized questions. The first was "At what stage are you in your current career path?" All 133 people answered. A majority of 52 (39%) are Emerging Museum Professionals; 38 (29%) are Mid-Career; 32 (24%) are Advanced-Career; 6 (5%) are New to the Museum Field; and 5 (4%) are something other.

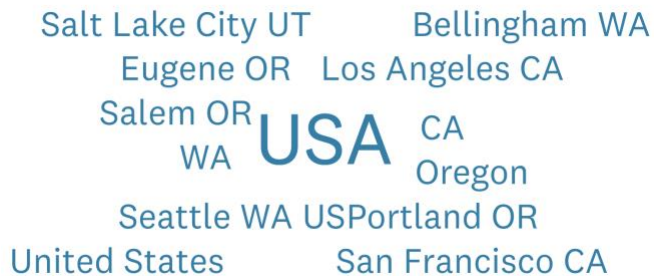
Out of those that are something else, they shared: Technology/Creative Consultant to industry 5 years; Adjacent field – advanced career; partner; consultant; and retired.



The next general question asked if the survey taker was a current member of WMA, OMA or both. Out of 132 respondents, 67 (51%) are a WMA member; 13 (10%) are an OMA member; 18 (14%) are both a WMA and OMA member; and 34 (26%) are not a member of either.



In the third and final more generalized question, we wanted to know where the respondents lived. While everyone reside\ed in the US, 31 (23%) live in Oregon; 23 (17%) live in Washington; 16 (12%) live in California; 3 (2%) live in Utah; and the rest live somewhere else in the Western US.



Moving onto more Annual Meeting-specific questions, WMA first asked “What was your primary reason for attending the Western Museums Association 2022 Annual Meeting?” 79 (59%) people stated they primarily attended WMA 2022 for professional development; 42 (32%) for networking; 10 (8%) for an “Other” reason; 2 (1%) for the exhibit hall; and none for either a specific speaker or to job seek.

Those that selected “Other” stated the following reason for their attendance:

Presenting

BOD Member

Invited to present

I was a Presenter

Presenter

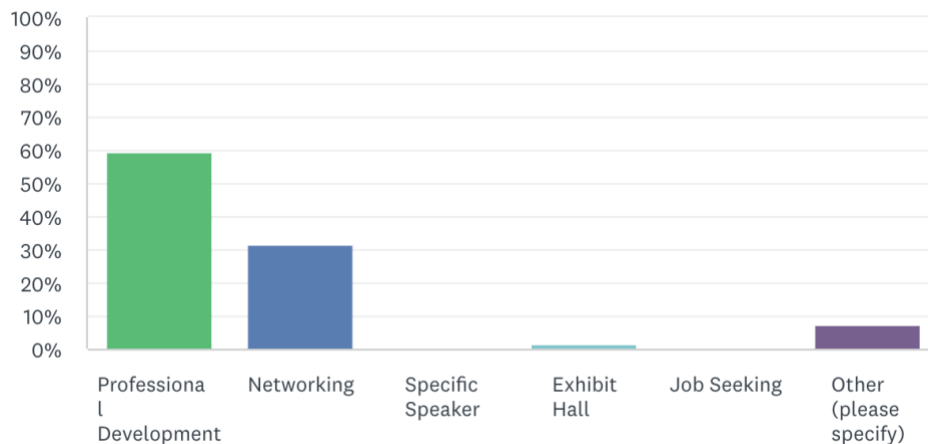
Had paid for registration previously; live near Portland

OMA Board Member volunteering

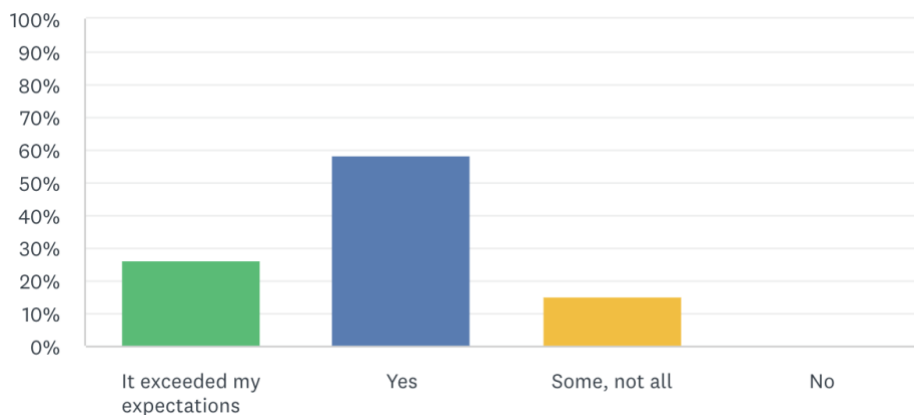
Presenting

Excuse to visit Portland

CSI Registrars



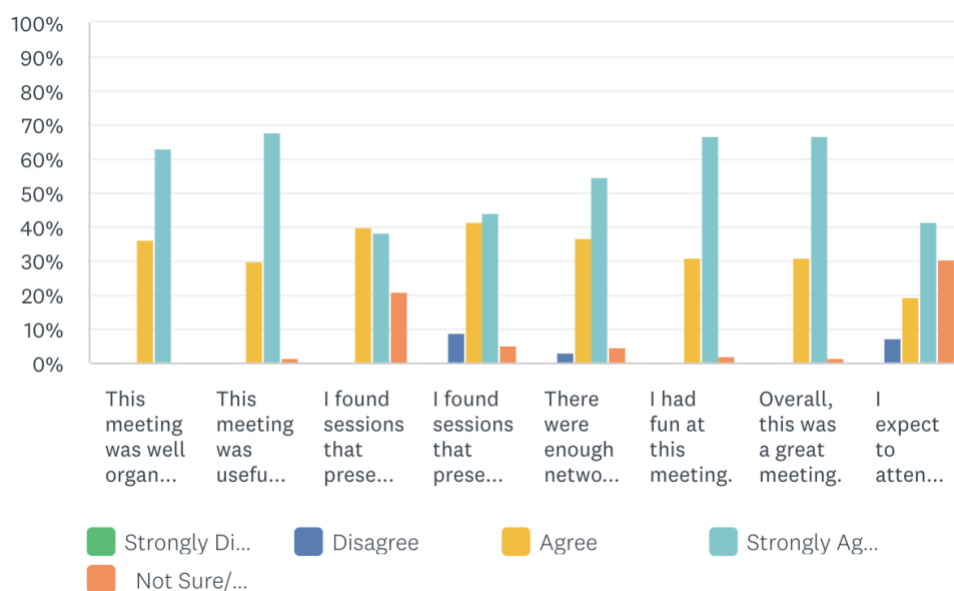
Next, we asked if the Annual Meeting met their expectations. Out of 132 responses, 77 (58%) said it met their expectations; 35 (27%) said it exceeded their expectations; and 20 (15%) said it met some, but not all of their expectations.



The 6th question asked survey respondents if they agree or disagree with the variety of statements seen below.

- 84 (63%) strongly agreed that the meeting was well organized
- 90 (68%) strongly agreed that the meeting was useful to them as a professional

- 53 (40%) agreed that the sessions material was presented at an appropriately introductory level for them
- 59 (44%) strongly agreed that the sessions material was presented at an appropriately advanced level for them
- 73 (55%) strongly agreed that there were enough networking opportunities
- 89 (67%) strongly agreed that they had fun
- 88 (67%) strongly agreed this was a great meeting overall
- 55 (42%) strongly agreed that they expect to attend next year



The second part of the survey moved to focus specifically on the Annual Meeting Sessions. A total of 5 questions were asked in this section.

WMA began with (7a-e): "What were the two or three best sessions you attended? What made them great?" A total of 98 attendees responded, 35 skipped. Here are the top favorite sessions of WMA 2022:

These are the sessions attendees found to be the **best session** they attended:

14 attendee votes

Beyond Land Acknowledgements: Real Collaboration with Tribes... (Sat)

9 attendee votes

Clowning Around: Creating Inclusive Collabs w/ Carla Rossi (Fri)

7 attendee votes

From Intention to Action: Decolonial Perspectives from the Burke Museum (Fri)

Strategies For Surfacing Truth and Fostering Reconciliation for Racial Equity (Sat)

5 attendee votes

Facilitating Critical Conversations Around Exhibitions (Sat)

Lessons Learned for New Leaders (Fri)

3 attendee votes

Preserving History through Restoration: Making Difficult Choices with Collections (Sat)

Museums and the Fight Against Hate (Fri)

Moving Forward with Communities: Co-Creating more Meaningful and... (Thurs)
WMA Community Lunch with Lisa Sasaki (Sat)
Beyond Land Acknowledgments: Real Collaboration with Tribes... (Sat)
Keys to Successful and Collaborative Grant Writing (Sat)
Decolonizing Initiatives in Action at the Burke Museum & Museum of Us (Sun)

2 attendee votes

Leveraging Major Gifts to Support Transformational Campaigns (Fri)
Forward Thinking Disaster Preparation: PNW Case Studies (Fri)

These are the sessions attendees found also to be **great**:

10 attendee votes

Beyond Land Acknowledgements: Real Collaboration with Tribes... (Sat)

7 attendee votes

From Intention to Action: Decolonial Perspectives from the Burke Museum (Fri)

5 attendee votes

Clowning Around: Creating Inclusive Collaborations with Carla Rossi (Fri)

4 attendee votes

Closing General Session (Sun)
Digital Strategy: A Means for Museum Transformation (Fri)

3 attendee votes

What Not to Do: Mistakes and Lessons Learned with Docents/Volunteers (Sun)
Tools For Meaningful and Engaging Internship Programs (Sun)
The Horror-egon Trail! The Campfire Continues... (Sun)
Museums and The Fight Against Hate (Fri)
Moving Exhibits and Programs Forward in Response to Climate Change (Fri)
Decolonizing Initiatives in Action at the Burke Museum and the Museum of Us (Sun)

2 attendee votes

Weaving A Network of Care for Oceanic Collections (Fri)
Show Me the Money: Integrating Pay into Museum Best Practices (Sun)
Shared Leadership: Models for Success (Sat)
Mentorship: Best Practices and Indigenous Notions of Care (Sun)
Measuring Social Impact for Strategic Change (Fri)
Facilitating Critical Conversations Around Exhibitions (Sat)
Putting the AANHPI Into DEAI (Sat)
Politics of Land Acknowledgments (Sat)
Lessons Learned for New Leaders (Fri)
Forward Thinking Disaster Preparation: PNW Case Studies (Fri)

These are the sessions attendees found to be **good** as well:

5 attendee votes

Beyond Land Acknowledgements: Real Collaboration with Tribes... (Sat)
Shared Leadership: Models for Success (Sat)
Mindsets, Tools, and Practices Moving Museum Educators Forward (Sat)

4 attendee votes

Facilitating Critical Conversations Around Exhibitions (Sat)
Closing General Session (Sun)
Putting the AANHPI Into DEAI (Sat)

3 attendee votes

Weaving a Net(work) of Care for Oceanic Collections (Fri)
From Intention to Action: Decolonial Perspectives from the Burke Museum (Fri)
Measuring Social Impact for Strategic Change (Fri)

2 attendee votes

Strategies For Surfacing Truth and Fostering Reconciliation for Racial Equity (Sat)
The Horror-egon Trail! The Campfire Continues... (Sun)
Preserving History Through Restoration: Making Difficult Choices... (Sat)
Moving Exhibits and Programs Forward in Response to Climate Change (Fri)
Leveraging Major Gifts to Support Transformational Campaigns (Fri)
Clowning Around: Creating Inclusive Collaborations with Carla Rossi (Fri)

Next, WMA asked (7b-e): "What was the least effective or valuable session you attended? What made it less than wonderful? How could it have been made better?" A total of 71 attendees answered, 62 skipped.

WMA categorized the responses by session title. These were the top 5 **least effective or least valuable sessions** that received 3 or more votes:

1. Archives Alive: Activating Archives for Engagement and Equity – 4 votes
2. Digital strategy: a Means for Museum Transformation – 3 votes
3. Show Me the Money: Integrating Pay into Best Practices – 3 votes
4. Keys to Successful & Collaborative Grant Writing – 3 votes
5. Measuring Social Impact for Strategic Change – 3 votes

Below, are all the individual responses.

Beyond Land Acknowledgements: Real Collaboration with Tribes and Tribal Museums Saturday, at 9am - this session was the most valuable, the tribal leaders who spoke were concise and shared exactly what i needed to take back to my organization.

Museums and the Fight Against Hate. I noted "lot of words, not a lot of content"

Moving Exhibits and Programs Forward in Response to Climate Change

Decolonizing Initiatives in Action at The Burke Museum and the Museum of Us--repeat of the earlier session The Burke gave, and Museum of Us never has native representation to vouch for or legitimize the work they claim to do.

There were a couple sessions i attended where the organizers were all from one institution, and in each case of that i found it made the session less dynamic and applicable.

Closing General Session & Panel, October 9, 9:00-10:45

Tools for Meaningful and Engaging Internship Programs. More information from other institutions about real experiences with interns.

Didn't have any that i went to that weren't valuable. Didn't find any one interesting to me during the sat. 11:00 am slot.

Moving Exhibits and Programs Forward in Response to Climate Change (Fri, 1:45pm); mostly case studies, didn't have a lot of takeaways or ideas that translated outside of specific circumstances. The presenters were wonderful though!

Getting Started with Disaster Planning - it was an interesting and needed session, but by Sunday afternoon i was exhausted and had a hard time paying attention and adding more information to my brain.

Measuring Social Impact for Strategic Change, Friday, 10-7 1:45pm - 3pm I had been hoping this session would have been more of a how-to regarding using social impact data for master and strategic planning, advocacy, and community engagement. Instead, it turned into discussing just smaller aspects of individual projects, and while interesting, it was not what I had been hoping to get out of the session. I left not really knowing how to apply any data I would have collected myself to the betterment of my museum.

Lessons Learned for New Leaders (10/7/22 - 11:15)

Preserving History Through Restoration: Making Difficult Choices with Collections - Oct.8 11am-12:15 pm it was interesting, but because I wasn't familiar with boats or submarines or their parts, I felt a little lost in unfamiliar words or terms. I wished I would have been more prepared, but didn't choose this session until the last minute. There were many sessions to choose from.

Show Me the Money: Integrating Pay into Best Practices. Was focused on should we pay interns (no one thinks we shouldn't), but gave no practical strategies for actually integrating pay.

The Horror-egon Trail! Sunday, 11:15 am - 12:30 pm. The format was fun and lighthearted, but could have benefited from more presentation time by the moderator and presenters before opening up to shared stories from attendees.

Forward Thinking Disaster Preparation: PNW Case Studies - limited relevance, but I still liked the session

All of the sessions I attended were the typical panel conversations or presentations. Although they were not all bad and many of them were informative, I wish conferences organizers would put a limit on these and encourage people to choose another format. I also find it disingenuous when these panel sessions have only executive directors or upper management folks presenting on a topic or project that is not leadership-specific and/or that clearly involved other staff at other levels and/or community members. "Museums Against Hate" is a good example. It felt very top-down, especially in light of the fact that three out of four museums represented were culture-specific, and only one of those exec directors was non-white (and that was only specifically addressed by one of the white exec directors).

Keys to Successful and Collaborative Grant Writing. Sat 2:00 pm. Useless, it was too elementary, did not cover what it promised, find a new instructor who understands the whole grant process, knows they why of grants, knows how to develop grants strategy in actionable steps. It is so much more than just writing! And meditating.

Archives Alive! (Friday 3:30pm) the presented content did not really support the session synopsis in the program. The presenters shared their experiences with expanding accessibility within their archives, but unless you are working in an institution very similar to theirs (within an educational location with access to unpaid students), the applicability was difficult to transfer. Not much was really communicated on concrete ways and means archival content can be better shared and opened up. When asked this question directly, the panelists could not answer it.

I was disappointed with the Politics of Land Acknowledgements because it felt more like a session to complain without offering ideas or solutions. There were some good points made, but overall, I disliked the tone of the session and I say this as someone who works for a museum focused on a tribe and am constantly contacted by other organizations for advice about land acknowledgements.

Moving Exhibits and Programs Forward in Response to Climate Change (Friday at 1:45pm), I actually left early as I did not find the material in the first 30 minutes to be relatable or actionable.

Activating archives... believe my expectations were more for practical advice and this seemed more academic and review(ish). I was hoping for a range of perspectives

Building Community: Discovering Resources for Professional Support, Learning and Development, Friday, Broadway 3&4, 11:15-12:30

Mentorship: Best Practices and Indigenous Notions of Care, Sunday, 11:15 - 12:30

Show Me the Money. It was mostly discussion among the audience. Would have liked some more concrete strategies from presenters.

All the sessions I attended were good, but I was meant to facilitate a "round table" on Sunday afternoon, and there was no one there. That was disappointing, but not unexpected. Sunday sessions seemed like a bad idea, particularly after the keynote.

Labeling Legacies was a unique and valuable topic, but too much time allocated to breakout sessions and not enough time to framing up topic from presenters

I led a happy hour this year for small history museums and it was in a massive bar called Punch Bowl Social, which felt out of sync with the types of folks in attendance.

Putting the AANHPI to DEAI, on Saturday, 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm. I didn't feel like I learned much here. Jennifer fang's introduction to the subject was great, but the other three speakers just seemed to be talking about their institutions, rather than ways to actually implement these ideas. They were very engaging speakers, though. I just like more concrete sessions. There was also a small breakout group bit at the end, which is a format that I really dislike.

Measuring Social Impact for Strategic Change (Friday afternoon). Not enough information on the project and its work and how attendees could 1) participate, 2) leverage the information, and 3) its import and value to the field, and too much time listening to panelist ask for attendee thoughts on the work they are doing/did.

What Not to Do: Mistakes and Lessons Learned with Docents/Volunteers. Examples presenters gave were a bit confusing. Wasn't as applicable for small museums. More tools and case examples might have helped.

Tools for meaningful and engaging internship programs; 10/8/22; 9:00a. I am not a fan of "working groups" to discuss how things are done in your museum; i was more interested in learning the "best practices" of successful internship programs.

Helping communities heal in the wake of local crisis: this was very moving but it was ultimately show-and-tell with not many practical takeaways.

The least effective session I attended was from Visitor Experience to Community Experience: Centering Well-Being and Welcome from the Inside Out, on Saturday morning. I felt like the presenters did a great job of making the session a space where other visitor services professionals could vent and be in support of each other, but i did not feel that there were any takeaways for my own museum practice.

Measuring Social Impact Session. There were no findings to report so it seemed too early to do a session. The sections when we broke into small groups was better but it was only for 10 minutes per round so not good for any meaningful communication.

Keys to Successful & Collaborative Grant Writing - based on the session description, i had expected more of a discussion on how different departments within a museum can identify their place within and contribute to the grant writing process. Functionally, it was more of an instructional introduction to the fundamentals of grant writing. The materials felt very familiar to publicly available content regarding the subject.

All sessions i personally attended met or exceeded my expectations.

Archives Alive: Activating Archives for Engagement and Equity (Friday, 3:00pm) - there was not enough content, and the presenters were all too similar in their experience, all drawing from university museums. Their experience was not really relatable to anyone outside of a university museum, and they also didn't share that much about how they actually could use their content in new ways.

Beyond Land Acknowledgements.

The Keynote. It felt like a motivational poster come to life. It didn't resonate.

Facilitating Critical Conversations. Panel was good, but breakout groups didn't work because of room setup and size of audience

Keys to Successful and Collaborative Grant Writing was not what I expected. It was less about collaboration and relationship building and more like a high school writing class.

I only ended up being able to attend four sessions and they were all great!!

Moving exhibits and programs forward in response to climate change: this was interesting but i didn't walk away with any strategies

Measuring Social Impact for Strategic Change (Friday 1:45pm) - because this project has no findings yet, I found that it was not a great use of limited time. I also do not think that breakout sessions with 20 people are a good use of time because there is hardly any time for conversation with so many people.

Digital Strategy: A Means for Museum Transformation. Friday, 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm. Felt more like an hour and a half long commercial rather than an informative "how to"

Helping Communities Heal in the Wake of Local Crisis I would have liked more information about programming offered.

Working with Collaborative Teams – I was hoping to learn how to collaborate with other institutions, but this seemed to be about collaboration between departments/team members. Most of what we learned seemed to apply only to institutions with a large staff dedicated specifically to exhibits, which mine is not.

Archives Alive. The session didn't go beyond my current knowledge and didn't provide new ideas for making archives more interactive. The session did not meet my expectations based on the description.

Facilitating Critical Conversations Around Exhibitions. I didn't learn much beyond specific situations at particular institutions. Didn't learn applicable strategy or come away with resources.

The Sunday morning plenary. Nothing new, nothing specific, nothing useful. All the participants are thoughtful people but the session felt like it was there to make the audience feel like champions rather than challenging anyone to think/do differently.

All sessions I attended were great and i could not place one here.

Digital strategy: a Means for Museum Transformation, on Friday, 1:45-3:00 pm. I didn't quite know what to expect with the concept of digital strategy, and it turns out my institution already has a fairly developed digital framework in place. It wasn't quite what I anticipated (which might just be user error), but I did still learn some interesting ways of looking at data and i feel like it would be helpful information for institutions starting to look into digital strategy.

Poster session

Poster session -- it was awkward and a little confusing for the posters to be mixed in with the exhibitors so closely. The posters were great, though.

Show Me the Money: Integrating Pay into Museum Best Practices. I wish it would have focused more on integration. We talked a lot about whether internships should be paid or not but didn't talk about strategies to bring equitable pay to our institutions.

Round tables. Everyone is tired by then, it competes with a coffee break, and there are too many to choose from at once.

The workshop for changemakers with mike was just too brief. I was really looking forward to it, but we would have been better served with 2, 3, or even 4 hours!

I enjoyed the Social Impact session but left wanting more due to the format of the session. Several conversations were interrupted before they got going due to the rotation of small groups across the three presenters. I loved Lorie Millward's ideas about aspirational programming and her general perspective on things!

All the panels were great. Getting Started with Disaster Planning: Framework to Build on (Sunday, 2:00) was thorough and came with helpful resources but it's a dry topic and the presenter read much of the lecture, and i did have to work to stay focused. So, i would recommend she move towards more engagement with this presentation and use notes instead of a full essay to read from.

Most of the other sessions were too ethereal to be helpful. I was looking for more tactical approaches for managing staff, recruiting volunteers, fundraising, marketing, etc.

Digital strategy: A Means for Museum Transformation (Friday, 1:45pm). This session felt like an ad for a digital strategy company than actually providing tools to implement at an institution.

Creative attention: Art and Community Restoration - it wasn't bad, just not sure how to use it in my work. The art project would have made a fun happy hour activity and the session could have focused more on how to introduce art therapy into your museum.

The third question (7c-e) in this section asked, "What session formats did you find the most valuable?" Overall, attendees seemed to gravitate more towards sessions that are activity-based or that break out into smaller discussion groups, with an opportunity for Q&As. However, there are still those who are more introverted and prefer the standard mainstage panel format. To accommodate everyone, it was suggested by a few survey respondents, that WMA specifically call out each session format (i.e., breakout discussions, mainstage, etc.) in the Final Program.

Here's what 79 attendees had to say about the session formats:

I liked the ones that allowed for more Q&A sessions. A lot of the questions asked allowed for additional content that was helpful to me.

I prefer to learn from those that are presenting and am not a fan of trying fancy formats just for the sake of doing something different. It's awkward in hotel conference rooms and is an absolute nightmare for those who are more introverted.

I appreciated panel presentations with ample time for Q&A.

15-20 minutes of presentation then take questions--people in the audience want help

I liked the sessions where a group of experts spoke and then had open conversation with the participants. Some did that all-in-one group, some in smaller groups, which both worked well for me. I didn't, by contrast, like the sessions where participants spent more time talking to each other without one of the presenters involved.

Not sure what you mean by this. I liked sessions with multiple speakers. I liked sessions that required the audience to interact with each other.

Panel discussion with open Q+A versus presentations.

Discussion and activity based - I found this created deeper connections between attendees and content

I like the case studies with photographs of actual hands-on experiences and fun stories.

Format where audience could ask questions or break into small groups.

Anything that had breakout groups/discussion time Keys to Successful and Collaborative Grant Writing - this session had built in mindfulness, which was great!

The roundtable discussions were the most valuable to me.

Moderated conversations

I enjoyed having an introduction to the topic and then time for small breakout groups with session panelists to go more in depth in their particular area of focus.

Content drives my interest. Large group, small group, lecture, participation matter less than leader or panel knowledge and delivery.

I really liked some of the discussion panels that we could just sit, listen, and learn.

Formats that included a presentation followed by break-out sessions were the most engaging and helped to further the conversation.

Those that encouraged us to breakout into groups and have discussions, compare experiences and share strategies

I don't remember any of the session formats. Can the session formats be listed in the final program at future conferences? I think if I had known the ones I chose to attend were going to be standard panels, I would have gone to different ones.

Making change happen with Mike Murawski

A mixture of presentation (including take away resources) and question/answer.

Interactive panels

Anything but talking heads

Story sharing and small group work

I enjoyed sessions where the audience was asked to participate and share their experience. Facilitated discussion was better than Q&A or panel presentations.

Presentation/panel discussion followed by breakout groups

The panels were good, as was Jackie's session where we got up and worked in small groups.

Panel presentations were particularly vibrant and informative

Panel discussions with several museums, ranging in size and specialty, related to one topic is the most valuable for me.

My three most valuable sessions all had a somewhat different format, so I'm not sure I have an answer to that question.

Every session I attended was audience participation heavy so hard to judge

Panel presentation with plenty of time for questions were the most effective

Sessions with clear guidance set out in their slides and that had QR codes attached for easy access and copies of the slides.

Mix of presentation and small-group discussion.

Conversation style/panelists who allowed for audience questions and interaction throughout

Strategies for Surfacing Truth and Facilitating Critical Conversations both did an excellent job of sharing out facts, strategies, and case studies then breaking us into small groups to learn from each other. I appreciated getting to connect individually with presenters and attendees in this format.

The format is determined by the topic. In general, it's nice to hear more than one perspective, but depending on the topic a single speaker can be appropriate.

Conversation/narrative-based sessions - each panelist had a perspective or part of the story to share that created a holistic picture. Case studies - Each panelist presented a real-world example of a problem or solution and the takeaways or lessons learned were extrapolated for attendees to utilize at their home institutions.

Panel discussion/case studies

Smaller group settings were the most valuable to me. I was still a little COVID aware/scared so I felt the most at ease in those sessions.

I prefer sessions with presentations and Q&A over the roundtable sessions. I'm a visual learner and tend to come away with a lot more notes when there are visuals.

I prefer presentations over facilitated conversations, so anything where someone who is more expert than me monologues about something I'm not well-versed in is valuable.

I liked that the Clowning Around session had a non-museum (artist) person as a speaker as well as museums. It was great to have a combo of sessions some of which were more presentation and others that engaged smaller groups. The break out groups for Facilitating Critical Conversations felt too big (only time for a few people to participate and not enough physical space), although the session and conversations during the break outs was really good.

Opening panel conversation to set tone and topic, then active - moving around, working in groups/ doing activity in group- gathering to conclude.

I found I stayed more engaged with presentations that cycled through different speakers & ended with breakouts.

I really enjoyed the panels - mics set up on the tables for each speaker would have been nice.

Panels of no more than three with a moderator, and then time for Q&A.

In general, I like watching presentations, but I also found the format for the Racial Equity session (brainstorming/discussing in small groups) and the Museum Educator session (presentation followed by break-out groups to learn more about specific topics). I generally didn't like the format of sessions that were just a conversation between panelists, with no presentation.

Lecture sessions with a Q+A at the end were the best. Worst- Sessions with breakout groups within them often rushed through pivotal info to make time for awkward small groups that were difficult to hear in.

Facilitating Critical Conversations Around Exhibitions, Saturday, October 8th, 11:00 - 12:15. I appreciated hearing input from people with a variety of roles and how they address critical conversations in their position. I also enjoyed the breakout sessions so we could hear what are other institutions challenges/successes.

I really appreciated it when they had handouts that shared resources and practical actions. I thought a lot of the sessions with rotations were too short

Long workshops (I.e., Community Centered Design, Thursday afternoon)

Talks with smaller break outs (with enough space to hear each other and the presenters)

The ones incorporating breakout sessions and share outs when it serves the topic (Museums + Race did this very well!). I think for Social Impact, which was a data driven process, I wanted to learn more about the results of the data vs. getting in to small groups to discuss what social impact was for each institution. I also enjoyed multi-panel quick-paced case studies with variation on a theme, a la Facilitating Critical Conversations Around Exhibitions.

The Roundtables on Sunday were fantastic. It was great to have time to connect deeply with people on a specific topic.

I enjoyed the sessions that had more of a discussion between several presenters.

It was unfortunate that the two session highlights for me--with Lisa and Micah's talk--were paid small group lunches. Lisa could have easily been an amazing general session speaker. I'm kicking myself that we didn't suggest that on the PC!

The fourth question (7d-e) in this section asked the survey takers to share any additional feedback about the sessions they attended. Out of 133 total people, 47 wrote in their thoughts, and this is what they had to said.

I would have liked happy hour mini-sessions every night. I could only pick one.

All sessions were valuable. Consider more time and higher touch facilitation in small group breakouts.

Breakout sessions in a small conference room are just cha I was really pleased with the high quality and meaningful content of sessions. I especially appreciated that there were multiple sessions relating to decolonization and tribal/museum histories and relationships. I also very much appreciated practical learning around facilitation techniques and transforming docent/volunteer and tour programs. Chaotic and noisy. It takes time for people to shuffle and engage. Ditch the format!

More maker stations, idea-sharing. Don't save the roundtables for the last day when nobody is there.

There were a couple redundancies, which maybe was for the purpose of making room for folks to go to them at different times, but it felt like there was room for more lenses to be present instead.

Was difficult to choose between sessions, my feeling is less options, all great content and quality make better us of my time.

I was only able to attend a handful of sessions due to other work constraints (I'm a local attendee), so I don't feel like I can rank any of them as "best" or "worst," just because my options were so limited based on my own schedule. I did enjoy the affinity lunches and the closing session though!

Additional nuts & bolts/how-to sessions (or labelling these sessions specifically) would be helpful.

Some needed larger rooms. Specifically in the Broadway rooms I felt very cramped.

WMA Community Lunch with Lisa Sasaki and Director & Leadership Team's Luncheon with Micah Parzen.

Some of the power point presentations contained words or letters that were too small for the audience. I was thankful for the presenters that offered to email us the slides, if we requested.

All of the sessions that were mentioned above, presented from multiple perspectives and/or represented different methodologies. Valuation of different thoughts and experiences as well as collaborative way of doing/seeing/working.

Thank you for spreading out the sessions that touched on DEAI! Definitely appreciate that they weren't all on the same day, or the very last day.

The closing keynote was too long.

I think that some of the sessions could have been half an hour rather than an hour and 15 minutes. Then there could have been more presentations.

I know this happens at every conference, but there were too many really popular topics offered at the exact same time. Saturday morning was brutal trying to choose a session. That's good, it means you had a lot of great presenters, but I wish there was a way to deal with this problem at conferences, either provide a recording, or summary from presenters that can be shared post-conferences with those who chose to attend another session.

I learned a lot about engagement with the tribes. Great job with that.

I think that the Forward Planning Disaster Preparedness session was really a collections session that was misidentified as indigenous.

Do not run sessions during Inspiration Stations/Group Roundtable times

I appreciated that certain sessions were offered on several different dates making it easier to attend when there was a scheduling conflict. I really enjoyed the Pittock Mansion tour and the OMSI event. Maybe next year have a special price for all of the evening events, I was only able to choose one evening event and the tour. Made me sad not to be able to attend the Opening Progressive Party in New Chinatown/Japantown and the Oregon Historical Society event. Visiting the different museums is one of the best parts of being in a new city, but I was told it wasn't safe to walk around Chinatown on my own looking like a tourist because of the homeless people and their encampments.

The sessions I attended were good, and I'm not willing to indicate "least effective" because of the negative undertone of that request. My most valuable session was my own because I learned so much from the attendees, but I won't name it above because that would be unintentionally self-serving.

The Digital Strategy session on 10/7, 1:45pm was great, but the slide presentation was very busy and had too much information to fully take in. It would have been nice to hear how the Oregon Jewish Museum met their goals specifically using the models shown.

The sessions at the end of the day on Sunday were very interesting and yet so few people were there, and those who were there were clearly tired and not focusing well. I would recommend lightening the session load at the end of the conference and having put some of those sessions earlier on, and putting the more chill discussion based "fish bowl" type sessions at the end.

Microphones! There needed to be additional microphones and you needed to instruct people to use them. People with hearing impairment should not have to ask. On multiple occasions speakers expressed that their voices were loud enough to not use a mic or that they didn't like using a mic. Really?? The descriptions in the program were not very helpful. Several of them were so vague or didn't really match the actual topic. Lastly there were a number of sessions that were clearly designed for larger museums exclusively. It would be really helpful if the description just said that. When speakers can't even answer how their topic would apply to a small museum don't waste our time and just be upfront about it. We won't be mad, it's totally fine to have a session specifically for small or large organizations just let people know so they don't waste their time.

It was incredible to be in person again after a long hiatus. Everyone that attended seemed in good spirits and happy to be there. The energy of in person was the highlight of the conference.

I appreciated sessions with tables for attendees. Having a more ergonomic setup than just chairs made it easier to stay focused and be comfortable.

It was such a privilege to spend time in the company of so many indigenous people

I'd like to see more sessions related to art museums and/or art and artists in non-art museums.

Really wish you had more microphones; it was an access issue in a few ways to just have the mic at podiums

It would have great to see Carla Rossi perform. Saturday had a VERY large break between the end of the session and the evening event. It would have been nice if some of the Sunday sessions had been there and Sunday ended earlier. I attended the conference not knowing anyone. I'm pretty extraverted, but it was really hard to break into conversations/groups. The evening events were amazing, but it felt like everyone knew each other. Since you identify first time attendees, it would be nice to provide them with a "buddy," at least for the first day.

I did not find that the sessions that I went to were very useful for small to mid-sized museums. Many of the speakers were from large institutions, and while sometimes inspiration is nice and some ideas are scalable, it would be really nice for smaller institutions to have some space to learn and talk about their work. It can be overwhelming for staff of small organizations to seek guidance and then be met with session after session of ideas that they know they cannot support at their organizations.

You didn't ask about luncheons. The WMA Community Lunch with Lisa Sasaki speaking was tremendous!!! I took copious notes and wished all could have heard her.

Due to low attendance, the session "Getting Started with Disaster Planning" should have been on a Friday/Saturday. It's a very important topic that was underattended due to being on a Sunday when most people were gone.

I would have appreciated more sessions pertaining to collections, and in general a greater amount of accessibility for small and low-budget museums. Many of those who would benefit most from this type of event would never be able to afford it, and once there, would be able to apply relatively little of the material to their institutions. Otherwise, I thought all the speakers were excellent and brought valuable experience to their sessions.

The Indigenous people leading these sessions deserve so much in return for their patience and grace knowledge-sharing with us.

The registration process was awful. The person behind the table either couldn't hear or couldn't spell, and I was so desperate by the time I finally got my packet that I walked away without noticing it was missing a number of things: one event ticket, my vegetarian meals ticket, my ribbon. Luckily, a friend gave me his vegetarian meal ticket. Which, btw, yielded the worst vegetarian meals I've had at an event in more than a decade. For a bit ticket lunch, handing vegetarians plates with a small portion of overcooked, salted vegetables with no protein makes me feel like I'm back in the 1990s. No exaggeration, I have had better vegetarian meals on Alaska Airlines. When I am stuck in a hotel all day and dependent on the conference to feed me, I need to feel I can trust that will happen. It does make a difference to the ability to concentrate, network, learn . . .

Some sessions had speakers that didn't want to use microphones. This works better in smaller rooms. Some speakers were hard to hear.

Sensitivity and awareness of DEAI/D topics was all over the place. Some of my colleagues of color experience harm with insensitive language and approaches.

Overall great quality, very thought-provoking. The plenaries were great too.

The pre-conference workshop "Moving Forward with Communities" was excellent

So much fantastic resources were made available through slides with QR codes/weblinks, but I found that my Wi-Fi/internet connection did not work in the meeting rooms. Is there a plan (I hope!) to gather session content information and share out to attendees' post-conference?

Time is short, but I would have liked stronger introductions to some of the sessions. I have an idea about what it will be about from the title, but it's not always precise. A quick review of the panelists' interpretation of their topic, and what the session will entail would be helpful to orient faster.

Wireless mics or at least more than one mic would have been helpful as it wasn't always easy to hear the speakers

The 4-5pm session on Sunday was great, but I think it was too late in the day

A comment that I saw on Twitter resonated with me. Seemed very top/leadership heavy. What about the other staff at the museum? Shouldn't we encourage professional development for them?

The closing session was strong, but not really motivational and uplifting. And because the general session was so lackluster, I had more riding on it. I feel like the inspiration stations were great, but so many people had left by Sunday. Also, the inspiration stations shouldn't have overlapped with sessions--during that time both were not well-attended.

The fifth question (7e) in this section asked “As WMA prepares for 2023, how should we structure the new program compared to this year's program?” A total of 103 survey respondents answered. To highlight a few, 10% want the program to include **less Business** content; 43% want it to include **more Community Engagement** content; 61% want it to include the **same amount of Indigenous** content; and 27% are not sure whether they want to see **more or less of Business** content.



A few attendees shared their thoughts:

Indigenous concerns are important but so are topics related to others; too many of the session addressing this topic were very similar and not particularly deep. Perhaps we focus on how museums can build empathy for others; provide a safe space; what respecting someone's culture and experience really means.

There was not a lot of direct attention to student/youth or educator engagement.

Marketing/Communications

All tribal museums that want to present should be able to. Less on decolonization, more on moving forward.

Education is a central purpose of museums and seems widely under-prioritized. I'd love to see it as a central theme and focus.

I was coming as an educator at a Botanical Garden. I could have used more on the education side.

Engaging with fraught political environments as museums.

Sessions on working with and empowering emerging museum professionals. The museum profession is changing and it doesn't always seem that EMPs and their mentors quite align on what constitutes as proper museum values, work ethic, etc. The age and generational differences are difficult to navigate.

Volunteerism was well addressed, but please keep it up!

I'm torn about "Equity" tracks because I think not calling it out specifically but trying to make the content of the sessions across the board address it was really effective. That said, I found that our session didn't exactly fit into the specific tracks listed but perhaps applied to most of them. I'm not entirely sure what "Business" is (maybe Museum Administration is clearer?), and I'm also wondering if there is another catch-all for ones that don't fit. Not sure what that would be, but ours was really applicable to most of them.

More on how to source and apply for grants by someone that can help with grant strategy. More on how to use communications to reach target audiences.

Research and evaluation

Project management only had 1 or 2 sessions. But a lot of us are or act as project managers.

Evaluation

Docents, volunteer engagement, training, and internships, community museum career development, programming

Getting projects design and built

More collections sessions please! I was really disappointed that there were only three identified collections sessions and I nearly didn't attend the conference at all because of this.

Development, marketing, evaluation, HR (all aspects)

More sessions with an exhibition focus would be well received

I don't have a broad enough sense of the distribution of sessions to answer this clearly. Also, my response would be biased by my own interests...

A few more options on the shifting digital realm of museums and how they work with community in that space and platform

Consulting work

Not many collections sessions. I typically pick these first. I attended mostly indigenous sessions that felt relevant.

Development/fundraising

Program Development Exhibitions Development

education - adult and kid

I thought the content was well balanced and really enjoyed/appreciated all the speakers and attendees that are Indigenous.

Small museum specific sessions

Please include more about digital strategy - technical side.

A session or networking opportunity for LGBTQA+ attendees would be very valuable and appreciated.

Evaluation/visitor research was only very minimally represented (one session, I believe)

See above -- the Indigenous sessions were very valuable, but last I checked, that was not the only diversity/inclusion/content issue for white supremacist museums.

Exhibit design and experience

Visitor experience was embarrassingly underrepresented.

Visitor Experience is always important.

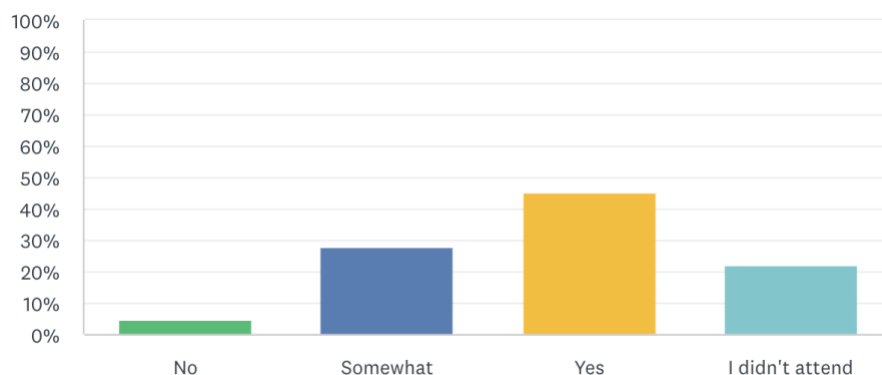
Exploring improvements of internal processes, grant resources, successful interactives, creative fundraising ideas, sustainable ways to exhibition-share across regional institutions.

I would love to see sessions geared specifically for culturally-specific history museums & what community engagement and school tours at all ages can look like in that space.

I have yet to find any advice/thoughts on how to deal with diversity when your community is not very diverse. We want to include those voices, but how do you do that with a small percentage of your population having those voices to begin with?

I feel like there does need to be content around work, the new rules, the great resignation. The session that I attended on the topic was really small (there were like 5 of us) and not super engaging.

Next, WMA asked the survey takers if they found the 2022 Opening General Session & Keynote with guest speaker Dina Bailey to be valuable or not." Out of 108 replies, 49 (45%) said "Yes;" 30 (28%) said "Somewhat;" 24 (22%) said "I didn't attend;" and 5 (5%) said "No."



Some people elaborated further on why they found the Opening General Session & Keynote to be valuable or not.

I think the "sense of place" notion is important--someone who can orient us to where we are and the local issues museums face.

<https://education.oregonstate.edu/book/project-leader-bios>

She had some great moments and overall, the role of creating a sense of shared purpose was the right tone for that slot. A couple of hand-raises or other minor audience engagements would have helped. I wasn't super moved by her personally, perhaps because the museum connection wasn't as strong as a lot of the subsequent content.

Dina's personal story/non-traditional presentation was great! It would have been great if she could have attended/participated in the rest of the conference.

It wasn't very memorable.

It wasn't very memorable

Nina Simon, Portia Moore

I thought it was odd that she didn't stay for the program and left soon after.

Susan D. Anderson, History Curator, CAAM

There are so many good people doing groundbreaking work in museums AND adjacent to museums. Check out the new book, "Change is Required" for dozens of essay authors thinking about the present and future.

Excellent speaker and topic.

I found the keynote to be very short and not super relevant to the annual conference theme. It would have helped if the keynote speaker had stayed after the opening/throughout the conference so the conference attendees could continue to learn from and network with her.

I thought her presentation was inspiring and relevant.

Please bring someone involved with museums.

More concrete! This felt like a motivational poster come to life.

Robin Wall Kimmerer

Natalie Ball, artist and activist, Klamath Modoc tribal member

She was wonderful.

Excellent keynote, Inspiring, informing and interesting.

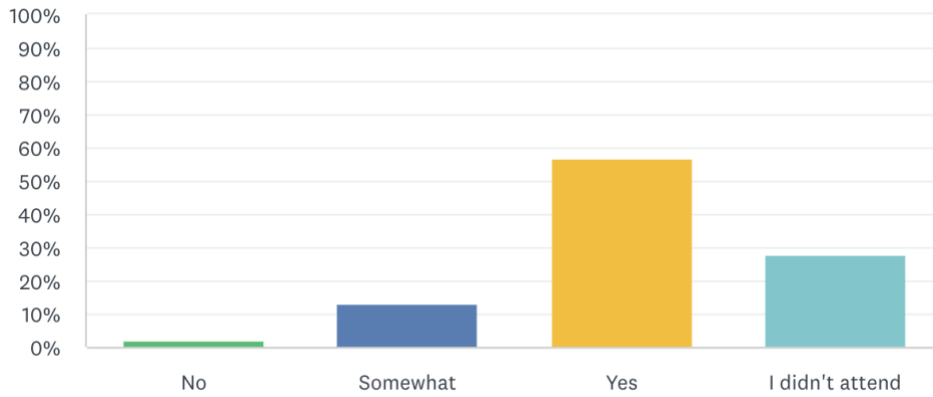
Angela Garbes

I liked the parallels between her hike and the museum field, but it took me a moment to figure out where she was going with that.

John Pepper Henry Amy Lonetree

I think we need someone to connect us to our work, remind us why we do this work, inspire us and set the stage for the conference. Dina really didn't. She's a great consultant and DEAI facilitator, but not keynote.

Similar to the previous question, WMA asked if the attendees found the Closing General Session & Panel to be valuable or not. The results showed that 61 (57%) of the attendees found it "Valuable," while 14 (13%) found it "Somewhat" valuable; 2 (2%) didn't find value; and 30 (28%) simply did not attend.



These were the comments:

I thought Lisa Sasaki should have been in the chair and have Brian moderate.

I really like the conversational format, and how it gave access to some of the speakers who had been otherwise presented in the most (cost) restricted spaces.

I got a lot of big ideas/inspiration from the presentation. It felt less about content and more about encouraging me to take action

This was one of my favorite sessions that I attended! I loved the open dialogue between the panelists. It was humbling to hear them discuss difficult issues presented in museums as well as inspiring to hear how things are changing and progressing forward. Thoughts for future keynote speakers: do not shy away from difficult topics. These are the least spoken about but the ones people want and need to hear the most.

The conversation went a little long.

Same as above... who is writing stuff NOW that is relevant and leading edge?

Fabulous discussion. Open, honest and engaging speakers. It was a great way to end the conference.

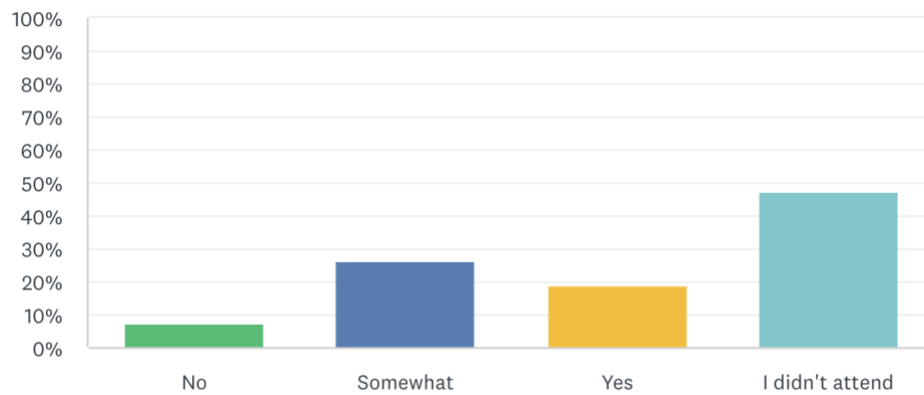
I found it difficult to hear... it was nice, but could have been a session.

Excellent!! Loved the interaction

I always love to hear Mike speak, he is very insightful and inspiring!

Again, because the keynote was so lackluster, more expectations here. A good discussion, but it didn't tie together themes from the conference in the way I would like.

Next up, WMA wanted to find out how valuable of an experience the Poster Session was. The large majority of 50 (47%) people did not attend; while the remaining 20 (19%) found it valuable, 28 (26%) found only some value, and 8 (8%) found no value.



These were the comments:

I found a couple of compelling posters.

I don't know, what is a Poster Session?

Was glad posters remained up so I could at least view them later

Seemed a little "high school science fair" to me.

There were just a small number of posters. I would have liked more.

Needed to be held in a place with more space--it was difficult to group together and try to hear in this Session. Takeaway versions of the posters would be useful as well.

There seems to be too many "sales" type presentations

Some guidelines for poster font sizes to improve readability. Many had far too much information on them to absorb.

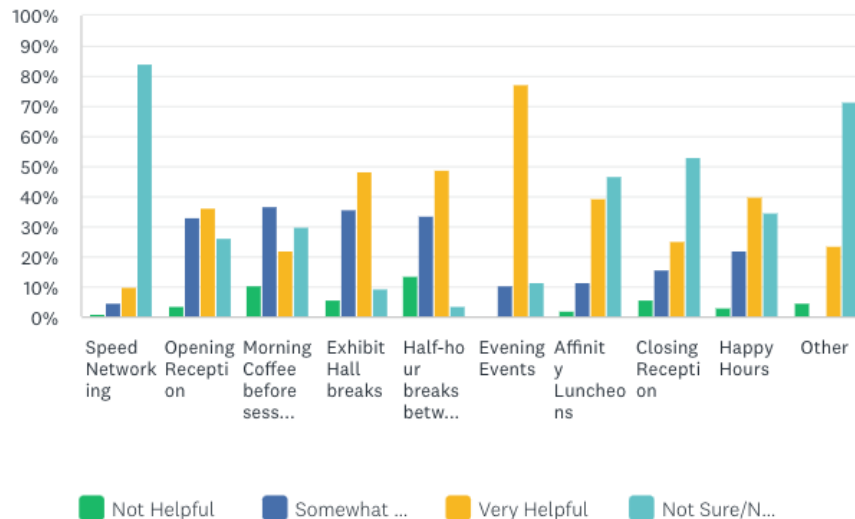
I didn't understand it.

The third section of the survey focused on **Networking** and the **Exhibit Hall**.

First up, WMA wanted to gauge just how much the various WMA 2022 networking opportunities facilitated networking for each attendee. Of the 133 survey takers, 106 answered and 27 skipped.

The top 3 opportunities that facilitated networking were the Evening Events (77%); half-hour breaks between sessions (49%); and Exhibit Hall breaks (49%). The bottom 3 opportunities that did not facilitate networking were the half-hour breaks between sessions (13%); Morning Coffee before sessions (11%); and both Exhibit Hall breaks and the Closing Reception (6%).

Additionally, a total of 86 (84%) could not say whether or not the Speed Networking successfully helped facilitate networking for them.



Here are a few comments from each networking opportunity:

Speed Networking

It was incredibly loud. My throat hurt afterwards from talking loudly and I think people couldn't hear me. Maybe more space between people?

I sort of wish there was more than one of the speed networking events. I did the Pittock tour so I got back right when it had started and didn't really have enough turn-around time to attend.

No alcohol next time.

Opening Reception

There was too much planned for the opening reception, and it was not possible to visit all four museums - which was disappointing. There were also only refreshments at one stop (albeit, tasty refreshments), but it was tough at dinner time

So weird to network in person again!

Felt that I connected with colleagues I knew already vs. reaching out to new colleagues

Morning Coffee Before Session

I wish that there had been some type of simple food (bagels, muffins, etc). Many people went upstairs to grab food, and so the attendance at the coffee sessions ended up split.

There wasn't enough coffee. It was also frustrating that it wasn't in the same place every day.

Zero options for people with food allergies

There wasn't coffee left by the time I got there at either of the two mornings I attempted it.

More coffee and decaf options would be great

Exhibit Hall Breaks

Everyone there...more connections

Ended up connecting with random people and contacts around silent auction tables

Limited options for people with food allergies

Half-Hour Breaks Between Sessions

Connecting with folks after we took in the same session was where my most meaningful connections came from

These breaks were quite long! They could have been shorter, in my opinion. The length/duration of each conference day was exhausting. I would have preferred quicker breaks and a shorter overall schedule.

Good idea. A chance to breathe.

Sometimes felt too long/not enough to do

Evening Events

These needed to be longer - by the time people finished their dinner, the events were more than half done.

These were really great! Only frustration here is that the "museum hopping" of the Progressive Party needed more time. Amazing experience, but difficult to navigate in the time allotted.

I wish there was more time to enjoy all the sites for the Progressive Party Thursday night. I'm sure it's difficult to coordinate, and I thoroughly enjoyed what we were able to see, but we really had to rush to get to three out of the four sites open.

More social at the evening event and felt people were more relaxed and open to walking up to someone they didn't know.

I appreciate getting out of the Hotel, but am not as comfortable in new places as some people, so getting to them was harder for me. Holding networking events in loud noisy situations never appeal to me either way.

Affinity Luncheons

If there had been affordable options for affinity lunches, I would have attended one. They seemed like a great place to connect with similar professionals.

Love affinity luncheons, however having them all on the same day is a bit difficult for those of us who occupy multiple roles or participate in a variety of content areas represented by the affinity luncheons. If they were spread out throughout the conference, it might enable people to attend multiple luncheons, expanding their networks.

I like the closed sessions and the opportunity to sit with a smaller group of people and chat.

Closing Reception

Can't recall what this was

It's a shame that it wasn't better attended! This should have been a highlight!

Happy Hours

Didn't attend but see this as another place to have more affinity spaces

The Small museums was in a mall bar in a space that was not good for conversation or moving around.

The happy hour I attended was too structured and there was not time to chat with attendees. The venue was also not ideal given the allotted amount of time. i.e., the one bartender working could not keep up with service during a peak happy hour time (Friday at 5)

It was hard to get to know folks as many already knew each other.

I enjoyed the Drink and Draw so much! Loved having creative activities to take the social anxiety down a notch, and we all laughed and had a lot of fun there. The highlight for me in terms of 'fun event' of the weekend.

Other

Location and integration to local arts organizations really captured the character of Oregon. Nicely done.

Scheduling felt very off throughout the conference and I wasn't able to attend as much as I'd hoped. Content felt oddly heavy on the end of the last day. My colleagues and I had to miss many of these sessions to catch flights or start our travel home.

I did not understand when I registered that 2/3 of the lunches required advance registration or there was no food provided. I would have loved the opportunity to network with additional people in those windows but there was not much of a way to do that if you had not pre-registered...

I met so many people at the Evening Events.

To better understand how else attendees would like to network with colleagues, we asked "What other opportunities for networking would you like to see offered at the WMA Annual Meeting?"

These were some of the key responses.

I attended solo and struggled to find my way into networking circles. The social events were the best for me. I would like it if there was a "corral" after the last session of people who want to network and head to dinner together. I ate alone all but one night and I could have maximized that time but it was hard to connect on my own.

Group or career path or special interest-based events like the happy hours but during the day

I think a space that is separated where affinity groups could gather or take respite at any time would be a powerful addition to the experience. As a trans/queer person I was really disappointed not to have any kind of space where I could gather with that community. I found myself really wishing that there was a lounge where we could gather to have a break and shared community. The high volume of social interaction is inevitably a circumstance where cultural biases are enacted and a break from the quiet constancy of heteronormativity would have helped me feel more well and remain in a more balanced state for learning. Seeing the enormous proportion of white presenting people (including myself) at the conference made me think that non-white folks would likely also benefit from an affinity respite space, and that might help to make the conference (and in a small way, the museum field) more welcoming to BIPOC folks.

Identity based networking - BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, etc.

I thought the networking opportunities at WMA were great! Opportunities for free events are always helpful, and having areas where people in similar positions can gather is beneficial. I went to the EMP happy hour and it was cathartic.

It would be nice to have more happy hour gatherings, as they are helpful in facilitating conversation in a more intimate setting. The roundtable session was also a helpful networking tool and could be implemented more.

Intentional, authentic conversations. I feel like I had several serendipitously, but it would be nice to have more baked in. Having more structured/self-pay happy hours or gatherings for folks not affiliated with a particular functional area or for those not wanting to spend a lot of money for the conference-organized activities. For example, at past AASLH meetings, some of the Equity Coalition members (e.g., The Inclusion, Museums & Race, MASS Action, etc.) hosted off-site happy hours that were listed in the program, and at last year's AASLH conference, attendees were encouraged to do the "36 Questions for Civic Love" activity and each day, a pair of attendees actually answered some of the questions as a "live" demo, while other attendees were encouraged to come and watch the conversation. I think there was a lot of good feedback about that, so I appreciate conference organizers trying to find ways for people to connect beyond meals, alcohol, things that cost money, etc.

The setup of online digital communities for different types of museums and different professionals within museums.

It was hard to find folks at the conference with concurrent sessions happening. There was time to meet organically, but I found it difficult to find some folks. Perhaps a conference app. And shame on me if there was one and I didn't know it. Whova is fabulous.

A mobile app or WhatsApp groups

More structured opportunities for EMPs to be introduced to people who have been in the field for longer. Maybe a quick session for EMPs on how to network effectively

Mentorship or ask an expert session? Leadership available to be approached by emerging professionals/consultants to talk to people wanting to start their own biz. Local museums share out info on current exhibits/programs.

I went to the small museums happy hour, and found that it was not a good space or environment for conversation.

I would like to see more informal meet-up opportunities based on interest. For example, chance for people to meet up and go to a museum together or have a meal together. I have found the Whova app really useful for other conferences I have attended in terms of finding people who might want to do something together.

Networking sessions based on interests that go beyond department to encourage interdepartmental mixing.

Maybe some more early events like the speed networking that helps EMPs and new museum people meet established museum people and/or each other (happy hour is also tricky for sober folks/people that are already burned out for the day). Coming into my first professional conference as an introvert (and missing the speed networking), it was a little daunting to go straight into regular events without some sort of introduction.

There were so many first-time attendees. I hope they had a great experience. Would love to think about ways to facilitate their networking with others.

Up next, we asked if and how the Exhibit Hall served our attendee's interests throughout the course of WMA 2022.

Here are some of the key responses.

Yes, as an exhibit designer I obtained a lot of new connections and was able to bring back a lot of samples to help me on future projects. That face-to-face connection is invaluable when the remainder of the relationship will be over phone/email.

As an exhibitor, I appreciated the increased flow in the Exhibit Hall. I don't if was the result of programming or layout, but it was good.

Yes, I like that it was a relatively small area and included the silent auction and lunch/snacks all in the same place. Was easy to run into people and strike up conversations.

Liked the table opportunities on Sunday

Having coffee breaks in the exhibit hall let me network and socialize in between sessions.

I appreciated it as a central place to go to meet my coworker and check on my silent auction bid.

I did not attend the Exhibit Hall. It seems like it's more geared for collections than museum educators.

It was very focused on collections. Would like to see more diversity in vendors.

Great networking opportunity with colleagues and with vendors! Awesome representation of vendors.

Yes, thought it was challenging to interact with the vendors with all the attendees also getting coffee and mingling in the same space. It was very full at times.

Connected with vendors we already work with, but would love to see more variety in vendors.

Most of the vendors seemed aimed at directors or collections/exhibitions staff. Most of it did not feel relevant to me or my position in the museum.

As a follow up to the previous question, we asked “What would you like to see in the 2023 Exhibit Hall?” 33 people responded with the following:

*More exhibit design companies. There was only 1 and more would be appreciated.
Would have like to see more vendors for travelling exhibits and exhibit services*

Occasionally wish I could see brief presentation by exhibitors (e.g., speed presentations in a session where all exhibitors relevant to a specific area - like visitor engagement - could have a few minutes to talk about their products and how they support museums) It is exhausting to wander through the exhibit hall and walk up personally to engage and hear the pitch of each exhibitor only to realize they do not have something to offer that you need.

Local businesses and orgs so that I could get to know the place where we are having the conference while I'm there

More hands-on activities and giveaways! Tables with people behind them feel more inviting/less intimidating if there is something hands-on people can interact with

More Women & Minority-owned vendors/service providers!

I was happy to see museum studies programs, and vendors, but I'd also be interested to see an exhibit hall where people from different institutions could promote the work that they're doing by having different museum booths.

I know it's so important to have vendor tables at Exhibit Hall (for funding reasons!), but would love to see more non-profit organizations (like the Inspiration Stations) have a spotlight in the Exhibit Hall. That was such a great idea but didn't get too much traffic since it was later on the last day. Thanks so much for including it!

Maybe vendors on how to make your own museum app.

More archival products companies and software applications

More silent auction items that can be easily transported home with air travel.

More digital technology resources. People who can talk about how to store in the Cloud and other options, what are best practices?

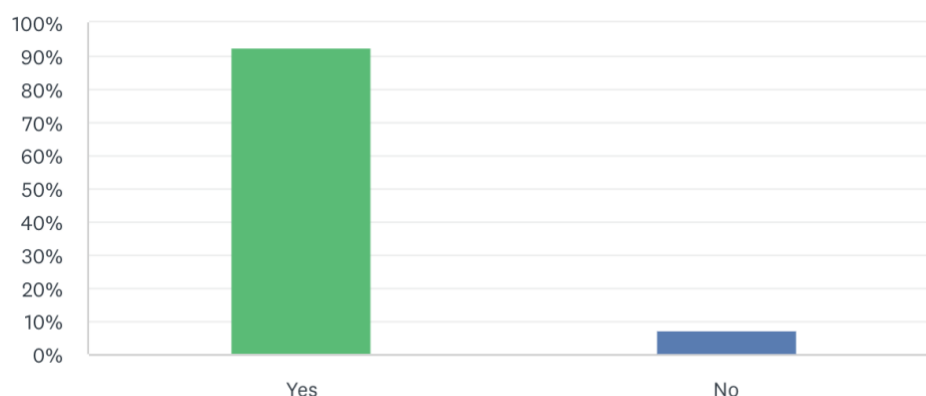
More sessions on working for small museums (less than 10 staff). A number of the sessions/presenters seemed more geared towards bigger institutions with access to greater resources and staff/volunteers.

Programming Posters/Case Studies (of successful exhibitions/educational programming/ audience-building examples/Docent Models.

I would LOVE to see publishers of new books for museum professionals represented in the vendors. Books on museum education, working with docents, volunteer coordination, etc.

Funders. Getting to talk to funders would be way more interesting/productive than looking at items I can't afford.

Throughout the planning process, WMA's Program Committee strove to make the 2022 Annual Meeting more diverse and inclusive than ever before. To see if this was successfully achieved, we asked the survey takers their opinion on the matter. A total of 86 (92%) found WMA 2022 to be diverse and inclusive, while 7 (8%) did not.



These were some of the comments:

It was on its way. I saw a lot of women. Are museums encouraging and supporting all types of staff to attend this? Or are women volunteering to do the emotional labor of collecting information from events like this and sharing it back out to the rest of staff?

There was almost no visible accommodation for (or presence of) disabled people, no space to gather as queer community to know how many of us were there, and way too high a proportion of white presenting folks.

I saw less than a handful of Black participants. The "Museums and the Fight Against Hate" session was bizarre. Showcasing the work of two white women representing Chinese cultural organizations was kind of an elephant in the room moment.

Discussion topics ended up including DEI frequently. Diverse attendees, in terms of race, gender, sexuality, leadership/entry-level, etc.

There was an emphasis on inclusivity as well as respect towards one another.

I believe the conference demonstrated proper awareness.

This is a hard question to answer. The PNW (and a lot of the western part of the US) is an overwhelmingly white part of the country and it was definitely reflected in the attendees. I also got the sense it was very leadership (role-wise)-heavy and didn't see many institutions with a cross-section of staff represented. I also recognize the threat of COVID still looms which may have made it difficult for people to attend]. While scholarships are a great way to get a more diverse group to attend, I always wonder if there a way to change the registration fee structure that offers more people access.

There were a lot of sessions that offered diverse perspectives, but as a multi-racial person, I attended one of the evening events and it seemed as though it was a very homogenous group and it was uncomfortable.

I'd say somewhat - mostly based on the sessions presented, but also based on attendee comments and self-identification. I know the industry is working to increase engagement across a representative slice of the country, and the work continues!

There were more sessions presented by BIPOC peoples than I've seen at other conferences. We can't control who attends, but we can control who presents (to some extent).

Being my first WMA - and coming from the mid-west - I was amazed at what I believe was good representation by indigenous people and those who appear to be of Asian descent. However, the attendance was very female-heavy, and not a lot of African-American/Black representation. That's diversity... as for inclusive, I appreciated that two major speakers were Black, and I can only hope that inclusiveness was part of session participation.

The attendees and presenters were fairly diverse, but the environment did not feel inclusive. An affinity space (outside of the affinity lunches) specifically for BIPOC participants may have helped. I also feel that a stronger mask policy would have made the conference accessible and inclusive for disabled colleagues.

It seemed like a lot of efforts were being made to be more diverse and inclusive, but I still seemed to be listening to presentations by majority white presenters

It was good to see the panels/areas for AANHPI and Native American presentations, but I didn't see any representation for African American, LGBTQA+, or Hispanic attendees.

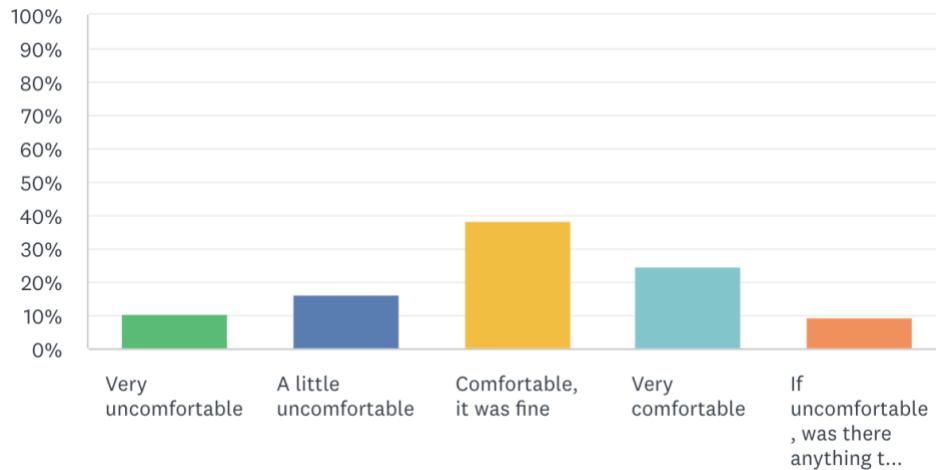
I appreciate how almost all the sessions discussed the complexity of inclusion, how we can better include indigenous people, people from the AANHPI community, and queer folks.

I feel this should be a scale rating instead of a Y/N. There were great topics and diversity of speakers in the major sessions. However, there were a LOT of white folks leading sessions on DEAL topics that did not feel appropriate.

Yes, but always room for improvement

I honestly feel that overall costs of attending the conference, the food costs at the hotel/surrounding restaurants, and parking/travel costs were not inclusive to emerging professionals or those working at smaller museums on baseline salaries with limited budgets.

Having been WMA's first in-person conference since 2019, we wanted to know how comfortable people were attending an in-person conference, post-COVID-19 pandemic. With 104 responses, 26 (25%) were **very comfortable**; 40 (38%) were **comfortable**; 17 (16%) were a **little uncomfortable**; and 11 (11%) were **very uncomfortable**.



To help WMA design stronger future Annual Meetings, we asked “What is one thing the Annual Meeting organizers could have done to make your experience better?” Many attendees mentioned the lack of on-site Wi-Fi, the desire for lots more coffee, the need for more clearly stated details in the program/website (I.e., cost of parking, session formats, what luncheons/events were free versus required pre-registration), and having a lighter session day on Sunday.

Here are some of the selected comments out of 58 responses:

I think this was a great first in person meeting since the pandemic.

Staff members to stand out more. I felt quite lost a lot of the time and struggled to find help.

Share information about parking costs and general parking information when it is complicated and costly. Figuring out parking was time consuming, stressful, and could have been very costly. I did not budget for \$55/day hotel parking, and ended up parking on the street and having to move my car. Did not learn about the \$12/day parking in downtown until the final day from another conference member. Seems like something that was a significant oversight in excluding in the plan your visit detail webpage.

In addition to longing for affinity spaces I also wished that there were interesting free options at the same time as the paid things so that it did not feel so exclusive. And the physical setting was not very accommodating for me - more variety of seating and recognition of the physical strain of such long days would have helped. I think it would be amazing to have a session block one day (or better yet each day) that is a variety of embodied activities (meditation, movement, etc.) - many presenters spoke to the value of this kind of self-care, so I think it could be done in a way that closely aligned to the content of the conference.

Better (any?) meal option for people with food allergies.

More coffee and snacks in between sessions! And make sure the rooms were not as cold as they were. I avoided going to certain sessions because the rooms were so unbearably cold.

Sunday activities felt like they overlapped too much- having distinct time slots would have allowed me to see and participate in more

Honestly, this sounds silly but everything was great except that we kept running out of coffee every morning.

Integrating different formats such as the roundtable discussions in between the sessions, or extending the breaks slightly, would help to provide some breathing room or a change of pace between sessions.

Make it easier to get WiFi inside and outside the meeting rooms.

More sessions for those who've been in the field for 20 plus years.

Included some more advanced collections sessions.

Create a package deal and maybe an early bird pricing for all of the evening events.

Start the conference a little later in the day, end it a little earlier in the evening, and do not end the conference on a Sunday evening. The timing was a challenge as someone who lives in the host city.

It was a great conference. One of the better ones in recent memory. Keep up the good work!

More time in between sessions? The 30 minutes seems to fly by. Also, scheduling the Inspiration Stations at the same time as concurrent sessions was frustrating because basically nobody came to the Inspiration Stations during that time.

It was great, really. Such good-hearted people and sharing of resources and knowledge.

I've mentioned it before, but everyone seemed to know each other, and I was new. Since we wear the "first time attendee" ribbons, it would have been nice for an organizer/board member to actively approach me during one of the networking sessions.

I did not find the conference program to be very helpful in determining what to expect from sessions. The descriptions did not actually explain what was covered. While many people do go to conferences for networking, myself included, I talked to a few people who had a hard time figuring out what sessions would require break out discussions, so they could avoid them. Some people are not comfortable in those settings and prefer to just listen.

Included more sessions focused on collections, including both practical and ethical topics. There's been interesting literature about decolonizing collections practice lately (for instance) but I haven't seen much of that reflected in professional conferences. It would be good to explore ways in which various types of museum professionals can apply these principles in our work, not just programming and outreach.

Ensure the presenters are knowledgeable about accessibility. People shouldn't have to ask for speakers to speak with microphones.

Clearer program book and communication...it was not clear which sessions were open to all, which were invite, and which were paid pre-reg.

Provided more breakfast food options with morning coffee sessions as the hotel food was very high priced and there were few options within walking distance of the hotel.

I stayed in the conference hotel and it would have been helpful to have more information about the stay and facilities. For example, I did not know how much it cost to park my car there and given that information, I would have chosen different lodging.

Having stated that WMA's Programs Committee worked hard to present a different, out-of-the-box conference for WMA 2022, we wanted to know if anyone noticed a difference in this year's conference. For many attendees, they stated that this was their first-time attending a (WMA) conference, so they had no previous model to compare this year to.

With that in mind, here are some of the other responses:

This was my first time attending the WMA. It felt much more alive and meaningful than most other conferences I've attended in the past. It was also my first conference since Covid.

That's awesome! As it was my first one, no, but I did notice that the total program did not shy away from being explicitly oriented to truth and justice and I loved that! It made me feel excited for where the whole field is going.

My first WMA conference so I have nothing to compare again

I appreciated the "have fun" mentality of this year's conference.

Easier schedule. Less "conference brain"

Most of the panelists I saw presented as panelists (an intro, several presentations, and Q/A), with one exception. I'm not sure that model is broken though. As long as the topics are good and engaging. You still had keynotes, an exhibit hall, a paper program, evening receptions, and concurrent sessions. So not sure it seemed "out of the box" per se. But again, the quality of those things was all fairly high, so that might be ok

I noticed a difference! It seemed more relaxed and less business-like. I think that facilitated networking and feeling inclusive. the extra time for networking was great, though a bit more time for sessions would have been awesome, too. Felt perfect for a "post"-pandemic gathering. Well done!

I think the Programs Committee did a wonderful job. They picked a great location and really nice pre-conference events and evening events. I don't drink, so I didn't attend any of the Happy Hours, but I think most of the people enjoyed them

It was SO much more diverse than I have seen in a long time. The sessions themselves had some unique topics, but the format of many of them were still the same old "show-and-tell"

Some of the sessions felt redundant, like having two sessions dedicated to land acknowledgements and two dedicated to decolonizing initiatives. This work is extremely important but these are similar to sessions that WMA has presented in the past. For professionals like myself who are not entry-level in that type of work, I would have really preferred at least one advanced-level session dedicated to those topics rather than redundant entry-level sessions.

The conference was fantastic! The evening events and the planned luncheons were perfectly planned. Thank you for taking care to make this first conference back in person a smashing success!

The variety of formats, from sessions to workshops, to Happy Hours to Roundtables, was excellent!

Yes!! Sessions were so collaborative and engaging this year! I felt that the conversations were franker and forward(!) this year than in previous years. More actionable pathways toward more inclusive, diverse practice, but it's hard to go home to my museum leadership team and suggest we get rid of our board. :) But I will suggest that our CFO, HR and Development Officers attend in future years, which was such a valuable takeaway from the closing session.

As WMA begins to plan for the 2023 Annual Meeting in Pasadena, California, WMA wanted to know if there was anything our Program Committee and other organizers should take into consideration during the planning process." Common themes found within the responses focused on the need for fewer sessions and the desire for the standard session format to be replaced with out-of-the-box programming, off-site activities, collaboration between colleagues, and time for rest.

Here's a few more of the responses:

Have a good mix of "how to, model programs or processes, nuts & bolts" along with social/museum issues.

Native American history there and how to honor that space. Architectural tours.

I found the conference to be quite disjointed from place - a chance to recognize and celebrate local movement work, key histories, and a glimpse into the arts and food cultures of the places where the conference happen would make for a richer experience and hopefully make the conference a better impact on the local community.

These are very expensive events to attend.

Fewer sessions are OK! Many attendees feel "left out" when they have to select between two important sessions.

Facilitate transportation options, since SoCal is not known for its public transit (unfortunately).

Collaboration is awesome and this felt like a very interactive and collaborative experience for all participants.

I think this conference addressed many difficult conversations head-on, and that honestly was refreshing. I would love to see the same kind of dialogue in Pasadena.

The final day of WMA 2022, while still engaging and informative, felt very long because of the sheer amount of material packed into that day at the end of the conference. It might be helpful to increase the offerings on the first day of the conference to alleviate the length of the final day, at which point attendees are reaching their capacity or have to leave early to return home.

Don't plan to have a full day on the Sunday of the conference. If it is half day then people are able to travel home in the afternoon or evening without having to pay for another night in a hotel.

They should find ways to continue to provide refreshments, more seating at the open to all lunch, and make sure that people understand how safe the area they are staying in is.

Plan more events that are just social and not necessarily around museums such as bowling or hiking.

People are getting sensitive to the sustainability of conferences. Please be as resource-conserving as possible. Ditch the plastic folders and paper programs. Find something other than pages of ads in a paper program to use for sponsorships. Use a program app. Give people a special sticker if they show a reusable coffee cup to use in the coffee breaks at registration... Give people an option of buying carbon offsets at registration. Take a clear stand on this.

Microphones are needed for all speakers, or at least 2 in each room that are removable. If we are going to emphasize more audience participation, we need to have a way for them to be heard by all in the session. Everyone thinks they can speak loud enough, but few actually can.

Please do NOT plan the conference to begin the day after a major religious holiday. Starting the conference, the day after Yom Kippur put extra burden on Jewish organizers and attendees, which felt counter to the WMA's value of inclusion. You should also plan on providing Wi-Fi for all attendees given that this is a professional event.

There is a lot of public art in Pasadena, I came to WMA from another conference, and they had a guided walking art tour each morning before the conference began. It was a great way to get a little exercise in and learn a bit more about the city of San Diego.

Sunday- the stacking of the investigation sessions, the round tables, and the afternoon session- felt really cramped and like those should have been separated out more.

The costs for events added up, I'm sure there are many attendees whose institutions won't pay for evening events, and their salaries won't cover them either. I assume Pasadena will be even more expensive to run than Portland, so perhaps there can be extra stipends for folks to attend those since they are invaluable for networking and add the opportunity to see various cultural sites!

As a collections professional, there weren't many sessions related to my work that allow me to grow. I sought out other interesting and adjacent topics. My institution encouraged me to attend the conference, but had I been looking at the program as to whether to attend, I definitely would not have.

Reach out to BIPOC folks in the area and strive for maximum inclusion.

I would put more emphasis on the Thursday night event and less on the Sunday night. Too many people had left by Sunday night.

Climate change, environmental issues, water conservation while in SoCal

More outside-of-the-box activities

Having too many paid events is a barrier to access for people coming from small museums.

I and many of my colleagues in small museums will likely not attend due to the expense on top of travel. I was only able to come to this year's meeting because I didn't need to pay for lodging. It delivered the value we paid for, but it's likely something my organization will only splurge on once every few years.

Be mindful of the new museum folks and that we don't know everyone, try to set up extra programming/space for them to introduce themselves.

More emphasis on front-line staff. They need to be recognized as key professionals carrying out our mission to the public.

There's so much within 30 minutes of Pasadena, that they might want to consider how to share that.

Please keep including large variety of formats

Museums are struggling to see attendance bounce back after the pandemic and this, along with inflation, is impacting our budgets, salaries, and ability to attend conferences. Please find ways to make the annual meetings more affordable even if it means considering locations where general cost of living is lower vs. a larger city.

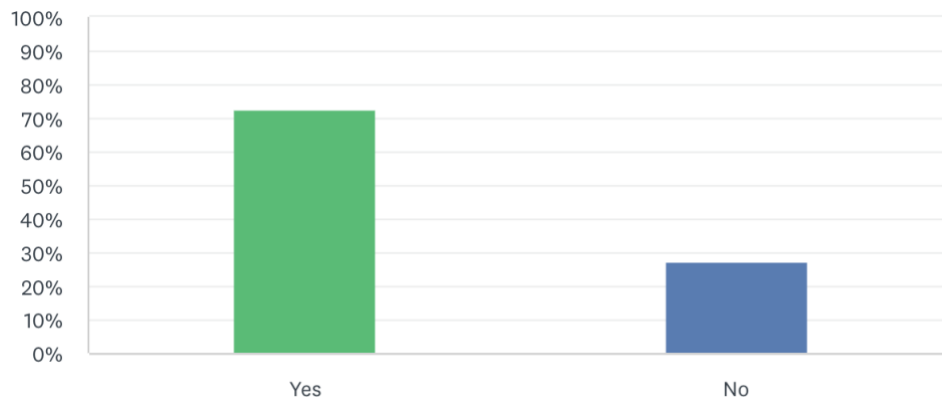
Please build in down time for rest/off-site wanderings. This can help me have the energy for all the personal interactions.

We began to wrap up the survey by asking the survey takers to leave a comment about the Annual Meeting for WMA to use on social media or other platforms, if they had one. Only three people contributed.

WMA is a great asset to our museum communities. Thought provoking sessions, topic tailored luncheons, comradery, learning and FUN all in one dynamic location. Thank you for a fabulous weekend!

WMA always inspires and challenges me to be a better museum professional. The people are the most welcoming group I have ever known and it is a pleasure to learn alongside them.

The second to last question asked if anyone would be you interested in participating in new year-round programming? Out of the 84 people who answered, 61 (73%) said “Yes” and 23 (27%) said “No.”



For the final question, we wanted to know what other what museum conferences our attendees attend, other than WMA’s Annual Meetings. Out of 80 answers, 51 (64%) attend State Association conferences, 33 (41%) attend Discipline-Specific Association conferences, 32 (40%) attend the American Alliance of Museums conference, 21 (26%) attend National Association conferences, and 9 (11%) attend Regional Associations.

More specifically, the top 5 conferences WMA’s 2022 attendee also attend include: American Alliance of Museums, California Association of Museums, Association of Technology Centers, Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists, and the Oregon Museums Association.

